

FACTORS INFLUENCING ENGLISH SELF-STUDY AMONG FIRST-YEAR NON-ENGLISH-MAJOR STUDENTS AT THANH DO UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: *In the context of globalization, English proficiency is essential for university students, yet first-year non-English majors often struggle due to limited self-learning skills and reliance on classroom instruction. This study examines the self-learning ability of 130 first-year students at Thanh Do University using a mixed-methods approach. The results show a moderate level of self-learning (Mean = 3.24), with the learning environment rated highest (Mean = 3.40), while social media distraction remains a major barrier (Mean = 3.77). Although students have motivation and access to resources, their self-discipline is still weak. The study contributes by proposing an integrated framework that explains the interaction between internal and external factors, highlighting the gap between awareness and actual learning practices. It is recommended that teachers implement structured strategies such as goal-setting guidance and reflective activities, while students develop time management and self-regulation skills to improve autonomous English learning.*

Keywords: *Learner autonomy, First-Year Non-English-Major Students; Thanh Do University; Self-study English.*

1. Introduction

For university students, English plays a crucial role in both academic and professional development, serving not only as a subject but also as an essential tool for accessing global knowledge and information. However, despite this recognized importance, many non-English-major students continue to face significant challenges in improving their language proficiency. Due to their limited exposure to English and the lack of authentic practice opportunities, their learning often relies heavily on classroom instruction, which may not be sufficient to promote active language use or sustained motivation.

Previous studies have identified various factors influencing students' English self-learning, including internal aspects such as motivation, self-regulation, and confidence, as well as external aspects such as teacher support, learning resources, and the learning environment. However, these studies tend to focus on these factors separately rather than examining how they interact within a unified framework. Moreover,

there is still a lack of research specifically addressing the context of first-year non-English-major students, particularly at Thanh Do University, where students may face unique challenges related to their transition into higher education and independent learning.

To address this gap, this study investigates the English self-learning ability of first-year non-English-major students at Thanh Do University by examining the main factors influencing their self-learning process. The following research questions guide the study: 1) To what extent do the four theoretically and empirically grounded factors influence the English self-learning ability of first-year non-English-major students at Thanh Do University? And 2) Which of these factors exerts the strongest influence on students' English self-learning effectiveness?" By analyzing both internal and external influences within a more integrated framework, this study aims to provide practical recommendations to enhance students' self-learning effectiveness and support the development of sustainable and effective English

language skills.

2. Research overview

Theories on self-learning and learner autonomy collectively highlight that effective English self-learning requires a combination of personal discipline, strategic self-regulation, and supportive learning conditions. Building on Holec's (1981) foundational view that successful language learners must take control of their own learning, later scholars refined and expanded this concept. Little (2003) emphasized that autonomy is strengthened when learners can select appropriate materials and make informed choices about learning methods, an idea that complements Holec's emphasis on responsibility by showing how learners operationalize autonomy in practice. Zimmerman (2000) further contributed by explaining that autonomy depends not only on independence but also on metacognitive processes such as goal-setting, self-monitoring, and strategy adjustment; these processes explain why some learners with access to resources still struggle without proper self-regulation. Benson (2013) added an environmental dimension, arguing that autonomy flourishes in supportive contexts where technology, peer interaction, and extracurricular activities provide both structured and flexible learning opportunities.

Although these theories share a common emphasis on learner autonomy, they differ in focus: Holec stresses responsibility, Little (2003) highlights decision-making, Zimmerman (2000) focuses on cognitive processes, and Benson (2013) underscores environmental influences. This comparison indicates that learner autonomy should be understood as a multidimensional construct shaped by both internal and external factors rather than as an isolated individual trait.

Recent empirical studies in Vietnam have shown that both personal and learning-environment factors significantly influence the English self-learning ability and motivation of non-English-major students, thereby reinforcing the multidimensional perspective of learner autonomy. For instance, Nguyen Thi Tuyet Nhung and Nguyen Thi Ngoc Huong (2024) at Tra Vinh University found that students with high learning motivation and effective self-regulated learning strategies demonstrate greater autonomy, while

low confidence in English communication remains a major challenge. In addition, external factors such as teacher support, a positive learning environment, and access to technology are identified as important conditions for promoting self-learning. Similarly, Trinh Ngoc My (2024) at a public university in Hanoi highlighted that teachers, peers, and a supportive learning environment play a crucial role in sustaining students' motivation, whereas unengaging learning materials and the lack of authentic communicative activities can negatively affect learners' motivation.

These findings collectively underscore the close relationship between internal factors (e.g., motivation, self-regulation skills, and confidence) and external factors (e.g., teacher support, learning resources, and the learning environment). However, despite acknowledging the importance of both dimensions, a key limitation of these studies is that they tend to examine such factors in isolation rather than integrating them into a unified analytical framework. This lack of integration makes it difficult to fully explain how these factors interact and jointly influence learners' self-learning effectiveness.

Therefore, there remains a need for a more comprehensive approach that synthesizes these dimensions into a coherent model. Addressing this gap, the present study classifies the influencing factors into two main groups: subjective factors, including motivation, self-discipline, proactivity, time management, and self-regulation; and objective factors, including lecturer support, learning resources, interactive environments, and technological tools. More importantly, instead of treating these factors in isolation, this study aims to integrate them into a unified research framework to examine how they interact and collectively influence English self-learning among first-year non-English-major students at Thanh Do University. By doing so, the study not only builds on previous research but also provides a more holistic understanding of self-learning, thereby offering practical implications for designing effective and sustainable learning strategies.

3. Research methods

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative

methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing first-year non-English-major students' self-learning of English at Thanh Do University. The theoretical foundation is based on key concepts from Holec (1981) on learner autonomy, Zimmerman (2000) on self-regulated learning, and Little (2003) on autonomous learning and the use of learning resources, which guided the identification of variables and the design of research instruments. For the quantitative part, a 16-item questionnaire was developed to measure four main dimensions: self-discipline and proactivity, goal setting and self-monitoring, technology and learning resources, and supportive learning environment. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), and was pilot-tested with 20 students from various non-English-major disciplines, achieving a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.73, indicating that the questionnaire was clear, reliable, and valid for measuring the intended constructs. Subsequently, the study reported that a total of 130 first-year non-English-major students were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representativeness across majors and classes. Specifically, the population was divided into strata based on academic majors, with each major treated as a separate stratum. The size of each stratum was determined according to the actual number of students in each major within the overall population of first-year non-English-major students. Accordingly, the sample size for each stratum was proportionally allocated (proportionate stratified sampling) to ensure that each major was represented in line with its size in the population.

Within each stratum, students were selected using simple random sampling by using class lists and randomly selecting participants through random number tables. This approach helped ensure both randomness and balance among the different academic groups.

The sample consisted of 58 males and 72 females, all of whom had completed at least two semesters of university-level English courses, with proficiency levels ranging from beginner to intermediate. The participants came from a variety of disciplines, including Pharmacy (40), Business

Administration (30), Information Technology (15), Accounting (10), Automotive Engineering Technology (20), Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technology (3), Vietnamese Studies (7), Office Administration (2), and Hospitality Management (3), ensuring that the sample reflected the diversity of non-English-major students at Thanh Do University. The test results indicated that the questionnaire achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.76, demonstrating good reliability and suitability for measuring the factors influencing students' English self-learning ability. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software, employing descriptive statistics and factor analysis to determine the factors affecting students' English self-learning and the relative influence of each factor.

To interpret students' responses, mean scores were examined together with standard deviations. Mean values were categorized into three levels following Boone and Boone (2012): 1.00-2.33 = Low, 2.34-3.66 = Moderate, and 3.67-5.00 = High. Standard deviation was used to assess the consistency of responses. According to Creswell and Creswell (2022), a lower standard deviation indicates that participants' responses cluster closely around the mean, whereas higher values reflect greater variability in perceptions. In this study, Standard Deviation (SD) values below 0.70 were interpreted as showing relatively consistent responses, while values between 0.70 and 1.00 indicated moderate variation.

Although the theoretical frameworks proposed by Holec (1981), Little (2003), and Zimmerman (2000) provide essential foundations for understanding autonomy and self-regulated learning, these scholars do not offer any quantitative interpretation scales, including mean reference ranges. Therefore, this study adopts the commonly used mean interpretation scale recommended in educational research methodology (Cohen et al., 2018), which is widely applied in studies using Likert-type survey instruments.

For the qualitative part, in-depth interviews were conducted in Vietnamese with 15 selected students to gain deeper insights into how both objective and subjective factors affect their self-learning. The interviews explored students'

learning habits, motivation, perceived obstacles, use of technology and learning resources, and the role of lecturer and peer support. To ensure anonymity, interviewees are identified using codes (e.g., Student 1, Student 2). The qualitative data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed thematically in Vietnamese to ensure accuracy and preserve the original meanings, and were then translated into English for reporting purposes. English translations are provided solely for illustrative purposes. Throughout the study, ethical considerations were strictly followed: participation was voluntary, students were informed about the purpose of the study, and all responses were kept anonymous and confidential. Interviewees provided written consent, and all data were used solely for research purposes. By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, this study aimed to provide empirical evidence on the factors influencing English self-learning among first-year non-English-major students, which would serve as a basis for proposing practical solutions to enhance self-learning effectiveness and improve students' English proficiency.

4. Research results

The research results are analyzed and discussed from four key perspectives concerning first-year non-English-major students in their English learning process: Self-discipline and proactivity; goal setting and self-monitoring; the use of technology and learning resources; and the presence of a supportive learning environment.

The four factors were identified from the outset based on both theoretical foundations and prior empirical studies. Theoretically, Holec (1981) emphasized the importance of learner autonomy and self-discipline in successful language learning, Zimmerman (2000) highlighted goal-setting, self-monitoring, and self-regulation as crucial components of effective independent learning, and Little (2003) stressed the role of choosing appropriate learning methods and utilizing available resources. Moreover, previous research on non-English-major students (Nguyen Thi Tuyet Nhung & Nguyen Thi Ngoc Huong, 2024; Trinh Ngoc My, 2024) showed that external factors such as teacher support, a positive learning environment, and access to technology are

considered important conditions for promoting self-directed learning. Therefore, these four dimensions were selected a priori as key areas to investigate because they comprehensively reflect the main internal and external factors affecting English self-learning in first-year non-English-major students.

4.1. Self-discipline and Proactivity

Table 1. Self-discipline and Proactivity

Statement	n	Mean	Standard Deviation
Question 1: I have a weekly plan for learning English and try to follow it.	130	3.17	0.62
Question 2: I am easily distracted (by social media, entertainment, etc.) when learning English.	130	3.77	0.99
Question 3: I actively look for English learning materials or lessons outside class hours.	130	3.13	0.71
Question 4: I regularly participate in English-related activities or clubs.	130	2.64	0.83

Source: Author's survey data (2025)

Analysis of the data in table 1 shows a moderate level of self-discipline among first-year non-English-major students. The item "having a weekly plan for learning English" received a mean of 3.17 (SD = 0.62), indicating that students sometimes to often follow a study plan. The relatively low SD suggests that most students responded consistently to this item, reflecting a shared awareness of the importance of maintaining a study routine.

In contrast, distraction appears to be a significant challenge. The item on being easily distracted recorded the highest mean (3.77) and a high SD (0.99). This indicates not only that

distraction is common but also that students differ greatly in their ability to stay focused. Social media and entertainment platforms seem to be major sources of interference during self-study, underscoring the need for improved self-control and digital time-management skills.

Students' initiative in seeking additional learning materials outside class shows only a moderate level of engagement (Mean = 3.13; SD = 0.71). Although students recognize the usefulness of supplementary resources, many do not consistently explore them. This suggests limited intrinsic motivation or insufficient awareness of accessible learning materials, resulting in continued dependence on classroom instruction.

Participation in English clubs and related extracurricular activities is low (Mean = 2.64), with a relatively high SD (0.83). This indicates that while a small group of students actively join such activities, most do not. Student 3 explained: "Tôi ít khi tham gia các câu lạc bộ tiếng Anh vì tôi cảm thấy ngại và không tự tin khi nói tiếng Anh trước người khác." [I rarely join English clubs because I feel shy and not confident speaking English in front of others.] Low involvement restricts opportunities for authentic English practice, reducing students' exposure to real-world communication contexts and limiting their development of communicative confidence.

Overall, findings from table 1 depict students as somewhat structured but not deeply engaged in autonomous English learning. Although they show initial effort through planning, their progress is hindered by high susceptibility to distraction, limited proactive learning behaviors, and minimal participation in communicative environments. These patterns highlight the need for targeted interventions that strengthen self-regulation, enhance motivational support, and expand opportunities for meaningful English practice.

4.2. Goal Setting and Self-Monitoring

Table 2. Goal Setting and Self-Monitoring

Statement	n	Mean	Standard Deviation
Question 5: I have specific goals for my English learning.	130	3.26	0.73

Statement	n	Mean	Standard Deviation
Question 6: I break down my goals (e.g., learning 10 words per day, listening for 30 minutes).	130	3.15	0.67
Question 7: I regularly assess my progress in learning English.	130	3.07	0.68
Question 8: I adjust my learning methods if I find them ineffective.	130	3.25	0.71

Source: Author's survey data (2025)

Analysis of table 2 shows that students exhibit a moderate level of goal-setting awareness, as reflected in the mean scores for having specific goals (M = 3.26, SD = 0.73) and adjusting learning methods (M = 3.25, SD = 0.71). These scores suggest that most first-year students recognize the importance of having learning objectives and demonstrate some willingness to modify their study strategies when they prove ineffective. This tendency is also reflected in the interview data, with three students reporting that they usually set goals at the beginning but tend to adjust their learning strategies when these prove ineffective.

However, the data also reveal important limitations. The ability to break down long-term goals into smaller, manageable tasks is only moderately developed (M = 3.15, SD = 0.67). Although the low SD indicates relatively consistent responses, the mean score suggests that many students still struggle to operationalize their goals into daily or weekly actions, an essential component of effective self-regulated learning.

The lowest mean in this dimension relates to regular self-assessment (M = 3.07, SD = 0.68), indicating weak habits in monitoring learning progress. Students appear to lack structured methods such as journals, checklists, or progress trackers, resulting in only a general sense of improvement rather than clear evidence-based evaluation.

Overall, these findings suggest that while students show emerging awareness of goal-

oriented learning, their skills in goal specification, task breakdown, and self-monitoring remain underdeveloped. To strengthen this dimension, explicit training in goal-setting techniques (e.g., SMART goals), reflective practice, and the use of self-assessment tools is essential for enhancing students' autonomy and effectiveness in self-learning.

4.3. Technology and Learning Resources

Table 3. Technology and learning resources

Statement	n	Mean	Standard Deviation
Question 9: I use apps/websites to learn English (e.g., Duolingo, BBC Learning English, etc.).	130	3.52	0.63
Question 10: I find online learning convenient and compatible with my schedule.	130	3.31	0.61
Question 11: I know how to select appropriate learning materials that match my proficiency level.	130	3.12	0.72
Question 12: I regularly listen to podcasts or watch English videos to improve my skills.	130	2.92	0.66

Source: Author's survey data (2025)

Analysis of the data in table 3 shows that the use of English learning applications and websites (M = 3.52, SD = 0.63) is relatively common among first-year non-English-major students. The moderately high mean and low standard deviation indicate that most students consistently perceive digital platforms, such as Duolingo or BBC Learning English, as convenient, flexible, and compatible with their learning routines. This suggests that technology-assisted learning has become an integral part of their self-study habits.

Students also expressed positive views toward the convenience of online learning (M = 3.31, SD = 0.61). The low variation in responses shows that

the majority find online tools easy to integrate into their schedules. However, the mean score remains within the moderate range, implying that although students appreciate flexibility, not all fully rely on or maximize online learning resources.

By contrast, students' ability to select materials appropriate for their English level is only moderate (M = 3.12, SD = 0.72). The slightly higher SD indicates noticeable differences among students: while some can choose suitable learning materials, many still lack evaluative skills needed to identify resources that match their proficiency. This may result in using materials that are too difficult or too simple, reducing study efficiency.

The lowest mean score appears in students' use of English podcasts and videos (M = 2.92, SD = 0.66), showing limited engagement with multimedia or authentic English content. Despite the abundance of accessible resources online, students tend to rely more on textbooks or teacher-provided materials than on independent listening or viewing activities. This underuse of authentic materials restricts opportunities to improve listening comprehension, pronunciation, and real-world communication skills.

This pattern is also reflected in the interview data. As Student 8 shared, "Minh thường sử dụng các ứng dụng học tiếng Anh vì tính tiện lợi, nhưng không phải lúc nào cũng biết cách chọn tài liệu phù hợp với trình độ của mình" [I usually use apps for English learning because of their convenience; however, I am not always sure how to choose materials suited to my level]. This suggests that although students appreciate the flexibility of digital tools, they may lack confidence in selecting resources appropriate to their proficiency level.

Overall, the findings indicate that although students are familiar with digital learning tools and generally find them convenient, their use of technology remains surface-level. They lack the skills to critically select appropriate resources and rarely engage with authentic English media. To strengthen their self-learning effectiveness, students need guidance on digital literacy, choosing level-appropriate materials, and incorporating multimedia resources into daily study routines.

4.4. Supportive Learning Environment

Table 4. Supportive learning environment

Statement	n	Mean	Standard Deviation
Question 13: Instructors encourage and support students in self-studying English.	130	3.62	0.68
Question 14: I have friends to study English with, and I often exchange ideas with them.	130	3.21	0.58
Question 15: My university provides sufficient resources to support English learning (library, Wi-Fi, materials).	130	3.50	0.77
Question 16: I feel that there is a positive environment for practicing English at school.	130	3.25	0.66

Source: Author's survey data (2025)

Analysis of table 4 shows that instructors' encouragement and support for students' independent English learning received the highest mean score ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 0.68$), indicating that teacher support is perceived as consistently strong across the student sample. The relatively low standard deviation suggests that most students share similar views about teachers' proactive role in motivating and guiding their self-learning. This emphasizes the importance of instructors as key agents in fostering learner autonomy. This is further supported by the interview data, with seven participants indicating that their instructors not only encouraged independent learning but also offered practical guidance on how to study effectively outside the classroom.

Peer interaction, however, appears less prominent ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.58$). Although students generally agree that they have classmates to study or exchange ideas with, the moderate mean score and low SD indicate that such

collaboration is present but not deeply developed. This implies that peer support exists at a surface level and is not yet leveraged as a meaningful learning resource. More structured peer-learning activities, such as study groups or peer mentoring, could strengthen this area.

University-provided learning resources ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.77$) were also viewed positively, though with the highest variability among all four items. The larger standard deviation suggests significant differences in students' access to or satisfaction with resources such as the library, Wi-Fi, or English-learning materials. This variation may be due to differences across faculties, learning spaces, or individual experiences with institutional services.

Finally, the perceived English-speaking environment at the university received a moderate mean score ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.66$). While students acknowledge some opportunities for English use on campus, the overall environment does not appear robust or immersive. Limited real-life communication contexts may restrict students' ability to practice English naturally, contributing to a continued reliance on teacher-led learning rather than self-driven interaction.

In summary, the findings from table 4 suggest that although teacher support and institutional resources provide a generally supportive environment, peer collaboration and authentic English-speaking opportunities remain underdeveloped. To enhance students' self-learning effectiveness, the university should integrate teacher guidance, peer engagement, and more active language-use environments into a cohesive institutional strategy that promotes autonomy and meaningful communication.

Table 5. Summary of the four factors influencing students' self-learning activities

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
Self-discipline and Proactivity	3.18	0.79
Goal Setting and Self-Monitoring	3.18	0.70
Technology and Learning Resources	3.22	0.66

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
Supportive Learning Environment	3.40	0.67
Overall Self-Learning Ability	3.24	

Source: Author's survey data (2025)

Analysis of the survey data shows that all four identified factors influence the English self-learning ability of first-year non-English-major students at Thanh Do University, though to varying degrees. Among them, the Supportive Learning Environment had the highest mean score ($M = 3.40$; $SD = 0.67$), indicating that instructor encouragement, peer collaboration, and institutional support exert the strongest influence on students' autonomous learning. This finding aligns with qualitative interview data, in which students emphasized feeling more motivated when teachers provided guidance, facilitated discussions, and created opportunities for collaborative learning with peers.

Technology and Learning Resources ($M = 3.22$; $SD = 0.66$) also contributed positively, suggesting that students frequently rely on online platforms, applications, and digital materials to support their self-study. However, qualitative findings reveal several persistent challenges, particularly students' difficulty in selecting level-appropriate materials and their underdeveloped digital learning strategies. These issues indicate a need for more structured guidance in effectively utilizing learning resources. This limitation is further reflected in students' own accounts. For example, five students reported that they often used vocabulary applications and watched English videos online as part of their self-study, reflecting the widespread use of digital tools. However, the findings also revealed notable challenges. As Student 1 admitted, "there are too many materials online, and sometimes I don't know which ones are suitable for my level," adding that "without proper guidance, it is difficult to use learning technology effectively."

By contrast, Self-discipline and Proactivity ($M = 3.18$; $SD = 0.79$) and Goal Setting and Self-Monitoring ($M = 3.18$; $SD = 0.70$) received slightly lower mean scores. These results suggest

that although students possess awareness of the need for self-regulated learning, their abilities in planning, maintaining routines, and evaluating progress are still limited. Interview responses further revealed tendencies toward procrastination, lack of detailed action plans, and minimal use of self-assessment tools, all of which reduce the effectiveness of their independent study. As Student 9 observed, even in a supportive learning environment, students who lack self-discipline tend to struggle, whereas those with stronger self-management skills are better able to make use of the available support. This suggests that although external conditions, such as institutional support and access to resources, can facilitate self-learning, their effectiveness is ultimately mediated by students' internal capacities, particularly self-discipline and self-regulation.

Taken together, these four factors interact to shape students' self-learning outcomes. External, objective factors, particularly institutional support and access to learning resources, create opportunities and motivation; however, their benefits depend heavily on students' internal capacities for self-regulation, proactive engagement, and goal management. Thus, even in supportive environments, students with weak self-regulation may struggle to achieve effective learning, while learners with stronger self-management skills are more capable of leveraging external support to enhance their proficiency.

5. Discussion

The study revealed that first-year non-English-major students generally hold positive attitudes toward learning English and demonstrate an initial awareness of the importance of goal-setting and study planning. This finding is consistent with Zimmerman (2000), Holec (1981), and Little (2003), all of whom emphasize the foundational role of motivation and learner autonomy in successful self-directed learning. Similarly, in line with Nguyen Thi Tuyet Nhung and Nguyen Thi Ngoc Huong (2024) as well as Trinh Ngoc My (2024), the present study confirms that Vietnamese non-English-major students are generally aware of the importance of self-learning. However, unlike these previous studies, which primarily highlight motivation as a positive

driving force, the current findings indicate that such motivation tends to remain at an initial or surface level and is not consistently translated into effective learning behaviors.

Despite these positive attitudes, students' self-directed learning efforts remain limited in terms of clarity, consistency, and effectiveness. This partially aligns with prior studies that point to insufficient study habits and weak self-regulation skills. However, this study provides more specific evidence by showing that students not only lack effective strategies but also struggle with setting measurable goals, maintaining long-term focus, and implementing daily learning plans. In this respect, the findings extend previous research by clarifying how these limitations manifest in actual learning practices rather than merely identifying them as general challenges.

Regarding the use of technology, the findings support Little (2003), who argues that access to diverse learning resources can enhance learner autonomy. Nevertheless, a notable difference emerges: while previous studies often emphasize the availability and benefits of technological tools, the present study reveals that students' actual engagement with these resources remains uneven and sometimes superficial. Many students underutilize authentic materials such as podcasts, YouTube channels, and online forums, suggesting that access alone does not guarantee effective use.

In terms of external support, the proactive role of teachers identified in this study is consistent with Benson (2013), who highlights the importance of a supportive learning environment. However, in contrast to some previous findings that underscore the role of peer interaction, this study indicates that peer collaboration among students remains relatively weak. This difference suggests that while institutional and teacher support may be present, the social dimension of learning, particularly peer-assisted learning, has not been fully developed in this context, thereby limiting opportunities for interactive and communicative language practice. Overall, the findings highlight the need for more structured guidance in goal-setting, strategy training, and the creation of richer, more interactive English-learning environments. Strengthening both teacher and peer support networks will be essential

to foster sustained engagement, enhance self-learning capacity, and promote genuine communicative competence among non-English-major students.

6. Conclusion

In response to the two research questions, the findings show that all four factors influence students' English self-learning effectiveness to a moderate degree. Regarding Research Question 1, the results indicate that each factor plays a meaningful role, with mean scores ranging from 3.18 to 3.40. Students benefit from structured routines, goal-setting practices, access to technological resources, and the availability of institutional and teacher support, although their level of engagement and consistency varies across factors.

For Research Question 2, the Supportive Learning Environment emerged as the most influential factor ($M = 3.40$; $SD = 0.67$). This suggests that teacher encouragement, institutional resources, and a positive atmosphere for language practice exert a stronger impact compared to internal factors such as self-discipline or goal-setting. While technology and learning resources also contribute substantially ($M = 3.22$; $SD = 0.66$), students' internal capacities for self-regulation, namely Self-discipline and Proactivity ($M = 3.18$; $SD = 0.79$) and Goal Setting and Self-Monitoring ($M = 3.18$; $SD = 0.70$), remain comparatively weaker. These findings indicate that while external support provides powerful motivation and scaffolding, its effectiveness still depends on students' ability to regulate their own learning behaviors.

In conclusion, the study identified four key factors influencing English self-learning among first-year non-English-major students at Thanh Do University: self-discipline and proactivity, goal setting and self-monitoring, technology and learning resources, and a supportive learning environment. The findings revealed that although students are generally aware of the importance of goal-setting and maintaining study routines, their self-discipline and proactive engagement remain limited. Many students struggle with distractions, vague or unrealistic goals, and infrequent self-assessment. In addition, while digital tools and online resources are widely available, their

effective use is inconsistent, and peer collaboration remains relatively weak. Teacher support and institutional resources, however, were found to play a significant positive role, highlighting the importance of a structured and supportive learning environment.

From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the existing literature by moving beyond the traditional approach of examining influencing factors in isolation. Instead, it proposes an integrated framework that demonstrates how internal factors (e.g., self-discipline, goal management) and external factors (e.g., technology, learning environment) interact to shape students' self-learning effectiveness. Moreover, the study provides empirical evidence of a gap between students' awareness and their actual learning behaviors, offering a more nuanced explanation of why self-learning remains ineffective despite positive attitudes.

Based on these findings, fostering English self-learning requires a comprehensive and systematic approach with clearly defined actions. For students, this involves setting specific and measurable weekly goals (e.g., completing a listening task or learning a set number of vocabulary items), using study logs or habit-tracking applications to maintain consistency, and conducting weekly self-evaluations to monitor progress and adjust strategies. For teachers, rather than providing general guidance, they should implement structured support mechanisms such as

weekly goal-setting checklists, short reflective journals, and brief training sessions on how to select level-appropriate materials and effectively use digital learning tools. Teachers can also integrate task-based activities, such as summarizing podcasts or participating in guided discussions, to encourage regular practice. For the university, it is essential to establish structured support systems, including workshops on self-directed learning skills, curated lists of reliable and level-appropriate resources, and interactive platforms such as English clubs or peer-learning groups. These targeted and practical measures can help bridge the gap between awareness and practice, thereby enhancing students' self-learning effectiveness and promoting sustainable English language development.

The study has several limitations: the sample was limited to one cohort of first-year students at a single university, and the qualitative data from interviews was limited in scope. Future research could expand the sample across multiple universities and examine the longitudinal effects of self-learning interventions. Additionally, further studies could explore how specific technological tools and peer-learning programs impact student autonomy and language proficiency. By addressing these limitations, future work can provide stronger, evidence-based recommendations to enhance self-directed English learning for non-English-major students in diverse educational contexts.

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CÁC YẾU TỐ ẢNH HƯỞNG ĐẾN HOẠT ĐỘNG TỰ HỌC TIẾNG ANH CỦA SINH VIÊN NĂM NHẤT KHÔNG CHUYÊN TẠI TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC THÀNH ĐÔ

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Tóm tắt: Trong bối cảnh toàn cầu hóa, khả năng tiếng Anh là điều thiết yếu đối với sinh viên đại học, tuy nhiên sinh viên năm nhất các chuyên ngành không phải tiếng Anh thường gặp khó khăn do kỹ năng tự học hạn chế và phụ thuộc nhiều vào giảng dạy trên lớp. Nghiên cứu này khảo sát khả năng tự học của 130 sinh viên năm nhất trường Đại học Thành Đô bằng phương pháp hỗn hợp. Kết quả cho thấy mức độ tự học ở mức trung bình (Điểm trung bình = 3,24), trong đó môi trường học tập được đánh giá cao nhất (Điểm trung bình = 3,40), trong khi sự phân tâm bởi mạng xã hội vẫn là rào cản chính (Điểm trung bình = 3,77). Mặc dù sinh viên có động lực và tiếp cận được các nguồn lực, nhưng tính tự giác của họ vẫn còn yếu. Nghiên cứu này đề xuất một khung lý thuyết tích hợp giải thích sự tương tác giữa các yếu tố bên trong và bên ngoài, đồng thời làm nổi bật khoảng cách giữa nhận thức và thực tiễn học tập. Nghiên cứu khuyến nghị giáo viên nên áp dụng các chiến lược có cấu trúc như hướng dẫn đặt mục tiêu và các hoạt động phân tử, trong khi sinh viên cần phát triển kỹ năng quản lý thời gian và tự điều chỉnh để nâng cao khả năng tự học tiếng Anh.

Từ khóa: Học tập tự chủ; Sinh viên năm nhất không chuyên Anh; Trường Đại học Thành Đô; Tự học tiếng Anh.