

Striving Through Enjoyment: An Autoethnography of Informal

English Learning

A THESIS



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English Education Study Program

Faculty of Teacher Education

Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University

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Striving Through Enjoyment: An Autoethnography of Informal English Learning

A THESIS

Presented to the Teacher Education Faculty of Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University

in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of *Sarjana Pendidikan* in English

Language Education



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APPROVAL SHEET (I)

This thesis entitled “Striving Through Enjoyment: An Autoethnography of Informal English Learning”, prepared and submitted by Vincent Gunawan Sinambela (1213021026), has been approved as one of the partial fulfillment requirements for the degree of *Sarjana Pendidikan* in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, with the approval of the following advisor.



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ABSTRACT

Sinambela, Vincent Gunawan (2025). *Striving Through Enjoyment: An Autoethnography of Informal English Learning*. Thesis. English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Education, Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University, 2025.

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Keywords: Autoethnography, narrative inquiry, non-formal activities, Second Language Acquisition Theory, Social Learning Theory.

In Indonesia, the English language is recognized as a second language and commonly taught in schools. However, I found that I learned more through activities outside of school, and wanted to know what activities helped my learning the most. Thus, I conducted this study with these questions in mind; What critical events did I encounter through my English learning progress? How did I manage to cope and overcome the obstacles during said learning? And, what lessons can I infer from the critical events?

This research is an autoethnography to retell my experiences in acquiring knowledge of the English language through informal activities, tying them to Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory. To ensure that my research is trustworthy, it is supplemented by personal artifacts as data, which is used to construct a narrative for data analysis. The results of this analysis is then further discussed to answer the questions I presented.

The findings indicate that three activities contributed the most to my English language learning; imitating music parodies, engaging in social media, and writing fanfiction. While there are difficulties to be had from unwitting imitation of the pronunciation of slurs, the negative influence of online culture, and difficulty of shaping a good engaging narrative, self-regulation proved to be a key aspect in overcoming these obstacles on top of being open-minded on the good and bad aspects of imitation of models and inferring from online culture. These solutions also play a key role in accepting advice and criticisms to improve my narrative writing and language acquisition in general.