

The Reality of AI Usage in English Learning Among English-Major Students at Phu Yen University.

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Abstract

This study adopted a quantitative approach to examine the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in English language learning among 100 students from the Foreign Languages Department at Phu Yen University. Specifically, it assessed the extent of AI usage, its purposes, advantages, and associated challenges. The findings revealed that all participants (100%) have integrated AI into their learning process, utilizing it for writing enhancement, listening practice, translation, grammar correction, and vocabulary acquisition. Notably, 51.3% of students reported increased confidence and motivation when incorporating AI into their studies. However, the study also identified significant challenges, such as high costs and difficulties in navigating AI tools. These results not only align with previous research but also provide deeper insights into how students at local universities engage with AI technology. The study's findings offer valuable implications for educators, enabling them to refine teaching methodologies, develop effective learning support tools, and enhance educational quality in an era of rapid technological advancement.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), English Language Learning, Students, Phu Yen University.

1. Introduction

In the digital age, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has precipitated profound transformations across the educational landscape, fundamentally reshaping how knowledge is accessed and processed. The integration of AI technologies into language education has become particularly significant, offering innovative solutions for personalized learning and skill acquisition (Anggraini et al., 2024; Turdaliyevna, 2024). English language learning, a critical competency for global communication, is increasingly supported by diverse AI applications ranging from virtual assistants and translation engines to sophisticated platforms that enhance communication skills (Kristiawan et al., 2024). Recent scholarship confirms that these tools are not merely supplementary; they are central to modern pedagogical strategies, significantly impacting areas such as reading instruction (Li, 2025) and learner autonomy (Alqaed, 2024).

Within the Vietnamese context, the adoption of AI in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings has gained traction. Research by Nguyen and Nguyen (2022) highlights the efficacy of AI tools in online learning environments, while Tran and Vuong (2022) have demonstrated positive correlations between AI tool usage and the improvement of English writing skills among university students in Ho Chi Minh City. Furthermore, Phan and Chen (2020) observed that digital translation tools are widely utilized by Vietnamese students to bridge linguistic gaps. However, while AI adoption is accelerating in major urban centers, its integration in regional institutions remains uneven. Sumakul et al. (2022) note that successful

technology adoption relies heavily on institutional readiness and user perception, factors that vary significantly across different educational contexts.

At Phu Yen University, integrating AI into the English curriculum faces distinct challenges compared to metropolitan institutions. The university lacks a comprehensive framework for evaluating AI usage, and training programs are insufficient to guide students in effective technology application. Consequently, students often explore AI tools self-directedly without institutional oversight. Addressing this gap, the current study investigates the reality of AI usage among English majors at Phu Yen University, specifically examining usage patterns, benefits, and barriers. By evaluating these factors, the research seeks to propose evidence-based measures to refine teaching methodologies. These insights are essential for enhancing educational quality and supporting advanced, AI-driven learning that aligns with the evolving demands of the 21st-century educational environment.

2. Literature Review

Research on the application of AI technology in English language learning among Vietnamese students has provided significant scientific insights into its effectiveness and associated challenges. Tran Thi Mai Thi and Vuong & Ly To Nhu (2022) investigated students' perceptions and usage of AI tools such as ChatGPT and Google Docs to enhance writing skills in Ho Chi Minh City. Their findings indicated a relatively high level of acceptance, but also highlighted challenges, including a lack of self-study skills and increasing dependency on AI. Similarly, a study by Nguyen Thi Thanh Hien and Nguyen Thi Thu Ha (2022) at Van Lang University examined the use of Google Docs in online English learning, emphasizing the role of collaboration and real-time feedback in improving writing proficiency. However, the study also noted that limitations in self-assessment and independent learning could reduce the overall effectiveness of AI in the learning process.

Expanding on this, Sumakul et al. (2022) analyzed factors influencing AI adoption in language education, finding that while AI can create personalized learning environments and enhance learning efficiency, obstacles such as high implementation costs and discrepancies in technological proficiency between instructors and students remain significant barriers. Additionally, research by Phan T.T. and Chen C.H. (2020) evaluated the use of AI-powered translation tools, such as Google Translate, in English language learning. Their study found that while these tools effectively support comprehension and pronunciation improvement, overreliance on them may lead to a superficial understanding of grammar and semantics.

At the international level, AI-driven English language learning is advancing rapidly, introducing innovative tools and methodologies that enhance the educational experience. AI supports personalized learning environments, increases interactivity, and provides immediate feedback, thereby contributing to overall language proficiency (Kristiawan et al., 2024). Furthermore, AI platforms can adapt to learners' individual needs by offering customized lessons based on proficiency and learning styles (Anggraini & Faisal, 2024; Li, 2025). Other AI tools facilitate learner engagement through interactive experiences that improve key language skills such as pronunciation, writing, and grammar (Turdaliyevna, 2024; Alqaed, 2024). However, despite its potential benefits, the integration of AI in education continues to face critical challenges, including accessibility barriers, teacher training requirements, data security concerns, and issues related to information reliability. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure the responsible and effective application of AI in educational settings.

The reviewed studies indicate that most research on AI applications in English language learning has primarily focused on supporting specific aspects such as writing, translation, and pronunciation. While studies by Tran Thi Mai Thi and Vuong Ly To Nhu (2022) and Nguyen Thi Thanh Hien and Nguyen Thi Thu Ha (2022) have highlighted the potential of tools like Google Docs and ChatGPT to enhance learning efficiency through collaboration and instant feedback, their scope remains largely confined to translation

and writing skills. A significant research gap exists in conducting a comprehensive investigation into the extent and manner in which AI is utilized in English language learning among students at local universities, particularly at Phu Yen University. Previous research has predominantly focused on major urban centers such as Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, leaving the learning context and needs of students in other regions underexplored.

This study is essential due to the absence of comprehensive research evaluating AI usage in English language learning at Phu Yen University, as well as the lack of an in-depth analysis of the benefits and challenges faced by students. A thorough assessment of the current situation will provide valuable insights for educators, support pedagogical adjustments, and facilitate the development of effective learning support tools. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to the enhancement of educational quality and the cultivation of high-quality human resources in the field of education.

3. Methods

This study employed a quantitative research method with a sample of 100 English major students at Phu Yen University. A self-developed questionnaire, which was informed by previous studies and validated by subject experts prior to the survey, was used to collect data. The survey was conducted online via Google Forms to ensure data reliability and research validity. Data analysis followed descriptive statistic method to express the information to reach research objectives.

4. Results

4.1 Participants

The survey revealed that all 100 students participants, comprising: 23 males and 77 females, reported using AI in their English language learning. However, the distribution of students by academic year was uneven:

- 7.5% were first-year students
- 10% were second-year students
- 62.5% were third-year students
- 20% were fourth-year students

Furthermore, the English proficiency levels among the surveyed- students varied significantly. Most students were at the B1 level (43.2%), followed by A2 (29.7%), while a notable 16.2% reached C1 proficiency. This variation suggests that students not only possess different language foundations but also exhibit potential for development in multiple directions in their English skills. Such distribution provides a basis for applying tailored learning methods and AI technologies to effectively enhance English learning outcomes across different proficiency levels.

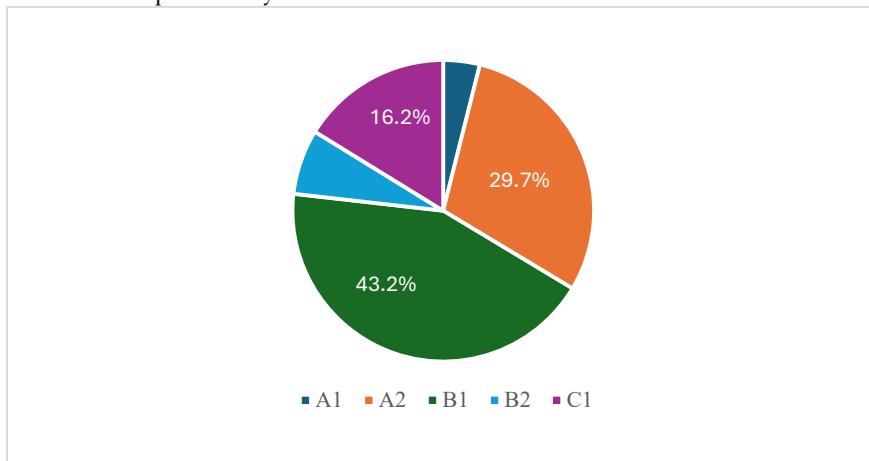


Figure 1. Current English Proficiency Levels among student participants

4.2 General Findings from the Survey

In the digital era, AI has become an effective learning support tool, especially in improving English language skills. At Phu Yen University, students increasingly adopt AI to optimize their language learning process. The survey was designed to evaluate how AI is used in English learning; from usage time to the associated benefits and challenges. Figure 2 clearly illustrates the average time students allocate to AI-based English learning tools.

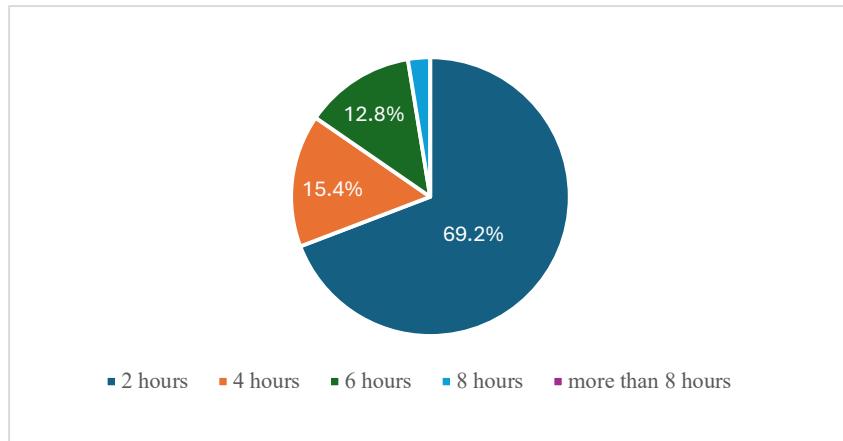


Figure 2. The amount of time students spend using AI-powered tools per day

According to Figure 2, the majority of students spent approximately 2 hours per day (69.2%) using AI tools for English language learning. In addition, a notable proportion of students invested between 4 to 6 hours per day (15.4% and 12.8%, respectively), reflecting a serious commitment to improving their language skills. These results reflect a growing trend toward incorporating technology into learning, thereby optimizing both the efficiency and flexibility of the English learning process.

Moreover, students utilized AI for a variety of purposes including practicing listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation, learning vocabulary, and grammar, as illustrated in the Figure 3 as below:

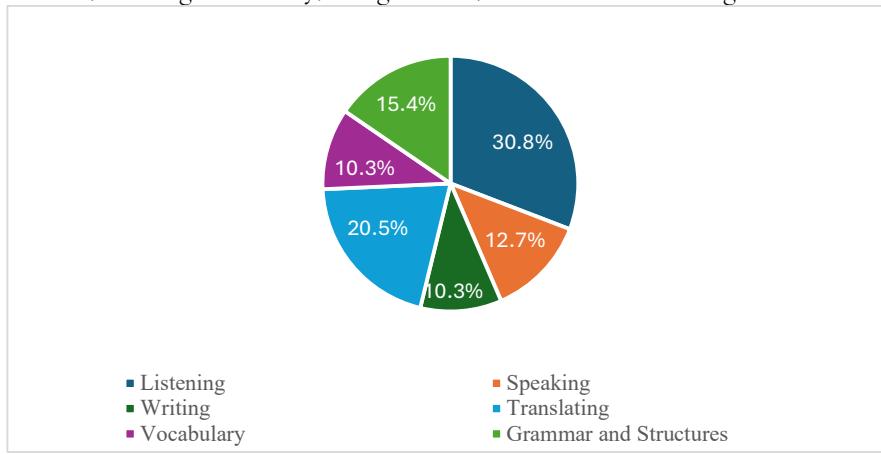


Figure 3. Students' purposes of using AI in studying

Figure 3 reveals that the use of AI tools across different language skills is fairly balanced. More specifically, 30.8% of students used AI for listening practice, followed by 20.5% for translation, and 15.4% for correcting structure and grammar exercises. Furthermore, 12.7% of the participants said that AI can help them practice speaking skill. Additionally, vocabulary acquisition and writing practice were each utilized by 10.3% of the students. This diverse application of AI reflects the comprehensive learning needs of the

students, indicating that they not only want to improve English skills but also desire to enhance other aspects of their English proficiency.

What is more, AI has become an essential tool in assisting learners throughout their learning process. Figure 4 illustrates students' awareness of the importance of AI in supporting their learning process:

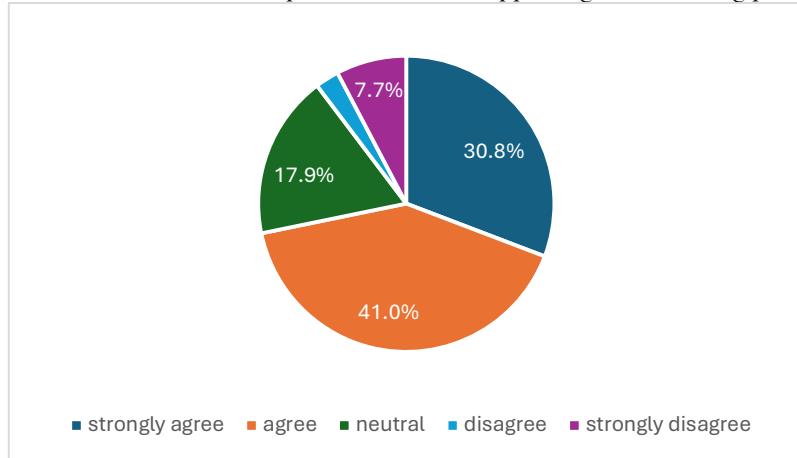


Figure 4. The importance of AI in supporting the learning process

The result indicates a high level of agreement among the students that AI played an important role in supporting their learning, with 41% agreeing and 30.8% strongly agreeing. These numbers reflect that a large number of the participants not only have a clear awareness of AI's benefits but also are willing to apply the new technology to their learning. Moreover, this level of agreement can be seen as a positive signal for educators and technology developers, encouraging them to continue researching and developing smart learning solutions that align with students' needs and expectations. This not only enhances the quality of education but also fosters a more flexible and efficient learning environment for students in the digital era.

In addition, the survey showed that students feel more confident when using AI tools to practice English communication, which is clearly demonstrated in Figure 5:

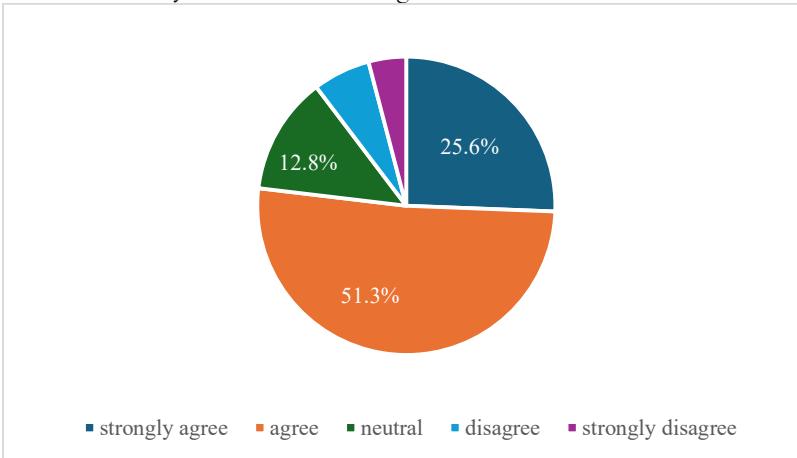


Figure 5. Students' confidence in using AI in their learning process

As can be seen from Figure 5, 51.3% of students agreed and 25.6% strongly agreed that using AI enhances their confidence in learning English, especially in communication. This finding suggests that a significant number of students view AI not only as a supplementary learning tool but also as an important factor in improving their communicative competence. The increased confidence may be attributed to AI's ability to

provide a low-pressure, supportive environment where students can practice without fear of criticism or error. This environment helps them feel more confident to participate in such communicative activities as presentations, discussions, and seminars, which fosters students' abilities in both language proficiency and essential soft skills for their future.

Regarding students' opinions on whether AI technology could completely replace some traditional English learning methods, the results are presented in Figure 7 as follows:

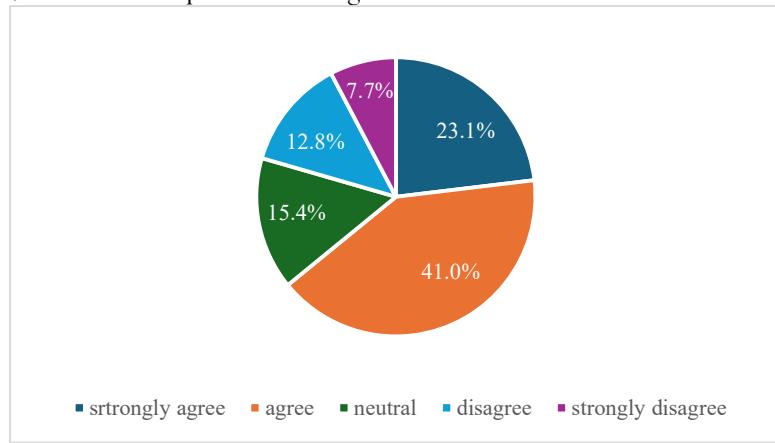


Figure 7. Students' Perspectives on AI Replacing Traditional English Learning Methods

Figure 7 reflects diverse student opinions regarding the potential for AI technology to completely replace some traditional English learning methods. Specifically, 41% of students agreed and 23.1% strongly agreed with this view, indicating strong confidence in AI's capability to enhance the learning experience. However, 15.4% of respondents expressed no opinion, while 12.8% disagreed and 7.7% strongly disagreed. This split suggests that although many students acknowledge the benefits of AI, some remain skeptical about the complete substitution of traditional methods; possibly due to concerns about the role of teachers and the enduring value of conventional learning approaches. This division highlights the need for further discussion on how to integrate modern AI technologies with established educational practices in order to optimize English language learning.

In addition to positive feedback, there are also negative responses from students regarding AI technology, which are clearly illustrated in Figure 8 below.

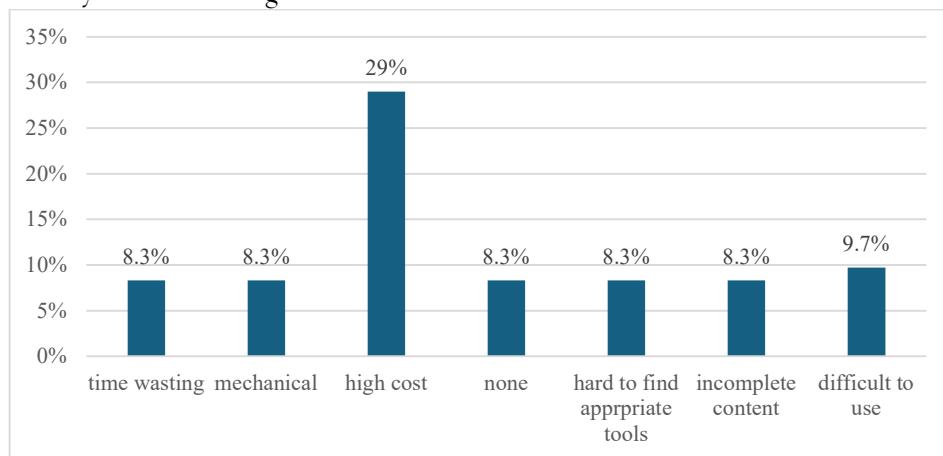


Figure 8. Difficulties students often meet when using AI

Figure 8 clearly shows that students encountered two major challenges when using AI for English language learning: high costs (29%) and complexity of use (9.7%). Currently, many advanced AI tools require paid

subscriptions to access premium features. For students, especially those with limited financial resources, the need to purchase upgraded versions of platforms; such as ChatGPT Plus, Grammarly Premium, and ELSA Speak, represents a significant barrier. In contrast, free versions are often limited in features, preventing students from fully capitalizing on AI's potential, particularly when seeking advanced language improvement.

In addition to the cost issue, the complexity of AI tools presents another significant challenge. Many students struggle with familiarizing themselves with the interfaces and functionalities of these tools. Advanced features such as in-depth grammar analysis and context-sensitive feedback can be confusing, especially in the absence of clear instructions or adequate support materials from instructors. Consequently, students may not be sufficiently equipped with the technological skills needed to fully exploit the capabilities of AI, which can ultimately compromise the effectiveness of their language learning.

4.3 Advantages and Challenges

4.3.1. Advantages:

- AI technology can analyze individual learning styles and needs, thereby offering tailored learning pathways and resources that help students progress more rapidly.
- It provides immediate feedback on assignments and tests, enabling students to quickly identify and correct errors.
- Students gain access to a wide variety of learning resources; including videos, online lectures, interactive exercises, and educational games, that contribute to a rich and engaging learning environment.
- AI enables anytime, anywhere learning, allowing students to manage their study time according to personal schedules.
- Tools such as chatbots facilitate listening and speaking practice at any time, alongside automatic scoring and error correction in writing, thus enhancing overall language skills.
- AI allows students to track their progress through detailed metrics and reports, helping them recognize their strengths and weaknesses throughout the learning process.

4.3.2. Challenges:

Some English learning applications or software that employ AI require paid subscriptions or licenses, which may be prohibitive for students with limited financial resources. Table 1 shows a list of AI-based English learning applications, including both free and paid options, along with pricing information:

Table 1. Description and Cost Analysis of Popular AI-Based English Learning Tools.

AI Tools	Description	Price
Duolingo	A popular language learning application offering engaging lessons.	Free (with an option to upgrade to Duolingo Plus at approximately 6.99 USD/month).
Voice of America (VOA)	Provides free English lessons via news bulletins.	Free.
Memrise	An app for vocabulary and grammar learning with interactive lessons.	Free (with an option to upgrade to Memrise Pro at around 8.99 USD/month).
Hello English	An application for learning English through lessons and games.	Free (with an option to upgrade at approximately 9.99 USD/month).
ChatGPT (Free Version)	A virtual assistant using AI to support English learning through questions and exercises.	Free (uses the GPT-3.5 model).

ELSA Speak	An app for practicing English pronunciation using AI technology.	Approximately 11.99 USD/month or 59.99 USD/year.
Babbel	A language learning app offering systematically designed courses.	Around 12.95 USD/month, with discounts available for 6- and 12-month packages.
Busuu	An English learning app offering interactive lessons and a learner community.	Approximately 9.99 USD/month or 69.96 USD/year.
FluentU	An application for learning English through videos and real-life content.	Approximately 29.99 USD/month or 239.99 USD/year.
Practica AI	An app that uses AI to enhance communication skills in English.	Approximately 10 USD/month.
ChatGPT (Plus Version)	A virtual assistant that leverages advanced AI to support English learning.	Approximately 20 USD/month (utilizes the GPT-4 model).
Google Gemini (Paid Version)	Google's AI platform supporting English learning with real-time information updates.	Approximately 20 USD/month for the Gemini Advanced version.
Prep AI	An English learning application that uses AI to offer personalized lessons and instant feedback on pronunciation and grammar.	Approximately 9 to 29 USD/month, depending on features and access level.

Source: Researcher's Compilation, 2025.

Some applications or platforms using AI may provide inaccurate or inappropriate information, which can cause confusion for students during their studies. Learning through AI technology may lead to feelings of isolation or a lack of support from teachers, potentially affecting the overall learning experience. Moreover, not all students can access AI technology due to financial constraints or a lack of necessary equipment, which may create disparities in learning opportunities. In addition, the continuously evolving and updating nature of AI may leave students feeling overwhelmed, as they must constantly adapt to new tools. Some students might also encounter difficulties in adjusting their learning methods when using AI, since not all tools align with their personal learning styles. Finally, using AI applications may pose risks to the security of students' personal information, raising concerns about privacy.

4.4. Measures for the Effective Use of AI Technology

Based on the students' responses to the question "How can English majors at Phu Yen University effectively use AI tools in their English learning?", the following summary of recommendations emerged:

Firstly, students should regard AI as a supplementary learning tool and combine it with traditional learning methods to develop a well-rounded set of language skills. They should actively participate in group activities or online discussions to enhance communication skills and reduce over-reliance on AI.

Secondly, students should be guided to engage in effective self-directed learning using AI applications, while also developing independent research skills and critical thinking. As an assistant, AI can establish a daily study routine which help students maintain focus and continuously improve their language skills. Setting time limits for AI usage is also necessary to prevent excessive dependence and to ensure sufficient time for other learning activities. Moreover, AI can be exploited to explore diverse learning resources such as videos, articles, podcasts, and language games, thereby offering students a multidimensional perspective on the English language.

Thirdly, students should be instructed on how to protect their personal information when using AI applications, which includes thoroughly reading the terms and conditions before registration. Finally, students should be encouraged not only to absorb information from AI but also to develop critical thinking skills by questioning and seeking information from various sources.

4.5. Discussion

The study on the use of AI technology in English learning at Phu Yen University reveals both similarities and differences compared to previous studies, while also highlighting the new contributions of this research. Regarding the extent of AI usage, previous research such as those conducted by Tran Thi Mai Thi and Vuong Ly To Nhu (2022), indicated that students in Ho Chi Minh City had a positive attitude toward using AI to improve writing skills. Similarly, this study found that 100% of the surveyed students at Phu Yen University use AI in learning English. This demonstrates that the adoption of AI has become a widespread trend in education across various regions.

In terms of the purposes of using AI, the study by Nguyen Thi Thanh Hien and Nguyen Thi Thu Ha (2022) showed that students primarily used AI tools to enhance their writing skills. In contrast, the current research indicates that students at Phu Yen University use AI not only for writing but for all language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as for various other purposes. Specifically, the usage rates were 30.8% for listening practice, 20.5% for translation, 15.4% for grammar correction, and 10.3% for vocabulary acquisition. This diversity in application demonstrates that students are employing AI to comprehensively enhance their language skills rather than focusing on a single aspect.

Regarding the impact of AI on confidence and learning motivation, this study found that 51.3% of students felt more confident when using AI to practice communication, and the same percentage reported an increase in their motivation to learn English. These results are consistent with previous studies but also highlight a new aspect: AI support not only improves language skills but also fosters a positive learning environment that encourages proactive student participation.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study provides a detailed survey of the application of AI technology in English learning among students at Phu Yen University. The results show that 100% of the surveyed students use AI, reflecting its widespread acceptance and popularity in the learning process. Students use AI not only to enhance their writing skills but also for other purposes such as listening practice, translation, grammar correction, and vocabulary acquisition. Notably, 51.3% of students reported feeling more confident when using AI to practice communication, and their motivation to learn English was also enhanced. However, the survey also revealed several challenges, particularly the high cost and the difficulties in using AI tools.

The contribution of this study lies not only in confirming previous findings but also in extending our understanding of how students at local universities access and apply AI in their learning. These findings can be applied to adjust teaching methodologies, develop appropriate learning support tools, and ultimately enhance educational quality in the context of rapidly evolving technology.

Based on the study's results, the following proposals are made to enhance the practical application of the research findings in English teaching at Phu Yen University, focusing on both application measures and policy mechanisms:

- Lecturers should actively integrate AI technology into their teaching methods while providing guidance and support for students in using these tools. Organizing specialized training sessions for instructors is also necessary to ensure effective guidance.
- Financial support programs should be implemented to reduce barriers for students; especially those facing economic hardships, making it easier for them to access AI-based learning tools. Besides, organizing workshops, online classes, and study groups is an effective way to allow students to practice communication and share experiences in using AI technology.
- From a policy perspective, educational institutions should develop policies that encourage developers to create user-friendly and accessible AI applications, while also ensuring the security and privacy of

user data. Educational managers should strive to create a positive learning environment where students feel comfortable adopting AI technology without fear of criticism.

- Continuous evaluation and improvement of the curriculum are essential to ensure that it remains in line with emerging technological trends and the evolving learning needs of students, thereby contributing to an overall enhancement in educational quality.

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