

ENHANCING LEARNER AUTONOMY IN ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS THROUGH THE ADOPTION OF CHATGPT: A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH-MAJORED FRESHMEN AT HO CHI MINH UNIVERSITY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (HUFLIT)

Becoming life-long learners who have the potential to pursue academic success in language learning requires a number of factors, ranging from linguistic competencies, dedication to studies, to learner autonomy development. The latest emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in education, specifically the availability of ChatGPT, promises to foster learner autonomy in a way that is distinct from conventional methods. This paper aims to investigate the enhancement of learner autonomy in English writing skills through the employment of ChatGPT among EFL freshmen at Ho Chi Minh City University of Foreign Languages and Information Technology (HUFLIT). A questionnaire-based survey was undertaken with the participation of fifty-four first-year students, eight of whom would then be randomly chosen to attend a semi-structured interview. The findings of the study reveal ChatGPT could turn HUFLIT freshmen into autonomous writers of English reflected through a reduced dependence on lecturers for offering corrective feedback, self-reflection and self-evaluation of their own paragraphs, as well as an increase in interest and motivation for writing. The majority of the participants also agreed that ChatGPT assisted them in a variety of aspects such as making better planning of ideas and structure, asking critical questions to fill gaps in their knowledge of English writing, and improving their problem-solving and decision-making skills. However, they asserted that only if ChatGPT was employed for reference purposes could learners of English take a self-directed approach to writing English and that ChatGPT adoption under the guidance of lecturers could be more beneficial to students' learner autonomy enhancement.

Key words: learner autonomy, English writing skills, ChatGPT, English-majored freshmen, HUFLIT

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