

A Narrative Inquiry into the Enhancement of Learner Autonomy in Blended EFL through AI-Powered Tools

In order to examine the extent to which AI-powered technologies promote learner autonomy in blended EFL environments, this qualitative study implements narrative inquiry. The research investigates the experiences of EFL learners in a Vietnamese university context with adaptive learning platforms and virtual tutors, drawing on self-regulated learning and connectivism theories. The study documents the personal narratives of how AI tools facilitate goal-setting, self-monitoring, and independent learning through narrative interviews with 12 EFL students. Thematic analysis reveals themes of learner agency, task persistence, and enhanced motivation, which demonstrate how AI technologies support sustainable ELT by reducing reliance on resource-intensive methods. The investigation addresses obstacles, including disparities in digital access, and suggests inclusive strategies to guarantee equitable access. The results provide evidence-based insights into the ways in which AI tools enable EFL learners to develop autonomy, thereby preparing them for global communication. This research enhances comprehension of learner-centred ELT practices by emphasising the role of technology in the development of sustainable and effective learning environments.

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