

## Vietnamese Students' Readiness for English as a Second Language: The Role of AI-Supported Learning Environments

With the trend of English as a second language (ESL) as a major priority in Vietnam, students in universities are expected to use English in addition to the classroom more frequently than before. However, in a country that encourages widespread adoption of digital learning tools, this phenomenon may remain a hurdle as they tend to have difficulty in real-life ESL applications, leading to a significant discrepancy between what they learn and actual language use. Most previous studies have been concerned with learner motivation and attitudes, paying limited attention to the question of how AI-assisted learning environments mediate in students' readiness to learn ESL. The purpose of this study was to investigate Vietnamese university students' ESL readiness and investigate the effect of AI-supported learning on this readiness. We employed a mixed-methods design, incorporating survey data available from 70 university students as well as semi-structured interviews with 10 participants. Student engagement, self-directed learning, and use of English beyond the classroom were examined in this study. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics and qualitative data were analysed thematically. A report on this survey found that this AI-driven learning experience increased student engagement and increased real-life English use, but the communicative competencies of the same students varied. This indicates that once implemented into pedagogy, AI can promote ESL readiness. This research needs context-sensitive utilization of AI in Vietnamese higher education.

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