MA Students' Perceptions and Experiences with the Gemini App in English Language Learning: A Mixed-Methods Study at Van Lang University, Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the adoption of AI-powered tools in English language learning, addressing research gaps in localized studies on educational technology in Vietnam. The purpose is to examine MA students' perceptions and experiences with the Gemini App at Van Lang University. Eighteen postgraduate students participated in a mixed-methods investigation, combining structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Findings reveal that while students appreciate the app's accessibility and personalized feedback, concerns remain regarding its academic alignment, cultural relevance, and content accuracy. The study has implications for the local educational expectations that underlie the integration of AI and argues for tools that facilitate both autonomy and curriculum-like learning. This knowledge also complements future research trends related to AI-enhanced language instruction and provides application design ideas for culturally significant and pedagogically effective AI applications in higher education.

Keywords: AI in education, Gemini App, language learning, MA students, Vietnam

Introduction

Background of the Study

In recent years, artificial intelligence has had a great impact on educational domains worldwide, from personalized learning paths and real-time tracking to adaptive learning technology (Imran & Almusharraf, 2024). AI tools have also shown great promise in improving writing fluency, facilitating language acquisition, and promoting learner autonomy in the field of English language education. English is put on a pedestal in the globalizing era for Vietnamese learners (Nguyen, 2024).

Within the last few months, a new tool—the Gemini App, developed by Google DeepMind—has touted its ability to assist learners of English by providing feedback on items like grammar and vocabulary. However, there have been some challenges to its integration into Vietnam's higher education system. Existing traditional strategies of rote learning, teacher-centered instruction, and limited digital infrastructure are also key barriers to the effective adoption of AI (Nguyen & Pham, 2024; Hoang et al., 2023).

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This is all the more so for MA students, whose different types of academic demands are poorly researched, including their use of these tools. Although some studies demonstrate the potential of AI to support English language learning, little is known about what postgraduate students in Vietnam think of and how they use AI tools, such as Gemini, in practice. The study examines usability, engagement, perceived usefulness, and academic alignment, which are considered to be essential constructs of the student experience.

Based on the TAM (Davis, 1989) and the UTAUT (Venkatesh et al., 2003), this study aims to explore how students' perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, social influence, and facilitating conditions affect their use of the Gemini App. It also discusses how the app enables and constrains students' learning practices in the cultural context of their learning environment.

Based on the perception of MA students at Van Lang University, this research contributes to the theory of using AI technology in the Vietnamese context. The findings are intended to help educators, developers, and policymakers design, adapt, and deploy AI-based tools that meet student needs and align with national educational priorities.

Statement of the Problem

While the benefits of using AI for education are widespread across countries, empirical evidence regarding its integration into the Vietnamese higher education system is limited, especially with regard to specific tools like the Gemini App. While AI tools such as Gemini can provide personalized learning experiences and interactive feedback, their uptake is often hindered by institutional readiness, conventional pedagogical practices, and poor correspondence with academic expectations (Nguyen, 2024).

Although a range of constructs, including perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use posited by the Technology Acceptance Model, are critical to such an endeavour, acceptance factors have not been adequately studied in Vietnam, especially among postgraduate users. For many MA students in Vietnam, the transition from teacher-led instruction to AI-assisted learning remains unfamiliar. This creates uncertainty around the actual benefits and usability of tools like Gemini, particularly when academic content, cultural relevance, and user motivation are not fully addressed.

Furthermore, while Gemini and similar platforms aim to improve learning outcomes, little research explores the students' willingness to adopt these tools, the obstacles they face, or their impact on language learning effectiveness. As highlighted by Hoang et al. (2023), a growing need exists to understand how localized educational practices influence the successful integration of AI in classrooms.

This study seeks to fill that gap by investigating the perceptions of MA students at Van Lang University toward the Gemini App and exploring the barriers, benefits, and behavioral patterns that shape their experience. The research also aims to contribute to non-Western perspectives on AI use in education, which remain underrepresented in current literature.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to explore the perceptions, experiences, and adoption factors of MA students at Van Lang University regarding the use of the Gemini App in English language learning. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Examine how MA students perceive the Gemini App's usefulness, usability, and engagement potential in their academic English studies and how these perceptions may inform broader educational technology adoption strategies.

2. Identify the key challenges and barriers that influence students' acceptance, sustained use, or avoidance of the app within a culturally specific educational context.

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach to capture statistical trends and personal insights. Its novelty lies in its focus on postgraduate learners, its application of TAM and UTAUT frameworks in a Vietnamese setting, and its emphasis on student-centered perspectives that go beyond technology performance metrics. Rather than relying on abstract metrics or institutional assumptions, this research emphasizes real student experiences, offering valuable guidance for future technology adoption, curriculum development, and AI-enhanced pedagogy in Vietnamese and similar contexts.

Literature Review

As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to evolve, its presence in educational settings—particularly in language learning—has become increasingly prominent. In a postgraduate environment, for example, where students are expected to grapple with nuanced academic texts and write at a high standard, AI tools like the Gemini App have beneficial potential in this literature review based on theoretical models that formulate the adoption of technology in education and on studies related to AI-assisted language learning that review the pros and cons of this emerging trend. The review highlights three primary forms of theory: The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), and the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, all of which offer applicable knowledge for the current study of MA students' interaction with the Gemini App.

Davis (1989) suggested the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) identifies two primary factors influencing a user's acceptance of adopting new technology: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEU), where PU are intrinsic benefits users gain from the technology and PEU are technical features users find valuable. PU stands for the perception that technology will help people perform better— specifically, whether the Gemini App improves students' English language skills, like writing, grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, etc. PEU, however, describes the ease of use of the technology, including the intuitiveness of the app's interface and its ability to integrate seamlessly into students' academic routines. According to the results of this study, the helpfulness of Gemini's features and the ease of capturing those functionalities largely influence students' acceptance of Gemini.

Venkatesh et al. (2003) proposed Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). Expanded on TAM with added social and infrastructural factors. Performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions are the four constructs of UTAUT. Performance expectancy is the belief that technology use can enhance academic outcomes. Effort expectancy is defined as how easy the tool is perceived to be. Social influence is focused on peer and instructor support, which can shape students' adoption decisions, and facilitating conditions focus on the level of institutional infrastructure and support for effective usage of the tool. This model especially applies to the higher education context of developing countries where social and institutional factors greatly impact students' access to and engagement with digital tools.

In parallel, Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory (2003) describes how innovations (and, in this case, new technologies) are adopted and spread across a population. Its model is based on five factors affecting adoption — relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. The relative advantage is whether Gemini is seen as a better alternative to traditional approaches or other AI tools. Compatibility is about the app's academic needs and

cultural learning context. Ease of use and its complexity is one, and trialability, which is students' ability to try out features before using the app full-time, is another. Observability is particularly salient to this study, as students are more inclined to utilize the app if they can readily observe its positive effects—such as enhanced writing quality, faster task completion, or higher confidence in language usage—within their peers.

Google DeepMind has designed the Gemini App, which is an AI-based learning assistant that utilizes natural language processing to help the user with academic communication. It provides personalized feedback, writing recommendations, and learning trajectories suited to users' levels of proficiency and academic goals (Team et al., 2023). With these capabilities, Gemini is positioned as a potentially transformative resource for MA students whose studies require the use of increasingly demanding academic language. While apps like Duolingo or Babbel do a little bit of everything, Gemini is geared much more toward academic writing and higher-order language functions, making it better suited for higher-level learners.

Researchers have studied the impact of AI on language education. Waziana et al. (2024) observed that while AI tools such as ChatGPT had enhanced grammar and vocabulary for English as a foreign language (EFL) learners in Indonesia, there was a warning that overreliance on these tools could create a barrier to independent learning. Likewise, Kulaksiz (2024) showcased that AI writing assistants enhanced student writing and performance from study results in Turkey but stressed the need for the incorporation of AI and teacher feedback. These studies show how tools like Gemini can help in language learning and their limitations, and they suggest caution in using this kind of tool as a substitute for teachers rather than as a complement.

Nguyen (2024) found that in the Vietnamese context, AI tools can help reduce language anxiety and promote engagement, but institutional and technological challenges limit their effectiveness. In developing countries, hardware limitations, sporadic internet access, and the lack of trained teachers can also prevent the successful integration of AI in classrooms. In addition, if AI tools are to be sustainably integrated into education, ethical concerns — from data privacy and algorithmic bias to the danger of student dependency — must be judiciously addressed.

Comparative studies have suggested that Gemini is particularly advanced in academic contexts. According to Lee et al. (2023), the app supports more complex writing tasks, provides contextualized feedback, and contributes to learners' language skills specific to the disciplinary lexicon. These features set Gemini apart from other programs like Grammarly or ChatGPT, which may be powerful in their own right but don't provide the same personalized academic support. This highlights the importance of selecting the right AI tool for the appropriate learner demographic and educational context.

The present study builds upon these theoretical and empirical foundations to explore how MA students experience and evaluate the Gemini App in their English language studies. By combining TAM, UTAUT, and Diffusion of Innovations, the study captures the full range of psychological, social, and contextual influences that shape technology adoption. The goal is to better understand not only whether students use Gemini but also why they choose to do so—or not—and what impacts this use has on their learning experiences.

Based on this review, the study is guided by the following two research questions:

1. How do MA students at Van Lang University perceive the usefulness and usability of the Gemini App in their English language learning?
2. What benefits and challenges do MA students experience when using the Gemini App

as part of their academic activities?

Research Methodology

Context and Sample

This research was conducted at Van Lang University in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The participants consisted of 18 Master of Arts students currently enrolled in the English Studies program. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select participants who met two key criteria: first, they had to be actively enrolled in the postgraduate English Studies program; second, they needed to have experience using at least one AI-powered language learning tool. Among the 18 participants, nine had direct experience using the Gemini App, while the remaining nine favored other AI tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, or DeepSeek. The ages of the participants varied from 23 to 42 years, and both male and female students were included in the sample. All participants were intermediate to advanced in the level of English. Some of them occasionally used AI tools, while others spent four to seven hours with them per week, according to their learning perspective and habits. The design of the study was mixed methods since we used both quantitative and qualitative research methods to investigate the MA students' perceptions and experiences of using the Gemini App and similar AI tools in teaching and learning English. This configuration allowed the researcher to look at not only statistical trends but also the personal perspectives of learners, adding depth and authenticity to the study.

The participants were 18 MA students from the English Studies program at Van Lang University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. They were chosen through purposeful sampling according to two criteria: (1) current enrolment in the postgraduate English Studies program and (2) experience with at least one AI-enhanced language learning product. Of the 18 students, 9 had used the Gemini App, while the other nine preferred alternative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, or DeepSeek. Participants ranged in age from 23 to 42 years old, and the group included both male and female students. All participants had intermediate to advanced English proficiency, and their exposure to AI varied from recent exploratory use to regular weekly engagement (4–7 hours/week), depending on their learning habits and academic goals.

Data collection was conducted over a three-week period in February 2025. All participants were recruited through Zalo, a popular Vietnamese messaging platform. Each participant received a single Google Drive link containing the structured interview questions, the questionnaire form, the informed consent form, and the invitation letter. After confirming their participation, students completed the questionnaire via Google Forms and took part in structured interviews, either in person or online, based on availability and preference.

The questionnaire was structured into three main parts. Part 1 collected background information about the participants, including gender, age group, study program, and usage patterns of the Gemini App. Part 2 consisted of 16 Likert-scale items (ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), organized into three thematic categories: (1) Advantages—assessing usability, learning enhancement, performance feedback, and curricular integration; (2) Disadvantages—exploring technical issues, cognitive dependency, and alignment with academic expectations; and (3) Concerns—regarding data privacy and content accuracy. Part 3 included five open-ended questions, which asked participants to elaborate on their learning experiences with the app, suggested improvements, and its integration into their academic habits. These items were developed based on the constructs of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) to evaluate perceived usefulness, ease of use, and barriers to adoption.

The structured interviews followed a fixed set of questions and focused on students' views regarding the role of AI tools (particularly the Gemini App), benefits and limitations, usability, and academic relevance. Each interview lasted between 20 and 30 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participant's permission. Transcriptions were anonymized and used for qualitative analysis.

The study followed standard ethical guidelines. Participants were fully informed of their rights and the voluntary nature of their involvement. All subjects provided signed informed consent—either digitally or on paper—before participation. The information was de-identified and stored confidentially.

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, and standard deviations, were used to analyze the quantitative data from the questionnaire. These numbers shed light on some general tendencies in participants' perceptions. Since the present study is qualitative, the interviews as a source of data were analyzed thematically to uncover patterns that strained to emerge on AI use in English language learning, sense of academic support, and student engagement.

Based on TAM and UTAUT, this methodological perspective enabled the researcher to explore AI adoption's psychological, social, and contextual predictors. The employment of two types of data (i.e., quantitative and qualitative) also guaranteed 'triangulation,' which critically enhanced the strength of trustworthiness and transferability of the findings for higher education in Vietnam.

Research Design

This research used a mixed methods research design using both quantitative and qualitative methods to gain a more complete picture of student attitudes about and experiences with the Gemini App and other AI educational tools. This design was used to investigate statistical trends and elicit the rich context of participants' beliefs about technology use in learning language. The theoretical foundations for this design were the TAM and UTAUT theories, shaping both the construction of research instruments and the interpretation of user behaviors. To triangulate between instrumentation, qualitative, and quantitative data, the study combined qualitative and quantitative methods to increase the reliability and depth of the findings.

Research Instrument

This study employed two major data collection tools: a structured questionnaire and a structured interview guide. The survey contained three main sections. The questionnaire was the first section, which sought demographic information (gender, age group, program of study, and habits on the use of AI). The second part was comprised of 16 Likert scale items ranging in scores from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). These were then classed into three themes: advantages (usability, learning progress, feedback performance), disadvantages (technical issues, cognitive dependence, academic alignment), and concerns (data privacy, content accuracy). The remainder of the questionnaire, the third section, was comprised of 5 open-ended questions about users' personal experiences of the Gemini App, their views on its effectiveness, and their suggestions for improvement. In addition, the interview guide was composed of a series of set questions that were used to gather detailed responses on students' use of the Gemini App or another AI tool, the advantages and difficulties they experienced, and their general attitudes towards AI in language learning.

Research Procedures

The recruitment was done using Zalo, a popular messaging platform in Vietnam. Participating students were sent a web link (Google Drive) containing the information sheet consent form

and items from the structured interview schedule and survey. Upon agreeing to participate in the survey, they filled in the questionnaire in a Google Form. Consequently, they were invited to take part in individual interviews (offline or online) of their choice and availability. The interviews took 20 to 30 minutes and were tape-recorded with the subjects' consent. Audio files were transcribed later and redacted for anything that could purposefully identify the recorded participants. Standard ethical practices were followed, and participants were free to withdraw at any time and without penalty.

Data Collection and Analysis

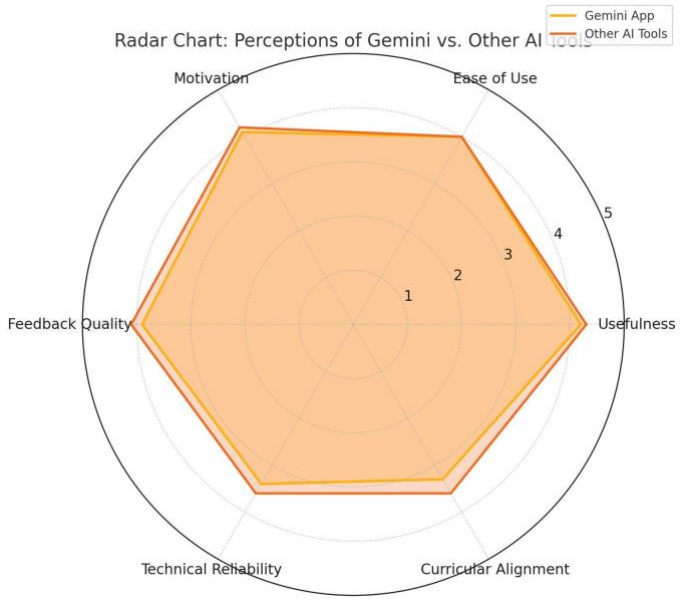
Descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data from the questionnaire: frequencies, means, and standard deviations. This comparison enabled us to recognize common trends in students' perspectives on the Gemini App and other AI applications for usability, feedback, academic support, and motivational effect. Qualitative data from the structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Transcripts were carefully reviewed to identify recurring themes and patterns concerning students' interactions with AI-powered tools. These themes included usability challenges, perceived usefulness, learning autonomy, and the cultural fit of the app. The integration of TAM and UTAUT frameworks provided a theoretical lens through which the findings were interpreted, allowing the study to assess not only functional aspects of the technology but also psychological and contextual factors influencing adoption. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data strengthened the study's credibility and allowed for more nuanced insights into the adoption of AI tools in higher education in Vietnam.

Results and Findings

The results and findings of this study clearly respond to both research questions. Below is a narrative synthesis in paragraph form, accompanied by a visual illustration to support the interpretation of key perceptions of the Gemini App versus other AI tools.

Figure 1.

Comparative Perceptions of the Gemini App vs. Other AI Tools among MA Students at Van Lang University



Research Question 1: How do MA students at Van Lang University perceive the usefulness and usability of the Gemini App in their English language learning?

A detailed thematic analysis was conducted based on open-ended responses and interviews to investigate postgraduate students' actual learning experiences with the Gemini App. The insights reveal a range of attitudes, interactions, and reflections toward the tool. While some participants expressed enthusiasm and appreciation for the app's support in writing, vocabulary enhancement, and research facilitation, others reported limited or hesitant use, citing technical concerns, unfamiliarity, or a preference for alternative tools such as ChatGPT or Quillbot. Below is a synthesis of student reflections, capturing the diversity and depth of their perceived experiences.

Despite not using the Gemini App extensively, some students demonstrated thoughtful perceptions of its potential and limitations. Student 1 admitted, "No, I haven't used this app," and explained further, "I don't actually use apps like Gemini myself since I don't learn in the traditional sense." However, they acknowledged possible advantages, stating, "If I used the Gemini App in my studies, I'd see several potential benefits including the ability to instantly look up words or phrases in different contexts would be very helpful." Although unfamiliar with the tool firsthand, the student still recognized its capacity to support self-regulated learning: "Gemini, like many AI tools, would allow learners to work at the speed. We can tailor your study time to suit our needs and give instant feedback on language use is a key part of self-regulated learning."

Similarly, Student 2 confirmed, "never used before," and added, "I don't think it is necessary because it is just an AI tool, I can do by myself." They preferred alternative tools: "ChatGPT feels more detailed, structured, and interactive in explanations." They offered constructive insights, such as "It might help with instant translations, grammar checks, and summarizing information." This student also outlined specific areas where Gemini could improve, including "More detailed explanations," and "Better interactive practice – Offering conversation simulations, TOEIC-style exercises, and speaking practice." Despite their limited experience with Gemini, these responses suggest that postgraduate learners can critically evaluate AI applications in language learning, even when relying more heavily on alternatives like ChatGPT.

Student 3 also had no direct experience using the Gemini App, stating clearly, "No, I haven't." Their primary tool was ChatGPT, with the explanation, "Because I use ChatGPT." When asked to compare, they remarked, "can't compare between chatgpt and gemini because i haven't used gemini yet," though they acknowledged ChatGPT's benefits such as "helps improve my writing, give me instant answers and explanations." Regarding challenges, this student candidly shared, "understanding grammar rules, remembering new words and their meanings, using words in the right way," and highlighted difficulties with AI interfaces in general: "sometimes having trouble with the app's design, difficult to make a good prompt." Notably, across all Likert-scale items in the questionnaire, this student selected "3. Uncertain" for every statement, signaling a neutral or uninformed stance, likely due to limited exposure. Their final responses reiterated this position: "I haven't used Gemini yet." This reiteration across both interviews and surveys reinforces that while Gemini remains underutilized by some students, their feedback—rooted in comparisons and usability insights—still provides valuable direction for tool improvement.

Student 4 shared extensive, insightful experiences that align directly with the study's primary research question. This student expressed that the main challenge was "understanding and generating human-like English," and chose the Gemini App specifically because "it can understand my ideas the most compared to other apps." Their frequent use of Gemini's "idea

analysis feature to learn English and write research papers" reveals a purposeful application of the tool in both academic and professional settings, especially in "creating lesson plan for my work (English teacher)." Notably, they emphasized using Gemini for "generating alternative perspectives, identifying potential biases, and exploring different solutions or courses of action" in case studies and for "constructive criticism and alternative perspectives" during peer feedback. They rated the app's feedback as "reasonable and complete, but we should not rely too much on them." The student viewed the app as facilitating "a more interactive and personalized experience" and described a learning environment where Gemini "influences study habits towards independent exploration and deeper engagement with course material." Their Likert responses consistently showed strong agreement (4) with positive statements, except where they admitted uncertainty about privacy, accuracy, and curriculum alignment. A key reflection noted, "The Gemini App has transformed my approach to learning English by providing me with a personalized and interactive learning experience," further solidifying their place as a core participant in the qualitative strand of this study.

Student 5 offered a more reserved yet relevant perspective on the use of the Gemini App, identifying "insufficient instructions" as a key challenge in both English learning and app usage. Despite this, they reported using the app "several times," motivated by the desire "to find out more references" and support IELTS speaking instruction. They frequently used the Gemini App to "find out more ideas" and expressed that when receiving feedback, they would "consider carefully and choose the most appropriate ones." While this student did not rely heavily on the app, they noted that it "encourages me to study" and "motivates me more." In terms of peer interaction, they affirmed that "It is very helpful" to give feedback. Their perception of the app's benefit to self-regulated learning was modest ("to a certain extent") but consistently positive across Likert responses, with agreement on usability, customization, time management, and motivation. The student did express uncertainty regarding the app's "accuracy," "curriculum alignment," and "linguistic resource variety," yet still agreed that feedback could be "sometimes too generic." In a concise reflection, the student shared that "there should be more guidance" and that the app's key benefit was "to provide me with more references," demonstrating a preference for information-gathering over deep integration.

Student 6 contributed a more critical and discerning view of the Gemini App, particularly questioning its reliability and alignment with academic needs. Although they reported regular usage "ever since its launch," they stated that "Gemini doesn't give out answers as accurately as other AI chatbots" and that they often needed to "crosscheck because it usually fabricates." While they acknowledged the benefit of the app's creative capacity and its integration with Google's large database, they emphasized that Gemini is "good at being creative, not accurate." This user frequently employed the app to "ask for info and simplify a paragraph," and made structured inquiries "all the time" in classroom contexts. Despite this, they preferred other tools like ChatGPT, DeepSeek, and NotebookLM for complex tasks such as reading comprehension, stating explicitly: "Not recommended. I'd rather use other models." They also highlighted dissatisfaction with Gemini's peer feedback capability: "Ewwww. More fabricated than I can imagine." Likert data revealed strong agreement that Gemini provided a wide variety of linguistic resources and supported advanced writing preparation but also pointed to weaknesses in time efficiency, motivation, feedback relevance, and curriculum alignment. The student summarized their stance by asserting that AI tools like Gemini are just "another source of information, not a reliable proofreader," and suggested peers "gain insights first, crosscheck later."

Student 8 (S8), an MA student and full-time English teacher, expressed that although she "hardly ever uses Gemini," her awareness of its academic potential was notable. She

emphasized that "Gemini or similar AI tools can offer lots of benefits such as enhancing understanding, generating quick summarization, and correcting grammatical mistakes within seconds." However, she also mentioned key limitations, stating that "it generates answers without proper citations and references or inaccurate explanations," and ultimately preferred ChatGPT due to familiarity. Nevertheless, her feedback on specific needs was constructive—she suggested "voice recognition with AI-driven pronunciation feedback" as a future improvement. Despite her infrequent usage, her questionnaire responses reflected moderate to strong agreement in areas such as motivation (4), feedback (4), linguistic resource access (4), and alignment with curriculum (4). This mixed pattern highlights a cautious optimism partially engaged users share (S8).

Student 9 (S9) described her evolving relationship with AI tools, emphasizing that "tôi không dùng nhiều công nghệ trước đây cho đến khi học cao học" (I didn't use much technology before studying for my MA). She reported using the Gemini App nearly every day—"6 days a week"—primarily for tasks like "asking to repair English paragraph, essay" and to receive quick answers during quizzes. According to her, "I have the highest score in one subject in this course thanks to Gemini." Despite relying more on ChatGPT for reading comprehension tasks, she affirmed Gemini's role in helping her "theo kịp tiến độ trên lớp" (keep up with the course progress), especially for summarizing lectures. She stated that the tool made her learning experience "nhanh hơn và hiệu quả nếu biết sử dụng thông minh" (faster and more effective if used wisely). However, she also cautioned against over-reliance, acknowledging, "Sometimes I feel too dependent on the Gemini App." Her experience demonstrates enthusiastic usage and thoughtful awareness of its limitations (S9).

Student 10 (S10) expressed a preference for alternative AI tools, stating that "ChatGPT thì ok hơn, cá nhân tôi thấy vậy" (ChatGPT is better, in my opinion). He acknowledged using the Gemini App only "thỉnh thoảng" (occasionally), highlighting its fast responses and ability to "giải quyết yêu cầu tốt" (solve tasks well), but also raised a concern that "bị fake nguồn nhiều quá" (it often gives fake sources). While he agreed that the app provides helpful feedback and supports academic writing, he remained cautious due to its limitations. He affirmed: "AI giúp tôi tìm kiếm thông tin nhanh hơn, đưa ra các gợi ý và giúp tôi hoàn thành công việc tốt hơn" (AI helps me search faster, give suggestions, and finish work better), but clarified that he prefers to explore things independently: "AI không ảnh hưởng tới thói quen học tập của tôi" (AI does not affect my study habits). His responses reflect a cautious, moderately engaged user with critical perspectives on the app's reliability and alignment with academic expectations (S10).

Student 11 (S11) portrayed a highly critical stance toward the Gemini App, viewing it as one tool among many and stating explicitly that "Gemini overall isn't too bright" and "honestly till this moment, I can't" when asked to describe any significant learning outcome attributed to it. He primarily used the app for paraphrasing and asking for insights but preferred ChatGPT and Perplexity, saying, "Chatgpt first, then perplexity, then Gemini." Although he acknowledged the interface as easy to use and helpful for managing time, he found the content often generic and uncontextualized, commenting: "Take it with a grain of salt, as it isn't capable of being contextualized." S11 also found the app unsuitable for case analysis and curricular integration, calling one feature "a disaster." Despite engaging with the tool weekly, he emphasized the minimal impact on motivation or learning, recommending it only as an additional AI, among others, to explore the pros and cons. His skepticism highlights the importance of user expectations and cross-platform comparisons in AI-enhanced learning (S11).

Student 12 (S12) made more instrumental use of the Gemini app, treating it like Grammarly. She said in her response that she mostly relied on it to fix grammar and vocabulary, adding: "It

is only a tool like Grammarly to help me check for errors." Her interaction with the app was limited in frequency and scope—under 4 hours per week and for less than a month—but she recognized its value in helping her search for exercises and examples more quickly. Though she acknowledged that Gemini was in line with academic writing and feedback-giving, it also did not "suit" her general study practice. S12 said that she received valuable feedback from Gemini, but Gemini did not offer any of the wider capabilities, such as producing scripts or images that she wished for. This student's view echoes that the AI tools are expected to provide more than just a simple correct of language toward creative, multimodal support (S12).

Like in the previous feedback, Student 13 (S13) reported that although Gemini could provide useful ideas and inspiration for academic tasks, it was often not specific enough for his purpose: "Gives good ideas but not specific ."He mainly employed it with research-related questions and in collecting relevant keywords and concepts, "Its ideas are better than mine, and those helped me get higher scores". But he also said Gemini was inferior to ChatGPT in the quality of its responses, which it "doesn't give specific answer like ChatGPT." This relative perception is consistent with the overall trend of students recognizing the potential of Gemini for academic improvement, but still favoring other AI tools for specific needs or more in-depth answers. S13's experience implies that although students appreciate Gemini for directing their thinking, Gemini needs to enhance the accuracy and relevance of its academic replies to better support the postgraduate learner (S13).

Student 14 (S14) also mentioned the role of the Gemini App in increasing speaking and communication confidence. "I use Gemini to check my pronunciation, to be able to structure my thoughts and be more confident in speaking English," he said. While he likes the app's assistance with grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, he noted that it has some limitations, particularly in terms of academic depth: "Sometimes, the app gives generic or slightly incorrect answers. He didn't enjoy it but found the formalism useful in understanding some of the key points and preparing for the case study. s14 especially compared Gemini against ChatGPT, pointing out that the latter provides "immediate, bespoke answers," implying a desire for more flexible AI. His experience fits well with a broader pattern among respondents who celebrated Gemini for strengthening basic skills and ability even as they flagged its limitations in terms of context sensitivity and application to graduate-level tasks (S14).

When compared with other AI tools, students also mentioned several practical advantages and disadvantages of the Gemini App. Student 15 (S15) wrote that "Gemini" has 'good power of processing' although she was not a frequent user: "Data is clear and can be integrable [translated] and modifiable in the same way as they are better than other apps." However, S15 also had some negative comments for the app, primarily noting the lack of a clear, focused function such as Quillbot or Grammarly: "Its features are too big… not only focus on any strong feature like correct and suggest. He explained that voice recognition apps, like Elsa or Otter, did very well in speaking support, while Gemini was better designed for structured text-based assignments. Although we did state that we were unsure about its motivational effect ("The Gemini App was motivating for me…" → 1. Strongly disagree), he admitted that Gemini does well in getting feedback and having access to language resources. This comparative insight reinforces the theme that while Gemini is useful, learners often rely on complementary tools to meet specific academic goals (S15).

Conversely, several students expressed critical perspectives regarding the Gemini App's utility and limitations. Student 16 (S16) openly criticized the app for technical instability: "Gemini App always changes the answer" and reported significant issues such as high resource consumption, data privacy concerns, and distracting features. Despite rating the app's

usefulness as “8/10” in one interview response, their questionnaire showed complete dissatisfaction across all usability and feedback items (“1. Strongly Disagree” for items 1–8). Nevertheless, S16 admitted to using Gemini for features like “answer bar,” “Wiktionary,” and “Google Translate” and occasionally noted self-study benefits, saying, "I learn by myself ."Their feedback helps reveal the perception of a user base that views Gemini as inconsistent, inconvenient, or overwhelming for structured academic tasks (S16).

Additionally, Student 17 (S17) offered a perspective shaped by comparison rather than direct experience, stating, "I already use other AI tools like ChatGPT," and suggesting that Gemini's value proposition remains unclear: "I'm not sure if Gemini offers anything better." Although she had not actively used the app, she recognized potential strengths such as "grammar, vocabulary, and writing improvement" and recommended future updates like "a speaking practice tool with real-time feedback." Her neutral responses across all questionnaire items ("3. Uncertain") underscore the hesitation of users who are aware of Gemini but unconvinced of its added value compared to established alternatives. This type of indirect user perception reveals critical gaps in Gemini's communication of unique benefits, especially for tech-aware learners (S17).

Furthermore, Student 18 (S18) expressed a traditionalist view by stating he preferred “textbooks and live instruction” to the newer AI tools. While he didn’t use the Gemini App, he wrote, “ChatGPT meets my need already,” and he believed that Gemini “might be useful for writing practice and research." This discourse corresponds with the uncertainty expressed by Student 17 and emphasizes that even tech-savvy students who decide not to use Gemini if other tools adequately meet their academic needs. His suggestion of "a conversation practice mode with AI feedback on fluency and pronunciation" mirrors past calls for additional interactive, adaptive functionality. Just like S17, all his questionnaire ratings were coded as "3. Not clear) was reiterated, which suggests that the ambiguous competitive benefits may continue to impede the widespread use of Gemini despite curiosity or awareness among postgraduate English learners (S18).

These firsthand accounts help to paint a complex picture of how MA student users at Van Lang University use the Gemini App. Their experiences are shaped not only by the functionality of the app but also by their learning practices, AI tool preferences, and academic requirements. Crucially, though, despite others using the app more widely for vocabulary, grammar, and task structure, "reluctance" is a feature for some respondents: lack of certainty, sense of inaccuracy, and lack of fit with course content prevail. These results are consistent with the constructivist view that learners actively construct their use of tools given contextual, personal, and cognitive factors. The qualitative findings further resonate with the survey results and offer a richer understanding of how Gemini has been perceived and implemented in postgraduate English language education.

Research Question 2: What benefits and challenges do MA students experience when using the Gemini App as part of their academic activities?

A recurring theme from the interviews was the varied adoption of the Gemini App across participants. Some students expressed a clear preference for alternative tools, while others highlighted both the strengths and limitations of the app in their academic routines. For instance, S1 stated, "I don't actually use apps like Gemini myself since I don't learn in the traditional sense." S2 responded, "never used before," adding, "I don't think it is necessary because it is just an AI tool… deepseek and chat GPT [are] better." Similarly, S3 said, "No, I haven't," explaining, "Because I use ChatGPT." S7 noted, "No, I haven't," because "I may not have heard much about the Gemini App or might not be familiar with how it works yet." S8 stated, "I hardly

ever use Gemini," and remarked, "Chat GPT seems to be more familiar to me." S11 stated, "no!! ChatGPT first, then perplexity, then gemini." S12 commented, "It is hard to have the the suitable instructions." S13 simply noted, "Doesn't give specific answer like ChatGPT." S14 said, "I don't use apps myself, but I'm familiar with how they can help… Gemini… can be quite beneficial." S15 declared, "I haven't use," explaining Gemini's functions "are too large," unlike "Quillbot… or Chat GPT." S17 added, "No, I haven't used it," explaining, "I already use other AI tools like ChatGPT." S18 agreed, "No, not yet," explaining, "I prefer traditional learning methods like textbooks and live instruction… ChatGPT, it suits my need already." Nevertheless, many students recognized the potential or actual benefits of Gemini. S1 noted, "The ability to instantly look up words or phrases in different contexts would be very helpful." S2 stated, "It might help with instant translations, grammar checks, and summarizing information." S5 remarked, "More reference." S6 wrote, "the database of Google is huge, sometimes creative writing helps basic asking and answering." S7 added, "Being able to practice anytime, anywhere, is a huge plus." S8 explained, "Gemini… can offer many benefits such as enhancing your understanding… providing suggestions for your essay topics." S10 reflected, "AI helps me find information quickly, provide suggestions, and complete tasks more effectively." S11 differentiated: "Gemini is good at being creative, not accurate." S14 believed, "Gemini might tailor lessons to your current level and progress." S15 elaborated: "The data can be explained, translated, and edited in the same format." S17 assumed Gemini "could help with grammar, vocabulary, and writing improvement." S18 anticipated it "might help with writing practice and research."

To enhance clarity, Table 1 below summarizes whether each student used the Gemini App and their reported preferences and perceived benefits.

Table 1

Perceived Use and Perceptions of the Gemini App

Student Code	Used Gemini App	Preferred Other Tools	Perceived Benefits of the Gemini App
S1	No	Yes (ChatGPT)	Instantly look up words or phrases in context
S2	No	Yes (Deepseek, ChatGPT)	Translations, grammar checks, summaries
S3	No	Yes (ChatGPT)	-
S4	Yes	No	Practice writing and vocabulary
S5	Yes	Yes (Google Translate)	More reference
S6	Yes	Yes (Google)	Creative writing, basic Q&A
S7	No	Not used Gemini yet	Voice recognition, practice anywhere
S8	Rarely	Yes (ChatGPT)	Quick summarization, suggestions for essays
S9	Rarely	Not specified	-
S10	Sometimes	Yes (ChatGPT)	Quick info, task suggestions
S11	Yes	Yes (ChatGPT, Perplexity)	Creative writing
S12	Yes	Yes (Grammarly, ChatGPT)	Difficult to get suitable instructions
S13	Yes	Yes (ChatGPT)	Doesn't give specific

			answers
S14	No	Yes (ChatGPT)	Tailored lessons, grammar, vocabulary
S15	No	Yes (Quillbot, ChatGPT)	Data analysis, translation, and editing in the same format
S16	Yes	Yes (Duolingo, Google Translate)	Answer bar, speaking, listening
S17	No	Yes (ChatGPT, Grammarly)	Grammar, vocabulary, and writing improvement
S18	No	Yes (ChatGPT)	Writing practice, research

Discussion

Discussing the Research Methodologies

In this study, the purposive sampling technique was used, and effective interviews were designed with questions designed to gain in-depth insights into the experiences of MA students at Van Lang University. This is a pragmatic approach with particular relevance for qualitative and mixed-methods research, where the intent is often to discover rich, contextualized data as opposed to statistically generalizable findings (Imran & Almusharraf, 2024). As participants in this study had experience using AI tools in academic settings, purposive sampling was used to select participants who were adequately positioned to reflect upon the usefulness and limitations of AI tools and cultural resonance.

Researchers used a convenient sampling approach based on their knowledge of the population and the research objectives. This ensured a purposive selection of participants who were highly likely to provide relevant and substantive insights and opinions regarding the application of the Gemini App and similar AI tools in English language postgraduate education.

Structured interviews were administered to ensure that responses were standard across respondents and that students would be given ample opportunity to verbalize their experiences. Having standardized questions for these sessions gave us the structure we needed to stay on track and allowed for systematic contrasts among responses. Using a structured interview, as opposed to a semi-structured one, resulted in standardized data collection across personal perceptions, difficulties, and expectations for implementing the AI tools (Imran & Almusharraf, 2024).

In addition, a survey was conducted to collect numerical data to support the research's outcome. This mixed-methods approach allowed us to triangulate findings, using themes produced by interviews to validate and inform numerical trends in user ratings. The twins' approach or methodological alignment strengthened the study's validity and credibility (Marikyan & Papagiannidis, 2024).

To ensure the instruments' reliability and construct validity, all the interview and questionnaire items were developed according to established frameworks, namely the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). Experts reviewed each item to ensure its appropriateness and clarity. To enhance internal consistency and reproducibility, various mechanisms, such as pilot testing and explicit coding protocols, were employed during the thematic analysis (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008).

While these approaches provide great depth, some limitations have been recognized. The small, purposively selected sample limits the extent to which findings can be generalized to the larger population of university students. Yet, such specificity in an academic group allows for a level of detail and contextualization regarding how postgraduate students interact with AI tools in the context of English learning.

Discussing the Results and Findings

Results indicated a more multifaceted picture of user acceptance and experiences with AI-supported language learning in the Gemini App. Although participants valued the tool's intuitive functionality and adaptability overall, feedback indicated multiple barriers concerning reliability, integration, and local academic alignment.

Participants who regularly used Gemini described it as easy to use and accessible from different platforms. Davis's (1989) view of perceived ease of use, a significantly strong predictor of technology acceptance, similarly maps onto these perspectives. However, some users (specific individuals in the Gemini and non-Gemini groups) expressed a stance around the depth and accuracy of AI-generated suggestions, saying they needed verification or modification. This ambivalent assessment is aligned with what Imran and Almusharraf (2024) frame as the need to juxtapose the capabilities of digital tools with the actual technological reality and learning contexts of students.

Meanwhile, some students noted that the Gemini App offers personalized feedback and is adaptive to individual skill levels, two known features of effective AI-enabled learning (Huynh, 2024). However, others said the tool could not replace human feedback or fully meet their instructors' expectations. These results align with Nguyen's (2024) study of the limited integration of AI tools into curricula in higher education.

A repeated issue was academic integrity. Some students considered Gemini a useful supplement to traditional learning, while others feared it might undermine critical thinking or academic rigor if it were overused. A key observation was that if the app did not align clearly with students' coursework, they were less likely to take it up—an issue also highlighted by Lee et al. (2023). These findings further validate the central tenets of TAM, i.e., perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, as critical to user satisfaction and continued use of the tool. Students whose study habits matched or aligned with the app's functions and goals were more likely to integrate it into their study paradigm.

To maximize the educational affordances of AI tools like Gemini, future work should focus on integrating these tools into well-established digital learning environments so that technological and curricular trajectories will be mutually aligned (Perera & Lankathilaka, 2023). Educators and institutions should consider AI tools as complements rather than substitutes for traditional teaching (Tian et al., 2024), maintaining teacher guidance while encouraging self-directed learning. Longitudinal research is also needed to evaluate how sustained exposure to tools like Gemini affects learning over time. This will allow educators to move beyond short-term perceptions and explore long-term impacts, as Venkatesh et al. (2003) recommended.

Conclusion

Summary of Findings and Discussion

This study examined the perceptions and experiences of MA students at Van Lang University regarding the use of the Gemini App and comparable AI tools in English language education. Overall, the findings show a positive outlook on AI-assisted learning, with the Gemini App

viewed as a useful complement to students' academic workflows.

Students noted that the app's easy-to-use interface, individualized master learning path, and real-time feedback to monitor progress came very close to satisfying the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989). These joins were, however, constructed to facilitate more extensive engagement, autonomy, and language-learning confidence. Other UTAUT constructs (Venkatesh et al., 2003) also came into play, notably social influence and facilitating conditions such as peer support and institutional support, respectively, which were factors in bolstering students' attempts at the tool.

However, problems were noted, including further complaints regarding the content of the academic material and its appropriateness to MA-level coursework. Others raised concerns about whether the app could meet their high academic standards, a sentiment echoed in previous studies that found limits in the use of AI in (Nguyen, 2024) advanced education. These concerns reflect what the Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 2003) describes as a lack of perceived compatibility and observability—factors that can slow adoption. While students recognized the Gemini App's potential, they emphasized the need for it to evolve to meet higher-order academic needs more effectively.

The study reinforces the value of AI in English language education, particularly when tools are responsive to learner needs and embedded within culturally relevant and pedagogically sound frameworks. However, it also points to the importance of cautious and strategic integration to ensure that the use of AI enhances rather than disrupts traditional learning dynamics.

Study Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged in this study. First, the sample size (18 participants) was relatively small and was drawn from a single institution using purposive sampling. This restricts the generalizability of the findings to a broader population of postgraduate students. Second, although the study applied a mixed-methods approach, the reliance on self-reported data through questionnaires and interviews may introduce response bias, as students may have overstated or understated their actual app usage or perceptions. Third, this study only targeted MA students who have intermediate to high English proficiency, suggesting that the experiences of learners in lower proficiency levels or different fields of study may not be covered in the results. Ultimately, the study was only focused on the immediate use of the Gemini App and did not assess long-term effects or if the users improved with performance over time. Such limitations suggest the importance of wider, longer-lasting, and more diversified research in future studies.

Recommendations for Future Research

This preliminary study lays out a number of avenues for future investigation. First, studies with a longitudinal research design should be applied to investigate students' perceptions and delve into how their engagement with the Gemini App changes and how it is related to their academic achievement and language development over time (Nguyen & Pham, 2024). Secondly, comparative research between AI in similar contexts, comparing different AI tools, can be conducted to know which platform is more pedagogically useful. Such research would be valuable for educators and developers seeking to select or design tools that are better aligned with local academic requirements and cultural norms (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003).

Third, given Vietnam's unique cultural and educational context, cross-cultural studies could offer insights into how local values, expectations, and infrastructures shape technology adoption. Understanding which elements of AI use are context-specific versus universally applicable will allow for better-informed implementation strategies (Rogers, 2003). Fourth,

future research should explore curricular integration. Studies that examine how AI tools can be aligned with existing syllabi and instructional practices will be essential in guiding curriculum developers, instructional designers, and language educators (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008).

Ethical considerations also deserve closer attention. As AI tools become more integrated into classrooms, research must explore the implications for data privacy, intellectual autonomy, and student-teacher interaction (Huynh, 2024). Additionally, the evolving role of teachers alongside AI technologies should be studied, particularly how educators can leverage AI without diminishing their pedagogical presence (Ozfidan et al., 2024). Addressing these areas will allow future research to provide educators, developers, and policymakers with a more comprehensive understanding of how to implement AI in a way that strengthens—not replaces—human-centered learning.

Implications for Practice and Policy

MA students at Van Lang University's perception of and experience with the Gemini app for learning English highlights the active application benefits of advanced AI tools in learning English. The implications of this study's findings extend beyond its context and are relevant to educational practice and policy in Vietnam and other similar contexts, where the integration of technology into education is gaining momentum.

The ambivalence students express about the Gemini app lends some support to the notion that AI tools may be novel, but they may not be effective unless they serve pedagogical goals and learner needs. Educators should treat these tools as complements, not substitutes, to in-person strategies. Integration approaches that complement AI tools with traditional pedagogical practices may also stimulate student engagement and learning outcomes. However, teachers can leverage the app's ability to provide tailored feedback to further support differentiated instruction approaches and target a wide range of student needs.

This study highlights the need for curriculum developers to factor in the inclusion of AI technologies such as these in language learning materials. This inclusion must be strategic, putting the tools into context and making sure they complement the broader lessons of language learning. This would entail designing specific modules or sessions in courses that take advantage of the app's capabilities to address higher-order skills like academic writing or critical reading.

Insights from the study on Gemini’s policy decisions at educational institutions can help other institutions structure their own policies. Policymakers should evaluate the implementation of frameworks that govern the ethical use of AI tools, with attention given to areas such as data privacy, student autonomy, and digital equity. Moreover, policymakers could prioritize allocating resources toward ensuring educators are adequately trained and supported in effectively integrating new technologies into their teaching practices.

It is suggested that more studies be conducted on the effectiveness of AI tools in different educational environments in and out of Vietnam. These studies have been individual in scope and form and thereby provide a clear assessment of the efficacy of one product or idea over another, building an aggregate understanding of the efficacy of technology in language education. It also highlights the importance of ongoing technological support for Gemini and its updates to stay relevant to the changing needs of learners and educators. Training that helps develop and grow such tools focuses on making them more user-friendly and knowledgeable or on ensuring they work well for more varied learning activities. Finally, the results demonstrate the significance of teacher preparedness when it comes to the adoption of AI tools. It is essential to implement professional development programs that train teachers on how to

use and integrate technology in their teaching methods. This training must be comprehensive to move beyond technical know-how, navigating the apps to pedagogical approaches for effective use.

The Gemini app is a new phenomenon, and these results indicate a certain level of awareness among MA students at Van Lang University, thus mirroring the broader trends in educational technology use. Knowledge of these perceptions might provide educators and policymakers with more robust foundations for planning the implementation of AI tools in language learning curricula so that they can not only be used for the task at hand but also to enrich the learning experience and enhance educational performance. The results of this research offer significance for educational institutions, curriculum developers, and policymakers. First, while students welcomed the app's personalized and interactive features, they all stressed that AI tools need to be treated as supplements — not replacements — to classroom instruction. When used judiciously, tools such as Gemini can facilitate differentiated instruction and personalized learning support.

Second, curriculum designers need to think about using AI-assisted activities in courses, particularly in terms of academic writing, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension. When embedded into specific modules, such tools can be used in a structured, purposeful, and pedagogically sound way. Third, institutional policy needs to address ethical use, student data privacy, and accessibility. Identify and publish good practices, protocols, and guidance for using AI tools in classrooms. Continuous teacher training is essential. That means we need to give teachers not just the technical know-how to use AI tools correctly but also the pedagogical playbook that helps them do so while maintaining the sanctity of their instruction. This analysis demonstrates the importance of investing in and developing AIs such as the Gemini App. Let's keep being public and let's keep iterating on these platforms based on public user feedback in ways that can help move towards more academic rigorous, culturally adept and usable platforms. Working together with educators and learners will be essential to developing AI tools and solutions that are equal, efficient, and sustainable.

Last but not least, this research adds to the rich literature of educational technology regarding the meaning and experience of AI tools at postgraduate-level sustainable language learning in Vietnam. As institutions proceed on their journey to digital transformation, understanding these user perspectives will be critical in designing future-ready, learner-centered AI solutions that enrich, rather than replace, education while respecting its human heart.

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Biodata

The author, Nguyen Hoang Anh, is a postgraduate student of the Faculty of Foreign Languages at Van Lang University. Because he is very determined to teach young learners English and wants them to be empowered to learn English through better methods, he aims to recommend ways of improving teaching. As a result, he hopes to find ways to effectively combine technology, methodologies, and artificial intelligence into the educational experience.