Exploring Vocational Students' Perceptions Towards Language Hub in Enhancing Autonomy

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine how an integrated digital learning platform, the Language Hub system, may enable vocational students to acquire more language learning autonomy. Although great efforts are made to raise language competency, vocational students typically need help to become autonomous in their educational process. This study fills in this gap by examining students' perceptions of the Language Hub and how it influences learner autonomy. Learner autonomy is proven to improve language acquisition significantly. The study was conducted with 80 students from a vocational school and employed qualitative data collected through a single-source student questionnaire. The findings significantly improved understanding of the effectiveness of online learning platforms in increasing learner autonomy in language education settings. The results show that the Language Hub program has greatly improved students' autonomy and language abilities. The long-term effects and adaptability of combined digital learning systems in different educational settings should be the main focus of the next studies. This paper emphasizes the need for such platforms to support autonomy and fulfill the changing language education.

Keywords: AI, Language Hub system, vocational students, students' perspective

Introduction

When artificial intelligence (AI) is used to teach a foreign language, it changes the way people learn, especially professional students. The Language Hub, an AI-powered platform, is at the forefront of this change. It encourages students to manage their own learning and participate.

By providing immediate feedback and encouraging autonomous learning practices, artificial intelligence systems improve learner autonomy (Wang & Zhang, 2022). Holec (1979) emphasizes the requirement of self-reflection and self-assessment as learner autonomy is, according to him, significant in education. The Language Hub provides tailored solutions that enable non-English major vocational students to take charge of their learning path, therefore addressing their needs (Kukulska-Hulme, 2020).

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AI also increases student inspiration and involvement. As Yang et al. (2020) underline, interactive technologies not only make language learning more fun and accessible but also aid in lowering anxiety, thus boosting student confidence. By addressing individual strengths and shortcomings, the Language Hub's AI capabilities provide tailored comments that motivate students to assume more accountability for their education.

In conclusion, for vocational students, including artificial intelligence in language education via systems like the Language Hub offers major advantages. These artificial intelligence applications improve language skills and self-confidence by encouraging autonomy and active participation, hence improving academic and employment results. However, further study is required to fully grasp how artificial intelligence might affect student autonomy and the general success of language instruction.

Literature review

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Foreign Language Education

Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming important in modern education because it provides flexible and tailored learning opportunities that support student autonomy. An AI-driven tool called The Language Hub generates interactive language learning environments, allowing vocational students to participate in autonomous learning. Many studies have looked at how artificial intelligence may improve language learning autonomously, especially for vocational students. For example, Liu et al. (2022) looked at how well students engaged and developed their language skills by combining AI-powered language learning systems. In a similar vein, Wang and Zhang (2021) investigated the effects of AI-enhanced grammar checkers and concluded that students gained from the error-correcting features.

Utilization of AI-power tools in students' autonomy

The Greek word "autonomos," where "auto" means self and "nomos" means law, is the source of the word "autonomy." The idea originally surfaced in the framework of foreign language education and instruction in 1979, when Holec described autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's learning" (Benson, 2011, p. 58). Several definitions of learner autonomy have evolved from Holec's point of view, all emphasizing the need for learners to have the freedom to make their own choices and judgments in their efforts to learn (Benson, 2012).

Boosting student autonomy during the learning language process benefits much from using technology driven by artificial intelligence. Research shows these tools can help students boost their confidence and hone their skills (Haleem, Javaid & Singh, 2022). Improvements in natural language processing allow artificial intelligence apps to provide useful remarks, topic analysis, and encouraging cues for students who first find a second language challenging.

The Language Hub system is an innovative solution.

Research indicates that by giving students personalized training and support, AI-powered systems have enormous potential to improve language instruction (Haleem, Javaid & Singh, 2022). Leading educational technology company Vietec Corp claims that the Language Hub system offers universities and colleges thorough support and performs better than world standards for English language instruction. Based on Macmillan Education's "American Language Hub" curriculum, the system is meant to fit the requirements of all educational stakeholders—that is, parents, instructors, administrators, and students. Its mix of artificial intelligence and mobile apps provides strong instruments for evaluating student performance and adjusting learning opportunities to fit particular student needs.

Although the Language Hub system marks significant developments in educational technology, more studies are required to grasp its influence and enhance its use in employment environments. Investigating its effectiveness and looking at best practices can help teachers completely grasp the possibilities of AI-driven language instruction to raise student outcomes (Lunning, 2023).

Research Questions

To fulfill the study's purpose, the survey sought to answer the following research questions:

What are vocational students' perceptions and attitudes toward using Language Hub to enhance their autonomy in language learning?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The study was conducted at a vocational school in Hanoi, where students are enrolled in diverse technical and professional training programs in information technology, software development, and hospitality management. The research was conducted during an academic block (equaling 6 weeks) at FPT Polytechnic College, where the English language education program applies a blended learning approach. All students enrolled at FPT Polytechnic must complete an English course that integrates both offline and online learning elements. Among the four levels of English subjects offered at the college, including English 1.1, English 1.2, English 2.1, and English 2.2, provide students enrolled in this level with an account to access the Language Hub website, learning app, and activities as part of their coursework. Each level contains 17 comprehensive lessons delivered through materials and digital resources. Previously, all levels used to learn the Top Notch 1 and Top Notch 2 textbooks, but starting from the spring semester of 2024, the curriculum has shifted to the American Language Hub program by Macmillan Education, one of the top five global publishers.

The study included 80 students currently enrolled at Level 1.1 across two separate classrooms, each taught by a qualified and dynamic teacher. Given the college's linguistic educational setting, learners were familiar with learning online at home and using computers as digital tools in in-person instruction. This group of students presented different points of view on how the Language Hub system should be affected in their English classes.

Design of the Study

In this study, a quantitative research approach was employed to gather data on vocational students' perceptions regarding the Language Hub and its role in enhancing their autonomy in language learning. Data were collected through an online survey questionnaire administered via Google Forms. The survey was distributed to 80 vocational students at FPT Hanoi Polytechnic, covering two classes, each taught by experienced educators.

The questionnaire was adapted from Soledispa (2023), who examined the impact of AI on language courses in higher education from the perspective of English instructors. It was divided into two sections. The first section focused on exploring their perceptions of AI and the Language Hub system, while the second section aimed to explore their perceptions of how the Language Hub system supports their autonomy and the challenges they face in using it for language learning. The survey was revised to better correspond with the study's unique aims and setting**.**

Quantitative analysis of the survey results revealed trends, patterns, or relationships with students' opinions on how well the Language Hub supports their autonomy in learning English. The survey findings influenced the whole of the Language Hub's influence on increasing students' autonomy in language acquisition.

Data collection and analysis

In this study, a quantitative research approach was employed to gather data on vocational students' perceptions regarding the Language Hub and its role in enhancing their autonomy in language learning. Students enrolled in several technical and professional training courses, including computer technology, software development, and hotel management, are housed in a vocational school in Hanoi city.

Data was collected using an online survey created by Google Forms. The survey was distributed to eighty vocational students across two classes at FPT Hanoi, each led by experienced instructors. The questionnaire was adapted from Soledispa (2023), who examined the perceptions of English teachers regarding the impact of artificial intelligence on language courses in higher education. It was divided into two sections: the first focused on assessing students' opinions about artificial intelligence and the Language Hub system, while the second explored how the Language Hub supports their autonomy and the challenges they encounter when using it for language learning. A quantitative analysis of the survey responses identified trends, patterns, and correlations concerning students' views on the effectiveness of the Language Hub in enhancing their autonomy in acquiring English. The findings were instrumental in assessing the overall impact of the Language Hub on fostering students' independence in language acquisition and in formulating recommendations for future development or implementation.

This study acquired quantitative data using pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, developed with a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The researchers sent these surveys to eighty FPT Hanoi Polytechnic vocational students across two classes taught by enthusiastic teachers.

The pre-intervention questionnaire was used to collect students' perceptions of AI and the Language Hub system. The post-intervention survey was given to evaluate any changes in these attitudes and experiences following the integration of the Language Hub into English language courses. After the Language Hub was put in place, the post-intervention survey sought to assess changes in students' learner autonomy. Statistical techniques were applied in data analysis to assess students' opinions about the Language Hub and how it affected their autonomy. These data and explanations enable us to investigate how the Language Hub could raise students' awareness. Adapted from Soledispa (2023), who investigated English instructors' opinions on how artificial intelligence affects language courses in a vocational environment, the questionnaire was divided into two parts. This study is to investigate, using a quantitative research approach and gathering data from the involved students, how effectively the Language Hub aids in student learning on their own in a vocational college in Hanoi.

Results/Findings and Discussion

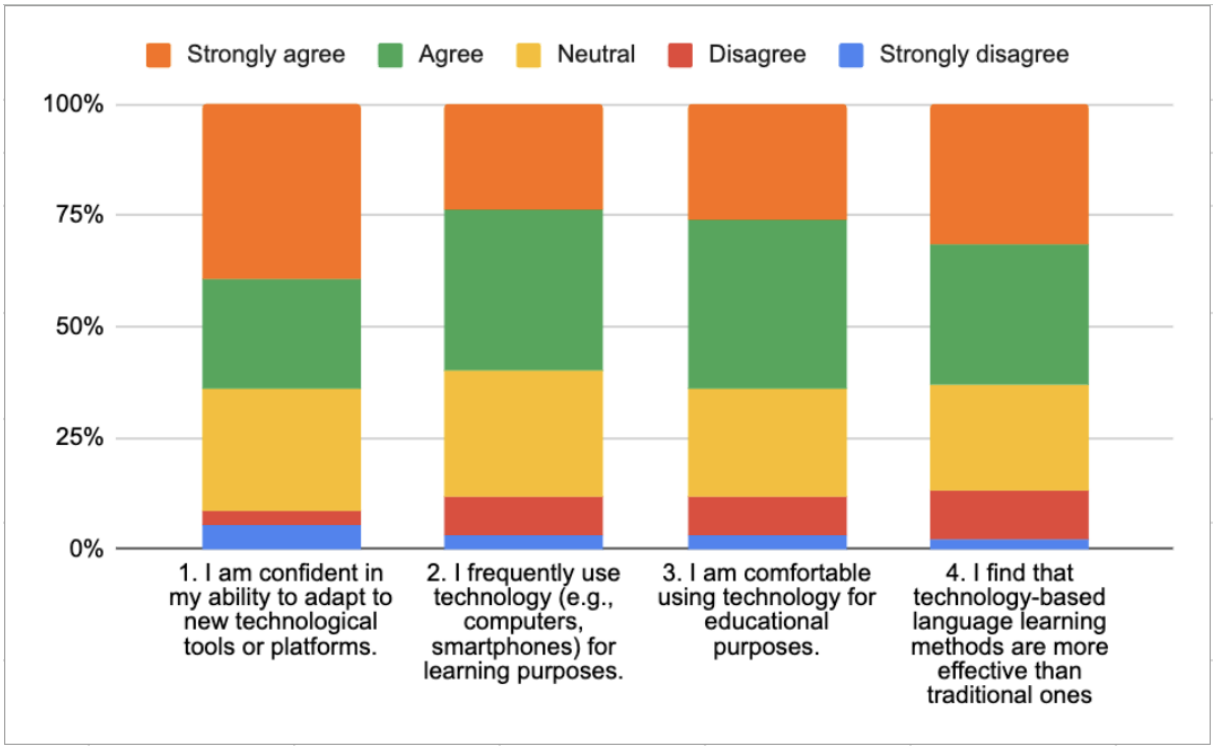
Students' Familiarity with Technology before the intervention

Students' initial experience of using The Language Hub System's artificial intelligence in English lessons.

The pre-intervention survey findings offer a complex picture of students' level of technological knowledge for foreign language learning.

Figure 1.

Students‘ familiarity with technology before the intervention



The survey results indicate that students generally have a positive perception of their familiarity with technology for educational purposes. Specifically, 39.1% of respondents strongly agreed that they are confident in adapting to new tools, while 25% agreed, reflecting a solid base of technological confidence. Additionally, 35.9% reported regularly using technology like computers and cell phones for learning, and 38% felt comfortable using technology for instructional purposes. However, some neutral responses highlight that some students remain uncertain about technology, suggesting a need for targeted support to enhance digital literacy.

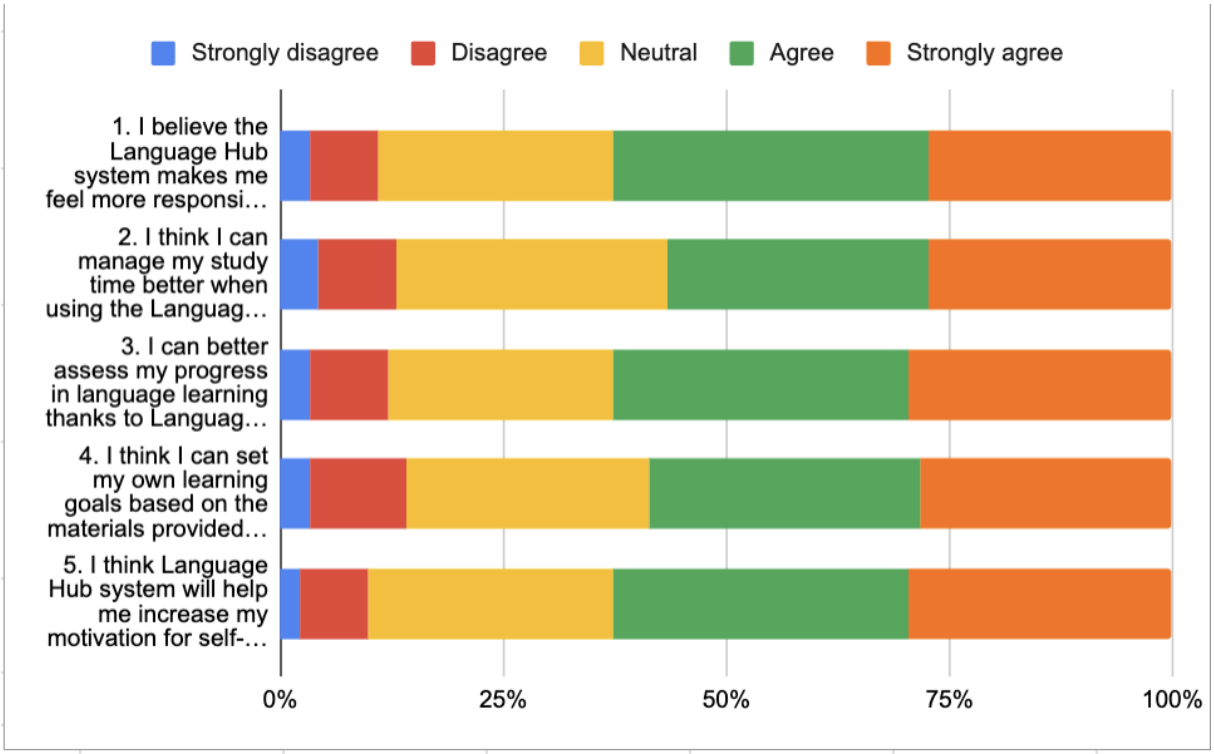
Before the integration of the Language Hub, students showed moderate confidence in technology but hesitated to use AI tools. After the intervention, familiarity, and comfort with digital learning increased significantly, with over 80% feeling more accountable for their studies. Many students reported improved time management and motivation for self-directed study, with approximately 44% feeling better equipped to set personal learning goals, indicating enhanced autonomy.

These findings align with previous research that suggests AI tools can foster learner autonomy. The personalized support from the Language Hub appears to enhance student engagement and motivation, corroborating earlier studies (e.g., Wang & Zhang, 2021) that identified similar

benefits of AI in education. Nevertheless, the initial resistance observed underscores the importance of providing supportive onboarding to address digital literacy gaps. Overall, this study reinforces the notion that AI tools can effectively promote independent learning in vocational contexts, especially when introduced with adequate guidance.

Perceptions of the Language Hub in Enhancing Autonomy

Figure 2.
Students' perceptions towards the effectiveness of the Language Hub in enhancing their autonomy in language learning before the intervention



The results indicate that students perceive the Language Hub system as a significant tool for enhancing autonomy in language learning. Specifically, 35.2% of participants agreed and 27.4% strongly agreed that the system helps them feel more responsible for their studies. Regarding time management, 29.3% believed they could manage their time more effectively, while 27.3% strongly agreed. In terms of self-assessing their progress, 33.0% agreed that the system improves this capability, along with 29.6% who strongly agreed. Furthermore, 30.4% reported being able to set learning goals based on the materials provided by the Language Hub, and 33.0% believed it would enhance their motivation for self-study.

These findings align with previous research on the positive impact of digital learning platforms on learner autonomy and responsibility (Wang & Zhang, 2021). Although many students recognize the potential benefits of the Language Hub, the presence of neutral responses suggests that some learners remain uncertain about its effectiveness or may require additional support.

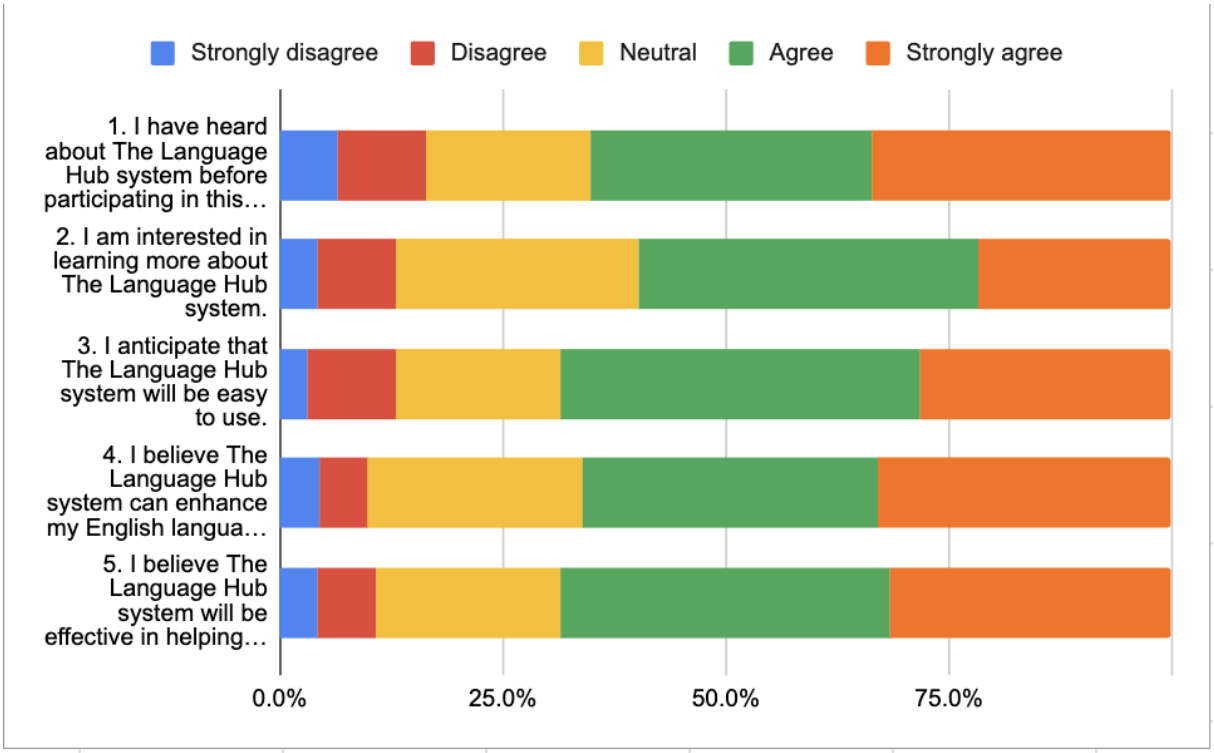
This implies that the Language Hub fosters student responsibility and enhances their ability to manage their autonomous learning processes. Educators must address the neutral feedback by providing targeted training and support to help students maximize the system's benefits. Overall, the results suggest that AI technology in vocational education holds significant potential to create a more engaging and self-directed learning experience, contributing to improved language proficiency and learner autonomy.

Perceptions Toward the Language Hub System

Before the intervention, students' awareness of and interest in the Language Hub system was relatively high. For instance, 33.7% strongly agreed that they had heard about the system before the survey, and 38% were interested in learning more. However, a significant number of students were neutral or disagreed, indicating a lack of familiarity or engagement with the system at this point.

Figure 3.

Students' perceptions towards The Language Hub System before the intervention



The survey results show that students generally perceive the Language Hub system positively. Specifically, 35.2% agreed and 27.4% strongly agreed that the system enhances their responsibility for their studies. Additionally, 29.3% felt they could manage their study time better, with 27.3% strongly agreeing. Regarding self-assessment of progress, 33.0% indicated improved evaluation skills, while 29.6% strongly agreed. Furthermore, 30.4% believed they could set learning goals based on the materials, and 33.0% felt the system would increase their motivation for self-directed learning.

These findings align with Wang and Zhang (2021), which highlighted the positive impact of digital learning platforms on learner autonomy and responsibility. The results suggest that the Language Hub fosters accountability and enhances independent learning management. However, neutral responses indicate that some students may be uncertain about the system's effectiveness or require additional support.

31.5% reported prior knowledge of the Language Hub, with 33.7% expressing strong agreement. A notable 40.2% anticipated ease of use, contributing to a favorable learning experience. Moreover, 66% believed the system could provide a personalized learning environment, reinforcing its potential to enhance English language learning.

These findings underscore the transformative role of AI and digital tools in vocational

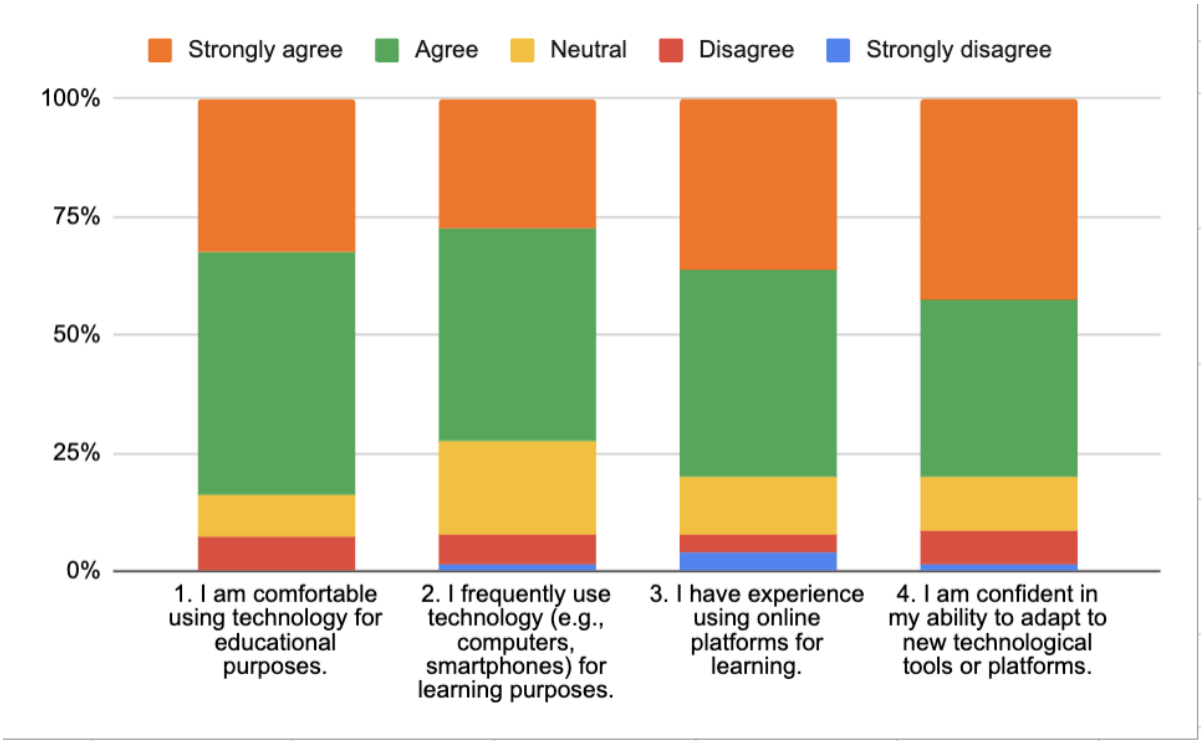
education, particularly in promoting learner autonomy and motivation. Addressing neutral feedback through targeted training and support is essential to maximizing the system's impact, ultimately leading to improved language proficiency and learner autonomy

Students' perceptions towards AI application in English classes via The Language Hub System after the intervention.

The post-intervention survey provides intriguing insights into students‘ familiarity with technology after the intervention period.

Figure 4.

Students' familiarity with technology after the intervention

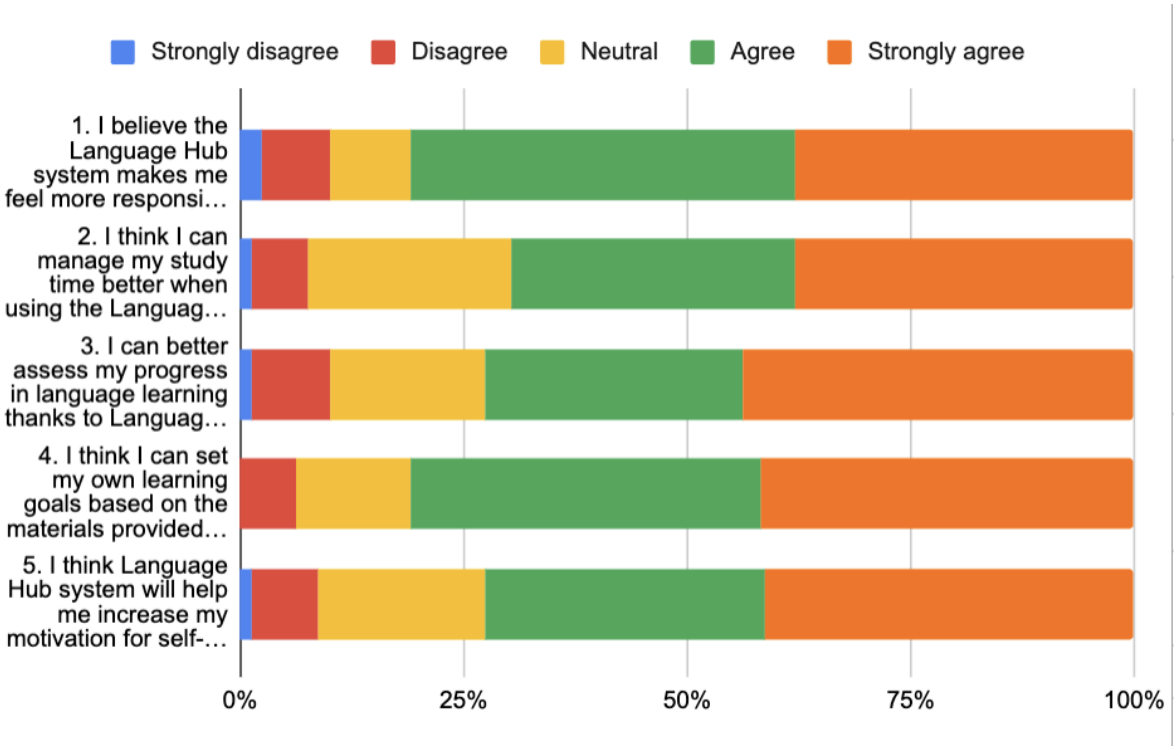


The survey results indicate that students are comfortable and familiar with technology in educational contexts. Specifically, 51.2% of participants agreed, and 32.5% strongly agreed that they are comfortable using technology for educational purposes. Additionally, 45% reported frequently using devices such as computers and smartphones for learning, while 27.4% strongly agreed with this statement. Furthermore, 43.8% indicated agreement regarding their experience with online learning platforms, complemented by 36.3% who strongly agreed. Notably, 37.5% of respondents felt confident in their ability to adapt to new technological tools, with 42.4% strongly agreeing.

These findings align with existing literature, underscoring the positive impact of technology integration in education on student engagement and learning outcomes (Kuo et al., 2019). The high percentages of agreement reflect an increasing trend among students towards embracing technology as a critical component of their learning process. However, neutral responses suggest that a segment of students may require further support or training to fully leverage technological tools effectively. This highlights the importance of ongoing professional development for educators to enhance students' familiarity and confidence with technology, ultimately improving their learning experiences.

Figure 5.

Students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the Language Hub in enhancing their autonomy in language learning after the intervention



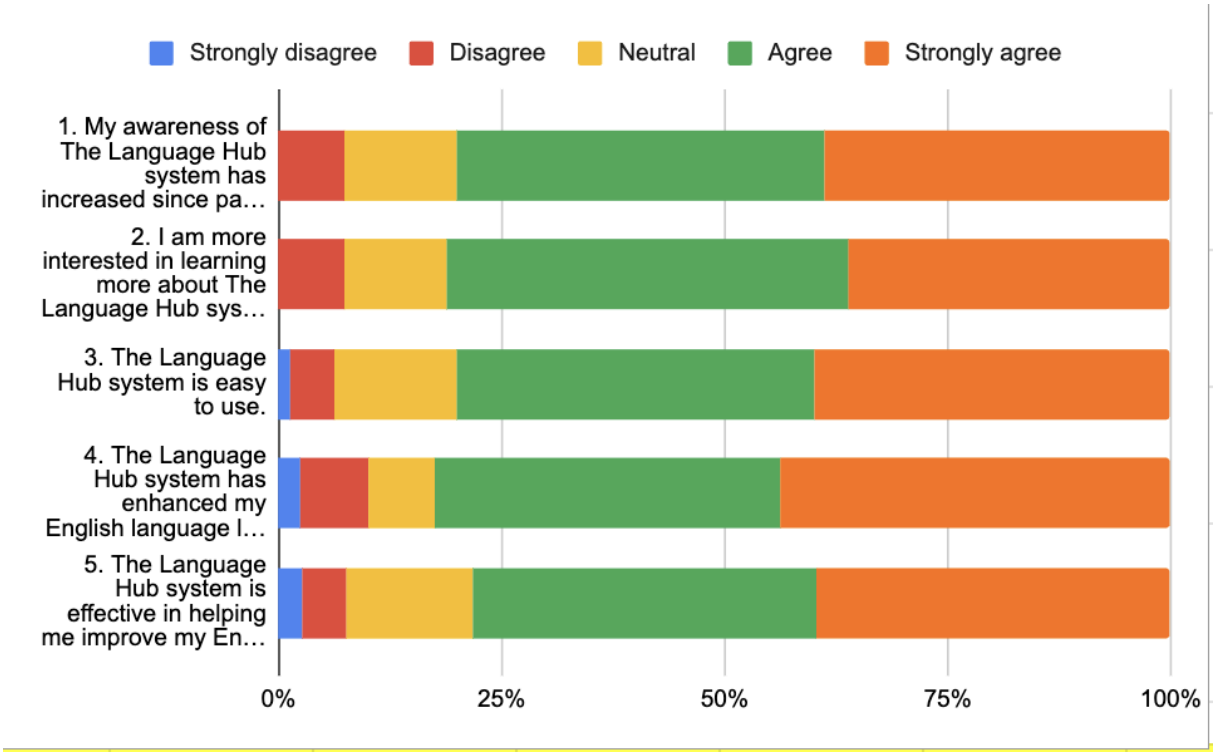
The survey results indicate that a significant majority of students view the Language Hub system as beneficial for enhancing their responsibility and autonomy in their studies. Specifically, 43% agreed and 38% strongly agreed that the system increases their sense of responsibility. Additionally, 38% strongly believe it helps them manage their study time effectively, with 31.6% also agreeing.

Moreover, 43.8% of respondents feel they can better assess their language learning progress due to the Language Hub, 41.7% believe they can set their own learning goals based on the provided materials, and 41.3% feel that the system boosts their motivation for self-study.

These findings align with research by Haleem, Javaid, and Singh (2022), which underscores the role of educational technology in fostering learner autonomy. The positive feedback on responsibility and goal-setting supports Wang and Zhang's (2021) assertion that digital platforms empower students. However, the presence of neutral responses suggests some students may need additional support to maximize the Language Hub's benefits, highlighting its potential to enhance language learning experiences and promote greater learner autonomy.

Figure 6.

Students' perceptions towards The Language Hub System after the intervention



The survey results reveal that students have a favorable perception of the Language Hub system after the intervention. Notably, 41.2% of respondents agreed and 38.8% strongly agreed that their awareness of the Language Hub system has increased. Additionally, 45% expressed a heightened interest in learning more about the system, with 36.2% strongly agreeing. A significant 40% found the system easy to use, further supported by another 40% who strongly agreed. Regarding the learning experience, 38.8% of students agreed that the Language Hub has enhanced their English language learning through personalized environments, and 39.7% believed it effectively aids in improving their overall language proficiency, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar.

These findings align with previous research emphasizing the benefits of digital learning platforms in fostering student engagement and promoting personalized learning experiences (Haleem, Javaid, & Singh, 2022). The positive feedback regarding ease of use and effectiveness in enhancing language proficiency mirrors earlier studies highlighting how accessible technology can facilitate language learning. However, neutral responses suggest that some students may still be navigating their perceptions of the system, indicating a need for continuous support and guidance to maximize its potential. The results underscore the Language Hub's promise to enrich language learning experiences and enhance student autonomy.

Conclusion

According to the findings, the Language Hub system helps vocational students improve their English skills. Students demonstrated considerable improvement in language abilities such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They also displayed enhanced confidence and drive for studying as a result of the usage of technology and the system's extensive online resources.

However, the study does have certain drawbacks. For starters, the sample size is tiny and concentrates on a small number of students from a single university, affecting the data's representativeness. Second, the research needs long-term evaluations of the Language Hub system's impacts, making it difficult to claim its long-term effectiveness. Finally, the lack of in-depth investigation of individual aspects, such as learning motivation and learning styles, lowers the study's comprehensiveness.

To address these limitations, future research should increase the sample size and diversify the participating institutions to improve the representativeness of the findings. Furthermore, conducting long-term reviews will provide insight into the system's long-term effectiveness. Finally, studies should carefully analyze individual aspects that may influence the learning process to generate appropriate measures to improve students' learning outcomes.

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Biodata

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