# A Study of Ho Chi Minh City Tertiary Students' Perceptions and Intentions on Chatgpt's Usage for English Language Learning

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## Abstract

This study investigated the perceptions of 428 first-year tertiary students from 17 universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, representing public, private, and international institutions across different regions. Guided by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), a quantitative survey using a 22-item Likert-scale questionnaire examined two key dimensions: Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) and Perceived Usefulness (PU). Results revealed high overall agreement, with students recognizing ChatGPT as a convenient and effective tool for language learning, particularly in writing tasks, idea organization, and summarization of complex texts. Students valued its ability to enhance productivity, autonomy, and engagement in their learning. However, concerns emerged regarding overdependence, potential reduction in critical thinking, and long-term academic integrity issues, as students prioritized immediate benefits over sustained learning outcomes. These findings suggest that while ChatGPT holds significant promise in supporting tertiary-level language education, its integration should be accompanied by structured guidance, digital literacy training, and clear ethical frameworks to ensure responsible, effective, and sustainable use.

**Keywords:** AI, Chatgpt, English Language Learning, Ho Chi Minh City Tertiary Students, Language Learning Tool, Students' Perceptions and Intentions

## Introduction

ChatGPT, an AI-driven application, has rapidly gained attention in education due to its versatile capabilities in supporting language learning. In Vietnam, English instruction at the tertiary level continues to be dominated by traditional teacher-centered approaches emphasizing memorization and exam preparation (Edusynch, 2024). These methods often fail to meet individual learning needs in large classrooms, where personalized feedback is limited. As a result, students struggle to develop communicative competence, academic writing skills, and learner autonomy (Su & Yang, 2023). Teachers also face challenges with time and resources, leading to a "one-size-fits-all" model that neither challenges advanced students nor sufficiently supports weaker learners (Rudolph et al., 2023; Shah, 2021). The lack of timely feedback further reduces motivation and engagement. This context highlights the urgent need for more personalized, interactive, and effective learning methods (Slamet, 2024).

This study addresses this gap by examining first-year Vietnamese students' perceptions of ChatGPT, offering insights that can inform effective and ethical integration of AI into higher education. This answers the question: What are Ho Chi Minh City tertiary students' perceptions and intentions of using Catgut as a tool for language learning?

## Literature Review

### Understanding ChatGPT and Its Technological Basis

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has profoundly reshaped education, and ChatGPT stands at the forefront of this transformation. Developed by OpenAI and launched in late 2022, ChatGPT rapidly gained 100 million users within two months, reflecting its disruptive potential for education (Thorp, 2023; Quintans-Júnior et al., 2023). Unlike traditional chatbots, ChatGPT leverages Generative Pre-trained Transformer (GPT) architecture, deep learning (DL), and reinforcement learning from human feedback (RLHF) to generate coherent, human-like text while maintaining conversational context (Van et al., 2023; Gill & Kaur, 2023). These features enable ChatGPT to handle follow-up queries, interpret informal inputs, and provide adaptive, near-human interaction, distinguishing it from earlier AI systems (Taecharungroj, 2023).

ChatGPT's capabilities have advanced significantly across versions, from GPT-1 with 117 million parameters to GPT-4 and GPT-4 Turbo, which exhibit enhanced reasoning, semantic comprehension, and efficiency (Vaswani et al., 2017; Taecharungroj, 2023). These iterative improvements position ChatGPT not just as a conversational agent but as a versatile academic assistant capable of supporting writing, summ, arization, translation, and problem-solving (Gill & Kaur, 2023). However, the system's accuracy is only as reliable as its training data, raising concerns about bias, misinformation, and fairness in AI-generated responses (Mhlanga, 2023; Ding et al., 2023). Researchers have documented instances of Chat GPT reflecting gender, racial, and cultural biases (Buolamwini & Gebru, 2018), challenging its credibility as an educational partner.

While ChatGPT demonstrates remarkable linguistic fluency, it lacks human emotional intelligence, nuance, and contextual sensitivity. AI responses may appear authoritative but risk misleading inexperienced learners (Rahaman et al., 2023; Sallam, 2023). This paradox, high linguistic competence but questionable reliability, frames the debate on its integration into education, particularly in language learning, where accuracy and critical interpretation are essential.

### Challenges and Limitations

### Academic Integrity

One of the most debated concerns is ChatGPT's impact on academic integrity. Its ability to generate original-seeming text challenges plagiarism detection systems (Elali & Rachid, 2023). Studies show that AI-detection tools are inconsistent, often misclassifying human-written text as AI-generated or failing to identify advanced GPT outputs. This blurring of authorship raises ethical and policy questions about how AI contributions should be acknowledged (Baron, 2024).

Some scholars advocate treating ChatGPT as a legitimate resource if cited and paraphrased correctly (Neville, 2010; Perkins, 2023). Others argue that uncritical use constitutes plagiarism, threatening the integrity of academic assessment (McCabe, 2023). A middle ground is emerging: educators should teach students to combine AI outputs with critical reflection, thereby fostering originality and ethical use (Cotton et al., 2023; Anderson, 2023). Ultimately, institutions must develop clear policies and pedagogical frameworks that balance AI integration with academic honesty.

### Overreliance and Student Independence

Another recurring theme is overdependence. Studies warn that students' heavy reliance on ChatGPT for simple tasks undermines critical thinking, originality, and independent learning (Kasneci et al., 2023; Abbast et al., 2024). By delegating

assignments to AI, students risk weakening their cognitive engagement, memory retention, and creativity (Bin-Hady et al., 2024; Lukman et al., 2024). Oates and Johnson (2025) stress that ChatGPT must not replace learners' intellectual effort, as such dependence may produce long-term academic gaps.

Educators note that students' enthusiasm for ChatGPT's convenience can become counterproductive, leading to "addiction-like" patterns (Mogavi et al., 2024). This reflects a broader pedagogical dilemma: while AI supports efficiency, it must be carefully integrated to prevent erosion of higher-order thinking skills.

### Reliability and Accuracy

Despite its linguistic fluency, ChatGPT remains limited in accuracy and reliability. Studies identify frequent errors, vague answers, and misleading outputs, especially in specialized or non-English contexts (Meyer et al., 2023; Kohnke et al., 2023). Kusuma et al. (2024, as cited in Hongxia & Razali, 2025) argue that ChatGPT's inconsistent use of academic terminology confuses novice learners, resulting in weaker writing performance.

Biases embedded in training data further compromise reliability. As Mhlanga (2023) and Houston and Corrado (2023) note, ChatGPT often reproduces systemic biases present in its training corpus, raising concerns about fairness and inclusivity. These issues underscore the necessity for students to critically evaluate AI-generated content, cross-check with credible sources, and cultivate digital literacy.

### Critical Synthesis

The literature reflects a paradox: ChatGPT is simultaneously a powerful enabler of learning and a potential threat to academic development. Its strengths lie in accessibility, personalization, and task efficiency, especially for language learners in contexts like Vietnam, where traditional pedagogy limits learner autonomy (Su & Yang, 2023). Through TAM, studies consistently show high levels of perceived ease of use and usefulness, confirming its attractiveness to students (Maheshwari, 2024; Huang & Mizumoto, 2024).

Nevertheless, the limitations are equally salient. Reliability concerns, plagiarism risks, and overreliance highlight the dangers of uncritical adoption (Xu et al., 2024; Kasneci et al., 2023). Students often prioritize short-term productivity over long-term cognitive growth, underscoring the need for structured guidance. The debate on academic integrity remains unresolved, as institutions struggle to adapt policies and plagiarism detection systems to AI's evolving sophistication (Elali & Rachid, 2023; Baron, 2024).

The literature thus converges a central insight: ChatGPT should be framed as a supplementary tool, not a replacement for human effort. When integrated ethically, it fosters learner autonomy, reduces affective barriers, and enhances academic productivity (Biswas, 2023; Pardos & Bhandari, 2023). However, without proper scaffolding, it risks undermining creativity, critical thinking, and originality.

For Vietnam and similar contexts, where students are transitioning into more autonomous tertiary learning, the implications are profound. Policymakers and educators must prioritize AI literacy, ethical training, and balanced integration to maximize benefits while mitigating risks. Future research should move beyond descriptive surveys to experimental studies that measure ChatGPT's actual impact on language proficiency, critical thinking, and long-term learning outcomes.

## Research Methodology

This study uses a quantitative method, using a structured questionaire survey, including 22 items which are measured by using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

### Participants

The participants of the study were 428 tertiary first-year students from three main reagions of Vietnam, including Northen, Middle and Southern. The participants were approached by using convenience sampling technique, a non-probability sampling method that involved selecting participants based on availability and willingness to participate. However, purposive sampling was also applied to ensure the balance of participants across the regions of North, Central, and South.

### Research Instruments

The study employed a structured questionnaire designed in Google Forms, consisting of 22 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). To ensure validity and reliability, three procedures were followed:

1. Content validity was established through the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC). Three lecturers with PhD degrees in linguistics, currently teaching at a private university in Ho Chi Minh City, reviewed the questionnaire for clarity, accuracy, and relevance to the study objectives.

2. Pilot testing was conducted with 30 first-year tertiary students. The internal consistency of the instrument was assessed, and Cronbach's alpha values indicated acceptable reliability.

3. A professional translation agency carried out bilingual translation to produce a Vietnamese version of the survey. This ensured linguistic accuracy and cultural appropriateness, minimizing the risk of misinterpretation among participants with limited English proficiency.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire was distributed to participants online. It comprised two main sections: items measuring students' perceptions of Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) and Perceived Usefulness (PU). Both positive and negative items were included to capture a balanced perspective on ChatGPT usage in language learning.

### Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the data. Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) were calculated to evaluate students' perceptions across the two TAM dimensions (PEOU and PU). Negative items were reverse-coded prior to analysis to maintain consistency in the measurement scale and ensure accurate interpretation of the results.

### Result of the Findings and Discussions

This section presents the findings of the research question based on the data on tertiary students' perceptions of using ChatGPT in language learning. The analysis focuses on three main dimensions: Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), Perceived Usefulness (PU), and students' Intention to Use ChatGPT. Table 1 summarizes the mean scores, standard deviations, and interpretation levels for each dimension. Overall, findings indicate that students hold high perceptions of ChatGPT, recognizing it as an accessible, helpful, and supportive tool for enhancing their language learning experience.

**Table 2** Students' Perception

| Dimension | Mean | S.D. | Interpretations |
|---|---|---|---|
| PEOU | 3.80 | 1.05 | HCMC tertiary students have HIGH perceive ChatGPT's ease of use with much effort or technology knowledge. |
| PU | 3.51 | 1.08 | HCMC tertiary students have HIGH perceptions on ChatGPT's usefulness for English language learning. |
| Intentions | 3.79 | 1.00 | HCMC tertiary students have HIGH intentions of ChatGPT's usage for English language Learning |
| Overall score | 3.70 | 1.04 | HCMC tertiary students' have High perceptions and intentions for using ChatGPT for English language learning. |

The dimension of Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) received the highest mean score (M = 3.80, SD = 1.05), indicating that students generally find ChatGPT simple and accessible without requiring significant technical effort. Perceived Usefulness (PU) recorded the lowest mean score (M = 3.51, SD = 1.08), while students' Intention to Use ChatGPT also showed a high mean score (M = 3.79, SD = 1.00). These results reflect a strong and positive agreement among students regarding ChatGPT's ease of use, usefulness, and their willingness to integrate it into language learning. However, the variations in standard deviations suggest that not all students share the same perceptions of ChatGPT's convenience and utility. Overall, the findings (M = 3.70, SD = 1.04) demonstrate that tertiary students hold a generally positive view of ChatGPT, recognizing it as a practical and supportive tool for enhancing their learning.

**Table 3** Students' Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)

| No | Items | Mean | S.D. | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I can easily and quickly access ChatGPT on my devices | 3.80 | .98 | High |
| 2 | ChatGPT has a user-friendly and simple interface | 3.89 | 1.07 | High |
| **Overall score** | | **3.84** | **1.02** | **High** |

Table 3 reveals that students perceive ChatGPT as highly easy to use (M = 3.84, SD = 1.02), emphasizing its convenience, simplicity, and accessibility for language learning. The highest-rated item highlights the platform's user-friendly interface (M = 3.89, SD = 1.07), enabling smooth interaction without confusion. However, the lowest score (M = 3.72, SD = 1.10) suggests that some students remain less familiar with ChatGPT, likely due to limited exposure or reliance on alternative tools.

**Table 3** Students' Perceived Usefulness (Pu)

| No | Items | Mean | S.D. | Interpretation |
|----|-------|------|------|----------------|
| 1 | I use ChatGPT to support my language learning | 3.46 | 1.05 | High |
| 2 | I often use ChatGPT for language learning | 4.22 | 1.10 | Very High |
| 3 | I find ChatGPT easy to use for language learning tasks | 3.75 | 1.05 | High |
| 4 | I am overly dependent on ChatGPT for language learning, even for simple tasks | 2.71 | 1.29 | Moderate |
| 5 | ChatGPT provides instant responses that enhance my learning experience | 3.82 | .98 | High |
| 6 | Using ChatGPT makes me less willing to think critically about my language learning | 2.81 | 1.27 | Moderate |
| 7 | ChatGPT helps me quickly look up language-related information in context | 3.59 | 1.02 | High |
| 8 | ChatGPT provides relevant and accurate responses according to my requests | 3.69 | 1.04 | High |
| 9 | I often trust ChatGPT's responses without verifying their accuracy | 2.78 | 1.30 | Moderate |
| 10 | ChatGPT serves as a useful tool in improving my writing and speaking skills | 3.76 | 1.03 | High |
| 11 | ChatGPT enhances my ability to construct arguments and express ideas clearly | 4.0 | .99 | High |
| 12 | Relying on ChatGPT too much will negatively impact my academic integrity | 2.90 | 1.20 | Moderate |
| 13 | ChatGPT provides tailored learning experiences based on my input | 3.76 | 1.00 | High |
| 14 | Using ChatGPT makes my language learning process more autonomous | 4.00 | 1.10 | High |
| 15 | ChatGPT helps me engage in language learning in a more interactive way | 3.92 | 1.00 | High |
| 16 | ChatGPT's responses sometimes lack depth and critical analysis, making it difficult to fully trust | 2.81 | 1.12 | Moderate |
| 17 | ChatGPT serves as a language partner in my learning journey | 3.75 | 1.01 | High |
| 18 | ChatGPT enhances my motivation to engage in language learning | 3.86 | 1.05 | High |
| 19 | ChatGPT improves my productivity during language learning activities | 3.70 | 1.11 | High |
| 20 | Using ChatGPT allows me to complete my language assignments more efficiently. | 3.73 | 1.02 | High |
| | **Overall Score** | **3.51** | **1.08** | **High** |

The findings presented in Table 3 reveal that tertiary students in Ho Chi Minh City hold a generally positive perception of ChatGPT's usefulness in supporting their language learning, as reflected in the overall mean score (M=3.51, SD=1.08). This high level of agreement suggests that ChatGPT is widely regarded as a helpful and supportive tool. However, varying degrees of reliance and critical engagement emerge across different aspects of its use.

The strongest perceptions of usefulness are observed in students' reported frequency of use. The item "I often use ChatGPT for language learning" received the highest score (M = 4.22, SD=1.10), indicating that ChatGPT has become a prioritized tool for many students in addressing their language tasks. This finding underscores ChatGPT's growing role as a learning companion, integrated into students' daily academic practices. Similarly, items highlighting autonomy and independent learning, such as "ChatGPT makes my learning process more autonomous" (M=4.00, SD=1.10) and "ChatGPT enhances my ability to construct arguments and express ideas clearly" (M=4.00, SD=0.99), reflect the platform's potential to foster learner autonomy and higher-order thinking. Students not only perceive ChatGPT as useful for basic tasks but also acknowledge its role in supporting more complex language activities like writing, organization, and argument development.

Beyond autonomy, students also recognize ChatGPT's contributions to productivity and efficiency. Items such as "ChatGPT improves my productivity during language learning activities" (M=3.70, SD=1.11) and "Using ChatGPT allows me to complete my language assignments more efficiently" (M=3.72, SD=1.02) demonstrate its practical utility in helping learners save time and complete academic tasks with greater ease. This reflects a pragmatic view of usefulness: ChatGPT is not only perceived as a tool for learning enhancement but also for achieving immediate academic outcomes.

At the same time, students value ChatGPT's ability to deliver accurate, relevant, and interactive responses. Items such as "ChatGPT provides instant responses that enhance my learning experience" (M=3.82, SD=0.98), "ChatGPT provides relevant and accurate responses" (M=3.69, SD=1.04), and "ChatGPT provides tailored learning experiences" (M=3.76, SD=1.00) highlight its role in providing quick, personalized, and context-specific feedback. Moreover, perceptions of engagement and motivation are strongly positive: "ChatGPT helps me engage in language learning in a more interactive way" (M=3.92, SD=1.00) and "ChatGPT enhances my motivation to engage in language learning" (M=3.86, SD=1.05) suggest that students see ChatGPT as more than a tool, it serves as a language partner that sustains interest and encourages active participation.

Nevertheless, the findings also expose limitations and concerns. Several items indicate moderate agreement regarding overreliance and reduced critical thinking. For instance, "I am overly dependent on ChatGPT for language learning, even for simple tasks" (M=2.71, SD=1.29), "Using ChatGPT makes me less willing to think critically" (M=2.81, SD=1.27), and "I often trust ChatGPT's responses without verifying accuracy" (M=2.78, SD=1.30) reveal that while most students acknowledge these risks, a portion of learners may over-trust the tool or use it as a shortcut rather than a complement to deeper learning. Concerns about academic integrity were also moderately noted (M=2.90, SD=1.20), reflecting awareness of potential misuse.

The relatively high standard deviations (ranging from 1.02 to 1.30) indicate diverse responses across the student sample, suggesting that while the majority recognize ChatGPT's usefulness, a notable group of students remain cautious or less convinced about its value. This variance points to differing experiences shaped by factors such as prior exposure, academic discipline, or learning preferences.

As indicated, the findings show that students strongly acknowledge ChatGPT's usefulness in enhancing autonomy, motivation, interactivity, and productivity in language learning. At the same time, they remain aware of the drawbacks of overreliance, lack of depth, and potential threats to academic integrity. This dual perspective emphasizes the importance of guiding students to maximize ChatGPT's benefits while critically managing its limitations. Educators must therefore strike a balance between encouraging innovation and ensuring responsible use, equipping learners with strategies to use ChatGPT as a supportive partner rather than a substitute for critical thinking and academic effort.

**Table 4** Tertiary Students Intentions

| No | Item | Mean | SD | Rating |
|----|------|------|-----|--------|
| 24 | I use ChatGPT to enhance my vocabulary and language comprehension | 3.77 | 1.02 | High |
| 25 | I use ChatGPT to improve my writing skills by receiving instant feedback and corrections | 3.72 | .94 | High |
| 26 | I use ChatGPT to practice conversational skills and improve my fluency | 3.67 | .90 | High |
| 27 | I use ChatGPT to clarify difficult grammar rules and sentence structures | 3.60 | 1.04 | High |
| 28 | I use ChatGPT to generate ideas and organize my thoughts for writing assignments | 3.76 | 1.00 | High |
| 29 | I use ChatGPT to summarize and understand complex texts more effectively | 4.10 | 1.07 | High |
| 30 | I use ChatGPT as a study assistant for exam preparation and academic tasks | 3.89 | 1.00 | High |
| 31 | I use ChatGPT to explore different perspectives and cultural insights in language learning | 3.88 | 1.08 | High |
| | **Overall Score** | **3.79** | **1.00** | **High** |

## Conclusion

This study explored Vietnamese tertiary students' perceptions and intentions toward ChatGPT in language learning through the lens of the Technology Acceptance Model. Findings revealed that students demonstrated a high level of agreement regarding ChatGPT's ease of use, emphasizing its user-friendly interface, accessibility, and minimal technical barriers. Similarly, strong perceptions of usefulness highlighted its value in summarizing complex texts, generating ideas, enhancing writing, and supporting comprehension tasks. Students also expressed clear intentions to adopt ChatGPT for a range of academic purposes, from vocabulary development and grammar clarification to exam preparation and exploring intercultural perspectives. These findings collectively affirm ChatGPT's role as an emerging support system for first-year students transitioning into the demands of higher education.

Nevertheless, the study also underscores potential risks associated with overreliance on ChatGPT, including reduced critical thinking, possible academic misconduct, and challenges in evaluating the reliability of AI-generated outputs. While students acknowledge these

concerns, their preference for short-term academic benefits, such as efficiency and improved performance, remains strong. This highlights the need for educators and institutions to provide clear guidance and digital ethics training to ensure responsible AI use.

In conclusion, ChatGPT has significant potential to enhance language learning in Vietnamese higher education by fostering autonomy, improving productivity, and enriching intercultural understanding. However, its long-term benefits will depend on how effectively students are guided to integrate AI tools responsibly. Universities must therefore balance innovation with integrity, equipping learners with not only technological proficiency but also critical judgment and sustainable academic skills.

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