

Undergraduate Students' Attitudes and Satisfaction in Choosing English Learning Applications

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate undergraduate students' attitudes and satisfaction toward English learning applications and to examine how these factors influence their application selection. The participants consisted of 67 fourth-year English major students at a university in Thailand. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising Likert-scale items and open-ended questions.

The findings revealed that English structure was the most frequently reported learning difficulty among the participants. Google Translate was the most commonly selected application, followed by Grammarly and other applications. Overall, the participants demonstrated positive attitudes and a high level of satisfaction toward English learning applications. The results further indicated that students' attitudes and satisfaction appeared to play a role in their application selection, although some students selected applications that were not fully aligned with their learning problems. These findings are exploratory in nature, and the relationships between attitudes, satisfaction, and application selection warrant further investigation through inferential analysis.

These findings highlight the role of learners' perceptions and experiences in shaping application selection in technology-enhanced language learning contexts and provide practical implications for the effective use of English learning applications.

Keywords: Attitudes, Satisfaction, English learning applications, Technology-enhanced language learning, Application selection

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1. Introduction

In recent years, education has undergone a significant transformation as a result of rapid technological advancement. Learning in the digital era is no longer confined to traditional classroom settings, as various forms of educational technology have enabled more flexible and learner-centered approaches. In particular, educational applications have become increasingly important tools that support learning both inside and outside the classroom, allowing learners to access information, practice skills, and engage in self-directed learning according to their individual needs and pace. In Thailand, recent government policies have further emphasized the integration of modern digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) into education in order to enhance digital competencies and promote lifelong learning (Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation & Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, 2024). These developments highlight the growing role of technology in shaping contemporary learning environments.

Despite these advancements, English language learning in Thailand continues to present challenges for many learners. Previous research has indicated that Thai learners experience difficulties across all four language skills, including writing, reading, listening, and speaking (Prapphal, 2003). Although technological resources have become more widely available, these learning challenges remain evident and continue to affect learners' English proficiency. In response, educational applications have emerged as supportive tools that can help learners address specific learning problems by providing immediate feedback, diverse learning materials, and opportunities for repeated practice beyond the classroom. As a result, learners increasingly rely on such applications to supplement formal instruction and enhance their language learning outcomes.

However, while a wide range of English learning applications is available, the way learners select these applications remains an important issue that has not been fully explored. Rather than using applications randomly, learners may choose specific applications based on their learning problems, attitudes, and prior experiences. The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) suggests that individuals actively select media or technology that they perceive as useful and capable of satisfying their needs, while their level of satisfaction influences continued use. In educational contexts, learners are therefore likely to choose applications that they believe can effectively support their learning goals. In addition, learners' attitudes toward technology play a crucial role in shaping their willingness to adopt and use learning applications (Katz et al., 1974).

Given these considerations, this study aims to investigate undergraduate students' attitudes and satisfaction toward choosing English learning applications and to examine how these factors influence their application selection. Specifically, the study explores students' attitudes toward English learning applications, examines their level of satisfaction with the

applications they select, and investigates whether their application choices are consistent with their English learning problems. It also examines the extent to which students' attitudes and satisfaction significantly influence their selection of English learning applications. By addressing these issues, this study seeks to provide insights into learners' decision-making processes in technology-enhanced language learning and to offer practical implications for the effective use of educational applications in English language education.

Based on the theoretical framework and review of related literature, this study tests the following hypotheses and addresses the following research questions. H1: Undergraduate students demonstrate positive attitudes toward English learning applications. H2: Undergraduate students report a high level of satisfaction with the English learning applications they select. RQ3: To what extent do students' attitudes toward English learning applications influence their application selection behavior? RQ4: To what extent does students' satisfaction with English learning applications influence their continued selection and the use of applications?

2. Literature review

2.1 Applications in English Language Learning

With the rapid development of technology, applications have become increasingly important tools in English language teaching and learning, supporting both formal and informal learning environments. These applications enable learners to access learning materials, practice language skills, and receive immediate feedback beyond the classroom, thereby promoting learner autonomy and continuous learning. Features such as multimedia content, interactive exercises, and real-time feedback allow learners to engage with language learning in flexible and personalized ways, which can enhance motivation and learning effectiveness.

Stockwell (2010) emphasized that mobile technologies provide learners with flexible opportunities to engage in language learning beyond the classroom. However, the effectiveness of such technologies depends on how learners select and use them to support their learning needs. This suggests that learners play an active role in choosing appropriate technological tools, which is highly relevant to the selection of English learning applications in the present study.

Various types of applications have been developed to support different aspects of English language learning. For example, writing support applications such as Grammarly assist learners in improving grammatical accuracy, vocabulary use, and sentence structure by providing automated feedback (Fahmi & Rachmijati, 2021). Dictionary-based applications also play an important role in supporting vocabulary development and pronunciation practice. Vocabulary learning has long been recognized as a fundamental component of language

acquisition (Nation, 2001), while mobile technologies enable learners to access learning tools and practice language skills beyond the classroom (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008; Stockwell, 2010). In addition, mobile applications have been widely used to improve speaking skills, with tools such as video communication platforms, messaging applications, and AI-driven chatbots enabling learners to practice communication in interactive and authentic contexts (Huang et al., 2025). These applications not only support skill development but also encourage learners to take an active role in managing their own learning process.

Empirical studies further demonstrate the effectiveness of such applications in enhancing English language learning. Koowuttayakorn and Taylor (2022) found that learners reported high levels of satisfaction and motivation when using a mobile application for English proficiency test preparation, particularly when the application was perceived as useful and relevant to their learning goals. Similarly, research has shown that learners tend to hold positive attitudes toward mobile-assisted language learning, perceiving applications as convenient, motivating, and effective in supporting independent learning (Thedpitak & Somphong, 2021). However, despite these benefits, challenges such as usability issues, limited access to technology, and distractions may affect learners' experiences and the effectiveness of application use (Huang et al., 2025). These findings suggest that while applications play a significant role in language learning, their effectiveness depends on how learners perceive and utilize them.

2.2 Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratifications Theory, proposed by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974), explains how individuals actively select media to satisfy their specific needs. Unlike traditional perspectives that view users as passive recipients, this theory emphasizes that users are active decision-makers who choose media based on their personal goals, expectations, and motivations. In this view, media use is purposive and driven by individuals' needs to obtain information, solve problems, or achieve personal satisfaction.

Previous research has highlighted the importance of satisfaction and perceived usefulness in technology adoption and continued usage. Rauniar et al. (2014) suggested that factors such as perceived usefulness, ease of use, content quality, and overall user experience significantly influence user satisfaction and sustained engagement with digital applications. In educational contexts, learners tend to select learning technologies that they perceive as effective in addressing their learning needs. Sural and Yazici (2018) found that learners who were able to personalize their learning environments reported higher levels of satisfaction and demonstrated improved learning performance.

These findings indicate that learners' satisfaction and perceptions of usefulness play a crucial role in shaping their technology selection and usage behavior. In the context of English language learning, learners are therefore likely to choose applications that they perceive as

helpful, convenient, and relevant to their learning problems. The Uses and Gratifications Theory is thus appropriate for explaining how learners select English learning applications and how their satisfaction influences continued use (Katz et al., 1974).

2.3 Theoretical Framework: An Integrated Approach

This study draws on two complementary theoretical perspectives to explain how learners select and continue to use English learning applications: the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Rather than applying these frameworks in isolation, the present study proposes an integrated model in which attitude, the central construct of TPB, functions as the mechanism through which learners evaluate whether a given application will satisfy their learning needs, the central concern of UGT.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory, originally proposed by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974), posits that individuals are active agents who purposefully select media or technology to fulfill specific psychological or functional needs. Applied to English language learning, this framework suggests that learners do not choose applications passively or randomly; rather, they evaluate available tools and select those that they expect will address their particular learning challenges, in this study, primarily difficulties with English grammatical structure. Satisfaction, within this framework, represents post-use confirmation that an application has successfully met the learner's anticipated needs, thereby reinforcing continued selection and use.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) complements this account by explaining the cognitive processes that shape selection behavior before use occurs. According to Ajzen (1991), attitude, defined as an individual's evaluative disposition toward a behavior, is a direct antecedent of behavioral intention and, subsequently, actual behavior. In the context of technology-enhanced language learning, a learner who holds a positive attitude toward English learning applications is more likely to develop the intention to use them and to act on that intention. Attitude thus functions as a pre-selection filter: it determines which applications a learner is motivated to try in the first place.

Taken together, the two frameworks provide a temporally sequenced and theoretically coherent account of learner behavior. Attitude (TPB) shapes the initial decision to engage with an application, while perceived need-satisfaction (UGT) governs continued and repeated selection. This integrated perspective allows the present study to examine not only whether students use English learning applications, but also why they choose specific applications and what sustains their usage behavior over time. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework guiding this study.

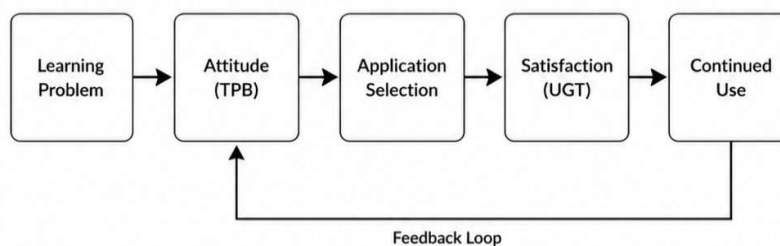


Figure 1 conceptual framework of students' selection and continued use of English learning applications.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate undergraduate students' attitudes and satisfaction toward choosing English learning applications and to examine how these factors influence their application selection. A questionnaire was used as the primary instrument to collect data on students' perceptions, experiences, and application usage. The design was appropriate for examining relationships among variables, including attitudes, satisfaction, and application selection.

3.2 Participants

The participants consisted of 67 fourth-year undergraduate students majoring in English at a university in Western Thailand. These students were selected using a purposive sampling method, as they had prior experience in using English learning applications and were considered capable of providing relevant information for the study. All participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the research.

3.3 Research Instrument

The primary research instrument was a structured questionnaire developed based on concepts of English learning applications, attitudes, and satisfaction derived from previous studies. The instrument was adapted and refined to ensure its relevance and alignment with the research objectives and hypotheses. The content validity of the questionnaire was reviewed by three experts in English language education and educational technology, who evaluated each item for clarity, appropriateness, and alignment with the research objectives. Based on their feedback, items were revised accordingly prior to administration. A pilot administration was not conducted owing to the small population size; the full sample was therefore used for data collection.

The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and open-ended questions and was divided into three main parts. Part 1 collected demographic information and data related to students' English learning problems and application usage. Part 2 measured students' attitudes toward English learning applications, and Part 3 assessed students' satisfaction with

the applications they selected. Parts 2 and 3 employed a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The questionnaire was administered online using Google Forms, which facilitated efficient data collection and accessibility for participants. The open-ended section also allowed participants to provide additional information regarding their application usage and learning experiences.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected during the academic semester through the distribution of the questionnaire to the participants. The researcher explained the purpose of the study and provided instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. Participants were given sufficient time to respond, and all completed questionnaires were collected for analysis. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality of the participants' responses was ensured.

3.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize students' demographic information, English learning problems, patterns of application usage, and responses to the attitude and satisfaction scales.

To address the research questions, the relationships between students' attitudes, satisfaction, and application selection were examined descriptively. Mean scores and frequency distributions were used to identify patterns and tendencies in students' application selection behavior in relation to their reported attitudes and satisfaction levels.

4. Findings

4.1 English Learning Problems

The results indicate that English structure was the most frequently reported learning problem among the participants, accounting for 61.2% of responses, followed by vocabulary (22.4%), writing (10.4%), and pronunciation (6%) (see Table 1). These findings suggest that grammatical and structural aspects of English remain the primary difficulty for undergraduate English majors, which may influence their selection of learning applications.

Table 1 English learning problems among participants ($n = 67$)

Learning Problem	n	%
English structure problems	41	61.2
English vocabulary problems	15	22.4
English writing problems	7	10.4
English pronunciation problems	4	6.0
Total	67	100.0

4.2 Application Selection

The results show that Google Translate was the most commonly selected application, used by 67.2% of participants, followed by Grammarly (19.4%) and other applications (11.9%) (see Table 2). This indicates that students tend to prefer applications that provide immediate support for understanding and translating English, particularly when dealing with structural difficulties.

Table 2 English learning applications selected by participants ($n = 67$)

Applications	n	%
Google Translate	45	67.2
Grammarly	13	19.4
Other applications	8	11.9
U-Dictionary	1	1.5
Total	67	100.0

4.3 Attitudes

Participants demonstrated overall positive attitudes toward English learning applications, with a mean score of 3.94, indicating agreement (see Table 3). The highest-rated item was the belief that applications are essential for learning English ($M = 4.67$), followed by their role in increasing confidence ($M = 4.50$).

Table 3 students' attitudes toward English learning applications ($n = 67$)

Attitude items	M	S.D.
Applications are essential for learning English today	4.67	0.52
Applications can help increase confidence in learning	4.50	0.75
Students can apply knowledge from applications to learning	4.00	1.15
Applications help students become more active in learning	3.32	0.89
Applications can act as a complete human replacement	3.22	0.92
Overall mean	3.94	0.84

This finding is further supported by participants' responses. One participant stated that "*the application is a tool for modern and fast learning that everyone can easily access*" (Participant 11). Another participant noted that "*we can learn English whenever it is convenient for us, which helps improve our language skills*" (Participant 17).

4.4 Satisfaction

The results also revealed a high level of satisfaction, with an overall mean score of 4.26 (see Table 4). The highest-rated factor was convenience and ease of use ($M = 4.61$), suggesting that usability plays a key role in students' continued use.

Table 4 students' satisfaction with English learning applications (n = 67)

Satisfaction Items	M	S.D.
The convenience and ease of use of the applications	4.61	0.59
Students can understand how to use the applications	4.49	0.58
The applications save time	4.47	0.64
The applications meet learners' needs	4.13	0.75
The applications provide accurate results	3.61	0.76
Overall mean	4.26	0.66

This finding is further supported by participants' responses. One participant noted that *"the application helps save time in completing tasks"* (Participant 40), while another stated that *"the application is reliable and helps improve English language skills"* (Participant 27).

5. Discussion

This study aimed to investigate undergraduate students' attitudes and satisfaction toward choosing English learning applications and to examine how these factors influence their application selection. The findings, interpreted through an integrated framework combining the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz et al., 1974) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), provide several important insights into students' English learning behavior in a technology-enhanced learning environment.

5.1 English Learning Problems and Application Selection

The results revealed that English grammatical structure was the most frequently reported learning problem among the participants, identified by 61.2% of respondents. This finding suggests that structural and grammatical aspects of English remain challenging even for undergraduate students majoring in English, and it has direct implications for understanding how learners approach application selection.

In response to these structural difficulties, students tended to select applications that provide immediate and accessible support. Google Translate was chosen by 67.2% of participants, making it the most commonly used application in this study. This behavior reflects a problem-driven approach to technology use, consistent with the UGT premise that individuals actively select tools they expect will address their specific needs (Katz et al., 1974). Within this framework, the selection of Google Translate can be understood as an attempt to manage the immediate communicative demands posed by structural difficulties, obtaining a translation or paraphrase when faced with an unfamiliar structure, rather than as a deliberate strategy for long-term grammatical development.

5.2 The Attitude-Gratification Misalignment

One of the most theoretically significant findings of this study is the apparent misalignment between participants' primary learning problem and their application selection behavior. Although 61.2% of participants identified English grammatical structure as their

main learning difficulty, only 19.4% selected Grammarly, which is an application specifically designed to support grammatical accuracy, while 67.2% relied on Google Translate, a general-purpose translation tool. This divergence between diagnosed learning needs and actual tool selection warrants careful examination.

From the UGT perspective, this pattern suggests that the gratifications learners seek do not necessarily align with their stated learning objectives. Rather than seeking applications that develop grammatical competence, participants appear to prioritize immediate functional gratification, specifically, fast and accessible translation support when confronted with structural difficulties. This distinction between sought and obtained gratifications is a well-recognized phenomenon in UGT research (Rubin, 1983), and its presence in this educational context suggests that learners may conflate task completion with language learning.

The integrated theoretical framework proposed in this study offers an additional explanatory layer. Within the TPB (Ajzen, 1991), attitude shapes behavioral intention before use occurs. The high satisfaction scores recorded for convenience and ease of use ($M = 4.61$) and time-saving ($M = 4.47$) suggest that participants' attitudes toward Google Translate are shaped primarily by usability perceptions rather than pedagogical effectiveness. This is consistent with prior findings that learners evaluate educational technology primarily on accessibility and interface quality rather than long-term learning outcomes (Rauniar et al., 2014). The implication is that positive attitudes, while predictive of adoption, do not guarantee pedagogically optimal selection.

This finding has important practical implications. If learners consistently select applications based on usability and immediate gratification rather than alignment with their learning needs, educators must play a more active role in guiding application selection. Teachers may need to explicitly address not only how to use English learning applications, but also why certain applications are more appropriate for specific learning goals. Similarly, developers may consider integrating explicit scaffolding features such as guidance linking user-identified learning problems to relevant application functions to redirect engagement toward more pedagogically productive behavior.

5.3 Attitudes toward English Learning Applications

The results demonstrated that students held positive attitudes toward English learning applications overall ($M = 3.94$). Students perceived applications as essential tools for learning English ($M = 4.67$) and as sources of increased confidence in language use ($M = 4.50$). This finding is consistent with the TPB (Ajzen, 1991), which posits that attitudes influence individuals' behavioral intentions and decisions. In this context, positive attitudes toward applications likely encouraged students to adopt and actively use these tools as part of their learning process.

These findings also align with previous research indicating that Thai EFL learners generally hold favorable perceptions of mobile-assisted language learning, viewing applications as convenient, motivating, and supportive of independent learning (Thedpitak & Somphong, 2021). However, when considered alongside the misalignment identified in Section 5.2, the present findings suggest a nuance worth noting: positive attitudes predict adoption but do not determine whether the applications selected are well-matched to learners' actual learning needs. Attitude formation, in this study, appears to be driven more by general perceptions of utility and accessibility than by careful evaluation of pedagogical fit.

5.4 Satisfaction and Continued Use

Students reported a high level of satisfaction with English learning applications ($M = 4.26$), particularly in terms of convenience and ease of use ($M = 4.61$). This suggests that usability is a key factor influencing continued engagement with learning technologies. These findings support prior research indicating that perceived usefulness and ease of use contribute significantly to user satisfaction and sustained technology adoption (Rauniar et al., 2014). When applications effectively meet learners' needs, even at the level of immediate functional needs, satisfaction increases and continued use is reinforced.

Within the UGT framework, satisfaction functions as post-use confirmation that an application has met anticipated needs, thereby reinforcing continued selection and use (Katz et al., 1974). The high satisfaction scores observed in this study are therefore consistent with the theoretical prediction that gratification-fulfillment sustains media engagement. Notably, the lowest-rated satisfaction item was the accuracy of results provided by applications ($M = 3.61$), suggesting that while learners are satisfied with the convenience and speed of available applications, they remain aware of limitations in output quality. This awareness, however, does not appear to significantly reduce overall satisfaction or continued use, which underscores the dominant role that convenience plays in shaping learners' application behavior.

5.5 Overall Summary

Taken together, the descriptive findings suggest that attitudes and satisfaction are associated with students' selection and continued use of English learning applications, supporting the integrated theoretical framework proposed in this study. However, as this study is exploratory in nature, the direction and strength of these relationships require confirmation through inferential statistical analysis in future research.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated undergraduate students' attitudes and satisfaction toward choosing English learning applications and examined how these factors influence their application selection. The findings revealed that students experienced various English

learning problems, with English structure identified as the most prominent difficulty. In response to these challenges, students tended to select applications that provided immediate and practical support, particularly Google Translate.

The results further demonstrated that students held positive attitudes toward English learning applications and reported a high level of satisfaction, especially in terms of convenience and ease of use. These findings indicate that applications play an important role in supporting English language learning beyond the classroom. Moreover, the study suggested that both attitudes and satisfaction appeared to be associated with students' selection and continued use of English learning applications. Overall, the findings highlight that learners actively and purposefully choose applications based on their learning needs, perceptions, and experiences.

6.1 Implications of the Study

The findings of this study offer several important implications for English language learning and teaching.

For students, the results suggest that selecting applications that align with specific learning problems can enhance learning effectiveness. Learners should be encouraged to critically evaluate and choose applications that best support their individual needs rather than relying solely on convenience.

For teachers, the findings indicate that English learning applications can be effectively integrated into teaching practices as supplementary learning tools. Teachers may guide students in selecting appropriate applications, particularly for addressing common difficulties such as English structure and vocabulary. Providing recommendations and training on effective application use can further enhance learning outcomes.

For application developers, the results emphasize the importance of designing applications that are user-friendly, reliable, and responsive to learners' needs. Features such as ease of use, accuracy, and immediate feedback are essential in increasing user satisfaction and sustained engagement.

6.2 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the participants were drawn from a single university and a specific academic program, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could include a larger and more diverse sample from different institutions and academic backgrounds.

Second, this study relied primarily on self-reported data obtained through questionnaires, which may be subject to response bias. Future studies may incorporate additional data collection methods, such as interviews or experimental designs, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of learners' behaviors.

Additionally, formal reliability testing, such as Cronbach's alpha coefficient, was not conducted in this study. Future research should incorporate reliability and validity indices to strengthen the psychometric properties of the instrument.

Finally, this study focused on attitudes and satisfaction as key factors influencing application selection. Future research could examine other variables, such as learning performance, motivation, or digital literacy, to further explore the effectiveness of English learning applications.

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