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A Case Study on Using ChatGPT for English Writing and Speaking Classes: Focused on Seventh Grade Students*

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This case study investigates the integration of ChatGPT in seventh-grade English writing and speaking instruction over a four-week period with 130 Korean EFL students. Data were collected through comprehensive questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and systematic classroom observations to assess implementation effectiveness. Quantitative analysis using a five-point Likert scale revealed strong attitudinal benefits, with students rating class participation highest, followed by content understanding and learning interest. Language skill perceptions, particularly speaking abilities, showed more moderate improvement. Qualitative findings demonstrated ChatGPT's dual functionality: first, as a comprehensible input provider delivering personalized, level-appropriate responses aligned with Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985); second, as an interaction catalyst facilitating peer negotiation of meaning consistent with Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1981). Students reported significantly reduced anxiety in ChatGPT-mediated activities compared to traditional instruction, attributing increased participation to the absence of peer judgment and evaluation pressure. Collaborative activities positioned ChatGPT as a shared resource generating authentic peer-to-peer communication opportunities. Results indicate ChatGPT's immediate impact centers on affective factors and peer interaction facilitation rather than direct skill development outcomes. This study provides empirical evidence for AI integration in EFL contexts, demonstrating how generative AI effectively addresses authentic communication

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challenges while supporting the 2022 revised English curriculum's emphasis on integrated, competency-based learning.

[ChatGPT/English as a foreign language/writing/speaking/perception]

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of generative artificial intelligence, particularly large language models like ChatGPT, has fundamentally transformed educational landscapes worldwide (Lo et al., 2024). With over one hundred million users within two months of its launch, ChatGPT represents a paradigm shift in how students access information, generate content, and engage with learning materials (Hu, 2023). This transformation is particularly pronounced in English as a foreign language (EFL) context, where authentic interaction opportunities are limited.

The 2022 revised English curriculum announced in December 2022 emphasizes the implementation of competencies-based education, shifting away from the traditional skill-based framework of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, to be reorganized into two areas: 'Reception' and 'Production'. This change reflects the understanding that the four skills are interconnected and used collaboratively for interaction, emphasizing integrated learning both within and across these areas. 'Reception' includes listening and reading, while 'Production' encompasses speaking and writing. The curriculum emphasizes the development of teaching, learning, and assessment methods that consider digital and AI educational environments (Sung & Jo, 2023). This policy shift reflects a growing recognition that artificial intelligence tools, when properly integrated, can address longstanding challenges in EFL education, particularly the scarcity of authentic communicative contexts that Korean learners face in their daily lives.

Many schools and universities are already utilizing AI to help students better understand learning contexts (Bonner et al., 2023). Among these applications, ChatGPT has recently gained attention as an EdTech tool that can help move away from standardized education focused on memorization and rote answers. Recognizing this potential, regional education offices are providing in service teacher training and support for classes that incorporate ChatGPT. English lesson materials utilizing ChatGPT have been developed and distributed for English teachers across various educational levels.

Despite the growing interest in ChatGPT integration, there remains a significant research gap regarding its practical implementation in Korean middle school contexts. Most existing studies have focused on university level learners (Alwasidi & Al Khalifah, 2025; Im, 2023) or theoretical applications, leaving questions about how ChatGPT can be effectively

integrated into secondary education where students have varying levels of English proficiency and digital literacy. Middle school students, typically aged 12-15, represent a unique population with distinct developmental characteristics, learning needs, and technological competencies that differ from both elementary and university students.

Students often exhibit high anxiety about speaking English due to fear of making mistakes in front of peers and concerns about grammatical or pronunciation accuracy. These contextual factors create both obstacles and potential benefits for ChatGPT integration, as the tool might provide low anxiety practice opportunities while also requiring careful pedagogical design to ensure meaningful learning.

This study addresses these gaps by investigating the practical application of ChatGPT in seventh grade English writing and speaking classes over a four-week period. The research examines not only the implementation process but also the multifaceted perceptions of both students and teachers. This study employs a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to provide insights into the pedagogical integration of ChatGPT into EFL writing and speaking instruction. The study examines student perceptions across multiple dimensions, including skill development, attitudes, and engagement; teacher observations of implementation challenges and opportunities; and the alignment of ChatGPT-mediated learning with established second language acquisition (SLA) theories.

The research questions are as follows:

1. How can ChatGPT be integrated into teaching the productive areas of English—speaking and writing?
2. What are the perceptions of students and the teacher regarding ChatGPT integrated lessons?

The significance of the research lies in its practical, classroom-based approach that provides evidence-based guidance for educators seeking to integrate AI tools in ways that support both language development and learner motivation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Theoretical Framework

The integration of artificial intelligence in language learning must be grounded in established theories of second language acquisition. Two foundational frameworks are particularly relevant to understanding how ChatGPT might support language development: Krashen’s Input Hypothesis and Long’s Interaction Hypothesis. These theories, while

developed in pre digital contexts, provide valuable lenses for examining how AI tools can facilitate language acquisition processes.

Krashen's Input Hypothesis posits that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed comprehensible input slightly beyond their current proficiency level, conceptualized as "i+1" (Krashen, 1985). According to this theory, acquisition happens subconsciously when learners focus on meaning rather than form, and when they receive input that is both understandable and interesting. This framework positions learners as recipients of linguistic data that becomes internalized subconsciously (Lichtman & VanPatten, 2021). The hypothesis emphasizes that acquisition cannot be forced through conscious learning or explicit instruction alone, but rather emerges naturally from exposure to meaningful, comprehensible language in context.

The relevance to ChatGPT becomes apparent when considering the tool's ability to adjust its language complexity based on user input and provide personalized, contextually relevant responses. Unlike static textbook materials that present identical content to all learners regardless of proficiency level, ChatGPT can dynamically calibrate its output to match individual learner levels, potentially providing optimal "i+1" input. When a student poses a question using simple vocabulary and basic grammar, ChatGPT typically responds at a similar level while introducing slightly more sophisticated elements. Conversely, when advanced learners use complex language, ChatGPT can match and extend that complexity, maintaining the optimal challenge level that Krashen identifies as crucial for acquisition.

Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1981, 2014) argues that negotiation for meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers interaction adjustments by the native speaker or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities (particularly selective attention), and output in productive ways (Lorincz, 2014). This framework emphasizes active learner participation in making input comprehensible through conversational interaction. Long proposes that when communication breakdowns occur, the negotiation processes used to resolve these breakdowns—such as clarification requests, confirmation checks, and comprehension checks—draw learners' attention to linguistic form in ways that promote acquisition.

The relevance to ChatGPT lies in the tool's conversational capabilities that enable the type of negotiation for meaning that Long identifies as crucial for acquisition. When students interact with ChatGPT, they can request clarification when they encounter unfamiliar vocabulary or unclear explanations, receive reformulations that present the same content in different linguistic forms, and engage in extended exchanges that mirror natural conversation patterns. ChatGPT's ability to maintain conversational context across multiple turns allows for the kind of sustained interaction that creates opportunities for negotiation of meaning. When a student's question is unclear or ambiguous, ChatGPT often asks for clarification, modeling the negotiation strategies that characterize effective communication.

Both theories acknowledge comprehensible input as fundamental to SLA, sharing the premise that meaningful communication should prioritize over form focused instruction (Loi & Franken, 2010). However, they differ fundamentally in their conceptualization of acquisition mechanisms. Krashen's model represents a unidirectional input driven process, while Long's theory proposes a bidirectional, socially mediated model where learners actively negotiate meaning to render input comprehensible (Schinke Llano & Vicars, 1993). These differences have important implications for how we understand and implement AI mediated language learning. Effective language acquisition benefits from rich comprehensible input combined with opportunities for negotiated meaning making, reflecting the complex, multifaceted nature of second language development (Gass & Mackey, 2020). This integrated view aligns well with ChatGPT's dual affordances as both an input source and an interaction partner.

This research examines how ChatGPT functions within both frameworks simultaneously—as a provider of comprehensible input and as an interactive partner that enables negotiation of meaning. The dual theoretical lens allows for a more nuanced understanding of ChatGPT's pedagogical affordances and helps explain why the tool might support some aspects of language learning more effectively than others.

2. Impact of ChatGPT in EFL Classes

The integration of artificial intelligence tools, particularly ChatGPT, into EFL education has emerged as a transformative force since its launch in late 2022. Research demonstrates that ChatGPT significantly supports EFL teachers in four primary areas: innovative teaching content creation, collaborative instructional strategies, effective assessment development, and language proficiency improvement (Asad et al., 2024). Teachers report using ChatGPT for lesson planning, exercise creation for lexical skills, text understanding monitoring, and developing speaking and listening activities (Stognieva, 2024). These applications suggest that ChatGPT functions not merely as a student facing tool but as a comprehensive pedagogical resource that can enhance multiple aspects of language instruction.

Research by Kohnke et al. (2023) shows effectiveness in generating input materials for reading and listening practices while creating individualized opportunities for speaking and writing skill development. Studies indicate notable congruence between ChatGPT and established theoretical frameworks in language education, including constructivist learning principles, communicative language instruction, and task-based learning approaches (Guo & Wang, 2024). Kim (2024) demonstrates that Korean EFL learners showed statistically significant improvement in reading comprehension and top-down processing skills when using ChatGPT as a supplementary learning tool over an eight-week period. These findings suggest that ChatGPT's benefits may extend across multiple language skills, though the

magnitude and nature of these benefits may vary depending on implementation approach and skill area.

Multiple studies demonstrate ChatGPT's positive impact on EFL writing skills specifically. Khampusaen (2025) conducted research with thirty undergraduate students to investigate ChatGPT's impact on the development of EFL students' argumentative writing. Quantitative analysis revealed significant improvements in writing performance, particularly in academic integrity, argument construction, evidence integration, and academic voice. Asad et al. (2024) use a literature review to analyze the use of ChatGPT in English classes. It compiles existing knowledge and information. available regarding the views and integration of ChatGPT in English writing pedagogy Writing instruction emerged as a particularly strong area of student satisfaction across multiple studies. The results suggest strong potential for transforming English writing instruction by enabling personalized feedback, improving language proficiency, and addressing issues related to student creativity and data privacy. Ting and Jumaat (2024) find that students perceived ChatGPT's assistance valuable for comprehending research trends, generating writing ideas, and improving overall composition quality. Students reported that ChatGPT helped them overcome writer's block, provided models of well-structured paragraphs, and offered vocabulary suggestions that enhanced their expression. However, concerns about over reliance and academic integrity also emerged, suggesting the need for careful pedagogical framing of ChatGPT as a learning aid rather than a replacement for student thinking and effort.

Beyond skill development, research consistently demonstrates ChatGPT's positive impact on learner motivation and engagement. Ibrahim and Kirkpatrick (2024) found that ChatGPT enhanced student motivation and provided personalized learning experiences in English as a Second Language (ESL) writing contexts, with students reporting increased willingness to engage with writing tasks and greater persistence in the face of challenges. The interactive, responsive nature of ChatGPT appears to create a low anxiety environment where students feel comfortable experimenting with language without fear of negative evaluation. This finding aligns with research on the affective filter in language learning, which suggests that reducing anxiety and increasing confidence are crucial for creating conditions conducive to acquisition.

However, research also identifies several challenges that must be addressed for successful ChatGPT integration. Hojeij et al. (2024) found that while teachers recognize ChatGPT's potential, they express concerns about over reliance, academic integrity, and the need for proper training. Teachers worry that students might use ChatGPT to complete assignments without genuine learning, simply copying AI generated content and submitting it as their own work. These concerns are not unfounded, as the ease of generating polished text through ChatGPT creates temptations for students to take shortcuts. Establishing clear guidelines about appropriate use, teaching students to cite AI generated content, and designing

assignments that require critical thinking beyond what ChatGPT can provide as important strategies for addressing these concerns.

While existing research provides valuable insights into ChatGPT's potential in EFL education, several gaps remain that this study addresses. First, most studies focus on university students, with limited investigation of younger learners in middle school contexts. The developmental, cognitive, and motivational characteristics of 12 to 14-year-old students differ substantially from those of university students, potentially affecting how they interact with and benefit from ChatGPT. Second, few studies examine sustained implementation over multiple weeks, with many relying on single session interventions or brief pilots. Third, research often focuses on single aspects such as writing skills or speaking skills rather than examining productive areas and comprehensive perceptions across skills and attitudes. A more holistic view is needed to understand ChatGPT's full impact on the learning experience.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Research Design

This study employed a mixed methods case study design to investigate the integration of ChatGPT in English writing and speaking classes. The research was conducted over four weeks with seventh grade students at a middle school in Gyeonggi-do. The mixed methods approach allowed triangulation of data, combining quantitative survey results with qualitative insights from interviews and classroom observations. The case study approach was selected because it enables in depth examination of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-world context, particularly when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear (Yin, 2018). The study was conducted over a period of four weeks. During this time, 45-minute ChatGPT-integrated English sessions were held once a week, for a total of four sessions. The classes were co-taught by the first author and English teacher Lee. Students used their own mobile phones to access ChatGPT.

2. Participants

The study involved 130 seventh grade students (approximately 13 years old) enrolled in regular English classes at C middle school in South Korea. All students were native Korean speakers learning English as a foreign language, with proficiency levels ranging from beginner to intermediate according to Korean national curriculum standards. Students had completed approximately four to five years of English education, including elementary school instruction and one semester of middle school study. Their English proficiency varied,

with some students able to engage in basic conversation while others struggled with fundamental grammar and vocabulary.

Students had limited prior exposure to AI based learning tools, though most were familiar with basic internet search engines and translation applications. None of them had experience with systematic ChatGPT integration in academic instruction. This relative unfamiliarity with the tool meant that the study captured initial reactions and learning curves associated with first time use, rather than examining effects among already experienced users.

The first author of this study is a graduate student who completed a teaching practicum at C middle school at the time of research, implementing speaking and writing classes using ChatGPT with a help of an English teacher Lee in C middle school. Teacher Lee is an experienced English teacher with seven years of teaching experience at the middle school level. The teacher had completed professional development training in educational technology. Throughout the four-week period, the first author systematically documented the research classroom observations and teacher reflections, providing an insider perspective on implementation challenges and student responses.

Four students were selected for in-depth interviews based on purposive sampling designed to represent diverse proficiency levels and engagement patterns. The sample included one high proficiency student A who actively participated in class, one high proficiency student B who was typically quiet, one low proficiency student C who showed active participation, and one low proficiency student D who exhibited reluctance toward English learning. This sampling strategy ensured that interview data captured varied perspectives rather than representing only the most successful or enthusiastic students.

3. ChatGPT Integration Activities

The study implemented ChatGPT across both writing and speaking activities, designed to align with curriculum objectives while leveraging ChatGPT's interactive capabilities. To make it easier for students to access, a brief customized prompt was set: "I'm 14 years old and intermediate level. Please use easy words and simple sentences."

The first session utilizing ChatGPT begins with sentence learning activities based on the worksheet within the theme "What's your favorite~". Afterward, students engage in individual conversations with ChatGPT for 15 minutes, starting the interaction with phrases like "Today, let's talk about favorite (e.g., sports, food, color, etc.)" to encourage ChatGPT to ask the question "What is your favorite~?" This prompts students to initiate the conversation using the target expression.

After completing their individual written conversations, each student writes down three memorable sentences from their interactions. If the responses generated by ChatGPT are difficult, students are advised to discuss with their group members to infer the meaning. If

they still find it challenging, they are guided to seek help from the teacher.

Based on the conversations with ChatGPT, each group wrote down interesting or memorable sentences in English that they have shared with ChatGPT during their conversations on their group's hardboard. By sharing these with their group members, they are exposed to various opinions related to the same topic, allowing for the exchange and organization of subjective ideas. Within each group, a presenter was designated to share the group's conversations with others and conduct speaking activities.

In the second session, prior to using ChatGPT, students deepen their understanding of the content learned in the first session by studying the key grammar expression "Because it is ~." to express reasons for their preferences. They are guided to construct sentences with this expression using ChatGPT, with 20 minutes allocated for sufficient conversation. This session encourages students to form at least four sentences, aiming to improve upon the previous session by creating one additional sentence. At the end of the second session, students use the 'DaHaeSseoYo (we are done)' application to upload one memorable sentence they learned, written in English, and to share their impressions of the class.

At the beginning of the third session, students are given 20 minutes to converse with ChatGPT based on sentences learned in the first two sessions. During this time, each group selects keywords for further application. Six different keywords are prepared, and one representative from each group randomly picks a keyword. Group members then have conversations with ChatGPT using that keyword. This activity helps students introduce several reasons for their preferences related to that keyword, and through listening and writing down each group member's reasons, they review the content learned through this activity.

4. Data Collection Methods

1) Quantitative Data: Student Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was administered to all 130 students at the conclusion of the four-week implementation period. The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 5 = *Strongly Agree*) to assess student perceptions across nine dimensions organized into two categories. The first category addressed language skills, including vocabulary improvement, grammar improvement, sentence structure improvement, speaking skill improvement, and writing skill improvement. The second category addressed learning attitudes and engagement, including confidence in speaking English, interest in English learning, understanding of lesson content, and class participation.

The questionnaire was administered in Korean to ensure comprehension, with each item clearly explaining the aspect of ChatGPT use being evaluated. Students completed the

questionnaire anonymously to encourage honest responses, with the teacher emphasizing that responses would not affect grades and would be used only for research purposes. The questionnaire also included an open-ended section where students could provide additional comments about their experiences, though these qualitative responses were not systematically analyzed for this study.

2) Qualitative Data: Interviews

Four students participated in semi structured interviews lasting 20-30 minutes each, conducted in Korean to allow for full expression of thoughts and experiences. The interviewer used an interview protocol with prepared questions while remaining flexible to explore unexpected themes that emerged during conversation. Interview questions explored specific experiences using ChatGPT, asking students to describe memorable interactions and explain what they found helpful or frustrating. Questions probed perceived benefits and challenges, inviting students to compare ChatGPT activities with traditional instruction and reflect on what they had learned. Students were asked about preferences for different activity types, identifying which ChatGPT applications they found most engaging and valuable. Finally, students were invited to offer suggestions for improvement, imagining how ChatGPT integration might be enhanced in future implementations.

The teacher Lee was interviewed using a similar semi structured approach to provide pedagogical insights. The interview with the teacher explored implementation challenges and solutions, asking about technical difficulties, time management issues, and student responses that required instructional adjustments. Questions addressed observed changes in student engagement and performance, with the teacher reflecting on whether and how student participation patterns, English use, and learning behaviors had shifted during the four-week period. The teacher compared ChatGPT integrated instruction with traditional teaching methods, identifying unique affordances and limitations of the AI mediated approach. Finally, the teacher offered recommendations for future integration based on lessons learned during the study.

3) Classroom Observations

Systematic observation notes were maintained throughout the four-week period, documenting student engagement patterns, types of interactions with ChatGPT, technical difficulties and solutions, and peer collaboration dynamics. The first author of this research recorded observations immediately after each class session, noting both typical patterns and notable incidents. Observations captured which students participated actively versus those who remained disengaged, how students formulated prompts and evaluated responses, what

technical problems arose and how they were resolved, and how group dynamics evolved during collaborative activities. These observational data provided contextual information that helped interpret survey and interview findings, revealing implementation details that participants might not articulate in self-reports.

5. Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis involved calculating descriptive statistics including mean scores and standard deviations for each questionnaire item. Comparative analysis examined differences between skill related items and attitude related items, exploring whether students perceived ChatGPT as more beneficial for certain outcomes than others.

Qualitative analysis employed thematic analysis following the procedures outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Interview transcripts and observation notes were read multiple times to achieve familiarity with the data. Initial codes were generated inductively, identifying specific ideas, experiences, and observations mentioned by participants. Codes were then organized into potential themes representing broader patterns across the dataset. Themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the coded data and captured meaningful patterns relevant to the research questions. Finally, themes were defined and named, with clear descriptions of what each theme represented and how it related to the research questions. Key themes were organized around research questions and triangulated with quantitative findings, examining whether qualitative and quantitative data converged on similar conclusions or revealed complementary insights.

The study received approval from the school administration, with the principal reviewing the research proposal and providing permission for implementation. Students were informed that participation was voluntary and would not affect their grades, with the teacher emphasizing that choosing not to complete the questionnaire or participate in interviews would have no negative consequences.

IV. RESULTS

1. Quantitative Results: Student Perceptions

The questionnaire conducted to 130 students revealed generally positive perceptions of ChatGPT integration across all measured dimensions. The overall mean score across all nine items was 3.93 on the five-point Likert scale, indicating that students generally agreed that ChatGPT had positive impacts on their learning experience. However, considerable variation existed across different dimensions, with some aspects receiving higher ratings than others.

This variation provides important insights into ChatGPT's relative strengths and limitations as perceived by student users. The following Table 1 presents the results of students' perceptions of ChatGPT-integrated class.

TABLE 1
Student Perceptions of ChatGPT Integration (*N* = 130)

Item	Survey Question	*M*	*SD*
Q1	Using ChatGPT helped improve my vocabulary	3.88	0.72
Q2	Using ChatGPT helped improve my grammar	3.71	1.23
Q3	Using ChatGPT helped improve my sentence structure	3.91	0.98
Q4	Using ChatGPT helped improve my speaking skills	3.67	1.29
Q5	Using ChatGPT helped improve my writing skills	3.94	0.67
Q6	Using ChatGPT increased my confidence in speaking English	3.78	0.76
Q7	Using ChatGPT increased my interest in learning English	4.05	0.64
Q8	Using ChatGPT helped me understand lesson content better	4.12	0.61
Q9	Using ChatGPT increased my participation in class	4.29	0.58
Overall Mean		3.93	0.70

Note: 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 5 = *Strongly Agree*)*

The highest rated dimension was class participation, with a mean score of 4.29 and the lowest standard deviation (0.58) among all items. This finding indicates that students strongly and consistently agree that ChatGPT increased their participation in class activities. The high rating and low variability suggest that this benefit was experienced broadly across students regardless of proficiency level or initial attitudes toward English learning. Content understanding received the second highest rating at 4.12 with a similarly low standard deviation (0.61), indicating that students felt ChatGPT significantly aided their comprehension of lesson content. Learning interest ranked third at 4.05, suggesting that ChatGPT positively impacted student motivation and engagement with English learning.

The language skill items received moderately positive ratings, with writing skills scoring highest among skill dimensions at 3.94, followed by sentence structure at 3.91, vocabulary at 3.88, speaking confidence at 3.78, and grammar at 3.71. Speaking skills received the lowest rating at 3.67 with the highest standard deviation (1.29) among all items, indicating both lower perceived benefit and greater variability in student experiences. While still above the scale midpoint of 3.0, this pattern suggests that students perceived ChatGPT as less beneficial for direct speaking skill improvement compared to other outcomes.

A notable pattern emerged when comparing language skill items with learning attitude items. The five language skill items (Q1, Q5) averaged 3.82, while the four learning attitude items (Q6, Q9) averaged 4.15. This difference of 0.33 points represents approximately nine percent higher ratings for attitudinal dimensions compared to skill dimensions. The lower standard deviations for attitude also suggest that motivational and engagement benefits were experienced more consistently across students than skill development benefits. This pattern

has important implications for understanding ChatGPT's primary contributions to EFL learning, suggesting that affective impacts may be more immediate and universal than cognitive impacts.

3. Qualitative Results: Student Interviews

Analysis of interview transcripts revealed four major themes that capture students' experiences with ChatGPT integration. These themes help explain why certain quantitative patterns emerged and provide nuanced understanding of how students perceived ChatGPT's role in their learning.

1) ChatGPT as an Input Provider

The first theme identified was ChatGPT as an input provider. Students viewed it as a source of slightly challenging but understandable input. A high proficiency student (Student A) noted that ChatGPT often used advanced vocabulary and complex sentences. This encouraged her to work harder to understand the input and expand her linguistic knowledge.

> Sometimes the English ChatGPT used was difficult, but looking up words in a dictionary helped solve it, and I think that was better. I could also write sentences I learned but didn't fully understand.
>
> (Student A)

One high proficiency student explained that ChatGPT wanted to have a personal English tutor who understood her level and could challenge her appropriately. Conversely, lower proficiency students (Student C, D) appreciated that ChatGPT understood their simple sentences and helped them express ideas more effectively without making them feel inadequate. One lower proficiency student noted that he was worried his English was not good enough, but ChatGPT understood his simple sentences and helped him say things better.

> When I said, my favorite is fall, ChatGPT understood me saying more things like fall is a great season. It really helps me learn how to make a sentence.
>
> (Student C (Low Proficiency))

2) ChatGPT as a Catalyst for Group Activities

The second theme concerned the enhanced group collaboration that ChatGPT facilitated. Students appreciated ChatGPT's role in promoting peer interaction, though they noted that

ChatGPT's responses could be difficult to understand. However, with the help of their group members, students were able to make the input comprehensible.

> When the teacher later gave a simple answer prompt, some students said, "ChatGPT's responses were too long and difficult..."
>
> (Student B)

> When talking with ChatGPT, I had some unfamiliar words, but my group helped me.
>
> (Student D)

English teacher Lee mentioned that there are few cases and studies on learners actively utilizing ChatGPT in real school settings, which raised some concerns. However, after observing the teaching activities from the first to the third lesson, she noted that there were expected learning benefits from using ChatGPT.

> (ChatGPT) allows exposure to colloquial language, and compared to textbooks, its free form nature enables exposure to a much wider variety of vocabulary and sentences. Also, even if the settings are above the learners' current level, it seems possible to grasp students' potential through this, and even in difficult contexts, students' efforts and experiences to infer meaning will be visible.
>
> (English teacher Lee)

3) Integrating Speaking and Writing Activities

The third theme identified was the simultaneous teaching of writing and speaking using ChatGPT. The revised English curriculum emphasizes that writing and speaking do not have to be taught separately; rather, students should generate and express ideas across both modes. In this activity, students communicated with ChatGPT through written dialogue, composing their own sentences to interact with the system. Based on this written communication, students then drafted sentences and shared them within their groups. Using different themes, they created short presentations on their favorite things.

To further integrate speaking skills, lesson plans were designed so that writing naturally led into speaking activities. Students conversed with ChatGPT on a common topic— "What is your favorite ~?", but each group focused on a different category such as colors, sports, seasons, or foods. After receiving input and ideas from ChatGPT, students prepared and shared their content within their groups and then delivered a class wide presentation. Below are sample student responses from the speaking activity.

> What is your favorite sub…ject? My favorite subject is P.E. Because it is ummm... fun.
>
> (Student 1, class 6)

> What is your favorite color? My favorite color is white. It... t is ah…again. . (다시) because it is bright.
>
> (Student 15, class 4)

> What is your favorite music? Uh... My favorite music is 'Made you look.' Be...cause... its exciting.
>
> (Student 8, class 1)

> What is your favorite thing...s? My favorite thing...s is smart phone. Because it is umm (어…)exciting.
>
> (Student 13, class 6)

The recorded and transcribed contents of students' presentations in each detail revealed that, although they used short sentences and simple vocabulary typical of seventh graders, they demonstrated effort to complete the task. All three elements that were asking about the topic, speaking about their favorites, and explaining the reasons were included. This shows how input from ChatGPT during the conversation extended into group writing activities and then into speaking practice.

4) Reducing anxiety

The fourth theme involved reduced anxiety and increased willingness to participate. Students reported feeling less anxious when interacting with ChatGPT compared to traditional classroom speaking activities. They attributed this reduced anxiety to the absence of peer judgment and the low stakes nature of human AI interaction. One typically shy student explained that she was usually too shy to speak English in class because she was afraid of making mistakes, but with ChatGPT, she did not feel embarrassed and could try many times without worrying about what others think.

> I first heard about ChatGPT on the day of the entrance ceremony. I didn't really know what it was, but I found out it was an AI robot. And when I used ChatGPT during class, I thought the class became much more fun, and I was proud that I could write sentences in English.
>
> (Student J)

> Since ChatGPT responded to the sentences I wrote, it felt like talking to a foreigner, which was amazing. I want to have more conversations at home later.
>
> (Student K)

This finding helps explain the high quantitative score for class participation, as ChatGPT appeared to lower barriers to engagement for students who might otherwise remain silent.

4. Qualitative Results: Teacher Interview and Observations

The teacher interview and systematic observations provided pedagogical insights and identified implementation factors affecting outcomes. The teacher's perspective complemented student reports while offering professional judgment about ChatGPT's role in instruction. The teacher observed that ChatGPT enabled more effective differentiated instruction than was typically English class settings. In usual class, providing individualized feedback to each student is difficult, with the teacher spending most of class time answering basic questions and correcting common errors. ChatGPT allowed each student to receive immediate, personalized responses matched to their level, freeing the teacher to circulate and provide targeted support.

The teacher noted a significant shift in pedagogical role during ChatGPT integrated lessons. Rather than serving as the primary source of English input and the sole error corrector, the teacher became more of a facilitator and guide.

> I became more of a facilitator than a lecturer. Instead of teaching English alone, I guided students in how to interact with ChatGPT. I focused on multiple things,… problem solving in students' difficulties, not to mention design the lessons and so on.
>
> (English Teacher Lee)

This transition required adjusting instructional routines and developing new skills in observing student AI interactions, asking probing questions to deepen engagement, and providing just in time support when students encountered difficulties. This role shift is aligned with constructivist pedagogy and student-centered learning approaches.

Several practical challenges emerged during implementation. Technical issues including login difficulties and occasional internet connectivity problems disrupted some lessons, consuming instructional time and frustrating students. Digital literacy variation among students meant that some quickly mastered effective prompt formulation while others needed extensive support in asking productive questions and critically evaluating responses. Time management proved more complex than anticipated, as ChatGPT mediated activities often took longer than planned due to the exploration, iterative nature of student AI interaction.

The teacher noted needing to build flexibility into lesson plans and sometimes extend activities across multiple sessions to allow adequate engagement time.

> It was impressive that students' curiosity and interest could be naturally stimulated through the media, and I was able to see the possibility of classes being conducted using ChatGPT in practice. As edutech is increasingly emphasized in the educational field, seeing this firsthand made me feel even more confident that it can be effectively utilized in our lessons. Additionally, the overall positive response from students after the class was also encouraging.
>
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Students used English more extensively during group work than in traditional activities, with ChatGPT providing vocabulary and structures that enabled more sustained communication. More proficient students spontaneously helped classmates formulate better ChatGPT prompts, creating authentic peer teaching opportunities that rarely emerged in conventional lessons.

5. Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The mixed methods data converge to paint a comprehensive picture of ChatGPT's impacts and limitations. Quantitative findings show highest scores in participation, understanding, and interest, while qualitative findings explain why these outcomes occurred through reduced anxiety, personalized input, and engaging collaborative activities. Students felt comfortable participating because ChatGPT provided a judgment free context for experimentation, understood content better because ChatGPT adjusted explanations to their level, and found learning more interesting because the interactive technology engaged them in novel ways.

Quantitative findings show lowest scores in speaking skills, while qualitative findings explain why through the text-based interaction limitation and short implementation period. Students recognized that typing to ChatGPT did not provide oral practice, and four weeks may have been insufficient for speaking improvements to become perceptible. This triangulation strengthens confidence in the findings and provides actionable insights for educators. The convergence of quantitative and qualitative data around both strengths and limitations suggest that the patterns identified are robust rather than artifacts of a single

measurement approach.

The integration of multiple data sources also reveals nuances not apparent in any single dataset. For example, the quantitative finding that participation scores were highest might be interpreted as simply indicating that students liked using ChatGPT. However, the qualitative data reveal that this participation increase stemmed from specific mechanisms including reduced anxiety, peer support enabled by ChatGPT's vocabulary assistance, and the distributed nature of collaborative activities where no single student bore sole responsibility for generating content. Similarly, the moderate skill development scores might be dismissed as indicating limited effectiveness, but qualitative data reveal that students held realistic expectations about learning timelines and understood the distinction between feeling more interested and becoming measurably more proficient. This integrated analysis provides a richer, more actionable understanding than either quantitative or qualitative data alone could offer.

V. DISCUSSION

1. ChatGPT as a Provider of Comprehensible Input

The findings strongly support ChatGPT's effectiveness as a comprehensible input provider, as conceptualized in Krashen's Input Hypothesis. Students perceived ChatGPT's input as highly comprehensible, with content understanding receiving a mean score of 4.12 on the five-point Likert scale. This high rating suggests ChatGPT successfully adjusted its language output to match student proficiency levels, enabling comprehension without overwhelming linguistic complexity. Students reported positive perceptions of linguistic development across vocabulary (M = 3.88), grammar (M = 3.71), and sentence structure (M = 3.91), indicating perceived tangible benefits from engaging with ChatGPT's input.

Qualitative data provides deeper insight into how ChatGPT delivered comprehensible input in practice. Student interviews revealed consistent experiences of receiving personalized, level appropriate responses. High proficiency students described ChatGPT as matching their advanced vocabulary and providing sophisticated structures, while lower proficiency students appreciated simplified explanations. One lower proficiency student noted that ChatGPT "understood my simple sentences and helped me say things better," highlighting the tool's capacity to work within individual zones of proximal development. This adaptive responsiveness represents a significant departure from traditional textbook materials, which provide uniform input regardless of individual proficiency levels.

The theoretical alignment with Krashen's Input Hypothesis is substantial. Krashen (1985) argued that optimal language acquisition occurs when learners receive input slightly beyond

their current competence—the "i+1" formulation. ChatGPT's dynamic adjustment of linguistic complexity based on student input appears to operationalize this principle in practice. Unlike static pedagogical materials that risk being either too simple or too complex, ChatGPT's interactive nature enables real time difficulty calibration, potentially providing optimal "i+1" input across diverse proficiency levels within a single classroom.

However, an important caveat must be noted. While students perceived ChatGPT's input as comprehensible and linguistically beneficial, this study relied on self-reported perceptions rather than objective measures of linguistic development. The moderate ratings for skill improvement, particularly speaking (M = 3.67), suggest that perceived comprehensibility does not automatically translate to measurable proficiency gains, at least not within the four-week implementation period. This finding underscores the distinction between input comprehensibility and acquisition outcomes, a complexity acknowledged within input-based theories of second language acquisition.

2. ChatGPT as a Catalyst for Interaction and Negotiation of Meaning

Beyond its role as an input provider, ChatGPT functioned significantly as a catalyst for peer-to-peer interaction and negotiation of meaning, processes central to Long's Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1981, 2014). The highest quantitative score across all survey items was class participation (M = 4.29), a finding that gains particular significance when interpreted alongside qualitative evidence of enhanced collaborative activity. Students did not simply interact with ChatGPT in isolation; rather, ChatGPT mediated activities generated substantial student to student communication in English, particularly during collaborative writing and group presentation tasks.

Observation data and student interviews revealed that ChatGPT functioned as a shared resource that generated authentic peer to peer communication rather than replacing it. Students worked together to interpret ChatGPT's responses and negotiated meaning to complete assigned tasks. This collaborative dynamic aligns closely with Long's (1981) emphasis on modified interaction, where learners adjust their language through negotiation processes that make input comprehensible and push output toward greater accuracy.

The affective dimension of this interaction proved particularly important. Students reported significantly reduced anxiety in ChatGPT mediated activities compared to traditional instruction, attributing increased participation to the absence of peer judgment when initially formulating ideas. Lower proficiency students particularly valued the opportunity to experiment with language without embarrassment. This anxiety reduction represents a substantial pedagogical benefit, as affective barriers often impede classroom participation more powerfully than linguistic limitations.

The collaborative dynamic surrounding ChatGPT use created supportive environments

where mistakes were viewed as natural parts of exploration rather than sources of embarrassment. This psychological safety may explain why participation ratings were so high despite moderate skill improvement perceptions—students felt comfortable taking risks essential for language development.

3. Immediate Affective Benefits versus Long Term Skill Development

A critical finding involves the temporal dimension of ChatGPT's impact. The study reveals strong immediate effects on affective variables—participation, interest, and confidence—but more modest perceived effects on linguistic skills. This pattern suggests ChatGPT integration produces rapid motivational and attitudinal changes, while skill development may require longer timeframes to manifest.

The four-week implementation period may have been insufficient for substantial skill gains to become apparent to students. Language acquisition is inherently gradual, and students may not perceive incremental competence improvements during short periods. Alternatively, initial novelty effects may have temporarily inflated engagement measures without corresponding learning depth that would be sustained over longer periods.

This temporal pattern has important pedagogical implications. Educators should view ChatGPT as a tool for creating optimal learning conditions, reducing anxiety, increasing participation, generating authentic interaction—rather than expecting immediate skill transformation. The affective benefits documented here create foundations for subsequent linguistic development, but sustained implementation with deliberate pedagogical design is necessary for skill gains to materialize and be recognized by learners.

The moderate skill improvement ratings, particularly for speaking, also suggest ChatGPT's limitations as a speaking practice tool. While it provides written input and facilitates peer discussion, it cannot replicate the real time, spontaneous nature of authentic oral interaction. Supplementing ChatGPT with other speaking activities remains essential for comprehensive communicative competence development.

4. Comparison with Existing Research

The findings of this study align with and extend existing research on ChatGPT in EFL education while also revealing some distinctive patterns worthy of discussion. The positive impact on student motivation and engagement observed here mirrors findings from Ibrahim and Kirkpatrick (2024), who reported that ChatGPT enhanced student motivation and provided personalized learning experiences in ESL writing contexts. Similarly, the writing skill benefits documented in this study align with research by Khampusaen (2025) and Ibrahim & Kirkpatrick (2024), both of whom found that students perceived significant value

in ChatGPT's assistance with vocabulary, grammar, and composition quality. The convergence across studies conducted in diverse contexts suggests that motivational and writing related benefits represent robust outcomes of ChatGPT integration.

However, this study diverges from some existing research in important ways. While Kohnke et al., (2023) emphasized ChatGPT's effectiveness in generating individualized opportunities for speaking skill development, the present study found speaking to be the lowest rated dimension of perceived improvement. This discrepancy may reflect differences in implementation approach, with this study relying primarily on text-based interaction while Kohnke et al. may have incorporated more oral components. The finding underscores that ChatGPT's effectiveness for skills depends heavily on how it is integrated pedagogically, not merely on its inherent capabilities.

A particularly novel contribution of this study is the identification of ChatGPT's role as a catalyst for peer interaction rather than solely a direct interaction partner. While existing research has focused primarily on student AI interaction patterns, this study reveals that ChatGPT's greatest pedagogical value may lie in its capacity to generate conditions for meaningful student to student communication. This finding suggests that future research should examine not only how students interact with AI tools but also how these tools reshape peer interaction dynamics within collaborative learning contexts.

The differential pattern between attitudinal and skill outcomes observed here also extends existing research in important ways. While studies such as Kim (2024) have documented measurable skill improvements in reading comprehension, and Zhang et al. (2024) found positive perceptions of writing proficiency development, few studies have systematically compared affective and cognitive outcomes or examined the time course of different types of benefits. The finding that attitudinal benefits emerge more rapidly and consistently than perceived skill gains have important implications for research design, suggesting that short term studies may be better suited to documenting motivational and engagement outcomes while longer term investigations are necessary to capture skill development trajectories.

The Korean middle school context of this study also provides culturally specific insights that complement the predominantly university focused existing literature. The challenges and successes documented here may differ from those in other educational contexts due to factors such as class size, curriculum constraints, student age and maturity, and cultural norms regarding technology use and learner autonomy. The positive outcomes despite these contextual constraints suggest that ChatGPT integration is feasible across diverse settings, though implementation strategies may require adaptation to local conditions.

VI. CONCLUSION

This case study examined ChatGPT integration in seventh-grade English writing and speaking instruction with 130 Korean EFL students over four weeks. The findings reveal important implications for both theory and practice in AI-mediated language learning.

The study demonstrates that ChatGPT's primary impact centers on affective and motivational dimensions rather than immediate skill development. Students showed strong positive perceptions of class participation, content understanding, and learning interest, while language skill improvements, particularly in speaking, were more modest. This pattern reflects both the text-based nature of ChatGPT interaction and the short implementation period, suggesting that attitudinal benefits emerge more rapidly than perceptible skill gains.

ChatGPT functioned effectively as both a comprehensible input provider aligned with Krashen's Input Hypothesis and an interaction catalyst aligned with Long's Interaction Hypothesis. The tool delivered personalized, level-appropriate linguistic input while simultaneously mediating peer-to-peer negotiation of meaning. This dual functionality suggests that AI tools can bridge traditional theoretical frameworks, flexibly serving multiple pedagogical functions depending on instructional design.

The most significant finding was ChatGPT's role as a catalyst for peer interaction rather than solely a direct learning partner. During collaborative activities, ChatGPT served as a shared resource that generated authentic student-to-student communication in English. This finding challenges assumptions about AI replacing human interaction and suggests that ChatGPT's greatest value may lie in creating conditions for meaningful peer engagement.

Students reported reduced anxiety in ChatGPT-mediated activities, attributing increased participation to the absence of peer judgment. This affective benefit proved particularly valuable in the Korean EFL context, where limited authentic communication opportunities and high-performance anxiety typically constrain oral participation. The personalized, non-judgmental nature of ChatGPT interactions created a safe space for language practice that complemented rather than replaced teacher-led instruction.

Several limitations warrant consideration. The four-week timeframe, while adequate for examining attitudinal outcomes, may be insufficient for documenting skill development. The study focused on student perceptions rather than objective performance measures, which could provide complementary evidence of learning gains. The single-school context and specific grade level limit generalizability across different educational settings and age groups. Future research should employ longitudinal designs with objective performance assessments, examine implementation across diverse contexts and proficiency levels, and investigate how individual differences mediate ChatGPT's effectiveness.

As AI technologies continue evolving, language educators must remain both innovative and critical. The question is not whether to integrate AI, but how to do so in ways that

genuinely support language development while maintaining the essentially human dimensions of teaching and learning. AI integration should be viewed not as a replacement for human instruction but as a complement that extends teachers' capacity to provide personalized, responsive, and engaging learning experiences for all students.

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