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EFL Student Engagement with ChatGPT in College Reading Classes via Prompts and Perceptions*

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ABSTRACT

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This study explored EFL students' interactions with ChatGPT, focusing on their prompting practices and perceptions towards ChatGPT in a college English class. A total of 36 university freshmen enrolled in English classes at a university participated in this study. Conversation logs from Weeks 4, 9, and 13 and Week 14 questionnaire responses were collected. Eleven prompt types were identified and analyzed for frequency, and Chi-squared tests examined prompt usage differences over time. Questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and independent samples *t*-tests, while qualitative responses were interpreted using grounded theory to examine students' opinions. Findings showed that students generated 11 prompt types, with information requests related to assigned passages being most frequent and increasing over time. Prompts for word definitions and sentence editing were also common, though their usage varied across three worksheets. Students revealed positive attitudes toward ChatGPT, valuing its fast responses, ease of use, and support for reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar skills. However, challenges such as repetitive inquiry patterns, information overload from ChatGPT, and limited support for advanced grammar concepts were noted. The study underscores the importance of fostering prompt literacy in AI-supported language classes, helping students craft precise prompts and engage actively with ChatGPT. Despite limitations, the findings highlight ChatGPT's potential as a supplementary tool for language learning. Future research should expand to diverse student groups, use standardized assessments, and conduct longitudinal studies to track changes in language proficiency and ChatGPT usage over time, further enhancing its integration into language education.

KEYWORDS
ChatGPT, generative AI, prompts, perceptions, college English

1. Introduction

The recent emergence of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies, such as ChatGPT and Gemini, has grown significantly in recent years, leading to widespread research and practical applications in various domains, including language education. Generative AIs have been seamlessly integrated across different fields and industries due to their remarkable ability to generate content and respond to human queries in a manner resembling human interaction. ChatGPT, one of the most widely used AI platforms, has supported both students and teachers since its release in 2022. Recently, users have also engaged with diverse generative AI platforms, such as Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, Claude, Mistral AI, and Perplexity. These technologies have proven useful in numerous sectors, including education, marketing, healthcare, finance, design, and entertainment. In marketing, for instance, generative AIs are employed to design logos, create product visuals, and analyze customer data to develop targeted marketing strategies. In healthcare, AI tools assist in analyzing X-rays and MRIs for disease detection, while AI-powered chatbots provide patients with 24/7 medical support. Similarly, in education, generative AIs are being explored for their potential to enhance teaching and learning processes. An increasing body of research highlights the benefits of ChatGPT in supporting teachers with planning, implementation, and assessment tasks (Karaman and Goksu 2024, Liang et al. 2023, Rahman and Watanobe 2023). For example, ChatGPT can analyze lesson plans and evaluation criteria, helping teachers generate open-ended questions and rubrics for classroom assessments (Baidoo-Anu and Ansah 2023).

However, despite the many advantages of generative AIs in education, concerns remain regarding potential student misuse and academic integrity (Kostka and Toncelli 2023, Teng 2023). Sallam (2023), for instance, reviewed 60 research articles in the medical and healthcare fields and raised concerns about incorrect responses and citations produced by AI tools, which may mislead students in their learning. These findings emphasize the need to provide students with proper guidance on the ethical and effective use of ChatGPT. The emergence of generative AI, such as ChatGPT, has also transformed English reading education by enabling more interactive and personalized learning experiences. AI can generate reading passages tailored to students' interests and proficiency levels based on user-inputted prompts, making reading activities more engaging and relevant. Given these emerging innovations, researchers and educators have recognized the critical role of effective prompting in maximizing AI's potential for language learning. However, not much research has explored how EFL students actually crafted prompts to engage with ChatGPT in English reading classes or their perspectives on using this technology for language learning purposes. This study aimed to fill this gap by examining how EFL students interacted with ChatGPT, focusing on the types of prompts they formulated during English reading classes at the university level. Additionally, the study investigates students' perceptions of ChatGPT as a tool for learning English. Two research questions guide this study:

1. What types of prompts did students generate while interacting with ChatGPT, and how did these prompts evolve over the semester?
2. What are students' perceptions of ChatGPT as a tool for learning English?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Generative AI and Prompt Literacy in Education

Since the first launch of ChatGPT, users can easily find the generative AI models that are developed for diverse purposes. Table 1 describes the list of the AI models and associated features. As shown in Table 1, the current AI models not only generate human-like texts but also images, codes, and even music. The most representative AI model, ChatGPT, uses natural language processing to generate human-like responses to users' input. Compared to previously developed chatbots, ChatGPT features with its capability to sustain human-like conversation as producing more individualized, coherent, systematic responses to users' inquiries. Apart from text generation, generative AIs like DALL·E 2 or Midjourney generate images from text prompts, offering artistic inspiration to creators in artistic community. Applications of generative AIs can be also found in the field of music generation as MusicLM and Stability Audio 2.0 as the models create music across diverse genres and allowing users to refining sounds by synthesizing various styles and genres.

Table 1. The Examples of Current Generative AIs and Features

AI models	Features	Developer
ChatGPT-4	Text generation, Conversational AI	OpenAI
Gemini	Text generation, Conversational AI	Google
DALL·E 2	Text-to-image generation	OpenAI
Stable Diffusion	Text/image-to-image generation	Stability AI
Midjourney	Image generation	Midjourney, Inc.
GitHub Copilot	Code generation	GitHub
Stability Audio 2.0	audio-to-audio generation	Stability AI
MusicLM	Text-to-music	GitHub

The emergence of AI technology has brought the paradigm shift in the field of education. Students become able to receive tutoring supports as AIs provides answers to students' queries, explains concepts, and provide example problems in diverse range of subjects. For the purpose of language education, AIs like ChatGPT help students practice the target language by providing immediate feedback on grammar, vocabulary, sentences, and guidance for writing practices including drafting and editing. For teachers, ChatGPT can be used to create not only for quizzes, reading passages, and writing prompts, but also for lesson plans. In the studies of Megahed et al. (2023) and Zhai (2023), instructors received assistant from ChatGPT to create class syllabus in statistics courses, and to develop curriculums of special education, respectively. Kim (2023) adopted ChatGPT 3.5 to develop English teaching materials that focused on communicative function to enhance students' productive and receptive language skills. The researcher emphasized that teachers play a critical role in adopting and refining the outputs generated by ChatGPT through careful evaluation of their quality and validation processes.

AIs have shown education potentials as assessment tools since they create diverse questions types such as multiple-choice questions and true or false questions. Teachers are also able to get help from ChatGPT for assessing students' writing tasks as it offers instant scores and feedback on students' papers. Shin and Lee (2024) examined the potential application of ChatGPT in assessing English essays written by Korean EFL secondary students. The findings indicated a strong correlation between scores assigned by ChatGPT and those given by

human raters. While ChatGPT generally awarded higher scores than human raters, this trend did not apply to the "language use" criterion. The study concluded that ChatGPT has the potential to serve as an accessible and supplementary tool for supporting EFL teachers in their essay rating practices. In another study investigating ChatGPT as an assessment tool, Guo and Wang (2023) compared the feedback provided by ChatGPT and five teachers on 50 argumentative essays written by Chinese college students. While the teachers' feedback was highly focused on language and content, ChatGPT provided a greater quantity of feedback, addressing all target dimensions —language, content, and organization—equally. These findings suggested that human teachers could collaborate with ChatGPT to enhance quality and comprehensiveness of feedback on EFL students' essays. Furthermore, researchers and educators have underscored the immense potential of AIs to enhance efficiency of learning and teaching, and provide customized support for classes, and automated administrative tasks such as emails, reports, and announcements (Wang et al. 2023, Zhang 2023). The representative strengths of generative AIs are that they can offer personalized learning experiences to students by analyzing the patterns of students' learning. The technology provided individualized and immediate feedback, recommended learning contents, and tests, and so forth (Wang et al. 2023). Despite the benefits AI has brought to education, stakeholders of education have also raised ethical concerns, authenticity and accuracy of generated outputs from AIs (Kooli and Yusuf 2024, Zhang 2023). The most severe problem caused by ChatGPT is students' plagiarism. In a relevant research, (Hassoulas et al. 2023), the participants were asked to identify ChatGPT-produced writing and only 42% of them were able to recognize it. The researchers stressed the significance of guiding students to use ChatGPT with responsibility rather than banning the use of the tool.

Prompt literacy has also emerged as a critical issue in language education with the increasing integration of AI in classrooms. In the field of AI, a prompt is defined as "questions, statements, a set of instructions, or any form of input that the model uses as a basis for generating output" (Haugsbaken and Hagelia 2024, p. 1). To effectively engage with AI, users must develop 'prompt literacy,' which entails the ability to craft precise inputs for generative AI and to critically interpret its outputs (Hwang 2023). The importance of prompt literacy has grown as AI systems, particularly those based on large language models (LLMs), continuously evolve by collecting and analyzing vast amounts of information, enabling them to contextualize user inputs and generate more relevant responses (Kim and Kim 2024).

In educational settings, both teachers and students have recognized the significance of effective prompting when interacting with AI. For instance, in a study involving 25 college students majoring in English language and literature, participants used ChatGPT to generate English poems (Lee 2023). Students composed poems independently and later employed ChatGPT primarily for paraphrasing and rewording. They observed that the AI often produced excessively lengthy outputs, necessitating iterative refinements of their prompts to achieve more desirable responses. Students reported that as their prompts became more precise, ChatGPT's outputs better aligned with their expectations. Similarly, Jung (2024) emphasized that users should compose prompts strategically, such as by assigning specific roles and providing relevant examples to guide ChatGPT's responses. Han (2023) also found that students recognized the need to formulate well-structured questions to obtain accurate and useful information from AI, highlighting the necessity of training in prompt composition for AI-assisted learning environments.

2.2 Integrating Generative AI into English Instruction

Recent studies have actively explored various methods for integrating generative AI into language instruction and its impact on students' language learning. Notably, the use of generative AI has gained significant attention in

writing classes. Shim and Kim (2024) investigated the effects of ChatGPT feedback on high school students' writing performance and their attitudes toward the tool. In their study, students received feedback on grammar, vocabulary, discourse, and context for their first drafts of argumentative essays and revised their work accordingly. The findings revealed that ChatGPT's feedback enhanced students' discourse and contextual awareness in their assignments, while also boosting their confidence in writing. Similarly, Choe (2023a) examined ChatGPT's feedback in the context of summary writing tasks assigned to Korean pre-service English teachers. Using a qualitative research approach, the study found that ChatGPT helped participants improve their lexical choices, organizational revisions, and content adjustments. With ChatGPT's prompt and personalized feedback on their drafts, participants reported reduced writing anxiety and increased confidence in their summary writing abilities. Allen and Mizumoto (2024) demonstrated that EFL learners benefited from using ChatGPT to edit and proofread their writing assignments, particularly improving the clarity and cohesion of their texts. Su et al. (2023) highlighted ChatGPT's usefulness in facilitating a process-oriented writing approach, assisting students at the pre-writing, drafting, and post-writing stages. Other studies (e.g., Ghafouri et al. 2024, Song and Song 2023, Yan 2023) similarly reported that ChatGPT not only enhanced students' writing skills but also increased their motivation for writing practice. In a related vein, Punar Özçelik and Yangın Ekşi (2024) demonstrated ChatGPT's benefits for teaching formal register knowledge, though it was less effective for informal writing. Additionally, Gozali et al. (2024) explored ChatGPT's role in improving students' feedback literacy. Their findings indicated that ChatGPT facilitated students' ability to understand and utilize feedback for self-improvement. These studies collectively underscore the potential of ChatGPT as a valuable tool for enhancing writing instruction and fostering greater student confidence and engagement in the writing process.

Researchers have explored the potential of ChatGPT as a language assessment tool. Bucol and Sangkwaong (2024) evaluated ChatGPT's ability to assess students' writing using prompts and pre-defined rubrics, comparing its ratings to those of human raters. Their findings highlighted ChatGPT's promising features as an assessment tool, particularly its consistency, efficiency, and scalability. Other studies (Mizumoto et al. 2024, Shin and Lee 2024) also demonstrated a strong correlation between ChatGPT's ratings and human evaluations of students' writing performance, emphasizing its potential as an effective assessment tool. However, limitations exist, particularly in its capacity to provide feedback. For instance, Al-Garaady and Mahyoob (2023) found that while ChatGPT excelled at identifying surface-level errors, it struggled with detecting deeper structural issues and pragmatic errors.

Another area of research has focused on students' attitudes toward ChatGPT in writing classrooms. Yan (2023) examined students' behaviors and perceptions when using ChatGPT for academic writing tasks. The findings showed that students could complete writing tasks with improved vocabulary, grammar, and coherence to some extent. However, the study raised concerns about the risks of plagiarism and threats to educational equity. Additionally, while ChatGPT increased student engagement in writing, it also imposed higher cognitive demands on users (Woo et al. 2024).

Beyond writing classes, ChatGPT has been utilized in other areas of language education. In integrated writing and speaking classes, Choi and Choe (2024) used ChatGPT 3.5 alongside Microsoft's Reading Progress to help EFL students develop both writing and speaking skills. Students created scripts on environmental protection using ChatGPT, revised their drafts with its feedback, and practiced reading aloud with Reading Progress. The findings revealed that the integrated use of AI tools enhanced students' pronunciation and speaking skills while fostering positive attitudes toward the importance of AI literacy. Similarly, Wang and Feng (2023) compared ChatGPT-supported English reading classes to traditional book-based methods. After four weeks, students using ChatGPT

outperformed their counterparts in analyzing stories, narrative structures, and language styles, highlighting the potential of AI-assisted reading instruction in English education.

For vocabulary development, Yüzlü (2024) implemented ChatGPT in an L3 German class to enhance vocabulary skills. Over five weeks, three learners read and analyzed thematic texts generated by ChatGPT, reconstructing key vocabulary based on their personal preferences. Semi-structured interviews revealed that ChatGPT positively impacted vocabulary proficiency and fostered constructive attitudes toward its use as a vocabulary-learning tool. Despite the growing interest in ChatGPT within language education, limited research has examined how students compose prompts to interact with the tool, particularly during the learning process. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the types of prompts students use and their perceptions of ChatGPT as an educational tool.

The integration of generative AI into language classrooms has raised discussions about user perceptions. Several studies have examined how students and teachers perceive ChatGPT, particularly in writing instruction. Oh (2023) studied EFL college students using ChatGPT for writing tasks over three weeks. While students valued its ability to save time, provide resources, and enhance writing, they struggled with inaccurate information, unverifiable sources, and occasional failure to generate expected responses. Lee and You (2024) similarly found students appreciated ChatGPT's convenience and speed but questioned the credibility of its outputs. Lee (2023) examined its use in creative writing, where 25 English majors used ChatGPT for paraphrasing their poems. A post-study questionnaire showed that 88% were willing to continue using ChatGPT, citing improvements in translation, grammar, vocabulary, and non-formulaic expressions. Although users appreciated ChatGPT's benefits, they stressed the importance of incorporating pedagogical guidelines or instruction in classrooms. Han (2023) explored ChatGPT's role in reflective essay writing, finding that students saw it as a learning assistant rather than a replacement for independent writing, emphasizing the need for critical analysis of AI-generated text. Shin (2023) reported that 70% of students found ChatGPT useful for brainstorming, outlining, and revising but warned against excessive reliance, highlighting the need for clear pedagogical guidelines. Choe (2023b) studied Korean pre-service teachers using ChatGPT for writing revisions. They found it beneficial for feedback on content, organization, and language accuracy while also improving time efficiency and writing confidence. However, concerns arose regarding authorship, misinformation (hallucinations), and over-reliance on AI, stressing the need for AI literacy education.

2.3 Generative AI in Reading Education

Research in reading education has highlighted several key areas that support students' reading development. Studies have identified various pedagogical approaches that enhance learner interest and motivation, ultimately improving reading skills (Lee 2017, Meniado 2016). Another critical area of research is the relationship between reading skills and self-efficacy. Previous studies suggest that as students' reading skills improve, their confidence increases, leading to greater engagement in language learning (Lee 2010, Oh 2013). Additionally, extensive reading has received significant attention from practitioners and researchers, as findings indicate its role in fostering reading motivation and overall comprehension (Park 2015, Ro and Kim, 2022, Suk 2016, Yamashita 2013).

With advancements in generative AI, the scope of reading education research and teaching practices has further expanded. Cha and Im (2023) examined college students' satisfaction and learning outcomes after using ChatGPT in English reading classes. Instead of traditional textbooks, students used ChatGPT to generate reading materials on various topics and create comprehension quizzes. Afterward, they completed self-reflection reports on their

learning experiences. Survey results showed that students had a positive perception of ChatGPT, finding it beneficial for learning new vocabulary, expressions, and information, which contributed to their overall literacy development. Similarly, Çelik et al. (2024) investigated EFL students' reading comprehension using ChatGPT. The study compared students' comprehension between authentic blog texts and ChatGPT-simplified blog texts. Those who read AI-simplified texts demonstrated improvements in comprehension and inference skills, though there was no significant difference in reading anxiety levels between the two groups. Im and Cha (2024) explored how ChatGPT influences online reading strategies and self-directed learning. In their study, 188 college students read AI-suggested online articles and completed reading comprehension questions four times throughout the semester. After each reading task, students summarized the articles and reviewed key vocabulary or expressions. Their reading strategies were assessed using a modified version of the Online Survey of Reading Strategies (Anderson 2003, Choe 2013), administered before and after ChatGPT use. The findings indicated that students' reading strategies, particularly their ability to critically evaluate reading content, improved after using ChatGPT.

Another emerging area of research involves ChatGPT's role in reading assessment. Kwon and Lee (2023) evaluated ChatGPT's ability to answer reading comprehension tasks from the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT) English section. The study found that ChatGPT-4 correctly answered approximately 93% of the items, while ChatGPT-3.5 achieved a 69% accuracy rate. Similar results were observed when analyzing ChatGPT's performance on TOEFL iBT reading tasks, where ChatGPT-4 answered 93% of questions correctly and ChatGPT-3.5 achieved 73% accuracy. These findings provide concrete evidence of ChatGPT's capability to handle standardized reading comprehension tasks. Researchers suggested that ChatGPT could serve as an assistant tool for students preparing for exams by demonstrating approaches to answering comprehension questions.

Despite the aforementioned benefits, concerns have been raised about ChatGPT's role in reading instruction. Chea and Xiao (2024) warned that overreliance on ChatGPT could limit students' participation and engagement, potentially undermining critical thinking and independent learning skills. While ChatGPT offers valuable support, these concerns pinpoint the need for structured guidance and pedagogical frameworks to ensure responsible AI integration in reading education. Given growing concerns about generative AI in reading instruction, existing studies focus on the outcomes of AI-assisted writing and students' perceptions of AI use. However, few have explored how users construct prompts in real-time interactions with generative AI or their perceptions in reading classes. The present study addresses this gap by examining students' prompting exercises and their perceptions in ChatGPT-supported reading classes.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

A total of thirty-six students, comprising 11 male and 25 females, participated in this study. All participants were university freshmen enrolled in English classes at a university in South Korea, majoring in English Language and Literature. The course, a mandatory English requirement for this major, aimed to develop students' general English skills, with a particular emphasis on enhancing their reading abilities. Classes were held once a week for 150 minutes over a 15-week semester. Each week, students were assigned English reading passages selected from sources such as news articles, *CNN*, *The Korea Times*, and websites featuring a variety of current issues. The reading topics included education, technology, business, culture, travel, and more. The students' English proficiency in this university was approximately at the 2nd tier of Korean Scholastic Test. In addition, students'

self-assessment on their English proficiency was further gathered using a five-point Likert scale, 1 being the low proficiency and with 5 being the advanced proficiency at the beginning of the semester. As shown in Table 2, the students perceived their listening proficiency was (M = 4.56, SD = .93) was higher than their reading (M = 4.33, SD = 1.09) and speaking proficiency (M = 3.67, SD = 1.30).

Table 2. Student Self-reported English Proficiency

Proficiency	M	SD
Students' self-assessed listening proficiency	4.56	.93
Students' self-assessed reading proficiency	4.33	1.09
Students' self-assessed speaking proficiency	3.67	1.30

Of the 36 students, 18 had prior experience using AI devices, while the other half had none. The target class was designed for English majors to develop proficiency in all four English language skills. Each week, students participated in three-hour classes that provided guidance in exploring a wide range of English reading and listening materials on current domestic and international topics, including entertainment, travel, culture, business, society, the arts, health, and lifestyle.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The data collected in this study mainly consisted of students' conversation logs while talking with ChatGPT 4, and their responses to a questionnaire. The data was collected based on the following teaching procedures.

In Week 3 of the semester, the teacher-researcher conducted an orientation session to introduce ChatGPT and provide a comprehensive overview of its features and usage. During this session, students practiced generating prompts and responding to ChatGPT's outputs, ensuring they were familiar with the tool and capable of completing assigned tasks without technical difficulties. In Week 4, students began the first task. Initially, they independently read the weekly passage without using ChatGPT or online dictionaries. Following this, they engaged in open-ended conversations with ChatGPT, discussing topics or specific details related to the passage. Students were encouraged to extend these discussions by formulating questions beyond the scope of the passage to sustain meaningful interactions with ChatGPT. All interactions were conducted in English. Upon completing their conversations, students submitted their logs, automatically generated by ChatGPT, by copying and pasting them into Word files. This process was repeated for subsequent tasks in Weeks 9 and 13. The topics for each week included: (1) interesting facts about the Mona Lisa, (2) the benefits of exercise on chronic stress, and (3) the rising popularity of personality tests among young Koreans, as shown in Table 3. In Week 14, an online questionnaire was distributed to the students. The questionnaire included nine six-point Likert scale questions evaluating ChatGPT's usefulness for English learning and students' overall perceptions of its use in English classes. Additionally, it featured four open-ended questions aimed at identifying specific benefits and usefulness of ChatGPT for English learning, as well as any challenges students encountered while using ChatGPT during class activities. During the weeks when ChatGPT was not integrated, particularly from weeks 5 to 8, students participated in conventional English reading classes. Each week, they read assigned passages and completed reading comprehension exercises, which included matching vocabulary, answering true or false questions, and responding to open-ended questions. They also engaged in small group discussions on the weekly topics to further develop their understanding and critical thinking skills.

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Table 3. Data Collection Procedure

Weeks	Specific Procedures	Reading Passage Topics	ChatGPT Worksheets
Week 3	1. ChatGPT orientation ▪ Register for ChatGPT ▪ Free talking with ChatGPT ▪ Check how to find the conversation logs		
Week 4	1. Read the assigned passage independently, without using ChatGPT or online dictionaries. 2. Engage in a discussion with ChatGPT, focusing on topics or specific content related to the reading passage. (*e.g. Do you think 'Mona Lisa' is worthful?* *What do you know about 'Mona Lisa'?*)	▪ Interesting Facts about Mona Lisa	▪ Worksheet 1
Week 9	3. Extend the conversation by engaging in open-ended discussions with ChatGPT, exploring ideas beyond the topics covered in the passage. (*e.g. Can you tell me some famous artists of the Renaissance?* *What is Michelangelo's most famous painting?*) 4. Copy and paste the ChatGPT conversation logs into a document for submission.	▪ Benefits of exercises on chronic stress	▪ Worksheet 2
Week 13		▪ Emerging popularity of personality tests among young Koreans	▪ Worksheet 3
Week 14	1. Students' responses to an online questionnaire		

To address the first research question, the analysis centered on students' conversation logs with ChatGPT. During data collection, students submitted three worksheets containing these logs at three intervals: Week 4, Week 9, and Week 13. To ensure anonymity, student identifiers in the logs were replaced with pseudonyms. The prompts were analyzed and coded using grounded theory methodology (Glaser and Strauss 1967) to identify emerging themes. These themes formed the basis for categorizing the prompts into eleven distinct types. The researcher then systematically reviewed the data to classify each student prompt into one of these types across all three worksheets. Subsequently, the frequency and percentage of each prompt type were calculated for each worksheet. Chi-squared tests were conducted to examine differences in prompt usage frequencies across the three time points. To enhance reliability, a second coder independently analyzed the data using the same procedures. Any discrepancies between the two coders were resolved through iterative discussions, ensuring consensus.

For the second research question, a mixed-methods approach was employed to analyze students' responses to the online questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were employed to examine the responses to the nine six-point Likert-scale statements, while independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare students with prior experience using AI devices to those without such experience. Additionally, qualitative data from the open-ended questions were analyzed using grounded theory principles to interpret students' perceptions and opinions about ChatGPT's use in their English learning experience.

4. Results

4.1 Representative Types of Student Prompts

The first research question investigated the types of students' prompts recorded in the student-ChatGPT

conversation logs and how they changed over the semester. Thirty-six students' logs were analyzed.

The result showed a total of eleven distinctive types of prompts used by students during their interactions. Table 4 categorizes these prompts, providing examples, frequencies, and percentages for each type across three writing worksheets that included students-ChatGPT conversation logs. The identified categories include prompts where students requested: (1) definition of words, (2) summary of ChatGPT's responses, (3) edits to their own sentences, (4) example sentences, (5) translations, (6) information relevant to the assigned passages, (7) ChatGPT's opinions, (8) synonyms or antonyms, (9) edits to previously entered prompts, (10) suggestions for other topics to continue conversations, and expressed (11) personal responses from ChatGPT.

Table 4 summarizes the eleven prompt types produced by the students and their frequencies across the three worksheets. Among these prompt types, the most frequently used across all three worksheets were prompts requesting information relevant to the given passages. These accounted for 119 instances (21.5%) in Worksheet 1, 132 instances (23.9%) in Worksheet 2, and 149 instances (26.9%) in Worksheet 3, showing a gradual increase over time.

The second most frequent prompt type varied across the worksheets. In Worksheet 1 (97, 17.5%) and Worksheet 3 (90, 16.3%), students most often asked for word definitions, whereas in Worksheet 2, the second-most common prompts were requests for sentence editing (92, 16.6%). Interestingly, sentence-editing prompts were slightly less frequent in Worksheet 1 (93, 16.8%) and Worksheet 3 (88, 15.9%). In Worksheet 2, prompts requesting word definitions followed closely behind, with 87 instances (15.7%).

Chi-squared tests were conducted to examine differences in the frequency of prompt usage across the three worksheets students submitted after interacting with ChatGPT. The results revealed no statistically significant differences in most prompt categories across the worksheets. However, a notable exception was found in prompts requesting ChatGPT's opinions, which showed a significant difference ($\chi^2 = 21.348$, $p < .05$) The frequency of these prompts steadily declined over time, decreasing from 72 instances (13%) in Worksheet 1 to 49 instances (8.9%) in the second, and further dropping to 27 instances (4.9%) in Worksheet 3.

Table 4. Prompt Categories and Frequencies across Worksheets

Prompt Category	Example	Worksheet 1		Worksheet 2		Worksheet 3		$X^2(p)$
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
1.Information relevant to the passages	▪ Then, are there any disadvantages caused by excessive aerobic exercise? ▪ Do you know about MBTI?	119	21.5	132	23.9	149	26.9	19.18 (.38)
2.Definition of words	▪ What does 'relevant' mean? ▪ What is the meaning of 'maternity'?	97	17.5	87	15.7	90	16.3	5.82 (.971)
3.Edits to users' own sentences	▪ Edit the sentences: As temperatures rise, marine ice sheet instability threatens Antarctica	93	16.8	92	16.6	88	15.9	5.02 (.986)
4.Example sentences	▪ Can you give me example sentences of 'subsidies'	61	11.0	79	14.3	71	12.8	14.63 (.26)

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Category	Example							χ² (p)
5.ChatGPT's opinions	▪ But if some people don't like exercise, it won't help them relieve stress? What do you think?	72	13.0	49	8.9	27	4.9	21.34 (.01*)
6.Summary of ChatGPT's responses	▪ Make it short. ▪ Can you keep your answer short?	52	9.4	46	8.3	57	10.3	11.39 (.495)
7.Users' personal responses to ChatGPT's output	▪ thank you, yes ▪ That's too bad…	25	4.5	45	8.1	37	6.7	10.92 (.69)
8. Translations	▪ What is the meaning of "normalization" in Korean?	6	1.1	19	3.4	17	3.1	10.40 (.40)
9.Synonyms or Antonyms	▪ What is a synonym for 'scoff'?	4	.7	4	.7	2	.4	3.07 (.54)
10.Edits to previously entered prompts	▪ Initial prompt: Can you give me example sentences of 're[el' ▪ Following prompt: sorry, the word is 'repel'	0	0	0	0	4	.7	4.02 (.40)
11. Suggestions for topics to continue conversation	▪ Let's have a conversation about "mbti"	0	0	0	0	1	.2	1.01 (.60)

Figure 1 illustrates the changes in prompt frequencies across the three worksheets, revealing how students' use of different prompt categories evolved over time. Some prompt types, such as "Definition of words," remained relatively consistent throughout the study (Worksheet 1: 97, 17.5%; Worksheet 2: 87, 15.7%; Worksheet 3: 90, 16.3%). This consistency suggests that these types of prompts were a core component of students' interactions with ChatGPT across all three periods of data collection.
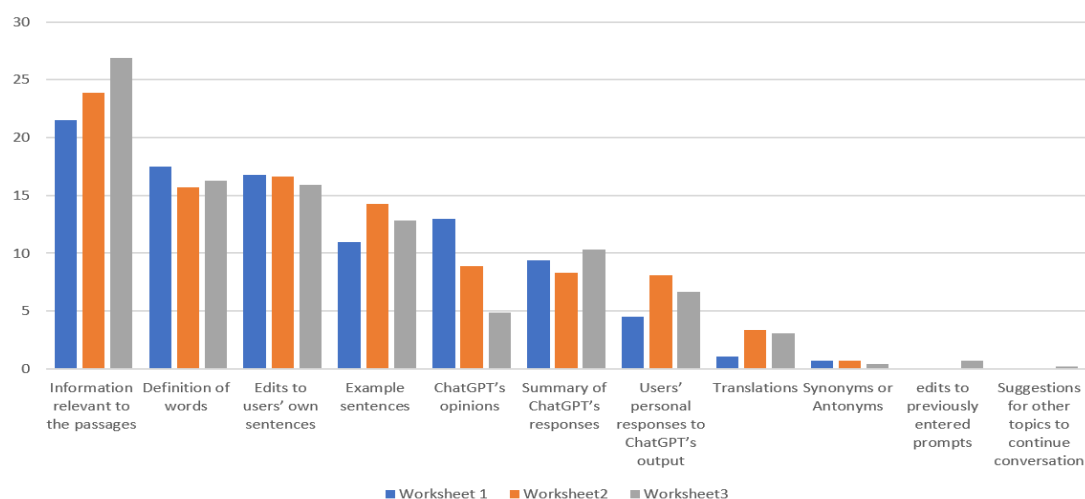

Figure 1. Changes in Prompt Usage Over Time

In contrast, certain prompts, including those asking for "Edits to users' own sentences," "ChatGPT's opinions," and "Synonyms and Antonyms," showed a decline in usage from Worksheet 1 to Worksheet 3. On the other hand, prompts requesting "Information relevant to the given passage" steadily increased over time, reflecting students' growing reliance on this type of inquiry. Additionally, despite a slight dip or rise in frequency in Worksheet 2, prompts such as "Summary of ChatGPT's responses," "Example sentences," and attempts to express "Personal responses to ChatGPT's answers" all increased in Worksheet 3 compared to Worksheet 1. These patterns indicate that students refined their prompting strategies as they grew more skilled in effectively utilizing ChatGPT during class activities.

Finally, two new types of prompts emerged in Worksheet 3: prompts requesting "Edits to previously entered prompts" and prompts seeking "Suggestions for other topics to continue the conversation." These new categories suggest that students were actively experimenting with strategies to sustain and deepen their interactions with ChatGPT as they became more familiar with the tool. The observation that students appeared to take a more active role in leading conversations in Worksheet 3 highlights the importance of providing timely and consistent teacher guidance. Such guidance is essential not only to help students take initiative in their interactions with ChatGPT but also to encourage effective use of the tool from their very first engagement. The remaining prompt categories exhibited noticeable fluctuations, suggesting shifts in students' focus and engagement patterns over time.

4.2 Student Perceptions of ChatGPT

The second research question explored students' perceptions of ChatGPT as a tool for English language learning. Specifically, the analysis examined whether prior experience with AI technologies influenced students' perceptions, aiming to determine if such experience led to divergent evaluations. Table 5 presents a comparison of students' assessments of ChatGPT's performance across various dimensions between the two groups. Overall, students expressed positive attitudes toward ChatGPT's capabilities. The most favorable perception was related to ChatGPT's rapid response to user inquiries (Experienced: $M = 5.44$; Inexperienced: $M = 5.11$). Both groups also agreed that ChatGPT's responses were easy to understand (Experienced: $M = 4.78$; Inexperienced: $M = 4.83$) and reported enjoying their interactions with the tool (Experienced: $M = 4.33$; Inexperienced: $M = 4.17$). However, perceptions of ChatGPT's conversational abilities and its resemblance to human interaction were relatively neutral (Experienced: $M = 3.78$; Inexperienced: $M = 3.22$). An independent *t*-test revealed no statistically significant differences in perceptions between students with prior AI experience and those without, as indicated in the final column of Table 5.

Table 5. Student Perceptions of ChatGPT

Students' responses	Previous Experience	M	SD	t	p
The response speed of ChatGPT is fast.	Experienced	5.44	.61	1.13	.26
	Inexperienced	5.11	1.07		
ChatGPT's responses are easy to understand.	Experienced	4.78	.87	-.20	.83
	Inexperienced	4.83	.70		
Talking with ChatGPT feels like talking with a real person.	Experienced	3.78	1.7	1.16	.25
	Inexperienced	3.22	1.11		
Talking with ChatGPT is fun.	Experienced	4.33	1.02	.45	.65
	Inexperienced	4.17	1.15		

The second research question also examined the extent to which ChatGPT could support students' English learning. As shown in Table 6, students in both groups did not exhibit significant differences in their perceptions of ChatGPT's usefulness for English learning. However, both groups expressed generally positive views, particularly regarding ChatGPT's support for learning English vocabulary (Experienced: $M = 4.50$; Inexperienced: $M = 4.56$) and reading skills (Experienced: $M = 4.33$; Inexperienced: $M = 4.39$).

Although no statistically significant differences were observed, students with prior AI experience tended to hold slightly more favorable opinions regarding ChatGPT's usefulness for improving English writing skills (Experienced: $M = 4.11$; Inexperienced: $M = 3.83$) and grammar skills (Experienced: $M = 4.11$; Inexperienced: $M = 3.89$). Additionally, experienced students demonstrated slightly greater willingness to continue using ChatGPT to enhance their English skills (Experienced: $M = 4.61$; Inexperienced: $M = 3.89$).

Table 6. Student Perceptions of ChatGPT Usefulness for Learning English

Proficiency	Previous Experience	M	SD	t	p
Talking with ChatGPT helps improve English reading skills.	Experienced	4.33	.97	-.16	.87
	Inexperienced	4.39	1.09		
Talking with ChatGPT helps improve English writing skills.	Experienced	4.11	1.02	.76	.44
	Inexperienced	3.83	1.15		
Talking with ChatGPT helps improve English vocabulary skills.	Experienced	4.50	1.38	-.14	.88
	Inexperienced	4.56	.92		
Talking with ChatGPT helps improve English grammar skills.	Experienced	4.11	1.32	.49	.62
	Inexperienced	3.89	1.37		
I want to continue using ChatGPT in the future to improve my English skills.	Experienced	4.61	1.42	1.57	.12
	Inexperienced	3.89	1.32		

In the open-ended responses to the questionnaire, students shared their perspectives on ChatGPT's usefulness as a tool for improving English proficiency. Students' responses were categorized into advantages and disadvantages of ChatGPT for four skills of English, reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar. Table 7 illustrates the students' perceptions of ChatGPT's advantages and disadvantages for developing reading skills.

Table 7. Student Perceptions of ChatGPT Advantages and Disadvantages for Reading Skills

Skills		Pros	Freq	%
Reading	Advantages	**Variety of content and diversity** *-ChatGPT gave me new ideas and diverse contents that helped me improve my reading skills.* *-Chatting with ChatGPT made me read its responses carefully, which helped my reading skills.*	14	32.6
		Reading ChatGPT's output itself is helpful *-To talk with ChatGPT, I had to read its responses, which helped me practice reading.*	13	30.2
		Fast information access *-ChatGPT's quick replies gave me the information I needed and improved my reading.*	6	14.0
		Knowledge enhancement *: Talking with ChatGPT gave me lots of information and helped me get more*	3	7.0

		information.		
	Disadvantages	**Information overload**	6	14.0
		-I found it hard to read and understand all the information in ChatGPT's responses.		
		ChatGPT's outputs were not aligned with users' reading proficiency	3	7.0
		-ChatGPT's responses were too difficult for me to understand.		
		-ChatGPT's answers were too easy for me, so they didn't really help my reading skills.		
		Outdated or irrelevant information	1	2.3
		-Sometimes ChatGPT gave me outdated or unrelated information.		
Total	**Total**		43	100

Findings revealed that 32.6% of students appreciated ChatGPT's ability to provide diverse content, suggesting that exposure to various contents helped enhance their reading skills. Similarly, 30.2% found the simple act of reading ChatGPT's responses beneficial for practicing and enhancing their reading skills. In addition, 14% of students valued ChatGPT's ability to provide fast access to information, and 7 % of them noted that engaging with ChatGPT helped them expand their knowledge, further enhancing their reading experience. Despite the advantages, 14% of respondents found it difficult to process and comprehend the vast amount of content in ChatGPT's responses. Another 7% felt that ChatGPT's outputs were misaligned with their reading proficiency, being either too easy or too difficult, which hindered their learning. A smaller percentage (2.3%) mentioned issues with outdated or irrelevant information.

Table 8. Student Perceptions of ChatGPT Advantages and Disadvantages for Writing Skills

Skills		Pros	Freq	%
	Advantages	**Prompt feedback and correction**	13	30.2
		-ChatGPT's feedback helped me identify and fix grammar and spelling mistakes.		
		Simple act of talking with ChatGPT	7	16.3
		-Writing questions in English to keep the conversation going helped me practice and improve my writing.		
		New vocabulary or expressions	6	14.0
		-I learned new expressions while chatting with ChatGPT.		
		-ChatGPT's responses introduced me to new words and phrases, which improved my writing.		
		-I learned English grammar by studying ChatGPT's responses.		
Writing		**Better understanding of writing process**	3	7.0
		-ChatGPT's edited responses and iterative editing practices were helpful for improving my writing skills.		
	Disadvantages		8	18.6
		Repeated question patterns		
		-I tended to ask similar, formulaic questions.		
		-I often repeated the same questions or had limited ideas for what to ask.		
		ChatGPT's error tolerance	4	9.3
		-ChatGPT understood me even when I made a lot of mistakes in my writing.		
		Less burden on writing in English	2	4.7
		-I felt less pressure writing in English with ChatGPT than with human teachers.		
		-I could practice my writing as much as I wanted with no pressure.		
Total			43	100

Table 8 above reveals varied student perceptions regarding ChatGPT's role in enhancing writing skills, with a balance of notable advantages and challenges. Among the advantages, 30.2% of students valued the ChatGPT's ability to provide prompt feedback and corrections, particularly in identifying and fixing grammar and spelling mistakes. This indicates that ChatGPT was seen as a practical resource for refining technical aspects of writing. In addition, 16.3% appreciated the opportunity to practice writing English questions during conversations, which encouraged consistent and active writing practice. Another significant benefit, noted by 14% of students, was the introduction of new vocabulary and expressions through ChatGPT's responses. A smaller proportion (7.0%) highlighted that iterative editing with ChatGPT contributed to a deeper understanding of the writing process. On the other hand, the most commonly reported challenge (18.6%) was the tendency to ask repetitive or formulaic questions, which limited the diversity of writing practice. Furthermore, 9.3% of students found ChatGPT's error tolerance both a strength and a weakness, as it understood their input despite significant mistakes but may not have effectively challenged them to improve. Interestingly, 4.7% of students noted that writing with ChatGPT felt less burdensome compared to human teachers.

Table 9. Student Perceptions of ChatGPT Advantages and Disadvantages for Vocabulary Skills

Skills		Students' Perceptions	Freq	%
	Advantages	**Vocabulary expansion** *-I could learn new words, synonyms, antonyms.* *-ChatGPT suggested me alternative expressions.* *-ChatGPT often provide more information about the meaning of a word or certain expressions than a traditional dictionary.*	22	57.9
		Efficient and interactive learning with ChatGPT's conversation *-When I asked and answered questions in English and interpreted ChatGPT's responses, I learned new words and expressions.*	9	23.7
Vocabulary	Disadvantages	**Preference for traditional tools** *-I preferred using traditional dictionaries like Naver or Google to find more accurate word meanings and examples.*	4	10.5
		Limited context *-ChatGPT sometimes uses vocabulary that's too advanced.* *-ChatGPT's explanations were sometimes too simple.*	2	5.3
		Limited use for grammar checks *-I only used ChatGPT to check grammar, so it wasn't very helpful for vocabulary.*	1	2.6
Total			38	100

Table 9 reveals diverse perceptions among students regarding ChatGPT's impact on developing vocabulary skills. The most significant advantage, reported by 57.9% of students, was vocabulary expansion. Students highlighted that ChatGPT helped them learn new words, synonyms, and antonyms, often providing alternative expressions and offering deeper insights into word meanings than traditional dictionaries. This suggests that ChatGPT's dynamic and detailed responses are a valuable resource for vocabulary building. Another advantage noted by 23.7 % of students was the interactive and efficient nature of learning through conversations with ChatGPT. By asking and answering questions in English and interpreting its responses, students were able to acquire new vocabulary in an engaging and context-rich environment. However, a few disadvantages were also identified. 10.5% of them expressed a preference for traditional tools like Naver or Google dictionaries, citing their accuracy and reliability for understanding word meanings and examples. Additionally, 5.3% stated that its vocabulary was sometimes too

advanced or its definitions too simplistic, making it less accessible in certain situations. Finally, 2.6% of them reported that using ChatGPT primarily for grammar checks did not significantly benefit their vocabulary learning.

Table 10. Student Perceptions of ChatGPT Advantages and Disadvantages for Grammar Skills

Skills		Pros	Freq	%
Grammar	Advantages	**Instant grammar correction** *-I could quickly find correct grammatical errors.* *-Real-time corrections from ChatGPT helped me understand grammar issues in my writing.*	24	58.5
		Enhancing awareness of mistakes *-ChatGPT's grammar corrections made me aware of common mistakes.*	3	7.3
		Reading ChatGPT's output *-Reading ChatGPT's responses helped me focus on grammar and learn the rules.*	1	2.4
	Disadvantages	**Limited function for advanced students** *-Sometimes the corrections were too basic and lacked depth.* *-Not very helpful for students wanting to improve advanced grammar skills.*	8	19.5
		Limited capability *-ChatGPT understands me even with lots of errors.* *-It just a simple grammar checker.*	5	12.2
Total			41	100

Table 10 provides insights into students' perceptions of ChatGPT's role in developing grammar skills. Among the advantages, the most frequently noted benefit (58.5%) was its ability to provide instant grammar corrections. Students appreciated ChatGPT's real-time feedback, which helped them quickly identify and correct errors while also improving their understanding of grammar issues in their writing. Additionally, 7.3% of students highlighted that ChatGPT's corrections enhanced their awareness of common mistakes, making them more conscious of their recurring grammatical errors. A smaller proportion (2.4%) mentioned that reading ChatGPT's responses helped them focus on grammar rules and better understand grammatical structures. On the other hand, the disadvantages point to some constraints in ChatGPT's utility for grammar development. Nearly one-fifth of the students (19.5%) found the tool less effective for advanced learners, noting that its corrections were often too basic and lacked the depth needed to refine complex grammar skills. Furthermore, 12.2% of students expressed dissatisfaction with ChatGPT's limited capabilities, describing it as a simple grammar checker that could understand their input despite numerous errors but did not challenge them to improve significantly.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine how EFL students interacted with ChatGPT by focusing on the types of prompts they formulated in the reading at a university. The students' perceptions towards ChatGPT was also investigated to further explore the more practical ways to integrating ChatGPT into college English classes. The main findings revealed that the students' actual prompting strategies while using the ChatGPT and their overall positive attitudes towards it.

In the first research question, analysis of 36 students' ChatGPT revealed 11 distinct prompt types, ranging from

requesting definitions to seeking ChatGPT's opinions. The most frequent prompts were for information related to assigned passages, which increased in usage across worksheets (1st: 21.5%; 2nd: 23.9%; 3rd: 26.9%). Requests for word definitions and sentence editing were the second most frequent but varied in rank across worksheets. While most prompt frequencies remained consistent across worksheets, prompts asking for ChatGPT's opinions significantly declined over time (1st: 13%; 2nd: 8.9%; 3rd: 4.9%), confirmed by a Chi-squared test. This suggests students increasingly relied on task-specific assistance over conversational engagement. The changes of prompt types over time suggested that students appeared to refine their prompt usage over time, initially experimenting broadly and focusing on prompts they found more useful. Students' iterative refinement of prompts aligns with previous research on prompting strategies in language learning (Han 2023, Jung 2024, Lee 2023), which emphasizes that clear and precise prompts are essential for obtaining accurate and relevant responses from ChatGPT. These studies also highlight the need for structured classroom activities and teacher guidance to help students develop effective prompting skills. As Han (2023) underscored, explicit instruction in prompt writing is crucial in AI-supported language classrooms. Therefore, educators should closely monitor how students engage with AI tools over time and adjust instructional support to enhance their learning experience.

In the second research question, students expressed generally positive attitudes toward ChatGPT, particularly appreciating its rapid responses and ease of understanding. Enjoyment of interactions was also reported. ChatGPT is widely regarded as a valuable tool for enhancing reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar skills. In reading, its strengths included providing diverse content, fast responses, and opportunities for knowledge enhancement. However, challenges like mismatched responses to users' reading levels and information overload highlighted the need for adjustments to create a more balanced and supportive learning experience. In writing, ChatGPT excelled in offering immediate feedback, encouraging consistent practice, and introducing new language elements. However, students' repetitive usage patterns and ChatGPT's high error tolerance might limit its potential for students' significant skill improvement. In terms of vocabulary, ChatGPT is highly effective for expanding word knowledge and facilitating interactive learning. Students benefited from its ability to introduce synonyms, antonyms, and alternative expressions. Nonetheless, some learners preferred traditional dictionaries for their perceived accuracy, and others felt ChatGPT's explanations sometimes lack depth. Similarly, for grammar, ChatGPT was a helpful resource for beginner to intermediate learners, offering instant corrections and raising awareness of common errors. However, its limitations in addressing advanced grammar concepts and providing nuanced feedback suggested it could be more useful as a supplementary tool. The findings from the second research question correspond to previous studies on students' perceptions of ChatGPT, highlighting both its pedagogical advantages and limitations in language learning (Choe 2023b, Lee and You 2024, Oh 2023). ChatGPT served as a valuable supplementary tool in English language classrooms, offering students access to diverse reading materials and providing immediate feedback across various language skills. However, several challenges emerged, such as mismatched reading content relative to students' proficiency levels, information overload, and repetitive prompt usage patterns. These findings underscore the need for effective prompting strategies to optimize learning outcomes. This aligns with Lee (2023) and Han (2023), who emphasized that well-crafted prompts and critical engagement with AI-generated content are essential for maximizing the benefits of ChatGPT-assisted language learning. Additionally, students expressed mixed perceptions of ChatGPT's effectiveness in grammar instruction. While it was helpful for beginner to intermediate learners, it proved less effective for advanced students, reinforcing the idea that AI should complement, rather than replace, traditional classroom instruction. These findings highlight the importance of structured guidance and pedagogical integration to ensure that ChatGPT serves as a supportive learning tool rather than a standalone solution.

This study is not without its limitations. It was conducted in a limited context, involving 36 students from a

single class. The conversation patterns these students exhibited with ChatGPT and their opinions may vary significantly across different groups of learners. Future research should therefore include a diverse range of student groups to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, this study relied solely on students' self-reported English proficiency levels, which may introduce subjective bias. The findings, particularly regarding the types of prompts, might differ based on students' actual proficiency. To address this, future studies should incorporate standardized English proficiency tests or pre- and post-assessments to provide more robust and reliable results.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, this study offers several important implications. From a pedagogical perspective, the findings underscore the importance of fostering prompt literacy in ChatGPT-supported language classes. Well-structured prompts help learners obtain more suitable reading materials, facilitating skill development, comprehension, and engagement in the language learning process. Given the importance of prompt structure, the findings addressing the first research question revealed that students tended to make one-way inquiries rather than engaging in back-and-forth exchanges similar to human interactions. Proper guidance on the use of prompts in language classrooms could expand students' repertoire of prompt types, enabling them to take an active role in steering conversations with ChatGPT rather than merely consuming its responses. Classroom activities incorporating generative AI should focus on teaching students to critically evaluate AI-generated responses. From an empirical perspective, future research could develop instruments to measure improvements in students' language proficiency and changes in their behavior when using ChatGPT outside the classroom over a longer time frame. Longitudinal studies could systematically collect and analyze student-ChatGPT interactions across an academic year to examine language proficiency growth and evolving patterns in the use of ChatGPT for language learning purposes. To conclude, this study explored how students interacted with ChatGPT in reading classrooms by analyzing their prompts and perceptions of the tool. The findings offer valuable insights for optimizing AI-supported learning environments and developing pedagogical frameworks that incorporate prompt literacy training for future research in EFL reading education.

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Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Level: Tertiary