

Guided ChatGPT Use in Personalized Virtual English Learning at Edu-K Academy

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Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés Facultad de Educación

Decanatura de División de Educación Abierta y a Distancia

CAU Cúcuta

Cúcuta, 2026

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Abstract

The increasing presence of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in education has generated growing interest in their potential to support personalized learning experiences, particularly in virtual learning environments. Among these technologies, generative AI tools such as ChatGPT have emerged as accessible resources that may assist learners in practicing language skills, receiving feedback, and accessing language explanations in real time. However, understanding how students perceive the role of such tools in their learning process remains an important area of inquiry.

This study analyzes the role of the guided use of ChatGPT in supporting personalized virtual English learning at Edu-K Academy, an online language academy located in Cúcuta, Colombia. The research adopts a qualitative approach to explore students' perceptions regarding the use of ChatGPT as a learning support tool. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, open-ended surveys, and the teacher-researcher's reflective journal. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis in order to identify patterns related to students' experiences with ChatGPT in their English learning process.

The findings suggest that students perceive ChatGPT as a flexible learning support tool that may facilitate individualized and personalized language practice and immediate feedback. At the same time, the results highlight the importance of teacher guidance in helping students use AI tools more effectively for learning purposes. Based on these findings, the study proposes an illustrative pedagogical prototype showing how teachers may guide students in using ChatGPT to support personalized virtual English learning.

Keywords: ChatGPT, Artificial Intelligence, Personalized Learning, Virtual English Learning, Language Education.

Resumen

El creciente desarrollo de tecnologías de inteligencia artificial (IA) en el ámbito educativo ha despertado un interés significativo en su potencial para apoyar experiencias de aprendizaje más personalizadas, especialmente en entornos de aprendizaje virtual. Entre estas tecnologías, herramientas de IA generativa como ChatGPT han emergido como recursos accesibles que pueden apoyar a los estudiantes en la práctica del idioma, la obtención de retroalimentación inmediata y el acceso a explicaciones lingüísticas en tiempo real. Sin embargo, comprender cómo los estudiantes perciben el papel de estas herramientas en su proceso de aprendizaje continúa siendo un área relevante de investigación.

El presente estudio analiza el rol del uso guiado de ChatGPT en el apoyo al aprendizaje personalizado del inglés en entornos virtuales en Edu-K Academy, una academia de idiomas en línea ubicada en Cúcuta, Colombia. La investigación adopta un enfoque cualitativo para explorar las percepciones de los estudiantes respecto al uso de ChatGPT como herramienta de apoyo en su proceso de aprendizaje del inglés. Los datos se recolectaron mediante entrevistas semiestructuradas, encuestas abiertas y el diario reflexivo de la docente- investigadora. Posteriormente, la información fue analizada a través de un proceso de análisis temático con el fin de identificar patrones relacionados con la experiencia de los estudiantes al utilizar ChatGPT en su aprendizaje.

Los resultados sugieren que los estudiantes perciben ChatGPT como una herramienta flexible que puede facilitar la práctica individualizada y personalizada del idioma y el acceso a retroalimentación inmediata. Al mismo tiempo, los hallazgos destacan la importancia de la guía docente para ayudar a los estudiantes a utilizar las herramientas de inteligencia artificial de manera más efectiva con fines de aprendizaje. A partir de estos resultados, el estudio propone un

prototipo pedagógico que ilustra cómo los docentes pueden orientar el uso de ChatGPT para apoyar experiencias de aprendizaje del inglés más personalizadas en contextos virtuales.

Palabras clave: ChatGPT, Inteligencia artificial, Aprendizaje personalizado, Aprendizaje virtual del inglés, Educación en lenguas.

Introduction

In recent years, the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies has generated increasing interest in their potential applications within educational contexts. Among these technologies, generative AI tools such as ChatGPT have attracted particular attention due to their ability to generate human-like responses, provide instant feedback, and support interactive learning experiences. In language education, these tools offer new possibilities for supporting learners' practice, providing immediate language assistance, and facilitating access to learning resources beyond the traditional classroom environment.

The growing presence of AI tools in educational settings has led researchers and educators to explore how these technologies may support more personalized learning experiences. In virtual language learning environments, where students often work independently and at different paces, tools such as ChatGPT may provide flexible learning support by responding to learners' individual questions, offering explanations, and generating language examples. However, the educational potential of AI tools does not depend solely on the technology itself, but also on how these tools are integrated pedagogically and how learners are guided in using them effectively.

Within this context, understanding students' perceptions regarding the use of generative AI tools becomes particularly important. While many learners are beginning to use tools such as ChatGPT independently, there is still limited research examining how students perceive the role of these technologies in supporting personalized language learning, especially in virtual learning environments. Furthermore, the growing accessibility of AI tools raises important questions about the role of teachers in guiding students' interaction with such technologies in meaningful and pedagogically responsible ways.

In response to these considerations, the present study explores the role of the guided use of ChatGPT in supporting personalized virtual English learning at Edu-K Academy, an online language learning academy. The study adopts a qualitative approach to analyze students' perceptions regarding the use of ChatGPT as a learning support tool within their virtual English learning process. Rather than implementing or evaluating a pedagogical intervention, the research focuses on understanding how learners interact with ChatGPT and how they perceive its potential contribution to personalized language learning.

The findings of this study contribute to the growing discussion on artificial intelligence in education by providing insights into students' perspectives on the use of generative AI tools in language learning. Based on the analysis of participants' experiences, the study also proposes pedagogical implications that illustrate how teachers may guide students in using ChatGPT to support personalized virtual English learning.

This document is organized into several sections. First, the contextualization and research statement present the background of the study and define the research problem. The literature review and conceptual framework provide the theoretical foundation for the research. The research design describes the methodological approach, participants, instruments, and data analysis procedures. The findings section presents the categories identified through the qualitative analysis, followed by an interpretation of these findings in relation to previous research. Based on these insights, the study introduces a pedagogical prototype illustrating how ChatGPT may be integrated into virtual language learning contexts. Finally, the study concludes by summarizing the main contributions of the research and presenting implications and recommendations for future research and educational practice.

Contextualization

Learning English as a foreign language has gained increasing relevance in the global context, especially in countries like Colombia, where proficiency in the language is an essential requirement for accessing better academic and professional opportunities (British Council, 2015). In the Colombian educational context, English language teaching is guided by the Ministry of Education (MEN) through national bilingualism policies that promote the strengthening of communicative competence aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). These policies emphasize the development of practical language skills and the integration of innovative methodologies to improve learning outcomes. Despite these national efforts, significant challenges remain in ensuring meaningful, engaging, and personalized English learning experiences, particularly in virtual environments.

This research is framed within the university's research line "Prácticas de Enseñanza en Lenguas Extranjeras innovadoras, incluyentes y emergentes," as it seeks to explore innovative practices in virtual English learning through the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Specifically, the study aligns with the thematic areas of emerging technologies and the use of AI in education, as it examines how AI tools may contribute to more personalized learning experiences. By incorporating AI-driven personalization, the research also contributes to the development of emerging pedagogies and more inclusive methodologies that respond to diverse learning needs in digital EFL contexts. This alignment is particularly relevant in light of the growing emphasis on digital transformation and innovation in Colombian higher and language education.

Despite institutional and national efforts, many students continue to face barriers that hinder their English learning process, especially in virtual settings where traditional

methodologies focused primarily on grammar and lacking personalization often prevail. The need for innovative approaches that prioritize communication, engagement, and real-world application has become increasingly evident in contemporary language education (Richards, 2006).

Edu-K is an emerging online English academy founded in Cúcuta, Colombia, with the goal of offering a dynamic and innovative alternative for language learning. Although the institution is currently in its early stages, it aspires to establish itself as a legally recognized educational entity. Unlike traditional language academies, Edu-K operates entirely online, allowing students from different locations to access high-quality English instruction. At present, the academy specializes in teaching English from levels A1 to B2, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The curriculum is divided into three progressive levels: Seed (A1.1-A1.2), Grow (A2-B1.1), and Bloom (B1.1-B2), each designed to develop students' linguistic skills in a structured yet flexible manner. The academy caters to a diverse audience, including children, adolescents, and adults, providing both individual and small-group classes with a maximum of 8 students per session. This semi-personalized approach ensures that each learner receives adequate attention and support throughout their language acquisition process.

Edu-K has differentiated itself from traditional models through interactive pedagogical strategies that promote an engaging learning environment for students. The academy adopts a communicative approach, which prioritizes real-life language use over rote memorization (Harmer, 2007). This methodology fosters students' ability to engage in meaningful interactions from the very first stages of learning, incorporating activities such as role-playing, debates, and simulated real-world scenarios. Additionally, Edu-K integrates game-based learning (GBL), a

strategy that enhances student motivation and participation through digital gamification tools and interactive exercises (Gee, 2003). By incorporating elements of play, learners develop linguistic skills in a more natural and engaging manner, which contributes to increased retention and application of knowledge.

Furthermore, the academy implements project-based learning (PBL) to reinforce the practical application of English in authentic contexts. This methodology encourages students to work on projects such as creating blogs, conducting interviews, and designing multimedia presentations, allowing them to develop communication skills while engaging in tasks that mirror real-life professional and academic settings (Thomas, 2000). To structure lessons effectively, Edu-K follows the Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP) model, a widely recognized framework in language education (Richards, 2006). This model ensures that students are first introduced to new concepts, then engage in guided practice, and ultimately apply their knowledge independently in communicative tasks.

Through the integration of these methodologies, Edu-K aims to create a dynamic virtual learning environment that promotes meaningful language use and student engagement. However, as the academy continues to grow, it has identified the need to move beyond semi-personalization toward more adaptive and individualized learning pathways. In this regard, the integration of Artificial Intelligence emerges as a potential strategy to enhance learning personalization, strengthen student engagement, and optimize learning outcomes in virtual English education. Exploring how AI tools, particularly ChatGPT, may support personalized learning processes becomes especially relevant in virtual language programs seeking to respond to diverse learner needs.

Research statement

In virtual English language education, one of the most significant challenges is ensuring that learning experiences effectively respond to students' individual goals, proficiency levels, and learning paces. A lack of personalization in learning processes can lead to demotivation, difficulties in knowledge acquisition, and, in many cases, course dropout. This issue is particularly evident in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in virtual environments, where traditional methodologies still prevail. In many online learning platforms, standardized, grammar-centered approaches (Richards, 2006) fail to address the diversity of learning styles and specific student needs.

Edu-K, an online English academy based in Cúcuta, Colombia, was founded with the goal of providing a dynamic and innovative learning experience. The academy distinguishes itself from traditional models through interactive pedagogical strategies, such as communicative approaches (Harmer, 2007), game-based learning (GBL) (Gee, 2003), and project-based learning (PBL) (Thomas, 2000). These methodologies have contributed to the creation of an engaging and comfortable learning environment, allowing students to actively participate in meaningful, real-life language interactions.

However, despite these well-intentioned strategies, classroom observations and student interviews have revealed underlying issues related to motivation and course continuity. Observations indicated that although students responded positively to the interactive nature of the classes and enjoyed the teacher's methodology, they also experienced frustration due to a lack of adaptability in scheduling, topic selection, and learning pace. Many students expressed a desire for learning experiences tailored to their individual goals and linguistic needs, yet the courses remained largely standardized.

Interviews further revealed that students who discontinued their studies at Edu-K did not do so due to dissatisfaction with the quality of instruction but rather due to challenges related to course personalization. Some students struggled with rigid course structures that did not align with their professional or personal language learning objectives, while others found that certain topics were either too advanced or too basic for their skill level. Additionally, time constraints for lesson planning and organization, as well as the scalability of personalized learning, posed significant challenges for instructors, making it difficult to implement fully individualized learning experiences.

Among the challenges identified, the lack of personalized learning paths is a major barrier to student motivation and retention in online EFL education. Research in second language acquisition (SLA) suggests that personalization enhances engagement by connecting course content to students' real-life experiences and goals (Dörnyei, 2001). However, many online academies, including Edu-K, rely on standardized curricula that fail to accommodate individual learning differences. This contradicts key educational theories, such as Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development, which emphasizes the importance of scaffolding at the right level for each learner. Without personalization, students risk disengagement due to courses that are either too challenging or too simplistic.

In the Colombian context, the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2013) has emphasized the importance of integrating digital technologies and virtual education environments to improve educational quality and promote flexible, student-centered learning. In recent years, this need has expanded with the emergence of more advanced digital tools, including artificial intelligence, which require not only access but also pedagogical guidance for their effective use. However, despite these developments, there is still a need to guide learners in the effective use of emerging

technologies such as AI to ensure that they meaningfully support personalized learning processes.

It is crucial to explore new strategies to optimize virtual English learning processes at Edu-K, offering greater flexibility and a more personalized approach focused on each student's individual goals. In this regard, rather than approaching Artificial Intelligence as a broad technological solution, this study focuses specifically on the guided pedagogical use of ChatGPT as a tool that may support adaptive feedback and individualized learning pathways.

While Artificial Intelligence has shown potential in enhancing digital education (Chen et al., 2020; Luckin et al., 2016), its effectiveness depends largely on structured pedagogical mediation rather than unrestricted technological use. Not all artificial intelligence tools contribute positively to language learning; in some cases, excessive automation or direct answer generation may hinder learner autonomy and critical thinking. Therefore, the present research does not aim to replace the teacher or automate instruction. Instead, it seeks to analyze the role of the guided use of ChatGPT in supporting personalized virtual English learning at Edu-K Academy.

Grounded in learner-centered principles and scaffolding theory, this study analyzes the role of the guided use of ChatGPT in supporting personalized virtual English learning, while preserving the active role of students in constructing their own learning process.

Research question

What is the role of the guided use of ChatGPT in supporting personalized virtual English learning at Edu-K Academy?

Research Objectives

General objective

Analyze the role of the guided use of ChatGPT in supporting personalized virtual English learning at Edu-K Academy.

Specific objectives

- To identify challenges related to the use of ChatGPT for personalization in virtual English learning at Edu-K Academy.
- To examine students' perceptions regarding the guided use of ChatGPT in their English learning process.
- To describe the perceived potential of ChatGPT for personalized virtual English learning.

Literature Review

Over the past decade, the intersection of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and personalized learning has generated increasing interest among researchers seeking to improve the effectiveness of digital education. Studies across various educational settings have demonstrated how AI tools can support learner-centered approaches, particularly within virtual environments.

The following literature offers a chronological exploration of this development from 2021 to 2025, laying a foundation for understanding the theoretical and practical contributions of AI to personalized English language instruction. In this review, each study is described considering key aspects such as research methodology, population, country of study, data collection instruments, and main findings, in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of how AI has been applied in different educational contexts.

To begin with, Maher et al. (2021) explored the transformative role of AI in digital education, focusing on personalized learning supported by virtual tutors, chatbots, and adaptive platforms. Their mixed-methods research showed significant academic improvement among students exposed to AI-driven learning environments compared to those in traditional classrooms. Qualitative findings emphasized increased learner satisfaction, real-time feedback, and the ethical concerns associated with data use and AI bias. The study reinforces the theoretical and practical value of AI tools in tailoring instruction, while also acknowledging the need for balance between technological innovation and human-centered pedagogy. These insights strengthen the foundation of the present research by supporting the view that AI can contribute meaningfully to the personalization of virtual language education.

Building on these early insights, Yao and Wu (2023) designed an intelligent chatbot system to support personalized learning through real-time feedback and adaptive content

recommendation. Using a two-level Bayesian algorithm and semantic analysis, the chatbot identified learners' knowledge gaps and offered targeted support materials. Their experimental design, although conducted in the context of digital cooking education, demonstrated the potential of AI chatbots to replicate the responsiveness of human tutors. This research is particularly relevant to the current study as it exemplifies how conversational AI can promote engagement and address individual learning needs—features highly desirable in virtual English language education.

Similarly, López López et al. (2023) investigated AI-driven personalization strategies at the university level to meet the diverse needs of computer science students. Using a mixed-methods design, they found that adaptive learning platforms—such as Knewton and Smart Sparrow—enhanced learners' engagement and helped instructors identify struggling students through real-time analytics. More than 80% of participants acknowledged that AI systems were better at detecting their learning difficulties than traditional methods. Although this study was situated in STEM education, its insights on adaptive technologies and learning analytics provide valuable conceptual grounding for this research. It supports the broader claim that AI tools can increase responsiveness and efficiency in virtual learning environments, including in language education.

In the Colombian context, Vija Baquero and Dávila Rubio (2024) conducted a qualitative study to identify the trends and uses of AI in the creation of online English language resources at the A2.2 level. Based on interviews and a documentary review, they designed a flexible virtual course module incorporating AI tools such as Haygen, WordWall, and Kahoot to foster communicative competence. The research highlighted the ability of AI to support content creation and promote learner autonomy while also addressing institutional challenges such as

schedule flexibility and access to personalized materials. Although access to technology and the need for teacher training were noted as limitations, the proposed pedagogical model offers concrete guidance for implementing AI in personalized learning environments. This study aligns closely with the current research by showcasing the potential of AI to bridge instructional gaps and support learner-centered design in virtual language programs.

Moreover, further advancing the technical foundation, Kanchon et al. (2024) developed an AI-powered system that identifies learners' individual styles (visual, auditory, or kinesthetic) and modifies digital content accordingly. Their quantitative study involved 506 students and employed multiple machine learning algorithms to achieve a 97.56% accuracy in classifying learning preferences. Natural language processing (NLP) tools such as GPT-3 and spaCy were used to generate personalized resources like flashcards, audio scripts, and visual aids. Learner feedback indicated strong satisfaction with the adaptive content. While the study focused on general education rather than language learning, it contributes directly to this research by demonstrating scalable and data-driven methods for tailoring instruction in digital environments, methods that could be adapted to virtual English instruction in language academies.

Continuing with the 2025 studies, Bernal Parraga et al. (2025) examined the influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on personalized learning within English language education, aiming to assess the effectiveness of AI-driven platforms in enhancing vocabulary acquisition, grammar comprehension, motivation, and learner autonomy. The researchers employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from pre- and post-tests with qualitative insights from interviews and focus groups. Their sample consisted of 120 high school students, divided into experimental and control groups, with the former using AI tools such as Duolingo, Grammarly, Rosetta Stone, and Babbel.

The results indicated a statistically significant improvement in English language proficiency in the experimental group, alongside increased student motivation and engagement. Teachers also noted improvements in individualized instruction and classroom dynamics. Despite these positive outcomes, the study acknowledged challenges such as unequal access to technology, the need for ongoing teacher training, and the short duration of the intervention. The authors emphasized that while AI tools are powerful aids in creating personalized learning pathways, their integration must be equitable and supported by proper infrastructure and pedagogical training. This study is directly related to the present research, as it provides empirical evidence of how AI contributes to the personalization of English language learning in virtual environments.

Expanding on this perspective, Kohnke et al. (2025) investigated how generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools impact learners' experiences and perceptions in English language education, particularly among first-year English for Academic Purposes (EAP) students. The study employed a sequential mixed-methods design, beginning with a survey of 129 students followed by in-depth interviews. Their findings emphasized the value of GenAI tools such as Grammarly, Quillbot, and ChatGPT in enhancing grammar, vocabulary, and writing skills.

Learners appreciated the personalized feedback and real-time support that these tools provided, though concerns emerged regarding overreliance and the need for academic integrity. This study significantly informs the current research by offering a learner-centered perspective on how AI tools foster autonomy, motivation, and linguistic competence in digital language learning settings.

Taken together, these studies highlight the growing potential of Artificial Intelligence to support personalized learning across diverse educational contexts, including language education.

The reviewed literature consistently shows that AI tools can enhance learner engagement, provide adaptive feedback, and promote learner autonomy. At the same time, these studies also reveal important challenges, such as differences in digital literacy, unequal access to technology, and the need for pedagogical guidance in the use of AI tools.

Within this context, there remains a need to further explore how the guided use of AI tools, particularly ChatGPT, can support personalized English learning in specific virtual environments. Therefore, the present study contributes to this field by examining students' perceptions and experiences within Edu-K Academy, aligning with the broader discussion on the pedagogical integration of AI in virtual language education.

Conceptual framework

To deepen the understanding of how Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies may contribute to the personalization of virtual English learning in a language academy, it is essential to clarify the key concepts that underpin this study. The theoretical construction of the project is based on several interrelated notions: Artificial Intelligence in Language Education, Virtual English Learning Environments, Learning Personalization, AI-mediated learning, and the use of ChatGPT in English language learning. These concepts emerge from the intersection of educational technology and language learning, offering a foundation for analyzing the potential and challenges of integrating artificial intelligence in virtual academic settings. Drawing on existing literature, this conceptual framework outlines the meaning, scope, and interconnection of these concepts as presented by scholars in the field of digital education and language learning.

Artificial Intelligence in Language Education

One of the central pillars of this research is the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies in language education. These tools are defined as digital systems capable of simulating aspects of human cognitive processes such as reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making in order to support learning processes. According to Maher et al. (2021), artificial intelligence in education enables automated tutoring, real-time feedback, and adaptive content delivery that can respond to students' learning needs. These systems can analyze user input and provide immediate responses, creating opportunities for more flexible and individualized learning experiences.

In the context of English language learning, AI technologies have been increasingly explored as tools capable of supporting language practice, feedback, and learner autonomy. Kohnke et al. (2025) emphasize the effectiveness of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT and

other language-support systems in developing writing and vocabulary skills through personalized assistance. These tools allow learners to request explanations, generate examples, and receive immediate feedback that may support their language development beyond classroom interaction.

Similarly, Yao and Wu (2023) highlight the role of intelligent chatbots that respond to learners' needs by identifying knowledge gaps and recommending tailored learning materials. Through natural language processing and adaptive algorithms, conversational agents can simulate interactive exchanges that resemble human tutoring interactions. These tools serve not only as technological aids but also as pedagogical mediators within digital learning environments, enabling students to access additional support during their learning process.

However, researchers emphasize that the educational potential of artificial intelligence depends largely on how these tools are integrated into pedagogical practices. AI technologies should not be viewed as replacements for teachers but rather as complementary tools that can enhance learning experiences when guided appropriately within educational contexts.

Virtual English Learning Environment

A virtual learning environment (VLE) refers to the digital space where online teaching and learning processes take place. These environments allow the distribution of educational content, communication between instructors and learners, and monitoring of learning progress through digital platforms. According to López López et al. (2023), virtual learning environments play a fundamental role in distance education because they promote learner autonomy, flexibility, and continuous access to educational resources.

In the context of English as a foreign language (EFL), virtual learning environments create opportunities for learners to engage in language practice through digital interaction and access to diverse multimedia resources. Warschauer and Kern (2000) argue that network-based

language learning environments enable learners to interact with authentic language materials, communicate with others through digital platforms, and develop linguistic skills through collaborative online activities.

Platforms such as Moodle, Google Classroom, and other learning management systems enable teachers to organize instructional materials, facilitate communication, and design interactive activities that support language development. These platforms can support both synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences, allowing learners to practice language skills beyond the physical classroom environment.

At the same time, researchers note that virtual language learning environments may present challenges related to maintaining student engagement and providing individualized learning support. Since learners may progress at different speeds and encounter different learning difficulties, virtual environments often require additional tools and strategies that support personalized learning experiences. In this context, artificial intelligence technologies may complement virtual learning platforms by providing adaptive feedback, additional language explanations, and personalized learning support that responds to students' needs.

Learning Personalization

Learning personalization refers to the process of adapting educational experiences to align with learners' individual needs, goals, learning preferences, and pace of learning. In contrast to traditional standardized instructional models, personalized learning approaches seek to provide students with more flexible learning pathways that respond to their specific learning contexts.

According to Bernal Parraga et al. (2025), personalization represents a shift toward learner-centered educational models that prioritize individual learning needs and promote greater

student engagement in the learning process. By incorporating personalized learning strategies, educators can design instructional experiences that better address differences in learners' linguistic backgrounds, motivations, and learning styles.

Artificial intelligence technologies have been increasingly explored as tools capable of supporting personalized learning processes. These technologies can analyze patterns in learners' interactions and provide adaptive responses that help students receive more targeted feedback. Kanchon et al. (2024) demonstrate that machine learning algorithms can identify learners' preferred learning styles and dynamically adjust instructional materials accordingly, which may contribute to improved engagement and learning satisfaction.

In language education, personalized learning can support learners in focusing on the linguistic areas that require greater practice, such as vocabulary development, grammar accuracy, or communicative fluency. By receiving individualized support, learners may develop greater autonomy and confidence in their language learning process. Consequently, personalization is not only a didactic strategy but also a pedagogical principle that promotes learner agency and responds to the diversity present within virtual learning environments.

AI-Mediated Learning

AI-mediated learning refers to educational processes in which artificial intelligence technologies function as mediating tools that support interactions between learners, learning content, and instructional environments. In this perspective, AI systems are not understood as replacements for teachers, but rather as technological tools that can facilitate learning processes by providing feedback, explanations, and access to additional learning resources. According to Holmes, Bialik, and Fadel (2019), artificial intelligence technologies can support learning by

acting as intermediaries that help learners access knowledge, receive personalized feedback, and interact with educational content in more adaptive ways.

Similarly, Luckin et al. (2016) explain that artificial intelligence in education should be understood as a tool that augments human teaching rather than replacing it. AI systems can support learners by offering guidance, scaffolding, and adaptive responses that respond to students' individual learning needs. Through these mechanisms, AI technologies can facilitate personalized learning experiences by allowing students to access explanations and learning support at the moment they encounter difficulties.

In language learning contexts, AI-mediated learning can provide opportunities for learners to engage in interactive practice with digital systems capable of responding to their language input. Conversational agents and intelligent tutoring systems can offer explanations of grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structures while allowing learners to experiment with language in a low-risk environment. According to Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019), artificial intelligence tools in education can enhance learning environments by enabling adaptive feedback and supporting learner-centered educational experiences.

However, the effectiveness of AI-mediated learning depends largely on the pedagogical design that guides the use of these technologies. According to Holmes, Bialik, and Fadel (2019), artificial intelligence tools can support learning processes only when they are integrated within pedagogically meaningful learning environments. Similarly, Luckin et al. (2016) argue that AI technologies should complement teaching practices rather than replace educators, highlighting the importance of instructional guidance in helping students interact productively with AI systems. For this reason, educators play a crucial role in helping students understand how to use AI tools effectively as part of their learning process.

Within this perspective, AI technologies such as ChatGPT can function as mediating tools that support language learning when they are integrated into structured learning activities guided by teachers. Through guided interaction, students can use AI systems to explore language questions, receive explanations, and practice communication skills while developing greater autonomy in their learning process.

ChatGPT in English Language Learning

Generative artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT have recently gained increasing attention in educational research due to their capacity to generate contextually appropriate responses through natural language interaction. ChatGPT is based on large language models capable of producing explanations, examples, and feedback that can support learning processes across different educational contexts. In language education, these systems have been explored as tools that may assist learners in practicing language skills, clarifying doubts, and receiving immediate feedback during their learning process.

In the context of English language learning, ChatGPT can provide various forms of linguistic support, including explanations of grammar structures, vocabulary usage, sentence construction, and writing assistance. According to Kohnke, Zou, and Su (2025), generative artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT can support language development by providing learners with interactive feedback and opportunities for additional language practice beyond classroom instruction. Through conversational interaction, students can explore language questions, request examples, and receive explanations that may help them better understand linguistic structures.

Similarly, research on generative artificial intelligence highlights the potential of conversational AI systems to support learning through adaptive responses and interactive

dialogue. Kasneci et al. (2023) argue that large language models such as ChatGPT can assist learners by generating explanations and responses that facilitate understanding and encourage inquiry-based learning. These systems allow learners to interact with educational content dynamically, which may contribute to more flexible and individualized learning experiences.

However, scholars emphasize that the educational value of generative AI tools depends largely on how these technologies are integrated into pedagogical practices. Cotton, Cotton, and Shipway (2023) note that while tools such as ChatGPT can provide valuable academic support, their effectiveness in educational contexts depends on responsible and pedagogically guided use. Without appropriate guidance, learners may rely on AI systems merely to obtain answers rather than engaging meaningfully with the learning process.

For this reason, the concept of guided AI use becomes particularly relevant in educational contexts. Teachers play a crucial role in helping students understand how to interact effectively with AI systems by modeling appropriate prompts, encouraging critical evaluation of AI-generated responses, and integrating these tools into meaningful learning activities. In this sense, ChatGPT can function as a complementary learning support tool when its use is guided by pedagogical strategies that promote reflection, language practice, and learner autonomy within virtual English learning environments.

Research Design

Research Approach

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, which focuses on understanding human experiences and social phenomena from participants' perspectives rather than measuring them statistically. According to Given (2020), qualitative research seeks to explore meaning and interpretation within specific contexts, making it particularly suitable for educational research that examines perceptions and behaviors.

In this study, the qualitative approach enables an in-depth understanding of how the guided use of ChatGPT may support the personalization of virtual English learning. By prioritizing participants' voices and contextual analysis, this approach allows the exploration of students' experiences, attitudes, and interactions with AI tools within their authentic learning environment at Edu-K Academy.

Type of Research

This study follows a descriptive research design, aimed at analyzing students' perceptions regarding the guided use of ChatGPT in virtual English learning. Qualitative descriptive studies focus on understanding phenomena within their natural context by exploring participants' perspectives and interpretations (Sandelowski, 2000).

In this research, this type of study allows the examination of how students perceive the role of ChatGPT as a support tool for personalized English learning within the virtual environment of Edu-K Academy. Rather than implementing or testing a pedagogical intervention, the study seeks to describe and analyze learners' experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to the use of ChatGPT in their learning process.

Participants

The participants in this study were adult learners aged between approximately 18 and 35 years old, enrolled in virtual English courses at Edu-K Academy, an online language academy based in Cúcuta, Colombia. The participants were students currently studying English at the A2–B1 proficiency levels according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

A total of 15 students participated in the open-ended survey, while 6 students voluntarily participated in semi-structured interviews to provide more in-depth insights into their learning experiences. These learners participate in virtual classes focused on communicative language development within a small-group learning environment.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, as they represent learners who actively engage in virtual English learning within the institutional context where the research is conducted. Their participation in the study is voluntary, and they are invited to share their perceptions regarding the guided use of ChatGPT as a learning support tool in their English learning process.

All participants are adults, which simplifies ethical procedures and allows them to provide informed verbal consent prior to data collection. To ensure confidentiality, participants' identities are anonymized, and any data collected through interviews, surveys, or reflective journals is treated with strict confidentiality.

The participants provided valuable insights into the role of the guided use of ChatGPT as a support tool for personalized English learning within a virtual learning environment.

Data Collection Instruments

To explore students' perceptions regarding the guided use of ChatGPT in virtual English learning, three qualitative data collection instruments were employed: semi-structured interviews, open-ended surveys, and the teacher-researcher's reflective journal. The use of multiple instruments allows for methodological triangulation, strengthening the credibility and depth of qualitative findings by incorporating different perspectives on the same phenomenon (Flick, 2022).

The instruments were reviewed and validated by an expert in English language teaching to ensure clarity, coherence, and alignment with the research objectives prior to their application.

Semi-structured interviews were used to obtain in-depth insights into students' experiences with ChatGPT as a support tool in their English learning process. Open-ended surveys allowed the researcher to gather broader perspectives from a larger group of participants regarding their experiences in virtual English learning and their perceptions of ChatGPT as a learning support tool. Additionally, the reflective journal maintained by the teacher-researcher provided contextual observations and reflections related to students' engagement, learning behaviors, and interactions with ChatGPT within the virtual classroom environment.

Together, these instruments offer complementary sources of qualitative data that contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the perceived role of ChatGPT in supporting personalized virtual English learning at Edu-K Academy.

Instrument Design and Description

The design of the instruments was guided by the research question and the specific objectives of the study. Each instrument was developed to capture different dimensions of students' experiences with ChatGPT and their perceptions of personalized learning in the virtual

English learning environment. Qualitative instruments such as interviews, open-ended surveys, and reflective journals are commonly used in educational research to explore participants' perspectives and generate rich descriptive data (Creswell & Poth, 2023).

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a small group of participants in order to explore their experiences using ChatGPT as a learning support tool. This format allows participants to share their perspectives in an open and flexible manner while enabling the researcher to guide the conversation toward relevant topics related to personalized learning and the use of AI tools in language learning contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2023).

The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions focusing on students' familiarity with ChatGPT, the ways in which they use the tool to support their English learning, the perceived benefits of using ChatGPT for language practice, and the challenges they may encounter when interacting with AI tools independently.

Table 1

Interview dimensions and sample questions

Dimension	Example Questions
Familiarity with ChatGPT	Have you used ChatGPT to support your English learning?
Use of ChatGPT	How do you usually use ChatGPT when learning English?
Perceived learning support	In what ways does ChatGPT help you practice or improve your English?
Personalization	Do you feel that ChatGPT adapts to your learning needs or

	level?
	Why or why not?
	Would you like your teacher to guide you in how to use
Teacher guidance	ChatGPT
	for learning?

Open-Ended Survey

An open-ended survey was used to collect qualitative responses from a broader group of students enrolled in Edu-K's virtual English courses. The survey aimed to explore students' experiences learning English in a virtual environment and their perceptions regarding the use of ChatGPT as a learning support tool.

Open-ended surveys allow participants to express their opinions and experiences in their own words, generating descriptive data that can reveal patterns and categories related to the research objectives (Mertler, 2023).

The survey included questions addressing three main areas: experiences in virtual English learning, students' familiarity with ChatGPT, and their perceptions of how ChatGPT could support personalized learning.

Table 2

Survey sections and example questions

Section	Example Question
Virtual learning experience	What challenges do you face when learning English in an online environment?

Use of ChatGPT	Have you used ChatGPT to support your English learning? If so, how?
Perceived personalization	How do you think ChatGPT could help personalize your English learning experience?

Reflective Journal

The reflective journal was maintained by the teacher-researcher throughout the data collection process in order to document observations and reflections related to students' interactions with ChatGPT and their engagement in the virtual learning environment. Reflective journals are widely used in qualitative educational research because they allow researchers to capture contextual insights and interpret patterns that emerge during the research process (Schön, 1983).

The journal included reflections about students' participation, the ways in which learners used ChatGPT to support their language practice, and emerging observations related to personalization and learner autonomy in the virtual classroom context.

Examples of reflective prompts included:

- How did students use ChatGPT to support their English learning during the class activities?
- What types of learning support did students expect from ChatGPT?
- What patterns emerged regarding students' engagement with AI tools?

Connection Between Instruments and Research Objectives

Each instrument contributed to addressing the research objectives from different perspectives, allowing the researcher to collect complementary qualitative data about students' perceptions regarding the guided use of ChatGPT in virtual English learning.

Table 3

Alignment Between Research Objectives and Data Collection Instruments

Research Objective	Instrument	Purpose
Identify challenges related to the use of ChatGPT for personalization in virtual English learning at Edu-K Academy.	Open-ended survey	Collect students' experiences and difficulties in virtual English learning
Examine students' perceptions regarding the guided use of ChatGPT	Semi-structured interviews	Explore how students interact with ChatGPT and how they perceive its role in learning
Describe the perceived role of ChatGPT in supporting personalized virtual English learning	Interviews and reflective journal	Interpret students' perceptions and classroom observations

This alignment ensured that the data collected through each instrument contributed directly to addressing the research objectives and the central research question of the study.

Data Collection Timeline

To ensure an organized data collection process, the instruments were implemented in different stages during the research period. The following timeline describes how each

instrument was applied to participants in order to collect complementary qualitative data regarding students' perceptions of the guided use of ChatGPT in virtual English learning.

Table 4*Data Collection Timeline*

Phase	Instrument	Description
Phase 1	Open-ended survey	An open-ended survey was distributed online to 15 students enrolled in Edu-K's virtual English courses (A2–B1 level) . The survey was administered through a digital form to collect initial information about students' experiences learning English in a virtual environment, their familiarity with ChatGPT, and their perceptions regarding the potential of AI tools for supporting personalized learning.
Phase 2	Semi-structured interviews	Six students voluntarily participated in semi-structured interviews conducted through virtual meetings. These interviews allowed the researcher to obtain more detailed insights into students' experiences using ChatGPT, the ways they interact with the tool during their English learning process, and their perceptions of the benefits and challenges associated with its use.
Phase 3	Reflective journal	Throughout the data collection process, the teacher-researcher maintained a reflective journal to document observations related to students' engagement, their interactions with ChatGPT, and emerging patterns in the use of AI tools during virtual learning activities at Edu-K Academy.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews, open-ended surveys, and reflective journals were analyzed using thematic analysis. This method is widely used in qualitative research to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns of meaning within textual data

(Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2022). Thematic analysis is particularly appropriate for studies that explore participants' experiences and perceptions, as it allows researchers to examine recurring ideas and meanings expressed in relation to a specific phenomenon.

In this study, thematic analysis was used to examine how students perceive the guided use of ChatGPT as a support tool for personalized virtual English learning. The analysis focused on identifying patterns in students' experiences, reflections, and perceptions regarding the role of ChatGPT in their learning process within the virtual environment of Edu-K Academy.

The data analysis followed the six-phase framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2022). In the first phase, the researcher became familiar with the data by carefully reading and reviewing the collected responses from interviews, surveys, and reflective journals. This stage allowed the researcher to gain an initial understanding of participants' perspectives and to identify preliminary ideas relevant to the research question.

During the second phase, initial codes were generated by identifying meaningful segments of text related to students' experiences and interactions with ChatGPT. These codes represented key ideas emerging from the data and served as the basis for identifying broader patterns.

In the third phase, related codes were grouped into potential categories by organizing similar ideas across participants' responses. These categories reflected recurring patterns regarding the role of ChatGPT in supporting personalized English learning within the virtual learning environment.

The fourth phase involved reviewing and refining the categories to ensure that they accurately represented the dataset and maintained internal coherence. At this stage, the researcher verified that each category captured meaningful patterns relevant to the research objectives.

In the fifth phase, the categories were clearly defined and named, allowing for a structured interpretation of participants' perspectives. Finally, in the sixth phase, the categories were interpreted in relation to the conceptual framework and the research question, generating insights into the role of the guided use of ChatGPT in supporting personalized virtual English learning.

Through this systematic analytical process, thematic analysis allowed the researcher to interpret participants' perspectives while maintaining a clear connection between the empirical data and the theoretical framework guiding the study.

Throughout the research process, ethical principles were followed to ensure the protection and confidentiality of participants. This study adhered to the ethical principles established by the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2013) and the Colombian Code of Childhood and Adolescence (Ley 1098 de 2006), which emphasize respect for human dignity, autonomy, and the responsible handling of personal information. Since the study involved adult participants enrolled in an online English academy, all procedures were conducted in accordance with widely accepted ethical standards in educational research.

Participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Students were informed about the purpose of the research, its objectives, and the type of information that would be collected through interviews and surveys. Participants were also assured that their involvement was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

To ensure confidentiality, all information obtained from participants was anonymized to prevent the identification of individuals. Pseudonyms were used in transcripts and analytical reports, and all digital files were stored securely on a password-protected device and a private

cloud folder accessible only to the researcher. In accordance with APA ethical standards (American Psychological Association, 2020), the collected data will be permanently deleted after the completion of the research process.

The study was designed to minimize potential risks to participants. Because the research focused on adult learners sharing their perceptions of their English learning experiences and their use of digital tools, the study did not involve physical, psychological, or social risks. Additionally, the dual role of the teacher as researcher required continuous reflexivity to ensure that participation remained voluntary and free from any form of coercion.

Within this context, the study adopted a descriptive and exploratory scope. It is descriptive because it seeks to portray students' perceptions regarding the guided use of ChatGPT in virtual English learning. At the same time, it is exploratory because it examines the potential role of this tool in supporting learning personalization within a specific educational context.

The research was conducted at Edu-K Academy, an online English language academy based in Cúcuta, Colombia. The study focused on adult learners enrolled in virtual English courses at the A2–B1 proficiency levels according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). These students participate in synchronous virtual classes and use digital platforms as part of their regular learning process.

Given the qualitative nature of the study, the findings are not intended to be statistically generalized to other institutions or populations. Rather, the results provide contextual insights that contribute to the discussion on the pedagogical use of artificial intelligence tools, particularly ChatGPT, in virtual English language learning environments.

Analysis and Results

Data Description

The qualitative data analyzed in this study were collected from two primary sources: semi-structured interviews and open-ended survey responses completed by students enrolled in virtual English courses at Edu-K Academy. These instruments were designed to explore students' perceptions regarding the guided use of ChatGPT as a support tool for personalized English learning within a virtual learning environment.

The participants included adult learners studying at the A2–B1 proficiency levels according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). A total of six students participated in semi-structured interviews, while fifteen students completed the open-ended survey. The responses provided a range of perspectives regarding students' familiarity with ChatGPT, their experiences using it for language learning, and their views on how the tool may support more personalized learning processes.

The collected data consisted primarily of written survey responses and interview transcripts. These qualitative responses were examined to identify recurring patterns related to students' learning experiences, perceived benefits of ChatGPT, challenges in its use, and expectations regarding teacher guidance in integrating artificial intelligence tools into their English learning process.

Coding Overview

Following the data collection process, qualitative responses from interviews and surveys were analyzed through thematic analysis, which allowed the identification of recurring ideas, patterns, and perspectives expressed by participants regarding the guided use of ChatGPT in their English learning process.

The coding process was conducted manually by reviewing the interview transcripts and survey responses multiple times in order to identify meaningful segments of text related to students' experiences with ChatGPT. Initial codes were assigned to statements referring to the ways students use ChatGPT, the perceived benefits of the tool for language learning, the challenges they encounter when interacting with it, and their expectations regarding teacher guidance in integrating artificial intelligence tools into their learning process.

After the initial coding phase, related codes were grouped into broader analytical categories that reflected recurring patterns across participants' responses. These categories were later refined to organize the main patterns emerging from the data in relation to the research objectives and research question.

Code Table

To further illustrate the coding process, Table 5 presents a selection of representative codes identified during the thematic analysis. Each code reflects recurring ideas expressed by participants regarding their experiences using ChatGPT in their English learning process. The table includes a brief description of each code, a representative excerpt from the data, and the corresponding category identified during the analysis.

Table 5

Code Table

Code	Description	Example Extract	Category
ChatGPT for vocabulary support	Students use ChatGPT to learn new words, meanings, and example sentences.	"I normally use ChatGPT to check the meaning of new words or to ask for examples of sentences." (<i>Semi-</i>	Current Use of ChatGPT in English Learning

		<i>structured interview,</i> <i>Participant 1)</i>	
ChatGPT for grammar explanations	Learners use ChatGPT to clarify grammar rules and sentence structure.	“Sometimes I write a sentence and ask if it’s correct or how I can improve it.” (<i>Semi-structured interview, Participant 2)</i>	Current Use of ChatGPT in English Learning
Immediate feedback	Students perceive ChatGPT as a tool that provides quick responses to their questions.	“It helps me because I get answers immediately, so I don’t stay stuck.” (<i>Semi-structured interview, Participant 2)</i>	Perceived Benefits of ChatGPT for Personalized Learning
Learning at personal pace	ChatGPT allows students to practice English whenever they need support.	“It helps me because I can practice at my own pace and I don’t depend on class time.” (<i>Semi-structured interview, Participant 5)</i>	Perceived Benefits of ChatGPT for Personalized Learning
Difficulty creating prompts	Students are unsure how to ask effective questions to obtain useful responses.	“It helps, but sometimes I don’t know exactly what to ask, so I don’t always get what I need.” (<i>Semi-structured interview, Participant 4)</i>	Challenges and Digital Literacy Barriers
Limited knowledge of AI tools	Some students lack experience using artificial intelligence for learning purposes.	“I use it sometimes, but I am not very confident using it.” (<i>Open-ended survey, Participant 11)</i>	Challenges and Digital Literacy Barriers
Need for teacher guidance	Students express interest in receiving support from teachers to use ChatGPT effectively.	“Yes, because I think I could use it in a better way and not just for quick answers.” (<i>Semi-structured interview, Participant 6)</i>	Need for Guided Pedagogical Use of ChatGPT

Source: Author's own elaboration.

As a result of phases four and five of the thematic analysis, in which categories were reviewed, refined, defined, and named, a set of analytical categories and subcategories was established. These categories represent the main patterns identified across participants' responses and provide a structured framework for interpreting the data in relation to the research objectives.

In this study, the coding process resulted in clearly defined and consistent patterns; therefore, each subcategory corresponds directly to a representative code identified during the analysis, following a semantic approach to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2022).

Table 6 presents the final organization of categories and subcategories derived from the coding process.

Table 6

Categories and Subcategories Derived from the Coding Process

Category	Subcategory
Students' Current Use of ChatGPT in English Learning	ChatGPT for vocabulary support
	ChatGPT for grammar explanations
Perceived Benefits of ChatGPT for Personalized Learning	Immediate feedback
	Learning at personal pace
Challenges and Digital Literacy Barriers	Difficulty creating prompts
	Limited knowledge of AI tools
Students' Need for Guided Pedagogical Use of ChatGPT	Need for teacher guidance
	Integration in class activities

Source: Author's own elaboration

Categories and Subcategories

Based on the categories and subcategories presented in Table 6, the following section provides a detailed analysis of the main patterns identified in participants' responses. Each category is examined in depth, incorporating evidence from semi-structured interviews and open-ended surveys to illustrate how students experience and use ChatGPT in their English learning process.

Through this analysis, the study aims to interpret how these patterns relate to the research objectives, particularly in understanding the role of the guided use of ChatGPT in supporting personalized virtual English learning within the context of Edu-K Academy.

Category 1: Students' Current Use of ChatGPT in English Learning

This category describes how students currently use ChatGPT as a support tool in their English learning process. The analysis of data obtained from semi-structured interviews and open-ended surveys reveals that ChatGPT is frequently used by students as an accessible resource to support independent learning outside the classroom. Across both data sources, participants reported relying on the tool to clarify doubts, obtain explanations, and access examples that facilitate their understanding of language structures.

These patterns are consistently reflected in participants' responses, indicating that ChatGPT has become part of students' personal learning strategies in virtual environments. For example, several participants described using the tool when studying independently, particularly when immediate support is not available from the teacher (Semi-structured interview, Participants 1 and 2; Open-ended survey, Participants 3 and 10). This suggests that students perceive ChatGPT as a complementary resource that extends learning beyond synchronous class sessions.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings align with previous research highlighting the role of artificial intelligence tools in supporting learner autonomy and self-directed learning. According to Kohnke et al. (2025), AI-based tools such as ChatGPT can provide immediate and individualized support that enhances students' ability to manage their own learning processes. In this context, ChatGPT functions as a flexible learning aid that students integrate into their daily study practices.

Two main subcategories were identified within this category.

Subcategory 1.1: ChatGPT for vocabulary support

The first subcategory reflects students' use of ChatGPT as a tool for vocabulary development. Participants reported that they frequently use ChatGPT to understand new words, request definitions, and obtain example sentences that help them contextualize vocabulary during independent study.

For instance, one participant explained, *"I normally use ChatGPT to check the meaning of new words or to ask for examples of sentences"* (Semi-structured interview, Participant 1). Similarly, survey responses reinforce this pattern, as students indicated that they use ChatGPT when they need help with vocabulary while studying on their own (Open-ended survey, Participant 3).

These responses suggest that ChatGPT provides immediate lexical support that allows students to resolve comprehension difficulties in real time. The possibility of accessing explanations and contextualized examples contributes to a more dynamic and personalized learning experience, particularly in virtual environments where students often rely on self-directed learning strategies.

This finding is consistent with Bernal Parraga et al. (2025), who emphasize that AI tools can enhance vocabulary acquisition by providing immediate feedback and contextualized input tailored to learners' needs. In this sense, ChatGPT supports vocabulary development by offering flexible and accessible language input that adapts to students' learning pace.

Moreover, the use of ChatGPT for vocabulary support reflects a shift toward more autonomous learning practices, where students actively seek resources to complement classroom instruction. This pattern highlights the role of AI as a mediator of learning that enables students to take greater control over their language development.

Subcategory 1.2: ChatGPT for grammar explanations

The second subcategory refers to students' use of ChatGPT to clarify grammar rules and improve sentence structure. Participants reported using the tool to check the accuracy of their sentences, request explanations, and receive guidance on how to construct grammatically correct expressions.

One participant stated, "*Sometimes I write a sentence and ask if it's correct or how I can improve it*" (Semi-structured interview, Participant 2). This use of ChatGPT as a corrective and explanatory tool is also reflected in survey responses, where students indicated that they rely on the tool to verify grammar and improve their written production (Open-ended survey, Participant 2).

These responses indicate that students perceive ChatGPT as a resource that provides immediate corrective feedback, which is particularly valuable in virtual learning contexts where access to teacher feedback may be limited outside class time. The ability to receive explanations and corrections in real time allows learners to identify errors and improve their understanding of grammatical structures.

However, the data also reveal variations in how students interact with the tool. While some participants use ChatGPT to deepen their understanding of grammar through explanations and examples, others tend to use it primarily to obtain quick answers, especially when completing assignments (Semi-structured interview, Participant 6). This difference suggests that the depth of learning may depend on how students engage with the tool.

This observation aligns with Kohnke et al. (2025), who argue that although AI tools can support language learning through immediate feedback, their effectiveness depends on learners' ability to use them strategically. Without appropriate guidance, students may limit their use of ChatGPT to surface-level interactions rather than engaging in deeper learning processes.

Overall, this subcategory highlights the potential of ChatGPT as a tool for supporting grammar learning, while also emphasizing the importance of guiding students in how to use AI tools effectively to promote meaningful learning.

Taken this together, the findings within this category indicate that students already incorporate ChatGPT into their independent English learning practices, particularly for vocabulary development and grammar clarification. The tool is primarily used as an accessible and immediate support resource that complements classroom instruction and allows students to continue learning outside scheduled sessions.

These results highlight the growing role of artificial intelligence tools in virtual language learning environments, where students increasingly rely on digital resources to support their learning autonomy. At the same time, the variation in how students use ChatGPT suggests that its educational potential depends not only on access to the tool but also on students' ability to engage with it effectively.

In this sense, while ChatGPT facilitates personalized learning by providing flexible and individualized support, these findings also point to the need for pedagogical guidance to help students move beyond basic use and engage in more meaningful learning processes.

Category 2: Perceived Benefits of ChatGPT for Personalized Learning

This category reflects students' perceptions regarding the potential of ChatGPT to support more personalized English learning experiences. The analysis of data from semi-structured interviews and open-ended surveys indicates that students value ChatGPT primarily for its ability to provide immediate assistance and flexible learning opportunities. Across both data sources, participants highlighted how the tool allows them to address learning difficulties independently and adapt their learning process to their individual needs.

These perceptions are consistent with the increasing role of artificial intelligence in promoting personalized learning environments, where learners can access support tailored to their pace and level (Kohnke et al., 2025). In this context, ChatGPT is perceived not only as a support tool, but as a resource that enables more individualized and responsive learning experiences.

Two main subcategories were identified within this category.

Subcategory 2.1: Immediate feedback

One of the most frequently mentioned benefits of ChatGPT is its ability to provide immediate responses to students' questions. Participants emphasized that this immediacy allows them to resolve doubts quickly without having to wait for teacher feedback, which is particularly valuable in virtual learning environments.

For example, one participant explained, "It helps me because I get answers immediately, so I don't stay stuck" (Semi-structured interview, Participant 2). Similarly, survey responses

confirm this perception, as students reported using ChatGPT to obtain quick explanations when they encounter difficulties during independent study (Open-ended survey, Participant 15).

These responses suggest that immediacy plays a key role in supporting students' learning processes, as it reduces interruptions and allows learners to maintain continuity in their study. In virtual environments, where interaction with the teacher may be limited to scheduled sessions, access to real-time feedback becomes particularly relevant.

This finding aligns with previous research highlighting that AI tools can enhance learning by providing instant feedback and support, which contributes to increased learner engagement and autonomy (Bernal Parraga et al., 2025). In this sense, ChatGPT functions as an on-demand support system that helps students overcome learning barriers as they arise.

Subcategory 2.2: Learning at a personal pace

Another key benefit identified by participants is the possibility of learning at their own pace. Students reported that ChatGPT allows them to ask questions whenever they need support, without being constrained by class schedules or time limitations.

As one participant stated, "It helps me because I can practice at my own pace and I don't depend on class time" (Semi-structured interview, Participant 5). This perception is also reflected in survey responses, where students indicated that ChatGPT helps them study outside class and revisit concepts as needed (Open-ended survey, Participant 10).

These findings suggest that ChatGPT supports flexible learning processes that adapt to students' individual rhythms and needs. This flexibility is particularly relevant in virtual learning environments, where students often engage in self-directed learning outside synchronous sessions.

From a theoretical perspective, this aligns with the principles of personalized learning, which emphasize the importance of adapting instruction to learners' individual characteristics, pace, and preferences (Maher et al., 2021). In this context, ChatGPT enables students to regulate their own learning process by providing access to support whenever it is needed.

Moreover, the possibility of learning at a personal pace contributes to a more learner-centered approach, where students take an active role in managing their learning. This reinforces the idea that AI tools can support not only content understanding, but also the development of autonomous learning strategies.

Taken together, these findings indicate that students perceive ChatGPT as a tool that enhances personalized learning by providing immediate feedback and flexible access to learning support. These characteristics contribute to more adaptive and individualized learning experiences, particularly in virtual environments where students rely heavily on independent study.

At the same time, these results reinforce the idea that the value of ChatGPT lies not only in the information it provides, but in how it supports students' ability to manage their own learning process. In this sense, ChatGPT plays a significant role in facilitating personalized learning, while also highlighting the importance of guiding students to use the tool effectively within pedagogical contexts.

Category 3: Challenges and Digital Literacy Barriers

This category addresses the main challenges students experience when using ChatGPT as part of their English learning process. The analysis of data obtained from semi-structured interviews and open-ended surveys reveals that, despite the perceived benefits of the tool, students face difficulties related to digital literacy and effective interaction with artificial

intelligence tools. These challenges influence how students engage with ChatGPT and may limit its potential as a learning support resource.

Across both data sources, participants reported uncertainty when interacting with ChatGPT, particularly when formulating questions or understanding how to use the tool effectively for learning purposes. These findings suggest that access to AI tools alone is not sufficient to guarantee meaningful learning, as students also require specific skills to interact with these technologies.

From a theoretical perspective, these results are consistent with previous research indicating that the successful integration of AI in education depends not only on technological availability but also on learners' digital competencies and their ability to use these tools strategically (Kohnke et al., 2025). In this sense, the challenges identified in this study highlight the importance of developing digital literacy skills as part of the learning process.

Two main subcategories were identified within this category.

Subcategory 3.1: Difficulty creating prompts

One of the main challenges identified by participants relates to difficulties in formulating effective prompts when interacting with ChatGPT. Students reported that they are not always sure how to ask questions in a way that leads to useful or clear responses.

For example, one participant stated, "It helps, but sometimes I don't know exactly what to ask, so I don't always get what I need" (Semi-structured interview, Participant 4). This perception reflects a common difficulty among learners when interacting with AI tools, as the quality of the response depends largely on how the question is formulated.

These findings indicate that students may require guidance in developing prompt formulation skills, which are essential for effective interaction with AI-based tools. Without these

skills, learners may not fully benefit from the potential of ChatGPT as a personalized learning resource.

This observation aligns with recent studies emphasizing that the effective use of generative AI tools requires users to develop new forms of digital literacy, including the ability to formulate clear and purposeful prompts (Kohnke et al., 2025). In this context, prompt design becomes a key skill that influences the quality of the learning experience.

Subcategory 3.2: Limited knowledge of AI tools

Another challenge identified in the data relates to students' limited familiarity and confidence in using artificial intelligence tools for learning purposes. While some participants reported feeling comfortable using ChatGPT, others indicated that they lack experience and are unsure how to integrate the tool into their study routines.

For instance, one student expressed, "I use it sometimes, but I am not very confident using it" (Open-ended survey, Participant 11). This response suggests that differences in digital literacy exist among learners, which may affect their ability to use AI tools effectively.

These findings highlight that not all students approach ChatGPT with the same level of confidence or experience. While some learners actively explore the tool and experiment with different uses, others adopt a more limited or cautious approach due to uncertainty or lack of familiarity.

This pattern is consistent with previous research indicating that disparities in digital literacy can influence how students engage with educational technologies (Maher et al., 2021). In this sense, the effectiveness of AI tools such as ChatGPT depends not only on their availability but also on students' ability to understand and use them as part of their learning process.

Taken together, these findings indicate that, although ChatGPT has the potential to support personalized learning, its effectiveness may be limited by students' digital literacy skills and their ability to interact with the tool effectively. The challenges identified in this category highlight the need for pedagogical support that helps students develop the necessary skills to use AI tools in a more strategic and meaningful way within virtual learning environments.

Category 4: Students' Need for Guided Pedagogical Use of ChatGPT

This category highlights students' perceptions regarding the importance of teacher guidance when integrating ChatGPT into their English learning process. The analysis of data from semi-structured interviews and open-ended surveys indicates that, although students already use ChatGPT independently, they recognize the need for structured support to use the tool more effectively for learning purposes. Participants consistently expressed interest in receiving guidance from teachers on how to interact with ChatGPT in ways that promote deeper understanding and more meaningful learning experiences.

Across the interview data, several participants emphasized that they are not always confident in how to use ChatGPT appropriately as a learning tool. For instance, one participant explained, "Yes, I think that would be helpful. Sometimes I use ChatGPT but I am not sure if I am using it in the best way for learning English" (Semi-structured interview, Participant 1). Similarly, another student stated, "Yes, because I feel like I use it, but maybe not in the best way for learning" (Semi-structured interview, Participant 2). These responses indicate that, although students actively use ChatGPT, they are aware that their current use may be limited or not fully effective.

This suggests that the educational potential of ChatGPT is closely linked to the pedagogical context in which it is used. In this sense, teacher mediation emerges as a key factor

in helping students move beyond a superficial use of the tool toward more purposeful and effective interaction with artificial intelligence tools. These findings are consistent with previous research highlighting that the integration of AI in education should not replace the role of the teacher, but rather complement it through guided pedagogical practices (Vija Baquero & Dávila Rubio, 2024).

Two main subcategories were identified within this category.

Subcategory 4.1: Need for teacher guidance

One of the most consistent patterns identified in the data relates to students' expressed need for teacher guidance when using ChatGPT. Participants indicated that, although they use the tool independently, they would benefit from receiving explicit instruction on how to use it more effectively for learning English.

For example, one participant stated, “Yes, because I think I could use it better if I knew how to ask better questions” (Semi-structured interview, Participant 3). Another student added, “Yes, I think it would be useful to learn strategies to use it better” (Semi-structured interview, Participant 5). These responses suggest that students recognize the importance of developing strategies for interacting with ChatGPT, particularly in relation to asking more effective questions and using the tool beyond basic or surface-level purposes.

Additionally, some participants acknowledged that they tend to use ChatGPT mainly for quick answers rather than for deeper learning. As one student explained, “Yes, because I think I could use it in a better way and not just for quick answers” (Semi-structured interview, Participant 6). This indicates that, without proper guidance, students may not fully take advantage of the tool's potential to support meaningful language learning.

These findings reinforce the idea that teacher guidance plays a crucial role in helping students develop more effective and reflective uses of AI tools. As suggested in previous studies, the role of the teacher is essential in modeling how to use digital tools strategically and in supporting learners in interpreting and applying the information they receive (Kohnke et al., 2025).

Subcategory 4.2: Integration in class activities

In addition to the need for guidance, students also expressed interest in seeing ChatGPT integrated into classroom activities as a way to learn how to use the tool more effectively. Rather than relying solely on independent use, participants suggested that guided classroom experiences could help them develop better strategies for interacting with ChatGPT.

For instance, one participant explained, “Also, I think it would be useful if the teacher included ChatGPT in class activities so we can practice how to use it better” (Semi-structured interview, Participant 1). Similarly, another student mentioned, “Maybe if the teacher used ChatGPT during class activities, we could learn how to ask better questions and use it more effectively” (Semi-structured interview, Participant 3). These responses indicate that students value opportunities to engage with ChatGPT in structured learning environments where they can receive guidance and feedback.

Furthermore, one participant highlighted that integrating ChatGPT into classroom activities could help shift its use from simply obtaining answers to supporting learning processes. As the student stated, “I think it would also help if the teacher used ChatGPT in class so we can understand how to use it for learning and not only for getting answers” (Semi-structured interview, Participant 6). This perspective reflects a more critical and reflective understanding of the role of AI tools in education.

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings align with approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasize meaningful interaction and guided practice as central components of language learning (Harmer, 2007). Integrating ChatGPT into communicative and structured classroom activities may enhance these processes by providing additional opportunities for feedback, practice, and reflection.

Taken together, these findings indicate that students recognize the importance of guided pedagogical use of ChatGPT in maximizing its potential as a learning tool. While the tool supports independent learning, its effectiveness is significantly enhanced when integrated into structured learning environments where teachers provide guidance, model effective use, and design meaningful learning activities. In this sense, the role of the teacher remains central in ensuring that artificial intelligence tools contribute to personalized and meaningful language learning experiences.

Final Interpretation

The analysis of participants' responses provides valuable insights into how students perceive the role of ChatGPT in supporting personalized virtual English learning within the context of Edu-K Academy. Overall, the findings indicate that students already incorporate ChatGPT into their independent English learning practices, particularly as a resource for vocabulary development, grammar clarification, and immediate access to explanations. This tendency reflects a broader shift toward learner autonomy in digital environments, where students increasingly rely on technological tools to extend learning beyond the classroom (Benson, 2013; Kukulska-Hulme, 2020).

However, while this pattern suggests an expansion of autonomous learning practices, it also raises important questions about the depth and quality of such learning. Access to

information and immediate responses does not necessarily equate to meaningful language development. As Selwyn (2016) argues, educational technologies do not inherently transform learning processes; rather, their impact depends on how they are pedagogically integrated and critically used. In this sense, the findings reveal a tension between accessibility and learning effectiveness, highlighting that the mere presence of ChatGPT as a support tool does not guarantee deeper cognitive engagement.

Participants consistently described ChatGPT as an accessible and flexible tool that supports learning outside scheduled class sessions. This aligns with Luckin et al. (2016), who suggest that artificial intelligence can enhance learning by providing adaptive and responsive support tailored to individual needs. From the students' perspective, the immediacy of feedback and the possibility of interacting with the tool at their own pace contribute to a sense of personalized learning. These characteristics are closely related to Tomlinson's (2014) conception of differentiated instruction, in which learning experiences are adapted to students' readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles.

Nevertheless, the findings also suggest that personalization, in this context, is not solely a feature of the technology but rather an emergent outcome of the interaction between the learner and the tool. While some students use ChatGPT to explore explanations and deepen their understanding of language concepts, others rely on it primarily to obtain quick answers. This variation indicates that learners' engagement strategies play a crucial role in shaping the learning experience. In line with this, Kohnke et al. (2025) emphasize that the educational value of AI tools depends on learners' ability to formulate effective prompts, critically evaluate responses, and use the generated information strategically.

This divergence in usage patterns highlights a critical pedagogical issue: the risk of superficial learning when AI tools are used without guidance. While ChatGPT has the potential to support personalized learning, its effectiveness may be limited if students engage with it only at a surface level. This finding resonates with concerns raised by Holmes et al. (2022), who argue that AI in education can either enhance or hinder learning depending on the extent to which it promotes critical thinking and active engagement. Therefore, the findings suggest that personalization should not be understood as passive adaptation by the tool, but as an active process that requires learner agency and pedagogical mediation.

Another key finding relates to the challenges students face when interacting with ChatGPT. Participants reported uncertainty about how to formulate effective prompts and how to guide the tool to produce responses appropriate to their language level. This difficulty reflects a gap in what can be described as AI-related digital literacy. As highlighted by Kohnke et al. (2025), effective interaction with AI systems requires specific competencies, including prompt design, evaluation of output, and strategic use of feedback. Without these skills, students may not fully benefit from the potential of AI tools in learning contexts.

Importantly, one of the most consistent patterns identified in the data is students' recognition of the role of the teacher in mediating the use of ChatGPT. Participants suggested that teacher guidance is essential for learning how to use the tool effectively, interpreting responses, and integrating AI into meaningful learning activities. This finding strongly aligns with sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), which emphasizes the importance of guided interaction and scaffolding in learning processes. From this perspective, ChatGPT can be understood as a mediating artifact that supports learning, but whose effectiveness depends on the social and pedagogical context in which it is embedded.

Thus, rather than positioning artificial intelligence as a replacement for the teacher, the findings reinforce the idea that its educational value lies in its integration within structured pedagogical practices. As argued by Luckin et al. (2016), teachers play a central role in orchestrating learning experiences in which AI tools are used meaningfully. In this study, students themselves recognize that guided use enhances the effectiveness of ChatGPT, suggesting that personalization emerges from the combination of technological affordances and pedagogical design.

Taken together, these findings indicate that the guided use of ChatGPT has the potential to support personalized virtual English learning by providing flexible access to explanations, opportunities for independent practice, and immediate feedback. However, this potential is not inherent to the tool itself; rather, it depends on how learners engage with it and how teachers structure its use within the learning process. In this sense, personalization is understood as a co-constructed process that involves both learner autonomy and teacher guidance.

Based on these findings, an illustrative pedagogical prototype was developed to demonstrate how the guided use of ChatGPT may be integrated into virtual English learning within the context of Edu-K Academy. It is important to clarify that this prototype was not implemented as part of the study; instead, it serves as a theoretically grounded proposal that illustrates possible pedagogical applications derived from the data. The purpose of this prototype is to bridge the gap between students' current use of ChatGPT and a more structured, pedagogically guided use that promotes meaningful learning.

The design of this prototype is informed by the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasize meaningful interaction, authentic language use, and the development of communicative competence (Harmer, 2007). At the same time, it incorporates

principles of personalized learning, as students expressed the need for flexible, self-paced learning opportunities combined with guided support (Tomlinson, 2014). By integrating these perspectives, the prototype positions ChatGPT as a complementary tool that supports both communicative practice and individualized learning.

Table 7 presents a set of illustrative activities that demonstrate how ChatGPT may be integrated into virtual English learning in a structured and pedagogically guided manner. These activities are directly derived from the findings of this study and respond to students' identified needs, including vocabulary support, grammar clarification, immediate feedback, and guidance in using AI tools effectively.

Table 7

Prototype Activities for the Guided Use of ChatGPT

Component	Type of Activity	Instructional Materials	Activity Description	Teacher Guidance	Expected Learning Outcome
Personal Learning Profile with ChatGPT	Diagnostic reflection activity	ChatGPT, guided prompt worksheet (see Appendix D), student reflection form (see Appendix F)	Students interact with ChatGPT using guided prompts designed to help them identify their learning goals, strengths, and areas for improvement in English.	The teacher provides prompts and supports students in interpreting ChatGPT responses.	Students develop awareness of their learning needs and establish individualized learning goals.

ChatGPT Language Support Tasks	Guided language practice	ChatGPT, communicative prompts (see Appendix E) writing or speaking tasks	Students use ChatGPT to practice language tasks such as vocabulary expansion, sentence construction, or grammar clarification.	The teacher models effective prompts and guides students in evaluating AI-generated responses.	Students practice English with individualized support while developing strategies to interact effectively with AI tools.
AI-Supported Speaking Practice	Communicative speaking activity	ChatGPT conversation prompts (see Appendix E) scenario cards (see Appendix E)	Students participate in short conversational simulations using ChatGPT to practice describing experiences or expressing opinions.	The teacher facilitates reflection on the feedback received and supports students in improving their responses.	Students improve speaking fluency and confidence while receiving immediate language feedback.
Reflective AI Learning Journal	Reflective learning activity	Reflection journal template (see Appendix F), ChatGPT interaction logs	Students reflect on how they used ChatGPT, what they learned, and the difficulties they encountered during AI-	The teacher reviews reflections and guides students in identifying strategies for improvement.	Students develop metacognitive awareness of their learning process and reflect on the role of AI in supporting their

supported	language
activities.	development.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

The instructional materials referenced in this prototype are included as sample templates in the appendices (Appendices D–F). These materials were designed to illustrate how guided prompts, communicative tasks, and reflective activities may be structured in practice. Although the prototype was not implemented, the inclusion of these templates provides a concrete representation of how the proposed activities could be operationalized in real educational contexts, thereby strengthening the applicability of the study.

These illustrative activities demonstrate that ChatGPT can function as a complementary learning support tool when its use is intentionally guided. Through structured interaction, communicative practice, and reflection, students may engage more deeply with language learning processes while developing the skills necessary to use AI tools effectively.

Table 8 summarizes key pedagogical considerations that may guide the integration of ChatGPT within virtual English learning environments.

Table 8

Pedagogical Considerations for the Guided Use of ChatGPT

Dimension	Description
Activity progression	Learning activities may begin with reflective tasks that help students identify their learning needs, followed by guided language practice and communicative tasks supported by ChatGPT. Reflection activities may conclude the learning cycle by encouraging students to analyze how the tool supported their language development.
Required resources	These illustrative activities require minimal resources and may be integrated into existing virtual learning environments. Students interact with ChatGPT

	through personal devices with internet access, while teachers provide prompts and guide reflection on AI-generated responses.
Teacher role	Teachers guide students in formulating effective prompts, interpreting AI-generated feedback, and using the information generated by ChatGPT to support their language development.
Potential learning indicators	Teachers may observe indicators such as students' engagement with AI-supported activities, their ability to formulate effective prompts, increased vocabulary use, improved sentence construction, and reflective awareness of learning strategies.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Together, these findings and the proposed pedagogical prototype illustrate that the integration of ChatGPT into virtual English learning environments can support personalized learning when guided by intentional pedagogical practices. Rather than replacing the teacher, artificial intelligence tools expand opportunities for interaction, feedback, and individualized support, reinforcing the teacher's role as a mediator of meaningful learning experiences.

Conclusions

This study aimed to analyze the role of the guided use of ChatGPT in supporting personalized virtual English learning at Edu-K Academy. Through a qualitative approach that incorporated semi-structured interviews, open-ended surveys, and reflective observations, the research explored students' perceptions regarding the use of ChatGPT as a learning support tool within a virtual English learning environment.

The findings of this study indicate that students perceive ChatGPT as a useful and accessible resource that supports their English learning in flexible and individualized ways. Participants frequently reported using the tool to clarify vocabulary, check grammar, translate expressions, and generate example sentences, which suggests that ChatGPT functions as an immediate and on-demand source of linguistic support. These practices demonstrate that students are already integrating artificial intelligence tools into their independent learning processes, particularly as a complement to classroom instruction. In line with previous research (Maher et al., 2021; Kohnke et al., 2025), these findings confirm that AI technologies can contribute to adaptive learning environments by providing immediate feedback and personalized assistance tailored to learners' needs.

At a deeper level, the findings highlight the perceived potential of ChatGPT to support more personalized learning experiences within virtual language learning contexts. Many participants emphasized that the tool allows them to learn at their own pace, revisit explanations as needed, and focus on specific areas of difficulty. This flexibility is particularly relevant in virtual learning environments, where students often depend on autonomous learning strategies beyond synchronous sessions. In this sense, the study reinforces the idea that AI tools can facilitate differentiated instruction by adapting responses to individual learners' questions and

learning preferences (Kanchon et al., 2024). Consequently, ChatGPT emerges not only as a support tool, but as a mediator of personalized learning pathways that align with contemporary approaches to learner-centered education.

However, the findings also reveal important limitations in the way students use ChatGPT. While the tool offers significant learning opportunities, its use does not automatically result in meaningful learning outcomes. Some participants reported relying on ChatGPT primarily to obtain quick answers, which may reduce opportunities for deeper cognitive engagement and limit the development of critical thinking skills. This pattern suggests that without appropriate guidance, students may adopt surface-level learning strategies when interacting with AI tools. These results support the arguments of Yao and Wu (2023), who emphasize that the educational effectiveness of AI-based tools depends largely on how they are integrated within structured pedagogical frameworks that promote active engagement rather than passive consumption of information.

A central conclusion of this study is the critical role of the teacher in mediating the use of artificial intelligence tools in language learning. Participants consistently expressed the need for guidance in using ChatGPT more effectively, particularly in relation to formulating meaningful prompts, interpreting AI-generated responses, and applying feedback to their own language production. These findings highlight that the integration of AI in education does not diminish the importance of the teacher; rather, it redefines the teacher's role as a facilitator, guide, and mediator of learning processes. As supported by contemporary perspectives on AI in education (Luckin et al., 2016), effective learning occurs when technology is embedded within pedagogically guided environments that support learner autonomy while maintaining instructional direction.

Based on these findings, this study also proposes an illustrative pedagogical prototype that demonstrates how the guided use of ChatGPT may be integrated into virtual English learning environments. Although the prototype was not implemented, it serves as a conceptual framework that translates the study's findings into practical instructional possibilities. The proposed activities, including guided prompts, communicative tasks, and reflective exercises, illustrate how teachers may structure learning experiences that encourage active interaction with AI tools, promote language development, and foster metacognitive awareness. In this way, the prototype contributes to bridging the gap between theoretical insights and pedagogical application, offering a model that educators may adapt according to their specific teaching contexts.

Despite these contributions, several limitations must be acknowledged when interpreting the results of this study. First, the research was conducted within a single institutional context, Edu-K Academy, which may limit the transferability of the findings to other educational settings. The study focused on a specific group of learners participating in virtual English courses, and therefore the results should be understood as context-specific insights rather than generalizable conclusions. Additionally, the relatively small number of participants is consistent with qualitative research approaches that prioritize depth of understanding over statistical representativeness.

Another limitation relates to the subjective nature of qualitative data, as the analysis was based on participants' self-reported perceptions and experiences. Although multiple data collection methods were used, including interviews, surveys, and reflective observations, individual differences such as digital literacy, prior experience with artificial intelligence tools, and access to technological resources may have influenced participants' responses. These factors

highlight the complexity of studying the integration of AI in educational contexts and suggest the need for further research that considers these variables more explicitly.

Considering these findings and limitations, several implications emerge for educational practice and future research. Educators interested in integrating artificial intelligence tools into language learning environments should provide explicit guidance on how students can interact effectively with tools such as ChatGPT. Teaching students how to formulate meaningful prompts, critically evaluate AI-generated responses, and apply feedback to their language practice may help them move beyond superficial use and engage more deeply with the learning process.

Furthermore, incorporating ChatGPT into structured classroom activities may help align its use with pedagogical objectives. Activities focused on vocabulary development, grammar practice, communicative interaction, and reflective learning can create opportunities for students to use AI tools in ways that support language development while reinforcing the teacher's role as a facilitator of meaningful learning. Encouraging reflection on the use of AI tools may also contribute to the development of learner autonomy and critical digital literacy, which are essential competencies in contemporary educational contexts.

Finally, this study highlights several directions for future research. Further studies could explore the implementation of guided pedagogical models that integrate ChatGPT into language learning activities in order to examine their impact on students' language development, engagement, and learning strategies over time. Additionally, future research could investigate teachers' perspectives on the integration of artificial intelligence tools in virtual learning environments, as well as the professional development required to effectively incorporate these technologies into teaching practices. Expanding research across diverse educational contexts,

proficiency levels, and learner populations would also contribute to a broader understanding of how generative artificial intelligence tools can support personalized language learning.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that ChatGPT has significant potential to support personalized virtual English learning by providing flexible opportunities for language practice, immediate feedback, and individualized support. However, its effectiveness depends largely on the pedagogical context in which it is used and the extent to which students receive guidance in interacting with artificial intelligence tools. When integrated within structured and pedagogically informed learning environments, ChatGPT can function not merely as a tool for obtaining quick answers, but as a meaningful resource that supports deeper learning, learner autonomy, and critical engagement with digital technologies.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Evidence of Semi-Structured Interview Implementation

This appendix presents evidence of the implementation of the semi-structured interviews conducted as part of the data collection process.



Interview Question	Participant Response
Have you used ChatGPT to support your English learning?	Yes, I have used ChatGPT several times to support my English learning. I usually use it when I have questions about vocabulary or grammar, especially when I am studying alone and I need a quick explanation.
How do you usually use ChatGPT when learning English?	I normally use ChatGPT to check the meaning of new words or to ask for examples of sentences. Sometimes I also ask it to explain grammar rules because it usually gives clear explanations that are easy to understand.
In what ways does ChatGPT help you practice or improve your English?	ChatGPT helps me practice English because it gives examples and explanations when I ask questions. It also helps me correct sentences or understand how to use certain expressions. This makes it easier for me to learn when I am studying on my own.
Do you feel that ChatGPT adapts to your learning needs or level? Why or why not?	In some cases, yes. When I ask simple questions, ChatGPT usually gives explanations that are easy to understand. However, sometimes the answers are a little complex, so I need to ask more questions to make the explanation clearer.
Would you like your teacher to guide you in how to use ChatGPT for learning?	Yes, I think that would be helpful. Sometimes I use ChatGPT but I'm not sure if I am using it in the best way for learning English. If the teacher shows us how to use it correctly, it could help us learn more effectively.

	Have you used ChatGPT to support your English learning?	How do you usually use ChatGPT when learning English?	In what ways does ChatGPT help you practice or improve your English?	Do you feel that ChatGPT adapts to your learning needs or level? Why or why not?	Would you like your teacher to guide you in how to use ChatGPT for learning?
P1	Yes, I have used ChatGPT several times to support my English learning. I usually use it when I have questions about vocabulary or grammar, especially when I am studying alone and I need a quick explanation.	I normally use ChatGPT to check the meaning of new words or to ask for examples of sentences. Sometimes I also ask it to explain grammar rules because it usually gives clear explanations that are easy to understand.	ChatGPT helps me practice English because it gives examples and explanations when I ask questions. It also helps me correct sentences or understand how to use certain expressions, which makes it easier for me to learn when I am studying on my own.	In some cases, yes. When I ask simple questions, ChatGPT usually gives explanations that are easy to understand. However, sometimes the answers are a little complex, so I need to ask more questions to make the explanation clearer.	Yes, I think that would be helpful. Sometimes I use ChatGPT but I am not sure if I am using it in the best way for learning English. If the teacher shows us how to use it correctly, it could help us learn more effectively. Also, I think it would be useful if the teacher included ChatGPT in class activities so we can practice how to use it better.
P2	Yes, I have used it mostly when I study alone. If I don't understand something from class, I go to ChatGPT instead of waiting for the next lesson.	I usually ask about grammar or sentence structure. Sometimes I write a sentence and ask if it's correct or how I can improve it.	It helps me because I get answers immediately, so I don't stay stuck. Also, the examples help me understand better.	I think yes, because I can ask things in a simple way and it answers in a way I understand. But sometimes I need to ask again to make it clearer.	Yes, because I feel like I use it, but maybe not in the best way for learning.
P3	Yes, especially when I am doing homework or reviewing topics.	I use it to understand vocabulary and also to translate some expressions, but I try not to depend too much on translation.	It helps me understand faster. For example, if I don't understand a word, I can ask and get examples immediately.	Sometimes yes, but sometimes I feel like the explanations are too general and I need to ask again.	Yes, because I think I could use it better if I knew how to ask better questions. Maybe if the teacher used ChatGPT during class activities, we could learn how to ask better questions and use it more effectively.
P4	I have used it a few times, but not a lot because I'm not very used to these tools.	When I use it, I ask simple questions like meanings of words or short explanations.	It helps, but sometimes I don't know exactly what to ask, so I don't always get what I need.	Not always, because sometimes I feel like I don't explain my question well, so the answer is not exactly what I expect.	Yes, definitely. I think with guidance it would be easier to use it correctly since it has been really hard for me to understand how it works.
P5	Yes, I use it quite often when I am studying by myself.	I use it for vocabulary, grammar, and sometimes to practice writing short texts.	It helps me because I can practice at my own pace and I don't depend on class time.	Yes, because I can control what I ask and how I ask it depending on what I need.	Yes, I think it would be useful to learn strategies to use it better.
P6	Yes, but mostly when I need quick help.	I use it to check answers or when I need something fast for homework.	It helps, but sometimes I just use it to get answers instead of really understanding.	I think it does, but I don't always take advantage of it.	Yes, because I think I could use it in a better way and not just for quick answers. I think it would also help if the teacher used ChatGPT in class so we can understand how to use it for learning and not only for getting answers.

Figure A1

Evidence of Semi-Structured Interview Implementation: Videocall and organized interview responses (Participants P1–P6)

Note. This figure presents evidence of the semi-structured interview process, including the virtual interview session and the organization of participants' responses. Participants' identities were anonymized using labels (P1, P2, P3, etc.) to ensure confidentiality. The interview responses were systematically organized in a spreadsheet format to facilitate data analysis. The complete dataset is available at the following link:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15ZerrFMZqZnQkg_0CkIDDty97oKv9ZQa/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=105551355256697672365&rtpof=true&sd=true]]

Appendix B

Evidence of Open-Ended Survey Instrument

This appendix presents evidence of the data collected through the open-ended survey administered to participants.

	What challenges do you face when learning English in an online environment?	Have you used ChatGPT to support your English learning? If so, how?	How do you think ChatGPT could help personalize your English learning experience?
P1	For me the biggest challenge is practicing English outside the class.	Sometimes I ask ChatGPT questions about English when I am doing homework.	I think it is useful because it answers quickly when I have a doubt.
P2	One challenge for me is understanding grammar explanations when the class is online.	I sometimes use it to check grammar or when I want to know if my sentence is correct.	I think it helps because everyone can ask different questions depending on their level.
P3	Pronunciation is difficult because I am not sure if I say the words correctly.	I use it when I study alone and need help with vocabulary.	It helps because I can practice writing and get suggestions.
P4	I think staying focused can be difficult when learning online because there are many distractions.	I use ChatGPT to translate expressions and understand their meaning.	It helps me learn at my own pace and practice when I have time.
P5	Sometimes it is difficult to practice speaking because we don't always talk a lot in class.	Yes, I use ChatGPT when I don't understand a word and I ask for examples.	It helps me because I can ask questions and understand better.
P6	Sometimes I need more examples to understand a topic and it is harder to ask questions quickly.	Yes, I ask ChatGPT to explain grammar because sometimes it explains it in a simple way.	ChatGPT can give examples and explanations when I need them.
P7	I also feel that sometimes I don't have enough time to practice after class.	I use ChatGPT when I don't understand something from class.	It helps because I can ask questions anytime.
P8	It is difficult to stay motivated when I am studying alone.	I use it to practice writing and check my sentences.	It helps me understand things better when I don't understand in class.
P9	I feel nervous when I have to speak because I am not confident.	I ask ChatGPT for examples so I can understand better.	It helps because I can learn in my own way.
P10	Sometimes I don't understand everything and I don't ask questions.	I use it mostly for homework and to understand grammar.	It helps me practice more outside class.
P11	I think I need more practice to improve my listening skills.	I use it sometimes, but I am not very confident using it.	It helps, but I need to learn how to use it better.
P12	It is hard to be consistent when learning online.	I use it to review vocabulary and meanings.	It gives explanations when I need them.
P13	I forget vocabulary easily if I don't practice often.	I ask it questions when I study alone.	It helps me improve my grammar and vocabulary.
P14	Sometimes the explanations are too fast for me.	I use it to understand explanations better.	It gives quick answers when I have questions.
P15	I feel distracted when I study at home.	I use it when I need quick help.	It helps me study at my own pace.

Figure B1

Survey Response Matrix (Excerpt)

Note. Survey responses were exported and systematized into a spreadsheet to support the data analysis process. Participants were anonymized using labels (P1, P2, P3, etc.). The complete dataset can be accessed at the following link: [

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15ZerrFMZqZnQkg_0CkIDDty97oKv9ZQa/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=105551355256697672365&rtpof=true&sd=true]

Appendix C

Evidence of Reflective Journal Documentation

This appendix presents selected excerpts from the teacher-researcher's reflective journal, which was used to document observations, emerging patterns, and analytical insights throughout the data collection process.

Reflective Journal Entry 1

Date: January 30, 2026

“During the data collection process, several students reported using ChatGPT primarily to clarify vocabulary and grammar questions during independent study. This pattern suggests that learners tend to rely on the tool as an immediate source of linguistic support, particularly for resolving specific language difficulties. While students appeared comfortable using ChatGPT for relatively simple queries, some expressed uncertainty about how to formulate more effective prompts to obtain more detailed or contextually appropriate responses. This observation indicates a potential gap between access to the tool and the development of strategic skills for its effective use.”

Reflective Journal Entry 2

Date: February 6, 2026

“During class discussions about the use of ChatGPT for English learning, students demonstrated a growing interest in exploring the potential of the tool to support their language practice. Participants highlighted the value of receiving immediate feedback, particularly in relation to grammar and sentence construction. However, several students also expressed the need for explicit teacher guidance on how to use the tool more effectively, especially for tasks

such as writing practice. This suggests that while students recognize the potential of ChatGPT, they may require pedagogical support to use it in more meaningful and structured ways.”

Reflective Journal Entry 3

Date: February 13, 2026

“While reviewing students’ survey responses, it became evident that many learners perceive ChatGPT as a useful support tool for independent learning. At the same time, some participants reported difficulties in formulating questions that align with their specific learning needs. This reinforces the idea that access to artificial intelligence tools alone does not guarantee effective learning, and highlights the importance of teacher mediation in guiding students’ interaction with these technologies. This observation aligns with broader patterns identified across the data, particularly regarding the need for structured guidance in the use of AI for language learning.”

Figure C1

Example excerpts from the teacher-researcher reflective journal

Note. The reflective journal was used as a tool to support ongoing analysis and researcher reflexivity throughout the study. It was not designed as a standardized or validated instrument, but as a means of documenting observations and informing the interpretation of qualitative data.

Appendix D

Guided Prompt Worksheet

This appendix presents a guided worksheet designed to support students in interacting effectively with ChatGPT for personalized English learning.

Objective: To guide students in interacting effectively with ChatGPT in order to identify their learning needs, receive level-appropriate explanations, and engage in meaningful language practice.

Instructions: Use the prompts below. When necessary, replace the words in brackets with your own information.

Table D1

Guided Prompt Template for ChatGPT Use

Learning Focus	Guided Prompt
Learning goals	“I am an English learner at a [beginner/intermediate] level. Based on this level, what are the most important areas I should improve? Please explain in simple terms.”
Strengths & weaknesses	“What are common strengths and weaknesses of English learners at my level? Give examples so I can understand better.”
Vocabulary development	“Teach me 10 useful words about [topic]. Include definitions, simple examples, and one question so I can practice.”
Grammar support	“Explain [grammar topic] in a very simple way. Then give me 3 examples and 3 practice sentences so I can try.”
Error correction	“I will write a sentence. Please correct my mistakes, explain why, and give me a better version.”
Personalized practice	“Give me a short activity to practice [topic]. Make it appropriate for my level and include answers.”

Reflection:

- What new information did you learn?

- Which response was most useful? Why?
- What would you ask differently next time?

Note. This table presents a guided prompt template designed to help students formulate effective interactions with ChatGPT and support personalized language learning. This material is part of a proposed pedagogical prototype and was not implemented or validated as a research instrument

Appendix E

Communicative Task Materials

Objective: To promote communicative competence through structured interaction with ChatGPT.

Activity 1: Guided Conversation (Daily Life)

Prompt:

“I want to practice English conversation about my daily routine. Ask me one question at a time. After I answer, correct my mistakes, explain them briefly, and ask a follow-up question.”

Task:

- Answer each question
- Pay attention to corrections
- Try to improve your next response

Activity 2: Expressing Opinions

Prompt:

“Let’s discuss this topic: [topic]. Ask me for my opinion. After I answer, give me feedback on grammar, vocabulary, and how I can improve my answer.”

Task:

- Give your opinion in 2–3 sentences
- Improve your answer based on feedback

Activity 3: Role-play Scenario

Scenario: Ordering food in a restaurant

Prompt:

“Let’s do a role-play. You are a waiter and I am a customer in a restaurant. Start the conversation. Correct my mistakes and help me improve my responses.”

Task:

- Participate in the conversation
- Use complete sentences
- Try to sound natural

Activity 4: Fluency Challenge**Prompt:**

“Give me a question about [topic]. I will answer. Then suggest a better and more natural version of my answer.”

Task:

- Compare your answer with the improved version
- Notice new vocabulary or structures

Note. The activities presented in this appendix are designed to promote communicative competence through structured interaction with ChatGPT, encouraging students to practice speaking, receive feedback, and improve their language use in meaningful contexts. These materials are part of a proposed pedagogical prototype and were not implemented or validated within the scope of this study.

Appendix F

Reflection Journal Template

This appendix presents a reflection journal template designed to promote metacognitive awareness and reflective learning through the use of ChatGPT.

Objective: To promote metacognitive awareness and reflective learning through the use of ChatGPT.

Instructions: Answer the following questions after completing the activities.

Table F1

Reflection Journal Template for ChatGPT-Supported Learning

Reflection Question	Student Response
How did you use ChatGPT in this activity?	
What did you learn (vocabulary, grammar, or skills)?	
What mistakes did you notice in your English?	
How did ChatGPT help you improve your answers?	
What difficulties did you have when using ChatGPT?	
What would you do differently next time?	
Do you think ChatGPT helped you learn? Why or why not?	

Note. This table presents a reflection journal template intended to support students in analyzing their learning process, identifying strengths and difficulties, and reflecting on their interaction with ChatGPT as a learning tool. This material is part of a proposed pedagogical prototype and was not used as a data collection instrument nor validated during the research process.