

English Education Students' Engagement with ChatGPT in Independent Grammar Learning

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Abstract

This study explores English education students' engagement in using ChatGPT as a personal tutor in independent grammar learning. Using a qualitative approach with a narrative inquiry design, this research involved 4 four undergraduate students from English education study program who had used ChatGPT to learn grammar independently at least one year. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings show that students engaged with ChatGPT behaviorally, cognitively, emotionally, and agentially. Behaviorally, students used ChatGPT for grammar exercises, corrections, explanations, and evaluations. Cognitively, students used ChatGPT to understand grammar concepts, evaluate responses, and monitor their learning progress. Emotionally, students felt comfortable, enjoy, increased confidence, and reduced anxiety due to ChatGPT's non-judgemental responses. Agentially, students directed ChatGPT through specific prompting, requesting simpler explanations, adjusting response styles, and verifying its answers with other sources. However, students also encountered challenges such as prompting difficulties, inaccurate responses, usage limits, and locked premium feature that disrupts their learning flow. Overall, ChatGPT supported independent grammar learning but required critical awareness and external confirmation

Keywords: ChatGPT, engagement, grammar learning, independent learning

Introduction

Grammar is one of the important skills in English language learning. For English education students, grammar serves as the bridge to communicate accurately and appropriately in both spoken and written English. Outside English education context as well, grammar is essential because students are often assigned to write essays, reports, and research papers in English. However, despite its essential aspects, students still found grammar challenging because of its complexity which made them feel confused (Mustakim et al., 2025). Furthermore, the difficulty of learning grammar becomes more challenging when students are expected to learn independently outside classroom. According to Dzimar et al. (2025) one of the reasons of students struggle in

understanding grammar is lack of guidance. This situation may cause problem such as difficulties in understanding grammar explanations from text book (Komara & Tiarsiwi, 2021). Therefore, grammar learning requires not only materials, but proper guidance to make students engaged in the learning process.

In response to this issue, the recent development of the generative intelligence of artificial intelligence (AI), especially ChatGPT, has begun to transform the way students learn and engage in learning processes (Deng et al., 2025; Wu et al., 2026). One of the major causes is that the increased use of ChatGPT as a personal learning assistant, particularly as an independent grammar learning tool, makes students engage with the lesson in different way (Bin Dahmash, 2026). Furthermore, detailed explanations, feedback, and examples, provided by ChatGPT have shaped students' language practices (Polakova & Ivenz, 2024). Also, ChatGPT is often used by students to facilitate academic activities and language learning exercises and has become an even more significant part of the higher education environment (Marjanovikj-Apostolovski, 2024; Vásquez Cardona et al., 2025).

However, the use of ChatGPT in independent grammar learning should not only be viewed from the availability of the tool, but also from how students engage with it during learning processes. Students Engagement is an important aspect because it reflects students' participation, effort, motivation, and cognitive involvement in learning activities (Fredricks et al., 2004). Furthermore, Fredricks et al. (2004) categorize engagement into three dimensions: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive, while Reeve & Tseng (2011) add a fourth dimension, agentic engagement, where students actively shape and direct their own learning. In the context of using ChatGPT, students' engagement can be seen from how frequently they use ChatGPT, how they apply feedback, and respond to the feedback given (Lo et al., 2024). At the same time, potential risks such as AI dependency, reduced critical thinking skills, and ethical concerns such as plagiarism have become common issues that highlighted in recent studies (Hasan et al., 2024; Tlili et al., 2023). Additionally, self-regulated learning theory by Zimmerman (2000) provides a complementary lens, explaining how learners plan, monitor, and reflect on their own learning progress. Therefore, exploring students' engagement is needed to understand whether ChatGPT is used meaningfully by students or only as a tool to complete assignments.

Although several previous studies have discussed the use of ChatGPT in education and language learning, there is still limited number of studies on how English education students engage with ChatGPT specifically as a personal tutor in independent grammar learning. For example, Rudolph et al. (2023) discussed the broader impact of chatGPT on higher education, particularly its potential challenges and opportunities for teaching and assessment. However, it provides limited insights into how students use ChatGPT to support specific learning process. Additionally, conceptual and review-based studies emphasize the potential of AI for personalized instruction but call for more empirical and qualitative investigations to understand its pedagogical implications (Baskara, 2023; Kasneci et al., 2023). Lastly, Lo et al. (2024) highlighted that several aspects of students' engagement remain underexplored, especially in specific learning contexts. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by exploring students' engagement in using ChatGPT as a personal tutor to examine how AI shapes their learning processes in grammar learning and the challenges they encounter when using ChatGPT in their independent grammar learning.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore students' experiences deeply. According to Creswell & Poth (2018), the aims of qualitative research is to understand individual's experiences, perspectives, and meanings of a particular phenomenon. This aligns with the current study that focuses on students' experience of using ChatGPT in their independent grammar learning. This research also employs narrative inquiry design. This design focuses on interpreting and understanding people's experiences through stories about their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through this design, it allows researcher to explore how participant interpret events, learning process, and construct meaning from their experiences.

In this study, the researcher involved 4 selected undergraduate students from English Education Study Program in Mulawarman University. They were chosen according to the criteria of this research. First, they are students of the English Education Study Program in Mulawarman University. This focus allows researcher to narrow the scope of this study to avoid overly broad population. Second, they have used ChatGPT independently for grammar learning for at least a year of experience. This specific

criterion ensures that the participants have rich experiences for researchers to explore. Lastly, participants are willingly to share their experiences openly. To ensure the ethical consideration of qualitative study, researcher will request participants' consent.

Furthermore, researcher acts as the primary instruments who designs and conducted semi-structured interview to explore students' experiences. This allows researcher to explore students' experiences and ask for additional questions to participants if the answers are still vague. Additionally, thorough open-ended questions, participants can describe their experiences in greater detail that involved behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and agentic engagement. The researcher also aware of the potential bias and will continuously reflect throughout the data collection and data analysis.

The process of data analysis employed thematic narrative analysis by Riessman (2008). The analysis began with repeated reading of the transcribed data to achieve familiarization. Next, narrative segments were identified within each participant's story, followed by deductive coding to find students' engagement categories and inductive coding to focus on the challenges students encountered in using ChatGPT. Themes were then reviewed and refined across all narratives. Finally, each participant's narrative account was constructed. Theoretical triangulation was employed strengthen the interpretation by connecting the findings with theoretical concepts.

Findings and Discussions

This study findings will be presented as a series of narrative stories from each participant who has different point of perspectives. These stories portray their experience in engaging with ChatGPT in their independent grammar learning and its challenges. The following section introduces the narratives of the participants, starting with Azl, Str, Frh, and finally Nsr's stories.

Azl's Narratives in engaging with ChatGPT

Azl's experience of using ChatGPT for grammar learning began in her first semester when her lecturer introduced it after the students received poor grammar scores. At first, she did not familiar with the tool, but after trying it, she realized that it could help her understand grammar deeper. This exposure shaped her perceptions that ChatGPT could be used to understand grammar beyond classroom learning.

“I tried using it, as my lecturer recommended... When I used it, I realized that it could explain how to answer properly and help improve my grammar. That was my first experience using ChatGPT.” (Azl Line 12-21)

After this first exposure, Azl gradually began to use ChatGPT more frequently. She no longer used ChatGPT only when she was introduced to it in class, but began to use it for assignments and grammar learning across several semesters. This shows that ChatGPT became part of her academic routine and a tool she repeatedly relied on whenever she needed help with grammar. At the same time, she described her experience as enjoyable and helpful. This part of the narrative highlights both behavioral and emotional engagement, as AZL developed a consistent habit of using ChatGPT while also expressing positive feelings toward the support it provided.

“So far, it has been really enjoyable. I feel very helped by it, and I’ve become really dependent on ChatGPT. Before, I rarely used it, but now I use it almost every day. I especially used it a lot for assignments, particularly for grammar from semesters 1 to 3 or 4, because I constantly relied on it.” (Azl Line 130-139)

As she became more familiar with ChatGPT, Azl did not only use it to receive explanations. She also used it to create learning activities for herself such as asking questions, requesting exercises, answering them, and asking ChatGPT to correct her answers. Through this process, ChatGPT becomes both a practice partner and feedback provider. This paragraph shows behavioral, cognitive engagement, and agentic engagement since AZL actively practiced grammar and used ChatGPT’s corrections to check and strengthen her understanding.

“Most of the time, I use it for everyday learning, especially for grammar. Grammar is complicated for me, so I use it to ask questions, request practice exercises, and get the answers as well. Or sometimes, I first ask it to give me questions, then I answer them myself first, and after that it checks and corrects my answers.” (Azl Line 54-61)

Over time, Azl began to depend on ChatGPT as a tool for re-explaining difficult grammar concepts. She aware that in a university level required more independent learning, which made her used ChatGPT as a re-explainer in simpler language. Furthermore, she emphasized that compared to text book, ChatGPT helped her understand grammar because it could reinterpret and re-explain difficult concepts. This suggest that ChatGPT served as a learning support for Azl to help her learn grammar that she found

difficult to understand on her own. Cognitive engagement becomes visible through her effort to process, reinterpret, and deepen her understanding of grammar concepts.

“Well, in my opinion, in college we are expected to study more independently, right? So if we have the courage, we can ask the lecturer, or we can learn from books. But based on my own experience, I really depend on ChatGPT, I truly rely on ChatGPT. Books are more like references, but I feel like I need things to be explained again. There has to be something that explains it to me again in a way that is easier to understand. So for me, ChatGPT is really helpful in reinterpreting and re-explaining things.” (Azl Line 28-41)

However, Azl’s interaction with ChatGPT was not always simple. Her ability to evaluate ChatGPT’s response heavily depended whether she already familiar or understood the grammar topic. If she familiar with the topic, she showed critical cognitive engagement such as questioning ChatGPT’s accuracy or did not simply accept its answers. On the other hand, when she did not understand the topic, she became highly dependent on ChatGPT and trusted the answer even when she was unsure whether it was correct. This indicates that her cognitive engagement involved both critical and heavy reliance, depending her prior knowledge of the topic.

“Well, if I ask something that I already understand, I automatically analyze it myself, like, this seems wrong, you’re wrong, it should be like this. And I usually tell it, it doesn’t seem like that, because of this and that. So if I understand the material I’m asking about, I can evaluate it. But if I don’t understand the material, I really depend on ChatGPT. Whether it’s right or wrong, I just try to make sure, like, is this correct, is this appropriate. So yeah, if I really don’t understand the material, I rely heavily on ChatGPT.” (Azl Line 112-124)

Beside helping her understand grammar, ChatGPT also made learning feel more comfortable. Azl felth that ChatGPT’s corrections did not make her feel judged. This made her feel more relaxed when practicing grammar and reduced the fear of making mistakes. In this narrative, her emotional engagement is clearly shown because AZL experienced comfort, safety, and a non-judgmental atmosphere when interacting with ChatGPT.

“The way it corrected me also never made me feel like, ‘you’re wrong’ or ‘that’s not how it is.’ Instead, it would say things like, ‘your answer is already good, but it’s still

a little inaccurate.’ So its responses really made me feel like I wasn’t being judged at all. That’s why using ChatGPT feels very relaxed and comfortable.” (Azl Line 61-69)

At the same time, she also felt doubt and uncertainty. She sometimes questioned whether ChatGPT’s response was correct or incorrect. In these critical moments, she did not fully trust it and chose to ask her friends for confirmation. This shows uncertainty and doubt of ChatGPT’s responses and she confirmed it by seeking external verification from her peers. This part demonstrates emotional and agentic engagement, as AZL experienced uncertainty but responded actively by seeking external verification from her peers.

“I still feel confused sometimes, and I definitely still have doubts about ChatGPT. Even though ChatGPT usually says things like, ‘yes, that’s correct’ and explains it confidently, if my feeling tells me that something doesn’t seem right, I’ll still ask my friends about it.” (Azl Line 142-153)

Azl also controlled how ChatGPT responded to her. She did not want ChatGPT to respond in a formal style and she managed its response to answer in a casual tone and to not make her feel pressured. This shows that she fully took control of ChatGPT’s style of responses to meet her needs which indicates agentic engagement.

“I really adjust ChatGPT so it doesn’t sound too academic... I prefer the responses to be more relaxed and not too formal or rigid.” (Azl Line 79-86)

Despite her positive and active engagement with ChatGPT, Azl experiences several challenges when using it. The first challenge was related to prompting. She found it difficult to create a prompt that were aligned with her needs. This challenge affected the quality of ChatGPT’s responses and required her to repeatedly refine the prompt.

“The difficulty is that I have to write a good and proper prompt so the answer matches what I want. My main struggle is making sure the prompt really fits the context.” (Azl Line 169-173)

The next challenge was related to usage limits. She admitted that she felt annoyed when ChatGPT suddenly stopped because of the limit when she was learning. This limitation disrupted her learning flow.

“The limits on ChatGPT also make me feel like, ugh, it’s annoying that there are limits like this. It really disrupts me when I’m studying and suddenly get stopped because of the limit.” (Azl Line 173-177)

The last challenge is inconsistency between her request and ChatGPT's actual output. Azl became frustrated when ChatGPT gave long answers even after she requested the short ones, or when the format changed unexpectedly. These inconsistent responses made the interaction felt difficult.

“When I ask one question and the answer is good, then I ask a second question, the format should be the same as the first answer, but it ends up going off track.” (Azl Line 195-200)

Overall, AZL's experiences reflects every aspect of engagement alligned with Fredricks et al. (2004) and Reeve & Tseng (2011). Behaviorally, she developed a consistent daily practice of using ChatGPT for exercises, corrections, and assignments, consistent with Lo et al. (2024) who found that students' active work with ChatGPT reflects behavioral engagement, suggesting that AI interaction can reflect students' involmenet in learning activites. Cognitively, she engaged with ChatGPT as a re-explainer to make her understand complex concepts and critically evalute its responses which in line with Baskara & Mukarto (2023) who argues that ChatGPT can support personalised language interactions, though her critical awareness limited on her prior knowledge. Emotionally, she found comfort in its non-judgmental feedback consisten with Bin-Hady et al. (2024) who found that ChatGPT can reduce students' anxiety. However, her doubt and frustration of its responses support Baskara & Mukarto (2023) who highlights ChatGPT's limitations such as inaccurate or misleading responses. Furthermore, she took control of her interactions by adjusting style, managing response length, and challenging answers she found unconvincing which shows agentic engagement as proposed by Reeve & Tseng (2011) where learners took control of their own learning. These experiences, however, included challenges such as prompting difficulties, usage limits, and inconsistent outputs, which disrupted her learning flow. These experiences also reflect self-regulated learning by Zimmerman (2000) through structured exercise routines and monitors her understanding actively, although her self-regulation was limited to her prior knowledge.

Nsr's Narratives in engaging with ChatGPT

Nsr's engagement with ChatGPT began from her difficulty in understanding grammar explanation in class. She explained that grammar was often difficult to

understand when it was explained by lecturers, which made her use ChatGPT to re-explain materials in a simpler and more understandable way. Rather than using ChatGPT as her first source of learning, Nsr usually starts her learning from lecturers' explanation and then transferred those materials to ChatGPT to help her learn them more clearly. This phase reflects NSR's cognitive engagement because she used ChatGPT to support comprehension and make classroom input more understandable.

"I usually ask ChatGPT after the lecturer has explained something in class, or based on the notes I took during the lesson. I put those into ChatGPT and ask it to re-explain them in a way that is easier for me to understand. I usually ask it to use more formal language so I can understand better. So basically, the original source still comes from the lecturer first." (Nsr Line 8-16)

As she continued using ChatGPT, Nsr began to notice that its explanations were easier to understand than classroom explanations. She mentioned that its responses felt lighter, shorter, and more direct. This helped her understand grammar quickly, especially when she asked ChatGPT to explain in a concise way. This indicates agentic engagement because she actively shaped the response style according to her learning needs.

"The explanation is usually short, clear, and concise. I usually ask it to explain briefly and clearly, so it goes straight to the point." (Nsr Line 27-30)

Overtime, Nsr's use became more active. After she understood the explanations, she asked ChatGPT to provide examples and practices. She then tried to answer it by herself and received feedback from ChatGPT whether her answers were correct or incorrect. This shows that her engagement shifts from receiving explanations to practicing and applying grammar knowledge. Furthermore, this reflects both behavioral and cognitive engagement. Behaviorally, she actively used ChatGPT for repeated learning activities such as asking questions, requesting exercises, answering them, and receiving feedback. Cognitively, she used these exercises to apply grammar knowledge and strengthen her understanding through correction.

"I ask first from the notes, then after I understand the explanation, I ask for example questions. Then I try to answer them, like when learning active and passive voice, I guess whether it is active or passive, and then it tells me whether it is right or wrong." (Nsr Line 69-80)

Additionally, she also used ChatGPT progressively through follow-up questioning. When she did not understand the first response, she asked ChatGPT to explain once again or simplify the explanations again until she understood. This repeated interaction shows that she actively negotiated meaning with ChatGPT rather than stopping at the first answer. This moment reflects both behavioral and agentic engagement because she continued the interaction while also directing ChatGPT to adjust its explanation.

“If I ask something and I still do not understand the explanation, I ask again, like, what does this mean, can you make it simpler? If I still do not understand, I keep asking for a simpler explanation until I understand.” (Nsr Line 92-99)

Nsr also aware that the quality of its response depended on how she wrote the prompt. She noticed that ChatGPT sometimes explained too broadly or moved away from the topic when her prompt was not specific enough. Because of this, she learned that she needed to make her instruction more detailed and focused to make the answer stay relevant to what she wanted to learn. This development shows her agentic engagement because she gradually learned to refine prompts and control the direction of ChatGPT's responses.

“Sometimes the difficult thing about ChatGPT is that its explanations can go off into other topics, so we really have to make the prompts complete and detailed so that ChatGPT does not drift into other explanations.” (Nsr Line 36-41)

Besides helping her understand grammar, ChatGPT also made her learning process feel more comfortable. Compared to asking the lecturer directly, she felt less nervous because ChatGPT did not make her feel judged. This made the interaction feel safer and more relaxed. This experience reflects her emotional engagement because ChatGPT reduced anxiety and created a more comfortable learning atmosphere.

“When it's with a lecturer, I sometimes feel nervous. I might be afraid of getting scolded or something like that. But with ChatGPT, it feels like talking to a friend. Even if you get mad at ChatGPT, it won't get mad back at you, so it just feels comfortable using ChatGPT.” (Nsr Line 112-117)

However, her learning experience was not always smooth. She admitted that sometimes she felt confused when ChatGPT's answers were unclear, unfocused, or difficult to understand. In some cases, what she learnt from ChatGPT did not fully match

what appear in class. Because of this, she did not treat ChatGPT as the final source of learning and still needed to check the material she learned with ChatGPT to lecturer. This reflects both emotional and agentic engagement because she experienced confusion but responded by verifying the information through classroom sources.

“Sometimes, what I learn from ChatGPT is actually different from what is taught in class. So sometimes I get confused about which one is correct. That’s why after studying with ChatGPT, I still need to check again with the lecturer to know whether it’s right or wrong, because ChatGPT can still make mistakes.” (Nsr Line 131-150)

When reflecting on the difficulties she faced, Nsr mentioned several issues such as writing effective prompts, directing ChatGPT properly, understanding what ChatGPT meant, and checking whether the answer was correct. These difficulties show that using ChatGPT required more than simply asking questions. She had to learn how to guide the tool, interpret its responses, and verify the information through other sources.

“It’s the prompting part. Directing it, understanding how ChatGPT works, and then reviewing and examining its answers again to see whether they are correct or not, that’s the challenge.” (Nsr Line 162-166)

Overall, NSR’s narrative reflects multiple engagements as proposed by Fredricks et al. (2004) and Reeve & Tseng (2011). Her habit of transferring classroom materials to ChatGPT to get a better understanding reflects cognitive engagement is in line with Fitria (2025) who argue that ChatGPT works as a supplementary tool that offers contextualized examples. Her behavioral engagement appears in her use of ChatGPT for questions, examples, exercises, and feedback consistent with Lo et al. (2024) who identify active use of ChatGPT as behavioral engagement. Her emotional engagement appears in her comfort and reduced nervousness which in line with Bin-Hady et al. (2024) who found that ChatGPT creates safe learning environment, although she also felt confused by unclear responses as highlighted by Nguyen et al. (2025) that the information provided by ChatGPT not always accurate. Her agentic engagement is reflected in her detailed prompting, request for simpler explanations, and verification with the lecturer which supports Reeve & Tseng (2011) that students actively involve in the learning process. Thus, ChatGPT was helpful but still required careful prompting and external confirmation. Through the lens of self-regulated learning proposed by Zimmerman (2000), Nsr shows a structured learning approach by extending her learning sources from

her lecturer, actively checking her understanding, and validating ChatGPT's responses through external sources. Therefore, the interpretation from Students' Engagement Theory is strengthened by SRL theory, showing that her engagement involved active control over her learning process.

Str's Narratives in engaging with ChatGPT

Str's experiences with ChatGPT began when he did not have access to a grammar book. At that time, he tried to search for grammar explanations on other sources, but the information he found made him more confused. Because of this, he started to use ChatGPT to ask for grammar examples, sentence patterns, and formulas.

"My first experience using ChatGPT for learning grammar was when I did not have a grammar book at the time. Since I did not have one, and searching on Google sometimes made me even more confused, I started using ChatGPT to create examples for different grammar forms in sentences. For example, for the past tense, I would ask about the grammar rules, how it works, and the examples. Including the formula as well." (Str Line 4-12)

As he continued to use ChatGPT, Str began to see it as a learning companion. He perceived ChatGPT as a friend, because ChatGPT could provide formulas, explanations, and examples whenever he needed them. However, he also felt that ChatGPT sometimes sounded too artificial which made the interaction less natural. Despite that, he still considered ChatGPT as a useful tool to learn grammar. This part of the narrative highlights emotional engagement, as Str felt supported by ChatGPT as a learning companion while also noticing discomfort with its artificial language.

"For me, ChatGPT feels like a study companion. Every time I use it, it feels similar to asking a friend for formulas, explanations, or help with something, because when it's with friends, it sometimes feels more comfortable. The issue with ChatGPT, from my experience, is that the language can sound too AI-generated." (Str Line 16-23)

Furthermore, Str's use of ChatGPT became more practice-oriented. He did not only request examples, but also asked it to create grammar exercises. After he received the questions, he answered them and asked ChatGPT to evaluate whether his answers were correct or not. Through this process, he was not merely receiving information passively but he was actively testing himself and using ChatGPT's feedback to check how

well he truly understood the material. This shows a combination of behavioral and cognitive engagement, since STR actively practiced grammar while also using feedback to monitor his understanding.

“My activity is asking ChatGPT to make grammar questions for me, something like, ‘ChatGPT, make me grammar questions on these topics,’ and then ChatGPT creates those questions. After that, I usually write/type my answers to fill them in. Then, when I submit them, I directly ask ChatGPT to grade them, whether the accuracy is correct or not (Str Line 52-59)

Emotionally, Str described his experience as satisfying and enjoyable. He preferred ChatGPT because it could provide many examples, unlike books that usually offered limited examples. By asking for more examples, such as several examples of past tense, he could recognize grammar patterns more clearly. From this narratives, emotional engagement is evident through his satisfaction and enjoyment, while cognitive engagement also appears as he used multiple examples to understand grammar patterns better.

“My feeling when using ChatGPT to learn grammar is very satisfying and enjoyable...for example, if I ask, ‘give me 10 examples of the past tense,’ then it will show me 10 examples. I feel more like, ‘oh, so this is what the examples are like.’” (Str Line 92-106)

However, he also experienced frustration when ChatGPT used language that was too advanced, which made the explanation difficult to understand and required several promptings. Rather than giving up, he pushed through by prompting ChatGPT repeatedly until the explanation became clear enough for him. This moment suggests emotional, behavioral, and agentic engagement, as STR felt frustrated but continued interacting with ChatGPT and redirected the explanation to meet his needs.

“Yes, because sometimes ChatGPT uses language that is too advanced. The problem is that it is AI language, right, and sometimes I do not understand it. So sometimes it requires ChatGPT itself to rewrite it several times.” (Str Line 111-116)

As his interaction developed, Str became more intentional in directing with ChatGPT according to his learning needs. He used it to focus on grammar topics that he felt weak in, especially when he did not understand material from the lecturer or received poor scores.

““I will direct it according to my needs... I will ask according to the topic that I am not strong in, so that I can improve more in that topic.” (Str Line 135-143)

When receiving explanations, he was also aware that ChatGPT could provide inaccurate information and immediately corrected it. Over time, he became more strategic. He knew where his weaknesses were, and he used ChatGPT deliberately to target those specific areas rather than using it randomly. In this case, STR demonstrated agentic and cognitive engagement by identifying his weaknesses and using ChatGPT purposefully to improve specific grammar areas. This reflects cognitive and agentic engagement, as STR critically evaluated ChatGPT's responses and challenged them when he suspected inaccuracies.

“For that, yes, I have, because sometimes we know that ChatGPT only takes references from other people, so whether it is right or wrong can sometimes be uncertain. So when I see something like, ‘wow, this grammar is wrong,’ sometimes I ask it to correct it...” (Str Line 150-155)

Additionally, he also actively directing ChatGPT's responses. When Str did not understand ChatGPT's explanations, he rewrote the prompts and asked it to make the explanation easier to understand. This showed that he was not a passive user because he actively shaped the interaction until he got the explanation that worked for him. This narrative also points to behavioral and agentic engagement, because STR sustained the interaction and actively shaped ChatGPT's response until he received an explanation that worked for him.

“Well, if I don't understand what ChatGPT shows me at first, for example when it gives the first explanation, I write another prompt asking it to make it easier to understand. Then it usually creates a simpler explanation for me to understand, including the formulas.” (Str Line 170-177)

Despite these benefits, Str faced challenges related to access limitations and locked features. He explained that ChatGPT had limited usage and that some features were only available in the premium version, which was expensive. These limitations sometimes prevented him from using ChatGPT when he needed it most.

“ChatGPT's features are limited, restricted. And its usage is also very limited... its features are unlocked, uh, locked in the premium section... That is what sometimes

makes it difficult for me to use ChatGPT because the features are locked.” (Str Line 161-169)

Overall, str’s narratives reflects practice-oriented engagement reflecting multiple engagements proposed by Fredricks et al. (2004) and Reeve & Tseng (2011). Behaviorally, He developed an active practice such as requesting exercises, answering them, and asking for evaluation which consistent with Lo et al. (2024) who identify students’ work with ChatGPT as an indicator of behavioral engagement. Cognitively, he used ChatGPT to understand grammar patterns and critically evaluated its responses when he suspected inaccuracies alligns with Nguyen et al. (2025) who emphasizes that students to check answers given from ChatGPT to ensure accuracy. Emotionally, he felt satisfied and enjoyed which consistent with Kartini et al. (2025) who found that students had positive and enjoyable experience when using ChatGPT in English learning, though he occasionally felt frustrated when the language was too advanced. He also took control of his interactions by directing ChatGPT, reprompting, and correcting its responses which alligns with agentic engagement proposed by Reeve & Tseng (2011) where students express preferences to meet their needs. However, challenges such as limitations and locked premium features often disrupted his learning process. Through a self-regulated learning perspective Zimmerman (2000), Str demonstrates focused planning by targeting weak grammar areas, monitor progress, and evaluate his learning critically. However, limitation such as usage limits and locked features sometimes interrupted his learning flow.

Frh’s narrative in engaging with ChatGPT

Frh’s experience with ChatGPT began earlier than the other participants. He used ChatGPT during high school and at that time, he used ChatGPT mainly to ask about general grammar rules and how specific grammar worked. However, his use became more frequent when he entered university to help him do assignments and correct answers.

“I first found out about ChatGPT when I was in high school, and at that time I initially used it only to ask about general grammar rules or how to use certain grammar functions. Then, when I entered university, I started using ChatGPT or other AI tools more often to sometimes help me do assignments or correct answers. (Frh Line 3-12)

As he continued to use ChatGPT, he began to see it as a learning partner. He did not only use it to get instant explanations, but also to discuss grammar and explore different explanations. Compared to textbooks, ChatGPT allowed him to directly ask for examples based on specific themes, such as education and environment. This made his learning process more flexible and personalized because he requested different examples according to what he needed. This paragraph reflects behavioral and agentic engagement, as FRH actively used ChatGPT for discussion and directed the content of learning based on his needs.

“In textbooks, the rules or ways to solve it are usually already provided, for example. But the good thing about ChatGPT is that we can directly ask it to give examples, such as making examples with a certain theme, maybe an education theme or an environmental theme, using the words that were taught earlier. So, we can directly ask for various kinds of examples.” (Frh Line 24-32)

Over time, his interaction became more specific and detailed. He explained that university assignments became more difficult, which made his questions become more detailed and specific. He also realized that the quality of its responses depended on how specific his prompt was. This reflects agentic and cognitive engagement where he used strategies questioning and directing its responses.

“Now, I ask in more detail, because the assignments are also getting more difficult. So now the questions, or the prompts, are more detailed, more difficult, and more specific.” (Frh Line 44-59)

In his learning routine, similar to Nsr, Frh usually started from materials taught by lecturers or from books. After practicing independently, he asked ChatGPT to check whether his sentences were correct according to grammar rules. Then, after receiving corrections, he continued by asking for more exercises and examples. This shows that ChatGPT became part of a learning cycle where he practiced, checked accuracy, received correction, and continued learning through additional tasks. This shows that he engaged behaviorally and cognitively through active practices and evaluation to improve his understanding.

“I am usually taught by a teacher or through a book, through the material. Then I usually practice by myself first, and after that I ask ChatGPT... After that, the AI gives

corrections. Then after that, I ask again for more exercises, for example, and also examples.” (Frh Line 79-89)

Frh also showed carefulness when receiving answers from ChatGPT. He usually compared ChatGPT’s explanations with websites, articles, or other internet sources. If the explanation matched, he continued using it. However, if he found differences, he asked ChatGPT why the answers were different. This shows that Frh used ChatGPT critically through combination of external sources. Through his narratives, cognitive and engagement is clearly shown as Frh cross-checked information and challenged ChatGPT when inconsistencies appeared.

“I usually make sure that what it says matches what is said on websites or in articles, for example, like what is taught in other online media. So I make sure, is the formula the same? Is the usage the same? If it is the same, then I can continue, but if it is not the same, then I ask again why its answer is different.” (Frh Line 140-148)

Emotionally, Frh described his experience with ChatGPT as easy and convenient to use. He felt that ChatGPT was useful because he could simply open websites, ask questions, and immediately receive answers. Compared to searching through many articles, ChatGPT felt more direct and interactive as if he was speaking to another person. This made the experience enjoyable for him. This also indicates that Frh engaged emotionally because he felt convenience, enjoyment, and a sense of connection when using ChatGPT.

“My feeling after using this is that, of course, it is very easy to use because we just open the website, ask directly, give the material, and immediately get the answer. Sometimes, compared to searching through various articles, the convenience is different because the articles we find sometimes do not really match our expectations. But when asking ChatGPT, it feels like directly talking to a person.” (Frh Line 159-169)

Furthermore, he felt that ChatGPT increased his confidence in learning grammar. When he did not understand something, he could immediately ask ChatGPT and also request the sources of its information to strengthen her understanding. This reflects multiple aspects of engagement which are emotional, cognitive, and agentic, as Frh felt more confident, deepened his understanding, and requested sources to support further learning.

“Oh, yes, I have become more confident because now, whenever there is something I do not understand about grammar, I can just ask AI directly. Then, I can also ask where it got the information from, and how I can learn more deeply through those sources.” (Frh Line 192-198)

Despite these benefits, Frh faced challenges related to inconsistent and inaccurate responses. He explained that ChatGPT sometimes gave wrong answers, overly general responses, or explanation that were too detailed. These issues sometimes slowed down his learning process and caused confusion or doubt.

“The difficulty I found was the inconsistency in the answers. Sometimes the answers could be inaccurate, and at times they were also too general or too overly detailed. That was the main issue.” (Frh Line 240-245)

Overall, similar to other participants, Frh’s narratives reflect multiple engagement as outlined by Fredricks et al. (2004) and Reeve & Tseng (2011). Behaviorally, his structured learning cycle of practicing, checking, receiving corrections, and requesting further exercises in line with Lo et al. (2024) that students’ active work with ChatGPT refers to behavioral engagement. Cognitively, he used it to understand grammar rules, evaluate correctness, compare responses, and deepen his understanding consistent with Tram et al. (2024) who found that learners use ChatGPT to improve grammar accuracy, compare their writing with ChatGPT’s output and verifying responses with other sources. Emotionally, he felt that ChatGPT was enjoyable and increased his confidence aligns with Kartini et al. (2025) who found that students had enjoyable learning experience and Xu et al. (2024) who reported that the use of ChatGPT increased students’ confidence, though he also experienced frustration and doubt in the process. He also directed ChatGPT through specific prompts, requested simpler explanations, corrected inaccurate answers, and provided more context to improve response accuracy which reflects agentic engagement explained by Reeve & Tseng (2011) where he directed ChatGPT to meet his needs. Despite that, he also experienced challenges such as inaccurate and inconsistent responses, which disrupted his learning process. Thus, ChatGPT functioned as a useful but imperfect learning partner that required cross-checking, detailed prompting, and active correction. Frh also reflects self-regulated learning proposed by Zimmerman (2000) where he demonstrates well structured planning routines, regular checking information

with other sources, and critically evaluating ChatGPT's responses when he notices inconsistencies in its responses.

Conclusion

ChatGPT played a meaningful role as a personal tutor in students' independent grammar learning. They engaged with ChatGPT through repeated exercise, explanation requests, feedback evaluation, personalized interaction, and emotional aspects such as enjoyment and comfortable. This engagement reflects all aspects of engagements such as behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and agentic, showing that ChatGPT was not only used to get instant answers but a learning companion that helped them to understand grammar deeper.

In the process, they also encounter challenges in using ChatGPT in independent grammar learning such as writing effective prompts, inaccurate responses, usage limitation, and locked premium features. Therefore, ChatGPT can help students to learn grammar independently but it must be used critically. Students must verify its responses with lecturers, text books, or other reliable sources to avoid misunderstanding.

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