English Communication Classes with Generative AI “ChatGPT”

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Abstract: This paper reports on a classroom practice integrating generative artificial intelligence (ChatGPT) into a Japanese senior high school English Communication course. The practice was implemented in four second-year classes (approximately 40 students per class; total N ≈ 160) using LANDMARK II (Keirinkan), Lesson 10 “AI and Our Future,” together with supplementary writing materials including a CNN Workbook (Asahi Press) and GTEC STEP UP NOTE Writing Work (Benesse Corporation).

Students first composed opinion-based texts independently and then used ChatGPT strictly as a rewriting assistant. External assessment data indicate that the average GTEC writing score increased from 150.8 to 182.6 (+31.8 points; +21.1%). While causation cannot be attributed solely to this intervention, the results suggest that structured AI-assisted revision may have contributed to measurable improvements in writing performance. The findings demonstrate that, under careful teacher guidance, generative AI can function as pedagogical scaffolding that enhances linguistic expression while preserving students’ cognitive ownership. The study also discusses ethical considerations surrounding AI use in education and proposes practical guidelines for responsible classroom implementation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of generative artificial intelligence has significantly influenced educational discourse worldwide. Tools such as ChatGPT can generate coherent written responses, summarize information, and assist with revision processes. In language education, these capabilities have the potential to support writing development by providing immediate linguistic feedback and modeling natural language usage.

However, the integration of AI technologies into educational settings also raises substantial pedagogical and ethical questions. Some educators worry that students may become overly dependent on automated systems, potentially weakening their own ability to construct ideas and communicate independently. Others argue that AI, when used carefully, can function as a form of scaffolding that supports students’ development rather than replacing their thinking.

In Japanese senior high school English classes, students frequently demonstrate thoughtful understanding of discussion topics but struggle to express their ideas clearly in written English. Their writing often contains simple sentence structures, limited vocabulary, and weak logical connections. This gap between cognitive understanding and linguistic expression provided the motivation for the present classroom practice.

The central research question of this study is

therefore: How can teachers integrate generative AI into writing instruction in a way that supports linguistic development while preserving students' ownership of ideas?

2. TEACHING CONTEXT

The classroom practice described in this study was conducted in four second-year English Communication classes at a Japanese senior high school. Each class consisted of approximately 40 students, resulting in a total of about 160 participating learners. The students were typically 16 and 17 years old and had completed several years of English education under the national curriculum established by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT, 2018), which has been fully implemented since 2022.

The primary textbook used in the course was LANDMARK II (Keirinkan), specifically Lesson 10 titled "AI and Our Future." This lesson introduces students to contemporary debates surrounding artificial intelligence and encourages them to consider the societal impact of emerging technologies. The thematic focus on AI provided a natural context for introducing generative AI tools as part of classroom activities.

To extend writing practice beyond the textbook, two supplementary resources were incorporated: the CNN Workbook (Asahi Press), which presents current global topics, and GTEC STEP UP NOTE Writing Work (Benesse Corporation), which focuses on structured writing practice aligned with external proficiency assessments.

While students generally understand the content and are able to form opinions, many struggle to express their ideas clearly in English. Common difficulties include limited vocabulary, repetitive sentence patterns, and insufficient use of logical connectors. As a result, students often feel that their English ability does not reflect their actual thinking.

3. DESCRIPTION OF TASKS AND STUDENT EXAMPLES

The writing tasks used in this practice required students to express their opinions on global social issues and cultural topics. These tasks were intentionally open-ended, allowing students to develop individual perspectives rather than reproducing predetermined answers. The CNN Workbook tasks used in this practice covered topics such as:

- the mandatory wearing of hijabs for women in Iran;
- appropriate dress when attending international ceremonies as a representative of Japan;
- opinions about school uniforms in Japanese high schools.

There were no single correct answers, and students were expected to organize their ideas logically within a limited word count.

Table 1 - Opinion on School Uniforms

Version	Text
Original	I think uniforms are good. Students don't have to choose clothes. Everyone is same.
Revised (AI-assisted)	I think school uniforms are beneficial because students do not need to spend time choosing clothes every day. In addition, wearing the same uniform can reduce visible differences among students.

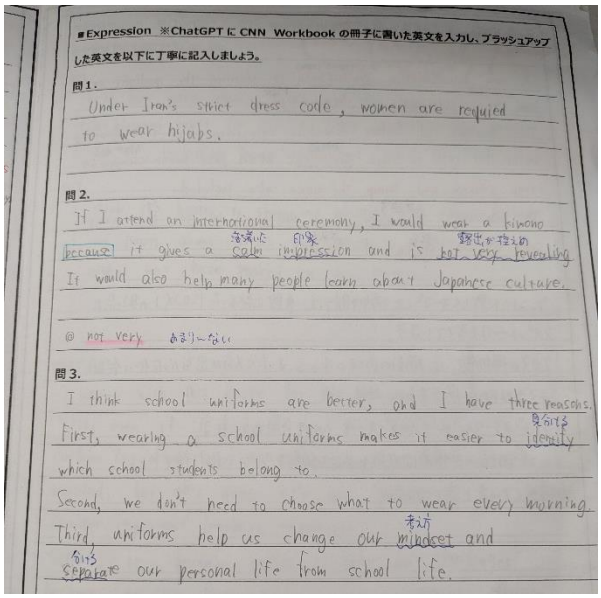
Table 2 - Cultural Perspective Example

Version	Text
Original	If I go to other country ceremony, I will respect their culture. Because I represent Japan.
Revised (AI-assisted)	If I attend an official ceremony in another country, I would respect the local culture and customs.

As shown in Tables 1 and 2, analysis of students' original writing showed that most students had relevant ideas and opinions, but their English expressions were often simple and underdeveloped. This gap between thought and expression became the focus of instructional intervention.

4. CLASSROOM PRACTICE: AI-ASSISTED REVISION

Students were explicitly instructed that ChatGPT should not generate ideas for them, but rather help them improve how their ideas were expressed.


■Expression ※ChatGPT に CNN Workbook の冊子に書いた英文を入力し、ブラッシュアップした英文を以下に丁寧に記入しましょう。

問1.
Under Iran's strict dress code, women are required to wear hijabs.

問2.
If I attend an international ceremony, I would wear a kimono because it gives a calm impression and is not very revealing. It would also help many people learn about Japanese culture.

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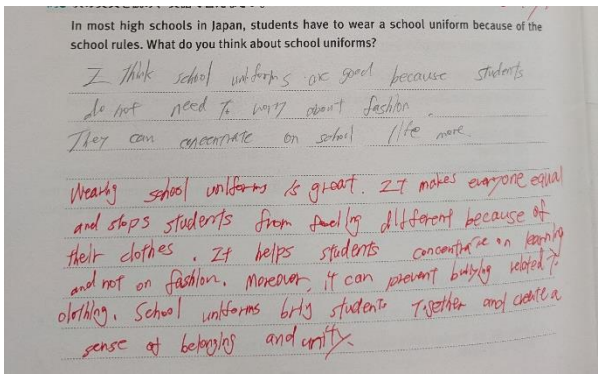
問3.
I think school uniforms are better, and I have three reasons. First, wearing a school uniforms makes it easier to identify which school students belong to. Second, we don't need to choose what to wear every morning. Third, uniforms help us change our mindset and separate our personal life from school life.

Figure 1 - Student notebook with sample answers before using AI

Students first completed writing tasks independently in order to ensure that the ideas expressed were their own. After completing their drafts, they entered their sentences into ChatGPT and requested revisions that preserved the original meaning while improving clarity and naturalness.


In most high schools in Japan, students have to wear a school uniform because of the school rules. What do you think about school uniforms?

I think school uniforms are good because students do not need to worry about fashion. They can concentrate on school life more.

Wearing school uniforms is great. It makes everyone equal and stops students from feeling different because of their clothes. It helps students concentrate on learning and not on fashion. Moreover, it can prevent bullying related to clothing. School uniforms bring students together and create a sense of belonging and unity.

Figure 2 - Simple student answers compared to sentences improved after using AI

Students then compared the original and revised versions in small groups, discussing differences in vocabulary, sentence structure, and logical flow. Finally, they rewrote their responses by selecting the elements they considered most useful.

With this approach, teachers could ensure that ChatGPT was introduced as a rewriting and polishing tool, not as a source of answer. Also, it is important to note that the teacher played a central role in guiding this activity. The teacher explained appropriate and ethical use of AI, emphasized critical evaluation of AI output, and encouraged students to notice differences between their original sentences and the revised versions. Students were reminded that they did not need to accept all AI suggestions and should make final decisions themselves.

5. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Several positive outcomes were observed through this instructional approach. Students became more aware of how English sentences can be structured logically and gained exposure to a wider range of vocabulary and connectors. Many also reported increased confidence in their writing, as they could see concrete examples of improved expression.

To evaluate these outcomes, the Global Test of English Communication (GTEC), a standardized English proficiency test developed and administered by Benesse Corporation and widely used in Japanese high schools, was used as a reference. In this study, the GTEC Advanced type (maximum total score: 1280) was utilized. The test assesses students' skills in reading, listening, writing, and speaking, with a particular focus on communicative competence.

At the author's current high school, students take the GTEC test five times over the course of three years. The present analysis is based on the results of four administrations conducted from the first to the second year. The test was administered as part of the regular assessment schedule in June and December.

Results showed a clear improvement in students' writing performance. The average writing score increased from 150.8 to 182.6, representing a gain of 31.8 points (approximately 21.1%). These scores are reported on a standardized scale used by GTEC to indicate levels of communicative ability.

However, these improvements cannot be attributed solely to this instructional activity, as students were

engaged in multiple learning experiences. Nevertheless, the quantitative gains, together with increased confidence and qualitative feedback, suggest that the approach contributed positively to students' development.

Furthermore, teachers observed a shift in instructional focus from error correction to meaning-based communication, with students beginning to view writing as a process of refining ideas rather than simply avoiding mistakes.

6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN AI-ASSISTED LEARNING

The integration of AI technologies into educational environments requires careful attention to ethical considerations. UNESCO (2021) emphasizes the importance of transparency, accountability, and human oversight in AI-supported systems.

In this classroom practice, AI use was restricted to the revision stage in order to maintain students' ownership of ideas. Students were explicitly instructed that ChatGPT should not be used to generate entire answers. Instead, it functioned as a tool for improving linguistic clarity.

In other words, using ChatGPT after students had attempted to write independently allowed AI to function as a scaffold rather than a substitute for learning. Under appropriate teacher supervision, generative AI supported reflection, comparison, and revision, all key elements of language development.

7. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study suggest that generative AI can function as a form of scaffolding in writing instruction. Rather than replacing students' thinking, AI-assisted revision can help learners bridge the gap between their ideas and their ability to express those ideas in English.

The key factor appears to be instructional design. When AI tools are used without guidance, they may encourage passive learning. However, when integrated into structured learning activities that emphasize reflection and comparison, they can promote deeper metalinguistic awareness.

8. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study represents a single classroom case study and therefore cannot be generalized without caution. Future research should examine similar practices across multiple schools and educational contexts.

This study demonstrates that generative AI can be integrated into English writing instruction in a way that supports students' linguistic development while preserving their ownership of ideas. It offers a practical and meaningful way to maximize students' expressive potential in English classes

With careful instructional design and ethical guidance, AI tools such as ChatGPT may serve as valuable partners in language education rather than a threat to it.

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