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Exploring Lecturers' and Students' Perspectives on the Use of AI for Grammar, Vocabulary, and Pragmatic Development in Namibian Universities

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Abstract— *This study examines the viewpoints of lecturers and students on the utilisation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to enhance grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatic skills in English and Applied Linguistics at Namibian universities. The research is based on the growing use of AI-powered writing tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and QuillBot in higher education. Data were gathered via a qualitative interpretivist methodology through semi-structured interviews conducted with lecturers and undergraduate students at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) and the International University of Management (IUM). The study indicates that AI tools are seen as beneficial for augmenting grammatical correctness, broadening vocabulary, and strengthening pragmatic understanding in academic writing. Nonetheless, apprehensions pertaining to excessive dependence, academic integrity, and insufficient institutional guidance were also recognised. The study indicates that although AI possesses considerable educational potential, its implementation requires organised support, policy frameworks, and active participation to ensure effective learning outcomes.*

Keywords— Artificial Intelligence, Grammar Development, Pragmatic Competence, Vocabulary, Higher Education.

I. INTRODUCTION

The incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into higher education has profoundly altered pedagogy and the acquisition of academic writing, especially in English and Applied Linguistics. AI-driven applications like ChatGPT, Grammarly, and QuillBot are increasingly utilised to assist students in enhancing grammatical precision, vocabulary expansion, and pragmatic proficiency. These tools offer prompt feedback, tailored recommendations, and engaging learning experiences, rendering them essential assets in contemporary language instruction. Notwithstanding these gains, students at Namibian universities continue to encounter issues in academic writing, including grammatical inaccuracies, limited vocabulary, and difficulties maintaining a suitable tone and coherence.

Prior studies demonstrate that numerous students commence university with insufficient writing skills, primarily because English is their second or third language. Research in Namibia indicates that students encounter difficulties in structuring ideas, utilising proper syntax, and generating coherent academic texts. Research indicates that AI technologies can improve writing skills by providing real-time corrections and modelling proper language use (Younas et al., 2025; Mulford, 2025). In African contexts, researchers have emphasised AI's capacity to function as a "digital writing assistant," aiding students in enhancing linguistic proficiency while mitigating issues such as restricted access to feedback (Modiba et al., 2023).

Nonetheless, despite the increasing utilisation of AI technologies, there is a paucity of empirical research in Namibia examining how lecturers and students assess the efficacy of AI in enhancing grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatic ability. Moreover, apprehensions about excessive reliance on AI, academic integrity, and the absence of institutional rules persist, raising

questions about the pedagogical incorporation of these technologies. This signifies a disparity between AI's theoretical capabilities and its practical application in writing education.

This research aims to examine the viewpoints of lecturers and students on the utilisation of AI technologies for the advancement of grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatics in English and Applied Linguistics at Namibian universities. The study aims to understand how AI enhances writing proficiency and to identify the challenges associated with its application.

This research offers empirical insights into AI-mediated writing habits in Namibian higher education. The findings aim to inform lecturers, institutions, and policymakers about the optimal integration of AI into writing instruction to improve communicative competence while preserving academic integrity. Moreover, the study contributes to the broader dialogue on integrating theory and practice in language instruction through AI-driven innovations.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative interpretivist research approach to investigate participants' experiences and views of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in writing development. The interpretivist paradigm is suitable for this study, as it emphasises understanding how individuals derive meaning from their experiences within specific social and educational contexts (Ryan, 2021; Tight, 2023). A qualitative methodology facilitates a comprehensive examination of participants' perspectives, especially in intricate and evolving domains like the integration of AI in education (Ravitch & Carl, 2021; Tracy, 2020). The study was carried out at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) and the International University of Management (IUM), as these institutions are actively involved with AI technology in education.

2.1 Participants

Participants comprised instructors and undergraduate students enrolled in English and Applied Linguistics programmes. The English and Applied Linguistics programme at both institutions is designed to develop students' proficiency in English language use, with a focus on applied linguistics, language teaching, and communication skills; students in this programme are required to produce academic writing in English across a range of genres. There were initially 30 participants from NUST and IUM, but data from only 15 were included in the analysis. These included both lecturers and students; the breakdown between the two groups was not specified. The participants were chosen for their active involvement in academic writing practices and their greater likelihood of utilising AI-driven writing tools. Purposive sampling was utilised to select people with substantial knowledge who could provide comprehensive insights into the issue under study (Palinkas et al., 2023). This sampling approach is commonly employed in qualitative research to guarantee the relevance and depth of data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

2.2 Data Collection

Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, enabling participants to articulate their experiences, perceptions, and attitudes on the utilisation of AI tools in writing activities. Semi-structured interviews are appropriate for qualitative research since they offer flexibility while ensuring the coverage of essential themes (Tracy, 2020). This approach enabled the researcher to investigate participants' responses more thoroughly and to obtain detailed, descriptive data on grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatic development through the application of AI.

Interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and were conducted in English. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) and the International University of Management (IUM).

The AI tools mentioned by participants included Grammarly (an AI-powered writing assistant that checks grammar, punctuation, and style), QuillBot (a paraphrasing and grammar-checking tool), and ChatGPT (a generative AI chatbot developed by OpenAI). Participants used these tools in various contexts, including drafting essays, revising assignments, and checking grammar before submission. The study did not prescribe specific tools or versions, allowing participants to report on their own usage patterns.

2.3 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was utilised to discern patterns and themes within the data. This approach entails systematic categorisation and analysis of qualitative data to produce significant interpretations (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The six-phase methodology for

thematic analysis—familiarisation, coding, theme development, theme review, theme definition, and reporting—was employed to guarantee a thorough analysis. Thematic analysis is particularly well-suited to interpretivist investigations, as it enables researchers to interpret participants' experiences and develop themes that encapsulate shared meanings (Nowell et al., 2017).

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 AI and Grammatical Development

Participants indicated that AI tools markedly enhanced grammatical precision in academic writing. Students emphasised that tools like Grammarly facilitated the identification of problems pertaining to sentence structure, punctuation, and grammar. Instructors remarked that AI offers prompt corrective input, a feat that is frequently challenging in large courses with limited personalised attention. This immediacy enables students to engage in ongoing self-correction and revision, thus enhancing their grammatical proficiency.

These findings align with international research indicating that AI-driven writing tools improve grammatical proficiency via automated feedback and real-time correction mechanisms (Younas et al., 2025; Al-Khresheh, 2023). Research indicates that AI operates as a "digital tutor," helping learners improve sentence-level correctness and linguistic precision in writing assignments (Modiba et al., 2023). In Namibia, where students frequently struggle with grammatical precision because English is a second or third language, AI tools offer essential support in addressing these deficiencies.

AI tools provided different types of feedback, including grammar correction (e.g., Grammarly's grammar and punctuation checks), style suggestions (e.g., recommendations for clearer or more concise phrasing), vocabulary recommendations (e.g., synonym suggestions or paraphrasing), and structural feedback (e.g., suggestions for improving paragraph organisation or argument flow).

3.2 AI and Vocabulary Development

Students reported that AI technologies enhance vocabulary acquisition by proposing synonyms, rephrasing sentences, and presenting more sophisticated academic terminology. These qualities enabled students to diversify their linguistic expression and to produce more advanced academic writing. AI tools were very effective at helping students avoid redundancy and improve lexical diversity.

Instructors recognised that AI significantly enhances students' vocabulary; however, they stressed the need for pedagogical guidance to help students understand the contextual appropriateness of recommended terms. In the absence of such instruction, students may misapply or misuse complicated vocabulary.

These findings correspond with the existing literature, which emphasises that AI-powered technologies facilitate vocabulary acquisition by presenting learners with diverse lexical options and contextualised language usage (Zhai & Wibowo, 2023; Ji et al., 2023). Moreover, research in African higher education settings demonstrates that AI facilitates language development, especially for second-language learners who require greater exposure to academic terminology (Rangara-Omol et al., 2025).

3.3 AI and Pragmatic Competence

Pragmatic competence refers to the ability to use language appropriately in social and academic contexts, including tone, formality, and audience awareness. AI tools were identified as facilitators in enhancing pragmatic competence, aiding students in modulating tone, formality, and audience awareness in academic writing. Participants indicated that AI technologies facilitated more effective argument structuring and the maintenance of an appropriate academic register. This was especially advantageous in promoting coherence and clarity in written communication.

Nevertheless, some lecturers expressed concern that students might not adequately cultivate pragmatic awareness if they rely unduly on AI-generated recommendations. Students may accept AI products without properly assessing their suitability for academic situations. These findings are corroborated by prior studies indicating that AI tools can improve pragmatic competence by exemplifying suitable language usage and discourse conventions (Younas et al., 2025; Hult, 2022). Scholars warn that excessive reliance on AI may hinder learners' capacity to make independent pragmatic decisions, thereby affecting

their communicative competence (Wardani et al., 2024). Figure 1 illustrates the association between AI tools and writing competence.

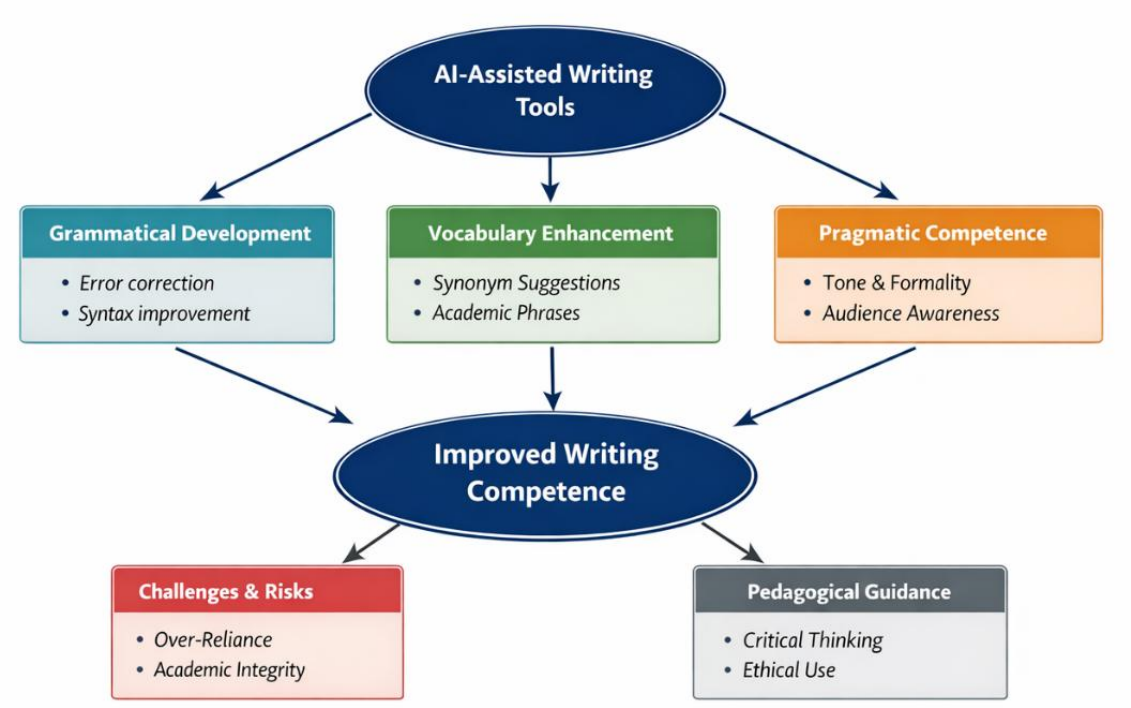


FIGURE 1: AI-driven writing development in grammatical, vocabulary, and pragmatic competence

The incorporation of AI tools enhances various aspects of writing proficiency, encompassing grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatic application. This link is depicted in Figure 1.

3.4 Challenges Identified

Notwithstanding the advantages of AI use, numerous obstacles emerged from the findings. These encompass:

- Excessive dependence on AI tools
- Concerns regarding academic integrity
- Absence of institutional policies
- Inadequate digital literacy among certain users

Participants expressed concern that overreliance on AI could diminish students' critical-thinking and autonomous writing skills. Moreover, instructors emphasised the difficulties associated with academic dishonesty, particularly when students submit AI-generated material without appropriate attribution. The lack of explicit institutional policies exacerbates the regulation and ethical use of AI in academic environments.

These challenges signify overarching issues in higher education regarding the integration of AI technologies. Research demonstrates that although AI improves educational outcomes, its improper application may lead to dependency, reduced creativity, and ethical challenges (UNESCO, 2025; Mulford, 2025). In African environments, infrastructural deficiencies and insufficient digital literacy intensify these issues (Modiba et al., 2023).

The multilingual context of Namibian higher education—where students often speak Oshiwambo, Afrikaans, Otjiherero, or other languages alongside English—also shapes how AI tools are used. Students may draw on their multilingual repertoires when engaging with AI, using translation features or comparing AI suggestions with their own linguistic intuitions. Future research could examine how multilingual learners navigate AI-mediated writing in ways that differ from monolingual users.

Table 1 summarises the principal findings of the study, emphasising the perceived advantages and obstacles associated with the utilisation of AI in writing development.

TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANTS' PERSPECTIVES ON AI USE IN WRITING DEVELOPMENT

Theme	Key Findings	Student Perspectives	Lecturer Perspectives
Grammatical Development	Artificial intelligence enhances sentence structure, punctuation, and grammar via instantaneous feedback.	Documented a reduction in grammatical errors and enhanced self-editing skills	Observed less grading workload and enhanced student precision
Vocabulary Development	Artificial intelligence augments lexical diversity via synonyms and paraphrases.	Documented heightened utilisation of academic vocabulary	Stressed the necessity for contextual comprehension of vocabulary
Pragmatic Competence	Artificial intelligence facilitates tone, formality, and audience awareness.	Enhanced scholarly tone and consistency in composition	Apprehensive over a cursory comprehension of linguistic application
Feedback and Learning Support	Artificial intelligence provides instantaneous, tailored feedback.	Perceived AI as a "writing assistant" accessible at all times	Acknowledged AI as an ancillary educational instrument
Challenges	Excessive dependence, concerns over academic integrity, and the absence of a policy	Partial reliance on artificial intelligence for writing assignments	Emphasised the necessity for regulation and ethical standards
Digital Literacy and Access	Divergences in proficiency in the appropriate utilisation of AI tools	Several students encountered difficulties with appropriate AI utilisation	Recognised necessity for training and organisational assistance

IV. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted at two institutions in Namibia, and the findings may not be generalisable to other African higher education contexts. Second, the study relies on self-reported data from interviews, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Third, the analysis did not include student writing samples produced with AI assistance, which could have provided more direct evidence of AI's impact on writing development. Fourth, the study did not examine how digital literacy differences among participants shaped their experiences. Future research could address these limitations by adopting mixed-methods designs, including analysis of student writing, and conducting comparative studies across multiple African countries.

V. CONCLUSION

This study's findings indicate that AI-driven tools significantly enhance students' grammatical accuracy, vocabulary development, and pragmatic competence at Namibian universities. Both educators and learners acknowledge AI as a beneficial educational tool that enhances writing proficiency through fast, tailored, and accessible feedback. These findings align with international studies indicating that AI technologies enhance writing quality and communication ability in higher education (Younas et al., 2025; Al-Khresheh, 2023; Zhai & Wibowo, 2023). In multilingual environments like Namibia, where English is often a second or third language, AI systems serve as crucial intermediaries to address linguistic proficiency gaps.

The study emphasises that the successful integration of AI into writing pedagogy requires robust institutional support, explicit policy frameworks, and thoughtfully crafted pedagogical practices. In the absence of these frameworks, the utilisation of AI may lead to excessive dependence, diminished critical thinking, and issues with academic integrity. The literature broadly recognises these problems, underscoring the necessity for the ethical and coordinated use of AI in educational contexts (UNESCO, 2025; Wardani et al., 2024).

Consequently, AI should be regarded as an auxiliary educational tool that augments, rather than supplants, students' autonomous learning, analytical reasoning, and writing skills. Instructors are essential in this process, directing students to critically analyse AI-generated feedback and cultivate a deeper understanding of language use. The effective incorporation of AI in Namibian higher education relies on harmonising technological advancement with pedagogical accountability, guaranteeing that AI enhances the cultivation of communicative skills.

Future research could extend this study in several directions. First, longitudinal studies could examine how students' writing development changes over time with sustained AI use. Second, comparative studies across multiple African countries could identify contextual factors that shape AI adoption and effectiveness. Third, mixed-methods designs incorporating analysis of student writing samples could provide more direct evidence of AI's impact on writing quality. Fourth, research could examine the effectiveness of specific pedagogical interventions designed to promote critical and ethical AI use. Finally, studies could explore how AI tools might be adapted to better serve the needs of second-language learners in multilingual African contexts.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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