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Exploring How MA Students Use AI-Assisted Proofreading Tools for Academic Writing: Practices, Challenges, and Perceived Impact

Masara Abdallah Aljkhawe[1]

[1]Department of English, Faculty of Arts and Education, University of Sabratha, Sabratha, Libya

Corresponding Author: E-mail: Masaraabd93@gmail.com

Abstract:

The growing use of artificial intelligence (AI) has provided students with new tools that may support academic writing. Tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and QuillBot can provide feedback on grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and clarity. However, their use has also raised concerns about inaccurate feedback, overreliance, and the need for students to evaluate AI-generated suggestions carefully. This study explored how MA students from different universities in Libya use AI-assisted proofreading tools in academic writing, the challenges they face, and their perceptions of the perceived impact of these tools on their writing. An exploratory qualitative approach was adopted, and data were collected through semi-structured interviews with ten MA students selected through purposive sampling. The findings showed that participants used AI-assisted proofreading tools during different stages of writing, including drafting, revision, and final proofreading. They reported benefits such as identifying language errors, developing vocabulary, improving sentence structure and clarity, saving time, and increasing confidence. However, participants also reported challenges, including unsuitable AI suggestions, difficulties in using prompts, possible overreliance, academic integrity concerns, privacy issues, and limited access to some features. Overall, participants viewed AI-assisted proofreading tools as helpful sources of support for academic writing rather than replacements for their own work. The findings highlight the importance of evaluating AI-generated feedback critically while maintaining students' responsibility for their ideas and final writing.

Keywords: AI-assisted proofreading; Academic writing; MA students; ChatGPT; Grammarly.

استكشاف كيفية استخدام طلاب الماجستير لأدوات التدقيق اللغوي المدعومة بالذكاء الاصطناعي في الكتابة الأكاديمية: الممارسات والتحديات والأثر المُدرَك

مسرة عبدالله الجخاوي[1]

[1] قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية الآداب والتربية، جامعة صبراتة، صبراتة، ليبيا، Masaraabd93@gmail.com

الملخص:

أدى الاستخدام المتزايد للذكاء الاصطناعي إلى توفير أدوات جديدة للطلاب قد تسهم في دعم الكتابة الأكاديمية. ويمكن لأدوات مثل ChatGPT وGrammarly وQuillBot تقديم تغذية راجعة حول القواعد والمفردات وبنية الجمل والوضوح. ومع ذلك، أثار استخدامها أيضًا مخاوف تتعلق بعدم دقة التغذية الراجعة، والاعتماد المفرط عليها، والحاجة إلى أن يقيّم الطلاب الاقتراحات التي يولدها الذكاء الاصطناعي بعناية. استكشفت هذه الدراسة كيفية استخدام طلاب الماجستير من جامعات مختلفة في ليبيا لأدوات التدقيق اللغوي المدعومة بالذكاء الاصطناعي في الكتابة الأكاديمية، والتحديات التي يواجهونها، وتصوراتهم حول الأثر المُدرَك لهذه الأدوات في كتاباتهم. واعتمدت الدراسة منهجًا نوعيًا استكشافيًا، وجُمعت البيانات من خلال مقابلات شبه منظمة مع عشرة من طلاب الماجستير، اختيروا باستخدام العينة القصدية. وأظهرت النتائج أن المشاركين استخدموا أدوات التدقيق اللغوي المدعومة بالذكاء الاصطناعي خلال مراحل مختلفة من الكتابة، بما في ذلك صياغة المسودة والمراجعة والتدقيق اللغوي النهائي. وأفادوا بفوائد شملت تحديد الأخطاء اللغوية، وتطوير المفردات، وتحسين بنية الجمل والوضوح، وتوفير الوقت، وزيادة الثقة. ومع ذلك، أبلغ المشاركون أيضًا عن تحديات شملت الاقتراحات غير المناسبة من الذكاء الاصطناعي، وصعوبات استخدام الأوامر، واحتمال الاعتماد المفرط، والمخاوف المتعلقة بالنزاهة الأكاديمية، وقضايا الخصوصية، ومحدودية الوصول إلى بعض الخصائص. وبوجه عام، نظر المشاركون إلى

أدوات التدقيق اللغوي المدعومة بالذكاء الاصطناعي بوصفها مصادر مفيدة لدعم الكتابة الأكاديمية، وليس بدائل عن عملهم الخاص. وتبرز النتائج أهمية التقييم النقدي للتغذية الراجعة التي يولدها الذكاء الاصطناعي، مع الحفاظ على مسؤولية الطلاب عن أفكارهم وكتاباتهم النهائية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التدقيق اللغوي المدعوم بالذكاء الاصطناعي، الكتابة الأكاديمية، طلاب الماجستير، ChatGPT، Grammarly

Disclosure of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools: The author declares the use of ChatGPT (GPT-5.6 Luna) during the language editing stage, with a limited role in identifying and correcting language-related issues, including grammar, wording, sentence structure, and clarity. The author bears full responsibility for the scientific integrity and accuracy of the generated outputs. No artificial intelligence tool was used to generate the research data or findings.

1. Introduction

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has introduced new tools that are increasingly used to support academic writing in higher education. AI-assisted writing and proofreading tools, such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and QuillBot, can provide immediate feedback on grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and clarity, allowing students to review and revise their written work. Academic writing is particularly important in postgraduate education, where students are expected to communicate their ideas clearly and accurately while following appropriate academic conventions. Written corrective feedback has long been recognized as an important component of writing development because it can help learners identify and correct language errors (Bitchener and Ferris, 2012).

Recent research has generally reported positive perceptions of AI-assisted writing tools and their potential to support writing accuracy, efficiency, and learning. Kohnke (2024), for example, found that EAP students perceived generative AI tools as providing more comprehensive and contextualized feedback than traditional grammar-checking tools, although concerns about overreliance, data privacy, and access to advanced features were also identified. Similarly, Sarıca and Gençoğlu (2025) reported that AI-assisted writing tools may support writing accuracy, efficiency, and personalized learning, while also raising concerns about academic integrity and excessive reliance. Research in the Libyan context has also reported positive experiences with AI-assisted writing tools. Elsherif (2025), for instance, found that Libyan EFL student-teachers generally perceived Grammarly positively and reported benefits related to grammar, vocabulary, and writing quality, while also identifying concerns about overreliance, technical difficulties, and the continuing need for teacher feedback.

Despite the growing body of research on AI-assisted writing tools, limited attention appears to have been given to how MA students from different universities in Libya actually use AI-assisted proofreading tools in their academic writing. In particular, students' practices, the challenges they encounter, and their perceptions of the impact of these tools on their academic writing remain insufficiently explored. Therefore, the present study explores how MA students use AI-assisted proofreading tools for academic writing, with particular attention to their practices, the challenges they face, and their perceived impact on academic writing.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The increasing availability of AI-assisted proofreading tools, such as ChatGPT and Grammarly, has provided students with support for revising and improving their academic writing. These tools can help identify language errors, improve clarity, and provide immediate feedback. However, their use does not necessarily guarantee effective learning or continued improvement. Kohnke (2024), for example, found that EAP students perceived generative AI tools as useful for providing detailed explanations and contextualized feedback, while also expressing concerns about overreliance, data privacy, and unequal access to advanced features. These concerns suggest that the use of AI-assisted tools requires further investigation.

Moreover, previous research has often focused on the effectiveness or general perceptions of AI writing tools, with less attention given to how MA students actually use them in their academic writing. In particular, students' practices, the challenges they encounter, and their perceptions of the impact of these tools remain insufficiently explored. Accordingly, the present study explores how MA students from different universities in Libya use AI-

assisted proofreading tools in academic writing, the challenges they face, and their perceived impact on their writing. It also provides context-specific insights into how these tools may be used as supportive resources rather than substitutes for students' own writing and learning.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To explore how MA students use AI-assisted proofreading tools for academic writing.
2. To explore the challenges MA students face and their perceptions of the impact of AI-assisted proofreading tools on their academic writing.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How do MA students use AI-assisted proofreading tools for academic writing?
2. What challenges do MA students face, and how do they perceive the impact of AI-assisted proofreading tools on their academic writing?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study provides insights into how MA students from different universities in Libya use AI-assisted proofreading tools in their academic writing. It focuses on students' experiences with tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and QuillBot and examines how these tools are used for proofreading, identifying language errors, revising sentences, and improving clarity.

The study is also significant because it highlights both the potential benefits and challenges of AI-assisted proofreading. The findings may help students understand the importance of critically evaluating AI-generated suggestions rather than accepting them automatically. In addition, the findings may provide useful insights for teachers and higher education institutions regarding the need for guidance on the appropriate and responsible use of AI-assisted writing technologies.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on MA students from different universities in Libya and examines their use of AI-assisted proofreading tools in academic writing. It specifically explores students' experiences with tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and QuillBot, including their use for grammar checking, sentence revision, vocabulary improvement, and clarity. The study also examines the challenges students experience and their perceptions of the impact of these tools on their academic writing.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Approach and Design

The present study adopted a qualitative exploratory research design to examine how MA students use AI-assisted proofreading tools in academic writing, the challenges they encounter, and their perceptions of the impact of these tools on their writing. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to explore participants' experiences, practices, and perspectives rather than measure relationships between variables or objectively assess improvements in writing. Qualitative research focuses on understanding the meanings individuals or groups attribute to their experiences (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Similarly, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) note that qualitative inquiry is appropriate for investigating complex educational phenomena in which participants' experiences and perspectives are central. The exploratory design was considered suitable because the use of AI-assisted proofreading tools in academic writing is a developing area in the Libyan higher education context (Stebbins, 2001).

2.2 Research Setting

The study was situated within the Libyan higher education context and included MA students from different universities and academic institutions across Libya rather than from a single university. This setting was selected to capture participants' experiences of using AI-assisted proofreading tools across different university contexts. The study focused on English language-related postgraduate programmes, where students are regularly required to produce academic writing.

2.3 Participants and Sampling

The participants consisted of 10 MA students from seven Libyan universities and academic institutions: Sabratha University, University of Tripoli, Misurata University, Janzour Academy, the Libyan Academy for Postgraduate Studies – Gharyan Branch, Elmergib University, and the University of Benghazi. The participants were enrolled in English language-related postgraduate programmes and had academic backgrounds in Translation, Applied Linguistics, and TESOL. They included both male and female students and represented different age groups.

A key inclusion criterion was direct experience of using at least one AI-assisted proofreading tool for academic writing during their MA studies. Participants were therefore selected not simply because they were MA students, but because they had relevant first-hand experience of the phenomenon under investigation. Participants who had no previous experience using AI-assisted proofreading tools for academic writing were excluded.

Purposive sampling was employed because the study required participants who could provide information-rich accounts of their practices, challenges, and perceptions of AI-assisted proofreading tools. As Patton (2015) explains, purposive sampling involves selecting information-rich cases that can provide relevant and detailed insights into a research topic. Similarly, Creswell and Poth (2018) emphasize the importance of selecting qualitative participants according to their ability to provide meaningful information about the phenomenon being investigated.

Participants were recruited online through Facebook pages and groups used by university and postgraduate students. An online announcement invited eligible MA students to participate. Interested students were asked to confirm that they were enrolled in an English language-related MA programme at a Libyan university or academic institution and had experience using AI-assisted proofreading tools during their MA studies.

2.4 Data Collection Tool and Procedure

Semi-structured interviews were used as the sole data collection tool. An interview protocol consisting of six main open-ended questions was developed to explore participants' experiences and practices in using AI-assisted proofreading tools during their MA studies. The questions addressed the types of tools used, the stages of academic writing in which the tools were used, the purposes for which they were used, perceived benefits, challenges encountered, and participants' perceptions of the role and impact of these tools on academic writing.

The interviews were conducted online through Messenger during August 2026. The interview questions were delivered to participants in written form, one question at a time, and participants responded to each question in writing. Each interview took approximately 20–30 minutes to complete. The interviews were conducted entirely in English, and no audio or video recordings were used. The written responses were retained in their original form, and no translation was required for the interview data or the quotations presented in the Findings section.

The semi-structured format ensured consistency by using the same six main questions with all participants while allowing participants to describe their experiences and views in their own words. The written online format also enabled the researcher to obtain participants' responses directly through Messenger (Kallio et al., 2016; Cohen et al., 2018).

2.5 AI-Assisted Tools

The study focused on AI-assisted proofreading and writing tools that participants reported using during their MA studies. These included ChatGPT, Grammarly, and QuillBot. Participants reported using these tools for purposes including grammar checking, vocabulary improvement, sentence revision, paraphrasing, and improving clarity. The study examined participants' reported experiences and practices rather than testing the technical performance of the tools or objectively measuring their effects on writing quality.

2.6 Data Analysis

The interview responses were analyzed using thematic analysis following the six phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, the researcher organized the responses according to the six interview questions and repeatedly read the data to become familiar with the participants' responses. Second, initial codes were generated by identifying meaningful and recurring ideas. These included references to grammar checking, vocabulary

improvement, sentence revision, clarity, incorrect suggestions, difficulties with prompts, overdependence, academic integrity, privacy, and limited access to features.

Third, related codes were compared and grouped into broader categories. For example, grammar checking and vocabulary improvement were grouped under language improvement, while sentence revision and clarity were grouped under writing enhancement. Incorrect suggestions were grouped under AI limitations, whereas overdependence, academic integrity, and privacy were grouped under ethical concerns.

Fourth, the categories were reviewed across participants' responses and developed into broader themes. Four main themes were identified: Students' Practices, Perceived Benefits, Challenges and Concerns, and the Supportive Role of AI-Assisted Proofreading Tools. Fifth, the themes were reviewed against the original participant responses to ensure that they accurately represented the data and that similarities and differences across participants were considered. Finally, the themes were clearly defined and named, and representative quotations were selected to support the findings.

Participants were identified using codes from Student A to Student J to maintain confidentiality. Thus, the analysis moved systematically from the participants' responses to initial codes, related categories, and final themes, providing a clear link between the original data and the findings.

2.7 Limitations of the Study

The study has several limitations. First, it included only 10 MA students from seven Libyan universities and academic institutions; therefore, the findings reflect the experiences and views of the participants and cannot be generalized to all MA students in Libya. Second, semi-structured interviews were the sole data collection tool, meaning that the findings were based on participants' reported experiences and may not fully represent their actual use of AI-assisted proofreading tools. Finally, the study focused specifically on AI-assisted proofreading tools in academic writing and did not examine the use of AI in other areas of language learning or education. Despite these limitations, the study provides context-specific insights into MA students' practices, challenges, and perceptions of AI-assisted proofreading tools in academic writing.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were addressed throughout the research process. Before the interviews, all participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their role in the research. Participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before data collection. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any stage without negative consequences.

To protect participants' privacy and confidentiality, no real names or identifying information were included in the study. Instead, participants were assigned codes from Student A to Student J, which were used throughout the presentation and discussion of the findings. All responses were treated confidentially and used solely for research purposes. These procedures were followed to ensure that the study respected participants' rights and was conducted in an ethical and responsible manner (Cohen et al., 2018).

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study based on the analysis of the semi-structured interviews. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach. The analysis resulted in four main themes addressing the research questions and reflecting participants' reported experiences of using AI-assisted proofreading tools in academic writing. Each theme is supported by direct quotations from the participants. Participant codes from Student A to Student J are used to maintain confidentiality.

3.1 Students' Practices in Using AI-Assisted Proofreading Tools

The findings showed that MA students used AI-assisted proofreading tools in different ways throughout their academic writing. Several participants reported using more than one tool, particularly ChatGPT, Grammarly, and QuillBot, for checking grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, clarity, and academic language. Student A explained that Grammarly was mainly used to check "grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure," while ChatGPT was used to improve "the clarity of my ideas and rephrase some academic sentences." Similarly,

Student B reported using AI tools to check "grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and clarity." Student C also used these tools to "refine academic tone, check grammar, and enhance vocabulary."

The findings also showed that participants used AI-assisted tools at different stages of the writing process. Some participants mainly used the tools during final proofreading, while others used them during drafting and revision. Student A stated, "I usually use AI-assisted tools for final proofreading to check for any mistakes and make sure that the final draft is accurate." In contrast, Student B reported using the tools at different stages, explaining that after writing the initial draft, the tools were used during revision to identify "grammar and vocabulary problems and improve the clarity of my sentences," followed by final proofreading before submission. Student C similarly reported using the tools "during drafting for brainstorming, revising for structural cohesion and clarity, and final proofreading for punctuation and mechanical errors."

Some participants described using AI tools as part of a process in which they remained involved in reviewing and revising their own writing. Student H explained that the tools were used during drafting, revision, and final proofreading, but emphasized that they reviewed the suggestions and decided "which ones are appropriate for my intended meaning and academic context." Student I also described using ChatGPT and QuillBot throughout the research and writing process, particularly for proofreading, paraphrasing, grammar checking, and improving clarity. Student J reported using AI-assisted tools to "identify grammatical and linguistic errors, improve sentence structure, clarify unclear expressions, and make some parts of my writing more academically appropriate."

Overall, participants reported using AI-assisted proofreading tools for a range of writing-related purposes and at different stages of the academic writing process, from drafting and revision to final proofreading.

3.2 Perceived Benefits of AI-Assisted Proofreading Tools

The findings showed that participants reported several benefits from using AI-assisted proofreading tools in their academic writing. These included identifying grammatical and language errors, improving vocabulary and sentence structure, increasing clarity, and saving time during the writing and proofreading process. Student A stated that AI tools "identified my mistakes and offered alternative academic words," while Student E reported that the tools helped recognize "grammatical mistakes in academic writing style" and increased awareness of writing more formally.

Several participants also reported improvements in the clarity, organization, and academic quality of their writing. Student D explained that AI helped make the writing "more organized" and supported "smooth connection with the following statement." Student I reported learning "new academic vocabulary, transition signals, and different ways of connecting ideas and paragraphs more effectively." Student C also identified "improved clarity" and exposure to "advanced academic vocabulary" as important benefits.

Another benefit reported by participants was saving time during the writing and proofreading process. Student G stated that using AI-assisted tools "brought convenience in time and cost," while Student H explained that the tools "save time during the proofreading process, especially when working on long academic texts." Student C similarly reported a "faster editing turnaround."

Participants also reported benefits related to confidence and awareness of their writing. Student B stated that the tools helped increase confidence because "I feel more comfortable when I know that I can check my writing." Student F reported that the tools gave them "confidence of my writing," while Student G explained that receiving feedback gave them "stronger confidence while presenting or publishing." Student H also reported that the tools increased awareness of grammatical and linguistic errors and helped with learning from feedback.

3.3 Challenges and Concerns in Using AI-Assisted Proofreading Tools

The findings showed that participants experienced several challenges when using AI-assisted proofreading tools for academic writing. Student A reported difficulty in using appropriate prompts, explaining that at the beginning, "I didn't know how I must use it so it give me broad answer that is not close with what I want." Student B also reported that AI suggestions were "not always appropriate for the context" and that the tool sometimes "changes the meaning of what I want to say or gives a suggestion that sounds unnatural."

Concerns about dependence on AI-assisted tools were also reported. Student B stated that there was a concern about "becoming too dependent on AI and losing the ability to correct my own mistakes." Similarly, Student D explained that they could not completely trust AI but still needed to use it, describing this as "giving it the authority on my writing (codependency)." Student H also expressed concern about "becoming too dependent on these tools instead of developing my own proofreading and editing skills."

Some participants raised concerns about academic integrity and the appropriate use of AI in academic writing. Student B stated, "Academic integrity is another concern," while Student G explained that "some universities do not accommodate using AI." Student H also mentioned concerns about "academic integrity, privacy, and the possibility of relying on AI-generated language without critically evaluating it."

Participants also identified limitations related to access and the ability of AI tools to provide suitable feedback. Student I reported that "I could not always access all the features of these AI tools for free," as some features required a paid subscription. Student C mentioned the "risk of losing personal writing voice" and the "misinterpretation of domain-specific terminology." Student F emphasized that AI "doesn't work as the human being" and that users "can't rely on it."

3.4 The Supportive Role of AI-Assisted Proofreading Tools

The findings showed that participants generally described AI-assisted proofreading tools as supportive resources rather than replacements for students' own writing and thinking. Student A stated that these tools are "very beneficial for improving academic writing and identifying weaknesses" and that they "make students more independent." Student B similarly stated that AI-assisted proofreading tools "should be used as supportive tools, not as replacements for students."

Several participants emphasized the importance of students maintaining responsibility for their own ideas and writing. Student C described the appropriate role of AI as "a supportive, collaborative assistant for language polishing" while ensuring that "the student retains full ownership of critical thinking and content." Student G also stated that AI should be used "as a surface level editor, a final step before publication but not for it to be used as a primary writer rather than the researcher."

Participants also reported concerns about excessive reliance on AI tools. Student E reported that QuillBot "supports, motivates, and encourages" effective academic writing practices, but also stated that extensive reliance may lead students to "indirectly imitate the AI-assisted tools' writing style." Student I similarly stated that greater reliance on ChatGPT and QuillBot "may reduce our own involvement in the learning and writing process" and may make students "less engaged in thinking critically."

Student H emphasized that AI-assisted proofreading tools should have "a supportive rather than a substitutive role" and that students should remain responsible for "their ideas, arguments, academic voice, and final text." Student J expressed a similar view, stating that AI-assisted proofreading tools should have "a supportive rather than a substitutive role" and that students should remain responsible for their own academic writing.

The main codes, categories, themes, and participant references identified through the thematic analysis are summarized in Table (1).

Table (1): Summary of themes, categories, and participant references

Initial Codes	Categories	Final Themes	Participant References
Grammar checking; vocabulary improvement; sentence revision	Language and writing practices	Students' Practices	Students A, B, C, H, I, J
Error identification; clarity; organization; time saving; confidence	Writing improvement and learning benefits	Perceived Benefits	Students A, B,C,D,E, F,G,H, I
Incorrect suggestions; prompt difficulties; overreliance; privacy; academic integrity; limited access	AI limitations and concerns	Challenges and Concerns	Students A, B, C,D,F,G, H, I
Critical evaluation; student responsibility; academic voice; supportive use	Supportive and responsible use	Supportive Role of AI-Assisted Proofreading Tools	Students A, B, C, E, G, H, I, J

Table (1) summarizes the progression from the initial codes to the broader categories and final themes and identifies the participants whose responses provided evidence for each theme.

3.5 Summary of the Findings

Overall, the findings showed that participants used AI-assisted proofreading tools for different purposes and at different stages of academic writing. They reported benefits related to grammar, vocabulary, clarity, organization, time saving, and confidence. At the same time, participants reported challenges including inappropriate suggestions, difficulties in using prompts, overreliance, academic integrity concerns, limited access to some features, privacy concerns, and the possible loss of personal writing voice. The findings also showed that participants described AI-assisted proofreading tools primarily as supportive resources and emphasized the importance of retaining responsibility for their own ideas, decisions, academic voice, and final writing.

3.6 Discussion

This section discusses the findings of the study in relation to previous research on the use of AI-assisted proofreading tools in academic writing. It focuses on the participants' practices, the perceived benefits and challenges of using these tools, and their role as supportive resources in academic writing.

3.6.1 Students' Practices in Using AI-Assisted Proofreading Tools

The findings showed that MA students used ChatGPT, Grammarly, and QuillBot for different purposes in their academic writing. Grammarly was mainly used to check grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure, while ChatGPT was used to improve clarity, rephrase sentences, and develop academic expressions. This may be because the tools provide different types of support. Grammarly mainly gives direct feedback on language, while ChatGPT allows users to give prompts and ask for different kinds of help, such as rephrasing sentences, improving academic style, or explaining unclear expressions. Therefore, participants seemed to choose the tool according to the type of support they needed. This finding is similar to Kohnke (2024), who found that students viewed GenAI tools as providing more detailed and contextualized feedback. It also agrees with Alashab (2026), who found that Grammarly supported grammatical accuracy, while ChatGPT was used for paraphrasing and academic style development.

The findings also showed that participants used AI-assisted proofreading tools at different stages of the writing process, including drafting, revision, and final proofreading. Some participants mainly used the tools at the final proofreading stage, while others used them during drafting and revision. This suggests that participants did not use the tools in the same way, but adapted their use according to their writing needs and the stage of writing. This finding is generally consistent with Tran (2025), who found that AI-generated feedback encouraged students to revise their writing, particularly in relation to surface-level issues.

The findings further showed that participants mainly used AI-assisted proofreading tools for language-related revision rather than for making major decisions about the content or overall argument of their academic writing. Participants reported using the tools to check grammar, punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, sentence structure, and clarity. This is consistent with Tran (2025), who found that AI feedback was mainly useful for surface-level writing issues, while teacher feedback was more helpful for higher-order concerns such as content development and organization. Similarly, Khany and Barzan (2025) found improvements in linguistic accuracy, coherence, and syntactic complexity among learners using Grammarly, while also emphasizing the importance of human guidance. In the present study, the participants' use of AI for grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and clarity also shows that the tools were mainly used for language-focused revision.

3.6.2 Perceived Benefits of AI-Assisted Proofreading Tools

The findings showed that participants perceived several benefits from using AI-assisted proofreading tools. These included identifying language errors, improving vocabulary and sentence structure, increasing clarity and organization, saving time, and increasing confidence. These findings are generally similar to previous research on the benefits of AI-assisted writing tools.

For example, Kohnke (2024) found that students viewed GenAI tools as useful for providing detailed and contextualized feedback. Similarly, Elsherif (2025) found that Libyan EFL student-teachers generally had

positive views of Grammarly and reported benefits in identifying grammatical, spelling, and mechanical errors, improving vocabulary, and enhancing writing quality. Abd El Rasoul, Refky and Aboelwafa (Abd El Rasoul et al., 2024) also found that Grammarly encouraged self-correction and revision. The present findings are similar, as participants reported using AI-assisted tools to identify errors, improve vocabulary, revise sentences, and increase clarity.

Participants also reported that AI-assisted proofreading tools helped save time during proofreading and revision. Student H, for example, stated that the tools "save time during the proofreading process, especially when working on long academic texts," while Student C referred to a "faster editing turnaround." This suggests that the quick feedback provided by AI tools made some parts of the proofreading process more convenient for the participants. This finding is also consistent with Sarıca and Gençoğlu (2025), who identified improved writing efficiency as one of the benefits reported in research on AI-assisted writing tools.

Another benefit reported by participants was increased confidence and awareness of language use. Participants reported feeling more comfortable when they could check their writing and mentioned learning new vocabulary, transition signals, and ways of connecting ideas. This suggests that participants viewed the tools not only as correction tools but also as sources of feedback that could support their learning. A similar finding was reported by Ghwela, Al-ferjani and Kawan (Ghwela et al., 2025), whose participants reported benefits related to vocabulary, confidence, and learner autonomy when using ChatGPT. However, since the present study was based on participants' reported experiences, these findings should be understood as perceived benefits rather than objectively measured improvements in writing performance.

3.6.3 Challenges and Concerns in Using AI-Assisted Proofreading Tools

Although participants reported several benefits, they also identified a number of challenges and concerns. These included difficulties in using appropriate prompts, receiving suggestions that did not fit the context, changes in meaning, overreliance, academic integrity concerns, privacy concerns, limited access to some features, and possible loss of personal writing voice. Similar concerns have also been reported in previous research.

The difficulty of obtaining appropriate suggestions was clear in some participants' responses. Student A reported difficulties in developing suitable prompts, while Student B stated that AI suggestions were not always appropriate for the intended context and could sometimes change the meaning of the original text. This shows that students need to check and evaluate AI-generated suggestions rather than accepting them without consideration. A similar issue was reported by Alghamdi and Abusa'Aleek (2025), who found that some postgraduate students received incorrect suggestions from automated writing evaluation tools. Elsherif (2025) also reported the continuing need for teacher feedback despite the benefits of Grammarly.

Overreliance was another important concern. Participants were concerned that depending too much on AI-assisted proofreading tools might reduce their ability to identify and correct their own errors. Student H, for example, expressed concern about "becoming too dependent on these tools instead of developing my own proofreading and editing skills." This is similar to Sarıca and Gençoğlu (2025), who reported concerns about overreliance on AI-assisted writing tools. Elsherif (2025) also identified overreliance as one of the concerns reported by Libyan EFL student-teachers. Therefore, the present findings show that participants were aware of the need to balance the support provided by AI tools with their own proofreading and writing skills.

Academic integrity and privacy were also mentioned by some participants. They expressed uncertainty about the appropriate use of AI in academic writing and referred to differences in how universities accept the use of AI-assisted writing. These concerns are similar to those reported by Sarıca and Gençoğlu (2025), who identified plagiarism and ethical issues, and by Kohnke (2024), who reported concerns about privacy and overreliance. Nawir et al. (2025) also identified privacy, ethical issues, and reliability as concerns related to AI use in English language learning. However, the participants' responses suggest that these concerns did not stop them from using AI tools but affected how they understood and managed their use.

The findings also showed concerns about limited access to some features and the possible loss of personal writing voice. Student I reported that some features were not always available without payment, while Student C mentioned the "risk of losing personal writing voice" and the "misinterpretation of domain-specific terminology." These findings show that participants did not consider AI-assisted proofreading tools to be

completely reliable or equally accessible. The concern about access is also similar to Elsherif (2025), who identified subscription costs as one of the challenges related to Grammarly.

3.6.4 The Supportive Role of AI-Assisted Proofreading Tools

One important finding of the study was that participants generally viewed AI-assisted proofreading tools as supportive resources rather than replacements for their own writing and thinking. This was particularly clear in their emphasis on reviewing AI-generated suggestions and keeping responsibility for their ideas, arguments, academic voice, and final text.

Student C described AI as "a supportive, collaborative assistant for language polishing" and emphasized that students should keep ownership of their critical thinking and content. Similarly, Student H stated that students should remain responsible for "their ideas, arguments, academic voice, and final text." These responses show that participants distinguished between using AI to support language-related aspects of writing and allowing AI to produce their academic work.

This finding is consistent with Alashab (2026), who emphasized that AI tools should remain complementary to human guidance. It also agrees with Khany and Barzan (2025), who emphasized the continuing importance of human guidance for higher-order writing skills. Tran (2025) similarly found that teacher feedback was more useful for higher-order concerns such as content development and organization, while AI feedback supported surface-level revision. These findings are similar to the present study, where participants mainly described AI as a tool for language support while maintaining responsibility for their own academic writing.

This finding is also connected to the participants' concerns about overreliance. Student E noted that extensive reliance on AI could lead students to imitate AI-assisted writing styles, while Student I reported that greater reliance might reduce students' involvement in the learning and writing process. Thus, participants recognized both the usefulness of AI-assisted proofreading tools and the importance of remaining actively involved in their own writing. This balance between usefulness and dependence can also be seen in previous research, particularly Elsherif (2025) and Sarıca and Gençoğlu (2025).

Overall, the findings are generally in line with previous research showing that AI-assisted writing tools can provide useful language support but also raise concerns about reliability, overreliance, academic integrity, and the importance of human judgment (Elsherif, 2025; Kohnke, 2024; Sarıca and Deneme Gençoğlu, 2025). In the present study, participants reported using the tools as part of their existing writing processes rather than as complete replacements for their own writing. Their emphasis on reviewing AI suggestions and taking responsibility for the final text also shows that they continued to make their own decisions about the use of AI-generated feedback.

However, the findings should be interpreted with caution. The study involved a relatively small sample of 10 MA students and relied on participants' self-reported experiences from semi-structured interviews. Therefore, the findings reflect participants' reported views rather than objectively measured changes in writing performance. The study provides context-specific insights into how MA students experienced and used AI-assisted proofreading tools, rather than evidence that these tools objectively improved their academic writing.

4. Conclusion

This study explored how master's students used AI-assisted proofreading tools in their academic writing. The findings showed that students used tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and QuillBot for various writing purposes, including checking grammar, improving vocabulary, revising sentences, and increasing clarity. The tools were used at different stages of the writing process, particularly during drafting, revision, and final proofreading.

The findings also indicated that students reported several benefits from using these tools, including improved language accuracy, development of academic vocabulary, time saving, and increased confidence. However, participants also reported challenges, including unsuitable AI-generated suggestions, difficulties in writing effective prompts, overreliance on AI, concerns about academic integrity, and limited access to some features.

Overall, the findings suggest that AI-assisted proofreading tools can provide useful support for master's students' academic writing when their suggestions are critically evaluated. The findings further suggest that these tools should be used as supportive resources rather than substitutes for students' own ideas, effort, and academic

judgement. Based on these findings, the study recommends providing students with appropriate guidance on the critical, ethical, and responsible use of AI-assisted proofreading tools.

4.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed. First, master's students should use AI-assisted proofreading tools as a form of support during writing and revision rather than relying on them completely. They should critically review AI-generated suggestions and make the final decisions about their own writing.

Second, universities may provide students with clear guidance on the appropriate and ethical use of AI-assisted writing tools. Such guidance could help students understand issues related to academic integrity, privacy, and excessive reliance on AI.

Finally, writing instructors may introduce students to effective ways of using AI-assisted proofreading tools. This may include showing students how to write appropriate prompts, evaluate AI-generated feedback, and learn from corrections. Such guidance may help students use these tools more critically while continuing to develop their own academic writing skills.

Ethical Approval: Ethical principles relevant to research involving human participants were followed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from all participants, and confidentiality and anonymity were maintained. No formal institutional ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection.

Scientific Integrity: The researcher declares the originality of the work, the absence of plagiarism, and transparency in the reporting and presentation of the findings.

Conflict of Interest: The researcher declares no conflict of interest.

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Data Availability: The interview data are not publicly available because they contain participants' responses and are subject to confidentiality and privacy considerations. Data may be made available upon reasonable request where appropriate and subject to the protection of participants' confidentiality

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