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EVALUATING THE ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF STUDENTS' USE OF AI TOOLS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING: SELECTED CASE STUDIES FROM SOUTHEAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

The education sector is also benefiting greatly from the transformative and innovative opportunities offered by artificial intelligence (AI) to the contemporary society. This study evaluates Nigerian tertiary students' use of AI tools for language learning. It also explores the ethical implications of their use of AI tools. The study is grounded in Technology Acceptance Model, which describes and predicts user acceptance of innovative technology, based perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Data are drawn from 270 questionnaire respondents across three tertiary institutions in Southeast Nigeria. The data are analyzed quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistics, which include simple percentage, tables, Likert five-scale coding, analytic interpretation, and thematic analysis. The results show that students of Nigerian tertiary institutions use AI tools for academic purposes, including language learning. Their misuse of the tools for plagiarism, malpractice, misinformation, stealing of intellectual, etc. presents negative ethical

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implications. The negative ethical implications outweigh the positive ones. It is also found that the students mostly use ChatGPT and Grammarly, followed by Google Translate, Google Gemini and Microsoft Copilot for language learning and other academic purposes. The study concludes that when used properly, legitimately and formally, there are no ethical implications of using AI tools for language learning and other academic purposes. Among others, the study recommends the enactment of strong AI use policies, and consistent classroom exposure of students to AI education, media literacy, and critical literacy.

Introduction

Technological and scientific advancements have brought to place artificial intelligence (AI), which exerts great impact on various endeavors. AI and other new technologies are innovative feats of contemporary times, which are reputed for effective operations, remarkable performance and transformations across all human endeavors (Awofadeju et al., 2024; Thuraka et al., 2024). AI refers to computer systems that use hardware, algorithms, and data to create 'intelligence' with which they do things as human beings do, including making decisions, discovering patterns, and performing some actions or tasks. As technology continues to evolve, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education is imperative. The impact is evident in the education sector, including language learning and teaching. Studies confirm that AI has been transforming the education sector. Such studies include Anozie-Ibebunjo et al. (2025), Obidiebube et al. (2025), Okpeseyi et al. (2024), Oyeyemi et al. (2024), UNESCO (2020), Vincent-Lancrin and van der Vlies (2020), and Bellei (2019). In the AI era, leveraging AI tools for language learning can make it (more) effective. Language, which plays communicative and diverse functions, presents different techniques to all spheres (Robert, 2022; Danjuma et al., 2023).

With AI tools, advanced and collaborative learning is possible and made easy and seamless (Ethikrat, 2023; Goldberg et al., 2021). AI tools are generally problem-solving, innovative, multitasking, and impactful. When used rightly, AI has pedagogic relevance to learners, teachers, and school administrators alike. The tools empower students to engage with a range of information, interpret and produce language in diverse formats, and improve their communication skills. AI provides supports to teachers, personal learning opportunities for learners, optimized and automated teaching and learning for teachers and learners alike, and resists cyberattacks on schools' data and critical digital resources (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). AI technologies stimulate teaching and learning and human rationality (Kamble & Gaikwad, 2024). When leveraged for teaching and learning the

English language, optimization, flexibility, feedback, instantaneousness and efficiency are achieved at a significant extent (Anozie-Ibebunjo et al., 2025).

As Hutson (2023) emphatically observes, there are increasing concerns about AI integration into the educational systems and about how AI is being used for educational purposes. Nwode et al. (2024) emphasize that breaching ethical governance of AI usage and practices allows for most of the ethical concerns. Ethical concerns about AI use for academic purposes include using ChatGPT and Meta AI to generate assignments, projects, lecture notes, class work and other writing exercises. AI is also used for cheating during tests and examinations. Also, there are concerns about invasion of individual's privacy, human wellbeing, social justice, and protection of rights to intellectual property (Hermansyah et al., 2023; Akgun & Greenhow, 2021; Uche et al., 2016). The ethical concerns are why Adams et al. (2022) observe that educators have a new obligation to re-evaluate their responsibilities towards ethical practice, because of the integration of AI into educational settings as algorithmic biases engender and perpetuate inequities which need to be critically addressed. The leveraging of AI tools for language learning presents both prospects and challenges. To that end, this study seeks to evaluate tertiary students' use of AI tools, with a view to determining the ethical implications of their use of the tools.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) for theoretical backing, propounded by Davis (1989). TAM describes and predicts user acceptance of innovative technology (Davis, 1989). It has two constructs, as what determine the acceptance of any new technology. These are perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). These two determine individuals' acceptance and use of a technology. PU concerns the prospective users' conception or belief that accepting and using a given technology would be beneficial, as it adds more value or effectiveness to the undertakings it is deployed for. The PEOU refers to how easy it is to use a technology. Upon perceiving or realizing how easy it is to use a technology, individuals become poised to accepting it. Of course, when a technology or an innovation is easy to use, many people are bound to accept and use it. No doubt, students accept and use AI widely across the globe, because it is very useful and easy to use.

Being easy to use does not preclude the technical difficulties and the associated issues of using AI. AI is not stressful to use. Thus, it is easy to use. It is also easy to learn how to use it. It follows that people get attracted to a technology, because of its usefulness and easiness of use. With these two attributes, many individuals approve of it, advocate for its use, and use it at a significant extent (Umrani & Ghadially, 2008). That is how AI has got accepted, popular, and used widely. Students have also accepted AI and thereby use it variously, including using it for language learning. How they use AI raises ethical

questions, which is why this study evaluates students' use of AI tools for language learning and the ethical implications of their use of the tools. Beyond acceptance based on usefulness and easiness of use, the applicability of an accepted technology is also important. That is why TAM has been modified to incorporate context of use, attitude towards use, and a user's task performance (Davis et al., 1989; Davis, 1989).

Users' attitude and behavioral intention to use are usually influenced by PU and PEOU. These are critical predictors of technology acceptance and use. Also, considering context and other factors, social influence and facilitating conditions have been incorporated into TAM. The predictive power of TAM is enhanced by social influence and facilitating conditions. There is no doubt that different factors come to play before a technology or an innovation is accepted, adopted and used. Since it is used in social settings, social influence and facilitating conditions are bound to be existent. The facilitating conditions can be considered the motivations, such as the usefulness and easiness of use. They are the enablers of the acceptance, adoption and use, as in the case of AI acceptance, adoption and use for language learning among learners and teachers. Therefore, TAM is apt for this study.

Related Studies

The study by Anozie-Ibebunjo et al. (2025) relates to the current one. It observes that the misuse of AI by students of tertiary institutions is raising serious concerns among teachers, school administrators and other stakeholders in the education sector. The study confirms that the "concerns about students' misuse of AI are yet to gain deserving scholarly exploration" (p. 249). It explores the place of language and critical literacy in the mitigation of students' unethical use of AI, and shows how language and critical literacy can be deployed to mitigate unethical use of AI by students of tertiary students. The study used interpretive devices, critical skills and content and thematic analyses for its analysis. The analysis reveals that through their techniques and skills, language and critical literacy can aptly serve as a viable mechanism for mitigating tertiary students' unethical use of AI for academic purposes. The work concludes that through strategic, pragmatic and expertise use of language and the exposure of students to critical literacy in the course AI education, students become poised to using AI ethically rather than unethically. Teachers, school administrators and other stakeholders are charged to deploy language and critical literacy for classroom-based re/orientation of students on best practices in using AI for academic purposes. The study captures the thematic concerns of the present study to a significant extent.

Another related study is that of Adole (2025), which partly captures the thematic concerns of the present study. It emphasizes that the application of AI in literacy education in Nigeria is timely as it provides teaching aid that spurs interactive learning in the fast

developing world. The study reveals that using AI in literacy education helps to enhance classroom interaction, and progress in learning is made in the presentations of facts and observations, as learning is made fun. Also, the application of AI to literacy education boosts assimilation rate in learners, thereby developing their domains of learning and increasing effectiveness. The study concludes that AI boosts literacy among learners. It charges stakeholders and policymakers to ensure significant integration of AI into literacy education. By determining the correlation between AI and literacy education, the study relates to the present one. It differs from the current study in that it does not look at ethical implications of students' use of AI for language learning.

Lochinovna's (2025) study also relates to the present research. From psycholinguistic perspective, the study engages with the impact of language on beliefs among human beings. It confirms language to be an influential tool for realizing any human goals, which shows the impact language exerts on human psychology. It emphasizes the importance and effects of persuasive communication. It adds that speech variations shape perceptions, views and decision-making. According to the study, it is important to be aware of the ethical effects of persuasive communication. In this case, teachers have to be aware of persuasive communication in the classroom, particularly when targeting the realization of change in attitude, practice, pedagogy, and so on. The current study goes beyond the foregoing to looking at the ethical implications of students' use of AI tools for language learning.

The study by Usulor et al. (2025) demonstrates the capability of effective language use and classroom orientation to address issues of unethical use of AI among students. It emphasizes that students' use of AI tools for plagiarism, malpractice, knowledge inhibition, academic dishonesty, erosion of educational standards, and devaluing qualifications are ethical implications. Their study argues that using language effectively for classroom reorientation on AI use can lead to ethical use of AI tools among students, as they change attitude towards the use of AI. Also, the study identifies some challenges of AI adoption. These include the absence of comprehensive policy frameworks for AI ethical governance, data privacy and management concerns, inadequate research on AI, the failure to train teachers for the task for leveraging AI models for teaching, and the failure to bridge the gaps caused by digital divide and access exclusion in AI education. Just like the present research, it is concerned with ethical implications of AI use among students.

Ahmed's (2024) study on how digital resources are transforming English language teaching and learning relates to the current research. It explores the potential of digital transformation and AI to enhance English as Second Language (ESL) teaching and learning in Nigeria. According to the study, AI-driven tools proffer personalized learning experiences, interactive content and adaptive assessments, while digital transformation

facilitates inclusive learning environments and access to quality educational resources. It identifies key opportunities, such as personalized learning, increased engagement, and improved assessment, and mitigation of technological barriers, teacher training, and cultural diversity, among other challenges. It shows that leveraging AI tools for language teaching and learning improves traditional ESL teaching methods that often fail to meet the diverse linguistic and cultural needs of Nigerian learners, resulting in low levels of proficiency. The study concludes that the integration of technology and artificial intelligence (AI) has revolutionized different spheres, including the education sector in general and teaching and learning of English as a Second Language (ESL) in particular. It recommends further research studies on digital infrastructure, teacher education programs, and ensuring ethical data practices. Indeed, the study tallies with the present research. However, its focus is not exploring the ethical implications of students' use of AI tools for language learning.

Choudhury's et al. (2024) study examines the cause of the rising integration of AI in education, and explains the role of AI in English language teaching and learning. It relied on 50 published articles, drawn from Google Scholar. Qualitative approach and content analysis were employed. The analysis reveals that AI fosters supportive teaching and learning of English language, and optimizes performance among learners and teachers. The study concludes that leveraging AI for language education enhances learner's proficiency, career goals, and personal interests, and significantly upgrades teaching and learning experience in ELT. Although the study reflects the current one because of its engagement with leveraging AI for language learning, it does not look at the ethical implications of students' use of AI tools for language learning.

Nwosu's et al. (2024) study demonstrates that critical literacy and effective use of language can help address the issues of AI misuse among students and the other attendant issues. It emphasizes that persuasive language and critical literacy have the capacity to ensure ethical use of AI among students. The study demonstrates that teachers' consistent and persuasive use of language in the classroom about AI how best to use AI can rouse students' critical awareness and consciousness to ethical use of AI for academic purposes. By so doing, students get discouraged from misusing AI tools, leading to many of them stopping. The study concludes that persuasive language and critical literacy are viable means of achieving ethical use of AI among students. It urges stakeholders in nations' education sector to make concerted efforts toward addressing students' misuse of AI through meaningful classroom engagement, language-based techniques, and critical literacy. While their study presents the means of addressing ethical implications of students' misuse of AI, the present study focuses the ethical implications of AI use among students and benefits of leveraging AI tools for language learning.

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Okpeseyi et al. (2024) prove Nigerian tertiary students' AI awareness level and extent of AI usage to be very low, unlike their contemporaries in USA's tertiary institutions whose awareness level is very high and usage extent is high. The study calls on stakeholders to increase AI awareness among Nigerian students. The call highlights the imperative of AI education in Nigeria and other developing nations, towards increasing students' awareness level and usage extent. Awareness level determines usage extent and fosters ethical usage among students. Upon being well informed of the ethical implications of misusing AI for academic purposes, the students become poised to using the tools ethically rather than unethically. Although the study determines the extent of Nigerian students' awareness level and extent of AI use, it is not concerned with determining the ethical implications of students' use of AI tools for language learning and the ethical implications of their use of the tools.

The study by Adams et al. (2023) confirms that pedagogic strategies and developing and implementing ethical guidelines can help mitigate the ethical issues associated with students' unethical use of AI tools. Their study shows that AI literacy, pedagogical appropriateness, children's rights and teacher well-being are feasible techniques for mitigating the ethical issues of students' misuse of AI tools. These techniques can be imbibed with others for comprehensive results. For example, media literacy and effective language learning can be imbibed for lasting solutions to unethical use of AI among students. The findings of their study confirm that different techniques can be developed and employed sustainably to find lasting solutions to the issues emanating from students' abusive use of AI tools. The study relates to the present one, but does not focus the ethical implications of students' use of AI tools for language learning.

Nguyen et al. (2023) explore the ethical principles of using AI in education. Their study discusses the looming debate on the ethical principles and guidelines for using AI in education. It indicates that AI has the potentials of transforming the education sector with its activities. The study emphasizes that AI techniques have been improving students' performance and addressing some of the challenges faced by learners. It demonstrates that AI offers both prospects and challenges. The paper tasks stakeholders to collaboratively devise sustainable means of tackling the rising issues of AI misuse among students. It urges users to adhere to guidelines for ethical use of AI or face the penalties. The study reflects the thematic concerns of the present research, but does not directly engage in evaluating students' use of AI tools and the ethical implications of their use of the tools.

Methodology

Based on its nature and thematic concerns, the study adopted descriptive survey design and quantitative method. For in-depth analysis and reliable findings that lead to a valid

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conclusion, purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques were used to draw a sample population of 270 student respondents from the vast populations of the students of three tertiary institutions in Ebonyi State, Southeast Nigeria. The three institutions are Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki; Alex Ekweme Federal University (AE-FUNAI), Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo; and Ikwo College of Education, Ikwo. In each of the three tertiary institutions, 90 participants were involved. They are from three departments. 30 participants are to each of the departments per institution.

Considering the interdisciplinary nature of the study, Departments of Languages and Linguistics, Mass Communication, and Computer Science were involved in the study. In each of the departments, 30 respondents were selected randomly, from 200 to 400 Levels. These are Levels considered to be more conversant with or interested in AI tools. Thus, 10 × 3 = 30; 30 × 3 = 90; whereby 10 → 3 Levels of students involved per department = 30 participants per department; 30 → 3 Departments in each of the 3 tertiary institutions involved = 90 per tertiary institution = 270 participants. Questionnaire was used to collate data from the 270 participants. It has structured and unstructured and open- and close-ended formats.

The questionnaire contains more questions on thematic data than on demographic data. The demographic data not needed for the presentation and analysis. It consists of Sections 'A' and 'B'. The former bears just several questions about the respondents' data like department, while the latter has questions for eliciting thematic data. The gathered data are analysed quantitatively, using interpretive devices, simple percentage, Linkert five-scale coding, frequencies, tables, simple percentage, and thematic content analysis. The five-scale coding involves 'Strongly Agreed' (SA), 'Agreed' (A), 'Neutral' (N), 'Strongly Disagreed' (SD), and 'Disagreed' (D).

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Familiarity with AI Tools

SN	Variables	SA	A	N	SD	D	Total
Students in Nigerian tertiary institutions are yet to be familiar with AI tools. Do agree?							
1	Responses	-	29	-	130	111	270
2	Percentage	-	10.8	-	48.1	41.1	100%

Source: Authors (2026)

From the data in Table 1, it is quite obvious that the surveyed students are familiar with AI tools. Only 29 (10.8%) responses affirmed the assertion that students in Nigerian tertiary institutions are yet to be familiar with AI tools. These responses are inconsequential compared to the others. The negative proposition, which can be regarded as a null

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hypothesis, is disproven by 130 (48.1%) and 111 (41.1%) responses for SD and D. The disagreement to the postulation turns it the other way round viz: Students in Nigerian tertiary institutions are familiar with AI tools.

Given the statistical prominence of the two sets of responses, it is apt to submit that students of Nigerian tertiary institutions are familiar with AI tools. However, the extent of their familiarity is not established by the study. Future research should determine the extent to which students of Nigerian tertiary institutions are familiar with AI tools.

Table 2: Ethical vs. Unethical Use of AI

SN	Variables	SA	A	N	SD	D	Total
Students do not use AI tools ethically. Do agree?							
1	Responses	162	66	-	14	28	270
2	Percentage	60	24.4	-	5.2	10.4	100%

Source: Authors (2026)

Data in Table 2 prove that students of Nigerian tertiary use AI tools unethically. The proof is obtained from 162 (60%) and 66 (24.4%) respondents, who indicated SA and A. In contrast, 14 (5.2%) and 28 (10.4%) respondents SD and D respectively to the proposition that students do not use AI tools ethically. Based on statistical prominence, the former sets of responses are upheld. Thus, the study empirically proves that students of tertiary institutions do not use AI tools ethically. Not using the tools ethically raises serious ethical concerns. That makes this a dire necessity. As such, further studies on students' unethical use of AI tools have to be carried out variously among scholars and researchers to further uncover the state of the state-of-the-art on the situation.

Table 3: How Students Use AI Tools for Educational Purposes

SN	Variables	SA	A	N	SD	D	Total
AI tools are used by students for plagiarism in assignments and research work and malpractice during tests and exams. Do agree?							
1	Responses	121	133	-	6	10	270
2	Percentage	44.8	49.3	-	2.2	3.7	100%

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

Data in the Table 3 show how students of tertiary institutions use AI tools unethically. While 121 (44.8%) strongly agreed to the postulation, 133 (49.3%) agreed. Even though the latter set of respondents indicated 'Agreed,' not "Strongly Agreed," their responses are higher in number than those of the former. Only 6 (2.2%) and 10 (3.7%) responses for SD and D were recorded against the responses for SA and A. Therefore, the study empirically

establishes that by using AI tools illegitimately, the student users of AI tools misuse them. Their misuse of these tools presents ethical implications to Nigerian tertiary education as regards language learning.

Table 4: Negative Ethical Implications of AI Tools among Students

SN	Variables	SA	A	N	SD	D	Total
	Do you agree that the major ethical implications of students' use of AI tools are poor quality of learning, plagiarism, academic dishonesty, weakened thinking and language development skills, unequal access and widened digital divide, privacy invasion, misplacement of intellectual credit, copyright issues, bias, misinformation, reduced communication efficiency, and increased workloads for lecturers and school administrators?						
1	Responses	169	53	34	-	14	270
2	Percentage	62.6	19.6	12.6	-	5.2	100%

Source: Authors (2026)

The identified ethical implications of students' misuse of AI tools are affirmed by 169 (62.6%) and 53 (19.6%), who strongly agreed and agreed respectively. In contrast, while 14 (5.2%) disagreed, 34 (12.6%) indicated the 'Neutral' response option. The 'Neutral' suggests that such respondents neither agreed nor disagreed to the assertions about the ethical implications of students' use of AI. Finally, no single response was obtained for SD. It follows that tertiary institution students' use of AI tools indeed have ethical implications for them and their teachers by extension.

Table 5: Positive Ethical Implications of AI Tools among Students

SN	Variables	SA	A	N	SD	D	Total
	The positive ethical implications of students' use of AI tools for language learning include getting immediate feedback on pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and writing conventions; personalised learning based on learners' proficiency; assisting students disabilities thereby allowing for inclusive education; enhanced translation and multilingual learning; and increased access to learning resources like large data.						
1	Responses	183	40	27	-	20	270
2	Percentage	67.8	14.8	10	-	7.4	100%

Source: Authors (2026)

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The identified positive ethical implications of students' use of AI tools for language learning are upheld by majority of the respondents. While 183 (67.8%) responses were recorded for SA, 40 (14.8%) others were recorded in favour of the A response option. Only 27 (10%) and 20 (7.4%) responses showed otherwise. Out of these latter two options, the 27 are for those who neither agreed nor disagreed, while the 20 others represent the only respondents who disagreed, though not strongly.

Table 6: The Most Known and Used AI Tools among the Students

SN	Variables	SA	A	N	SD	D	Total
The following AI tools are well known to and used by students of Nigerian tertiary institutions for language learning. Do you agree?							
1	ChatGPT	270	-	-	-	-	270
		100	-	-	-	-	100%
2	Grammarly	270	-	-	-	-	270
		100	-	-	-	-	100%
3	Google Translate	173	97	-	-	-	270
		64.1	35.9	-	-	-	100%
4	ELSA Speak	-	80	71	69	50	270
		-	29.6	26.3	25.6	18.5	100%
5	QuillBot	18	48	24	61	119	270
		6.7	17.8	8.9	22.6	44.1	100%
6	Microsoft Copilot	66	89	57	38	20	270
		24.4	33	21.1	14.1	7.4%	100%
7	DeepL	-	39	62	98	71	270
		-	14.4	23	36.3	26.3	100%
8	Duolingo	29	65	45	81	50	270
		10.7	24.1	16.7	30	18.5	100%

Source: Authors (2026)

Table 6 presents findings for eight different variables, being the AI tools this study considers the most commonly used for language learning among Nigerian students of tertiary institutions. The most well known and used AI tools for language learning among the surveyed students are ChatGPT and Grammarly, followed by Google Translate. The data show that all the respondents strongly agreed to the proposition on their use of ChatGPT and Grammarly. No other sets of responses were recorded for ChatGPT and Grammarly AI tools. Next, Google Translate recorded only two sets of responses, which are for SA and A. SA recorded 173 (64.1%) responses, while A recorded 97 (35.9%).
Additionally, the data reveal that Microsoft Copilot is used by students of Nigerian tertiary institutions, though not so many of them. While 66 (24.4%) agreed that Microsoft Copilot

is well known to them and they use it well or often, 89 (33%) agreed to the proposition, though not strongly. Further, 57 (21.1%) respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, as they indicated 'Neutral'. Only 38 (14.1%) and 20 (7.4%) of them strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively.

From the data, it is realized that the surveyed students are less familiar with DeepL, QuillBot, ELSA Speak, and Duolingo, and they either seldom use these AI tools or do not use them at all for language learning. It is possible that they know and use the tools for non-academic proposes. That is not part of the scope concerns of the study. Thus, such usage is not determined by the current study. Accordingly, under the DeepL variable, no responses were recorded for SA. Only 39 (14.4%) agreed, though not strongly. While 62 (23%) responses indicated 'Neutral', 98 (36.3%) are in favor of "Strongly Disagreed". The remaining others, 71 (26.3%) disagreed but not strongly to the proposition. QuillBot is found to be the second less known and used AI tools for language learning among students of Nigerian tertiary institutions, as evident among the surveyed students. Only 18 (6.7%) strongly agreed, while 48 (17.8%) agreed. Those who disagreed had the highest sets of responses. These are 61 (22.6%) and 119 (44.1%) for SD and D respectively. Only 24 (8.9%) claimed they were not sure, thereby taking a neutral stance.

Similarly, ELSA Speak recorded no single response for SA. Only 80 (29.6%) agreed that this AI tool is well known and used among the students. Among the respondents, 71 (26.3%) neither agreed nor disagreed to the statement on students' knowledge and use of ELSA Speak in language learning. The remaining other two sets of responses strongly disagreed and disagreed. These are 69 (25.6%) and 50 (18.5%) respectively. Lastly, Duolingo is less known to and used by the students. Accordingly, 81 (30%) respondents strongly disagreed. They are supported by 50 (18.5%), who disagreed but not strongly. In contrast, while 29 (10.7%) strongly agreed, 65 (24.1%). The remaining 45 (16.7%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

It should be noted that AI tools that support language learning and make it effective are of five major categories. These are conversational AI, translation AI, grammar and writing AI, pronunciation and speaking AI, and language learning platforms. Examples of conversational AI include ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, and Claude. Grammarly, QuillBot, and Language Tool are to the grammar and writing category. Those for pronunciation and speaking include ELSA Speak, and Speechling. Among others, Duolingo, Busuu, Babbel, and Memrise belong to the category called "Language Learning Platforms."

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Table 7: Ways of Ensuring Ethical Use of AI tools among Students

SN	Variables	SA	A	N	SD	D	Total
	Do you agree that stakeholders can ensure ethical use of AI tools for effective language learning through the following ways? **1. Create operational and sustainable institutional policies on AI adoption and use, with clearly specified penalties** **2. Inclusion of AI literacy and media literacy into the curriculum, and increasing digital literacy** **3. Improve academic integrity education during classroom presentations, teaching and learning, and other educational trainings like workshops, seminars, and defences** **4. Reviewing and redesigning assessment and teaching methods** **5. Engage in imparting and promoting critical thinking with critical skills** **6. Discouraging and punishing for unethical practices in using AI tools for language learning, such as malpractice, copy and paste, plagiarism, intellectual deft, etc.** **7. Setting up and maintaining AI Ethics Committees** **8. Encourage and insist on ethically approved and permissible research devoid of ethical violations** **9. Promote and ensure equity and inclusive access** **10. Collaborations among AI developers, AI experts, scholars and researchers, educators, linguists, and other relevant stakeholders**						
1	Responses	98	144	28	-	-	270
2	Percentage	36.3	53.3	10.4	-	-	100%

Source: Authors (2026)

It is quite obvious that stakeholders can ensure ethical use of AI tools for effective language learning through the means listed in Table 7. While 98 (36.3%) respondents strongly agreed, 144 (53.3%) agreed that ethical use of AI tools for language learning can be ensured through the listed ways or means contained in the Table 7. Only 28 (10.4%) respondents neither agreed nor disagreed to the postulation.

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Conclusion

Using the tools paves ways for effective language learning. However, there are ethical implications of using them among students. The implications arise from undue and abusive uses of AI tools. The study shows that any form of undue or illegitimate use of AI tools in language learning or any other pedagogic contexts constitutes ethical implications of using AI tools. When used abusively, AI tools rather cause problems or hamper the effectiveness of language learning than fostering the attainment of effective language learning. Although students of tertiary institutions are found to be using the tools, the extent of usage is currently low or insignificant. Different ways of attaining and ensuring effective language learning with AI tools are identified and described. All in all, ethical use of AI tools for language learning paves way for significant level of effectiveness and great learning outcomes, while the misuse of the tools presents negative ethical implications to learners' performance and academic achievements, and increased workloads for teachers and educational leaders.

AI use policies with penalties should be enacted, implemented and sustained. AI education, media literacy, and critical literacy should be leveraged for inculcating the knowledge of ethical use and best practices of using or implementing AI tools for language learning among students of tertiary institutions. Teachers and other stakeholders should consistently lay emphasis on moderate use of AI and the humanising of AI-generated contents. School authorities provide teachers with AI detection software and turnitin, with which they can easily detect and reject AI-generated assignments, seminars, term-papers, research work, tests, and examinations. Researchers and scholars should carry out more studies on the effectiveness of students' use of AI learning across disciplines and the ethical implications.

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