REPÚBLICA DEL ECUADOR

UNIVERSIDAD ESTATAL DE MILAGRO

VICERRECTORADO DE INVESTIGACIÓN Y POSGRADO

FACULTAD DE POSGRADOS

ARTÍCULOS PROFESIONALES DE ALTO NIVEL

PREVIO A LA OBTENCIÓN DEL TÍTULO DE:

MAGÍSTER EN ENSEÑANZA DE INGLÉS COMO LENGUA

EXTRANJERA

TEMA:

Improving grammatical accuracy through ChatGPT: A study of University Students in

Riobamba.

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Milagro, 2025

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ABSTRACT

The present research analyzes the main challenges faced in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language within the Ecuadorian educational context. Despite the Ministry of Education's efforts to implement strategies aimed at improving educational quality, limitations related to insufficient resources, limited methodological guidance, and teachers' technological constraints continue to hinder the development of students' linguistic competence. In this context, the integration of innovative tools represents a necessary alternative to strengthen foreign language acquisition. In recent years, artificial intelligence-based resources have gained increasing relevance, with ChatGPT emerging as one of the most widely used tools due to its potential to provide personalized interactions and immediate feedback.

The aim of this study is to demonstrate the benefits of using ChatGPT to enhance grammatical accuracy among university students in Riobamba. The research adopted a mixed-method approach, including diagnostic tests, guided activities with ChatGPT assistance, and post-intervention assessments to evaluate improvements in grammatical precision. Findings reveal significant progress in students' written production, particularly in reducing morphosyntactic errors and in the more accurate use of complex structures. This study contributes to the discussion on the integration of artificial intelligence into higher education, highlighting the potential of ChatGPT as a pedagogical support in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Ecuador.

KEYWORDS

RESUMEN

La presente investigación analiza los principales desafíos que enfrenta el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del Inglés como lengua extranjera en el contexto educativo ecuatoriano. A pesar de los esfuerzos del Ministerio de Educación por implementar estrategias que promuevan la calidad educativa, persisten limitaciones vinculadas a la falta de recursos, la escasa orientación metodológica y las dificultades tecnológicas de los docentes, lo que impacta directamente en el desarrollo de la competencia lingüística de los estudiantes. En este marco, la incorporación de herramientas innovadoras constituye una alternativa necesaria para mejorar la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras. En los últimos años, los recursos basados en inteligencia artificial han adquirido relevancia, siendo ChatGPT una de las herramientas más utilizadas por su potencial para generar interacciones personalizadas y retroalimentación inmediata.

El objetivo de este estudio es demostrar los beneficios del uso de ChatGPT en la mejora de la corrección gramatical focalizado en un grupo de estudiantes universitarios de Riobamba. La investigación se desarrolló bajo un enfoque mixto, con la aplicación de pruebas diagnósticas, ejercicios guiados con asistencia de ChatGPT y evaluaciones posteriores que permitieron medir los avances en precisión gramatical. Los resultados evidencian una mejora significativa en la producción escrita de los participantes, especialmente en la reducción de errores morfosintácticos y en el uso adecuado de estructuras complejas. Este trabajo contribuye al debate sobre la integración de la inteligencia artificial en la educación superior, resaltando el potencial de ChatGPT como apoyo pedagógico en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera en Ecuador.

PALABRAS CLAVES

Inglés como lengua extranjera; inteligencia artificial; ChatGPT; gramática inglesa

1. INTRODUCTION

In Ecuador, the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language continues to face significant challenges that directly affect student achievement. Despite its status as mandatory subject at different educational levels, many learners, particularly at the university stage, struggle to attain proficiency, especially in written grammar. Limited resources, insufficient exposure to authentic language use, and traditional teaching methods based on memorization and repetition have restricted students' opportunities to develop accuracy in their written production. As a result, grammatical difficulties remain a persistent barrier to academic progress and access to broader educational and professional opportunities.

In this context, the integration of innovative technologies emerges as a promising alternative to support language learning. Recent advances in artificial intelligence have introduced tools that provide students with immediate feedback, personalized guidance, and interactive practice opportunities beyond the classroom. Among these, ChatGPT has gained increasing recognition as a valuable resource for enhancing linguistic competence. Its potential to support grammar correction and writing development makes it a relevant pedagogical ally in higher education contexts where time, resources and authentic practice are often limited.

The present study focuses on exploring the impact of ChatGPT on improving grammatical accuracy in a group of university students in Riobamba. By examining its role as a support tool for written production, this research seeks to highlight the potential benefits of integrating AI-driven resources into the English language learning process in Ecuador

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The deficiency in students' writing skills has led educators and researchers to investigate the principal causes of this issue. Some factors, such as insufficient linguistic knowledge, lack of strategies, and ineffective use of technological tools, pose challenges for university students when composing academic texts. These shortcomings can affect writing proficiency and linguistic comprehension (Aldabbus & Almansouri, 2022). Recent research establishes that the correct use of technological resources is a key factor in improving grammatical accuracy within distinct educational levels in EFL context (Remadhan et al., 2023). For this reason, it is necessary to analyze key aspects to enhance the use of AI technology in academic writing.

Grammar has been one of the most important aspects in the process of English Language acquisition. Nordquist (2020) defined grammar as a systematic study of language, a bound of rules, and examples that deal with syntax and word structures of a language usually intended to aid language learning. However, the explicit teaching of grammatical rules has been a controversial issue; several authors contend that it is an essential tool, especially when an individual has the necessity of building a clear communicative message. According to Kumari, Kumbhakar, & Kumar, (2024) grammar has the structural basis to create language. It has several rules and norms that permit the organization of different patterns like words, sentences and communication in general. Building on this perspective, Cong (2020) states that if grammar is taught at the right time, at the right place and with the right way, it can help students efficiently scaffold their language learning.

Accuracy is a fundamental component to provide effective communication. Yuan and Ellis (2003) indicate that accuracy as the extent to which learners produce spoken or written output that adheres to the target language's grammatical norms High accuracy reduces errors,

thereby promoting clarity in communication. This is particularly important for learners engaged in formal writing, as grammatical precision ensures coherent and professional discourse. (Ferris, 2002). Accuracy in grammatical aspects is indispensable to maintain a natural and concise communication. The correct structure and word usage of every pattern affects positively the quality and effectiveness of language production. The maintenance and practice of grammar accuracy avoid mutual confusion, taking account that we share the same structures and patterns in a linguistic setting. For that, the message must be coherent to provide a clear output and not interrupt the interchange of information.

Technology plays an increasingly significant role in daily life and education. AI Assistance has become innovative tools that hold great potential to transform the field of education. (Sajja et al., 2024), and particularly a resource like ChatGPT, which has emerged as integral due to its numerous advantages in language learning. These AI-assisted writing tools offer automated feedback on various aspects of writing, including organization, coherence, grammar, and vocabulary, thereby facilitating more effective writing performance improvements (Song y Song, 2023). Additionally, GPT-based technology enhances information production across various domains, particularly in second language acquisition, by improving interaction through structured language patterns. However, unguided or excessive reliance on AI tools may hinder learning effectiveness. (Giray, Nemeño & Edem 2025). Thus, structured implementation and pedagogical strategies are essential. ChatGPT is an AI assistant that is designed to understand and generate concrete answers in an immediate way. According to Božić & Poola (2023), GPT technology can increase the production of information in different areas but especially enhance the acquisition of a new language improving the interaction using the language patterns to create an effective communicative environment. The different virtual assistants such as ChatGPT allow learners

to generate ideas, sentences and produce better writing styles. (Brown et al., 2020).

However, some researchers suggest that the disorganized and inefficient use of this app can reduce the effectiveness in the process of learning a new language. For that, the implementation of competent strategies and organization is totally necessary. When used with appropriate methodologies, ChatGPT can significantly enhance learning outcomes.

Moreover, ChatGPT can increase student engagement by providing adaptive learning resources that surpass traditional classroom materials. Hawanti (2023) notes that ChatGPT reduces language anxiety by offering a low-pressure environment for practice, thereby boosting learners' confidence and motivation. In addition, students benefit from timely assistance that clarifies concepts, addresses misconceptions, and reinforces learning in a personalized manner. This personalized support system fosters a deeper understanding of subjects and empowers students to progress at their own pace while maintaining educational rigor (Khzouz et. al., 2024).

There are a lot of benefits with the implementation of ChatGPT to write academic texts. Božić & Poola (2023), suggested that it can transform the educational scenery according to the different learning experiences and necessities of every participant, providing students with personalized instruction, improving their language skills, and automating time-consuming tasks for educators. Adding that, when used correctly, contributes to achieving the desired results among all participants in the educational context. (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019)

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-method design to comprehensively investigate the effectiveness of ChatGPT in enhancing grammatical accuracy among English language learners at a university in Riobamba. The convergent parallel design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) allowed for simultaneous quantitative and qualitative data collection, providing a holistic understanding of the tool's impact.

For the research design, a previously validated pre-test with ten exercises and one special section to assess writing skills was applied as a quantitative approach to measure grammatical improvement objectively. The control and experimental groups underwent identical assessments to isolate ChatGPT´s effect. At the end of the research process, a post-test was applied in order to determine the results of applying ChatGPT to improve writing skills. For the qualitative approach, an exploratory survey examined students' experiences, behaviors, and perceptions through semi-structured written interviews, offering insights into the tool's usability and challenges.

The study was carried out during an academic semester, and 30 third-semester students from a university in Riobamba were involved, of whom 19 were male and 11 female (Figure 1). Participants were in the age range of 18 to 30 years old (Figure 2). After applying the pre-test and identifying the weaknesses of the students, the lesson plan started.

Students took the pre-test that consisted of four exercises that included: correct use of verb tenses, question-answer matching, implementing completion, error correction and a space to free-write a short e-mail answering a specific topic.
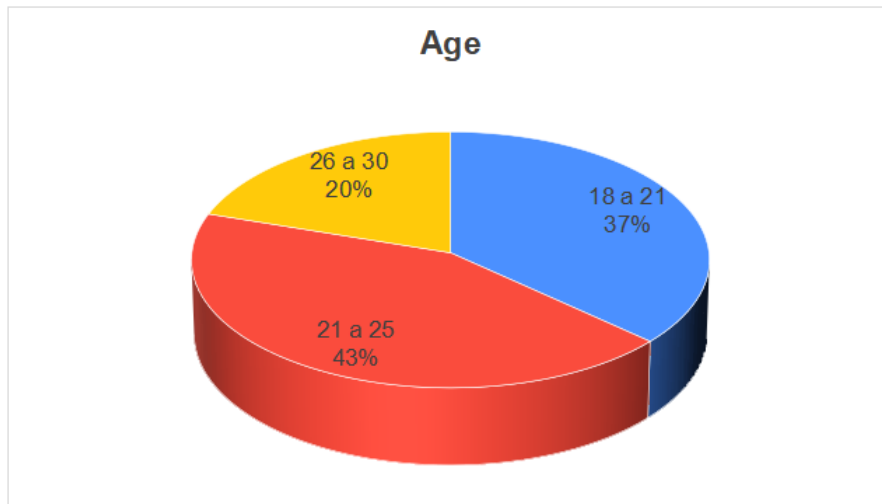
Figure 1

Percentage according to Gender
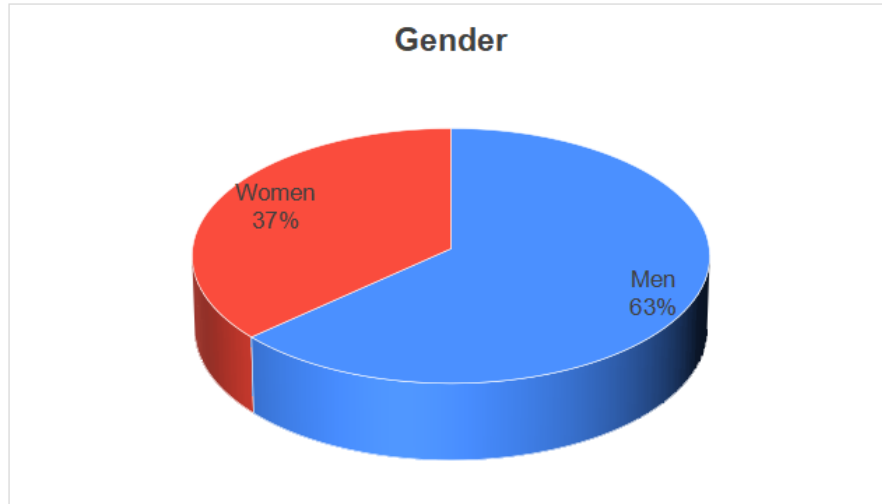
Source: Pre-test applied to students

Figure 2

Percentage according to the age of the participants

Source: Pre-test applied to students

The Intervention period was implemented during the entire academic semester (4months).

The administration of an instructional plan was designed to improve the students'

grammatical writing skills using ChatGPT as a complementary instrument. The writing

classes were held twice a week, for 60 minutes. The classes were conducted in the Institute's laboratory, incorporating the use of computers to access the ChatGPT platform.

Each session had a structured organization. First, the moderator provided an explanation of the topic of the day and its components. The use of clear examples was indispensable during these 20 minutes. Then students have to put into practice their knowledge through written activities like e-mails, short paragraphs, and texts that include structured sentences.

Once students have completed their assignments, it's time to use ChatGPT as a writing assistant. Students enter all their information into the platform and receive grammatical correction or feedback through simple prompts such as: "Please check my paragraph for grammar mistakes, can you improve the sentence structure of my text, explain why this sentence structure is incorrect?" This way, students receive personalized guidance, immediate error correction, and can reflect on the errors they found, subconsciously improving their grammatical structures in writing activities.

Finally, students were asked to rewrite their writing text based on the received feedback. Then they have to interchange their reflection with all the experiment participants. For that, it was necessary that they share what they learned and what they would avoid in the future. This class structure was repeated every class, trying to build students' confidence and improve their grammatical accuracy in writing skills.

The next chart explains specifically the activities planned for the class, and the materials and time required.

Section	Learning Goal	Activity	Materials	Time
Introduction	Remember previous knowledge and introduce the new grammatical topic.	-Using questions: What do you know about the present continuous? -Teacher presents the topic	Projector Slides	5 minutes
Explanation	Provide structure guides and use them in context	-Teacher shows structure, uses, and examples of the present continuous.	Projector Slides	15 minutes
Writing practice	Students apply grammar knowledge in writing activities	-Students write a short paragraph (80 words) about their current activities.	Laboratory computers	20 minutes

Chat GPT assistance	Use ChatGPT to identify and understand grammatical mistakes	-Students enter their paragraph into ChatGPT platform. Use prompts such as: "Can you explain why the sentence is incorrect?"	Laboratory computers Internet	10 minutes
Rewriting and Reflection	Reflect on mistakes and apply corrections	-Students rewrite the paragraph. -Students reflect on what they have learnt today.	Laboratory computers	5 minutes

After four months following the research planning, a post-test was administered to the participants to determine their improvements during the grammatical experiment. Finally, the implementation of a digital survey from Google Forms was also essential. In this digital survey, Students expressed what were their experiences, opinions, and challenges while using the ChatGPT tool. The usage of these instruments provided a collection of experiences, perspectives, and data related to the use of ChatGPT in English language grammar skills.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

This part of the study presents the analysis of the results obtained from the different instruments applied during the experimental research, which has the objective of evaluating

the effectiveness of ChatGPT as a tool to improve grammatical accuracy in the writing skills of third semester university students. The combination of mixed methods was totally necessary to measure quantitative data (pre-test and post-test) and the analysis of qualitative data (semi-structured interviews). These instruments allowed the measurement and understanding of the recollected information from student's perception with the utilization of AI assisted writing tools.

At the beginning of the present study, a pre-test was conducted to determine the level of grammatical knowledge students have when they develop written activities. Table 1 shows the results of students after the pre-test was applied.

Table1. Scores of students in pre-test

	PRE-TEST				
	Question 1 (3p)	Question 2 (3p)	Question 3 (2p)	Question 4 (2p)	Total Score
Student 1	3	1	2	2	8
Student 2	2	3	0,5	1,5	7
Student 3	3	3	0	2	8
Student 4	1	3	2	1,5	7,5
Student 5	1	2	2	1,5	6,5
Student 6	3	1	0,5	1	5,5
Student 7	0	3	0,5	1,5	5
Student 8	1	2	0,5	0,5	4
Student 9	0	3	1,5	2	6,5
Student 10	3	1	1	1	6
Student 11	2	3	2	1,5	8,5
Student 12	1	3	1,5	2	7,5
Student 13	2	2	2	0,5	6,5
Student 14	3	3	1	1	8
Student 15	2	2	1,5	1,5	7
Student 16	2	3	2	1	8
Student 17	2	0	1	1,5	4,5
Student 18	3	3	1,5	1	8,5
Student 19	1	1	1,5	2	5,5
Student 20	2	3	2	1,5	8,5

Student 21	3	3	1,5	2	9,5
Student 22	3	2	1	1	7
Student 23	2	3	2	1	8
Student 24	3	2	1,5	2	8,5
Student 25	1	2	2	0,5	5,5
Student 26	3	3	1,5	0,5	8
Student 27	2	2	1,5	2	7,5
Student 28	3	2	2	1,5	8,5
Student 29	3	3	1	1	8
Student 30	2	1	1	1,5	5,5
TOTAL	62	68	41,5	41	212,5
Overall Score	**2,07**	**2,27**	**1,38**	**1,37**	**7,08**

Source: Pre-test applied to students.

Table 2. Overall Score of Pre-test

Section	Overall Score
Question 1	2.07/**3**
Question 2	2.27/**3**
Question 3	1.38/**2**
Question 4	1.37/**2**
Total	7.08/**10**
Percentage	**71%**

Source: Pre-test applied to students

When implementing the pre-test, it was evident that students had quite high scores in

questions 1 and 2, since the majority of students dominate these types of structures. These

correspond to basic grammar topics with questions about the use of Simple Present and

Present Continuous tenses.On the other hand, participants had more difficulty in forming

conversations and slightly more advanced structures and connectors (question 3 and 4),

which was where the students obtained low scores and found more difficulty when

completing them. Table 2. shows the overall scores of pre-test. Question 1 and 2 obtained

2.07 and 2.27 out of 3 points each, while question 3 obtained 1.38 and question 4 got 1.37 out

of 2 points. The average score for the course was 7.08 out of 10 points representing a 71 per cent in total.

After completing the class planning, at the end of the semester, a post-test was administered to evaluate the students' progress. Table 3 shows the results obtained.

Table3. Scores of students in post-test

	Question 1 (3p)	Question 2 (3p)	Question 3 (2p)	Question 4 (2p)	Total Score
			POST-TEST		
Student 1	3	2	2	2	9
Student 2	3	2	1,5	1,5	8
Student 3	3	3	1,5	2	9,5
Student 4	2	2	2	2	8
Student 5	3	2	1	1,5	7,5
Student 6	3	3	2	1,5	9,5
Student 7	1	2	1	1,5	5,5
Student 8	2	2	1	1	6
Student 9	1	2	1	2	6
Student 10	3	3	2	1,5	9,5
Student 11	3	3	2	2	10
Student 12	2	3	1,5	2	8,5
Student 13	3	2	2	1	8
Student 14	3	3	2	1,5	9,5
Student 15	2	2	2	1,5	7,5
Student 16	3	3	2	1,5	9,5
Student 17	2	2	1	1	6
Student 18	3	3	1,5	1,5	9
Student 19	2	3	2	2	9
Student 20	3	3	2	2	10
Student 21	3	3	1,5	1,5	9
Student 22	3	3	2	1,5	9,5
Student 23	3	3	1,5	1,5	9
Student 24	3	3	2	2	10
Student 25	3	3	2	1,5	9,5
Student 26	3	3	1	1,5	8,5
Student 27	3	2	2	2	9
Student 28	3	3	2	2	10
Student 29	3	3	2	2	10

Student 30	3	2	2	1,5	8,5
TOTAL	80	78	51	49,5	258,5
Overall Score	**2,67**	**2,60**	**1,70**	**1,65**	**8,62**

Source: Post-test applied to students

The results of the post-test revealed a significant improvement in questions 1 and 2, confirming that the group's knowledge of basic structures (Simple Present and Present Continuous) is consolidated. Nevertheless, the participants' performance in questions 3 and 4, which require the use of slightly more complex structures, has improved. Although several students still have difficulty structuring conversations and texts, most have improved their output. These factors indicate that by continuing to implement strategies to further reinforce grammatical knowledge, the group could achieve mastery of all the assessed aspects.

Table 4. Overall scores in post-test

Section	Overall Score
Question 1	2.67/**3**
Question 2	2,60/3
Question 3	1.70/**2**
Question 4	1.65/**2**
Total	**8.62/10**
Percentage	**86%**

Source: Post-test applied to students

Table 4 shows the overall scores of post-test. Question 1 and 2 obtained 2.67 and 2.60 out of 3 points each, while question 3 obtained 1.70 and question 4 got 1.65 out of 2 points. The average score for the course was 8.62 out of 10 points representing 86 per cent in total and increasing the average course scores from 71% (pre-test) to 86% (post-test), representing a 15-percentage-point gain and a 21.13% relative improvement.

Finally, a survey was conducted indicating a positive impression of using ChatGPT as a tool to improve writing skills for students. Since, most of them have selected between 4 and 5 on the Likert scale for every question. This suggests that they are quite satisfied with the

utilization of the technological tool during their written practice. Adding that this resource has improved the grammatical structure of their sentences due to the practical classes and feedback that they receive from it.

Table 5. Satisfaction survey

Columna 1	1	2	3	4	5
1. How helpful was ChatGPT to develop written activities?	1	2	4	9	14
2. How comfortable do you feel using ChatGPT during writing exercises?	0	3	5	4	18
3, How effective was ChatGPT to enhance your grammatical learning during this semester?	0	1	8	8	13
4. ¿Do you feel that ChatGPT platform helped you complete your task faster?	0	1	4	9	16
5. Was useful the feedback received by ChatGPT on your writing performance?	0	1	5	10	14

Source: Google form

DISCUSSION

This study explored the extent to which ChatGPT can support the improvement of grammatical accuracy in written task among a group of university students in Riobamba. The findings revealed that, after the intervention period of approximately four months, participants demonstrated noticeable progress in their written production, particularly in the correct use of verb tenses and sentence structures. These results indicate that the integration of ChatGPT into academic writing tasks can significantly contribute to reducing grammatical errors and fostering greater linguistic precision.

An additional factor that reinforced these outcomes was the students' positive perception of the tool. They reported feeling comfortable using ChatGPT, mainly due to its immediacy,

personalization, and adaptability to individual needs. Such perceptions highlight the potential of AI-based tools not only to improve language accuracy but also to increase student motivation and engagement in the writing process.

However, one limitation of the study was the time frame, as a semester may not be sufficient to fully capture the long-term effects of AI integration in language learning. Moreover, broader research that incorporates diverse methodological approaches and larger samples would be necessary to strengthen the validity and generalizability of the findings. These considerations open avenues for future studies to further examine the role of ChatGPT and other AI-driven tools in supporting different dimensions of second language acquisition, including writing, speaking, and overall communicative competence.

3.   CONCLUSION

The results of the present research on *Improving Grammatical Accuracy through ChatGPT: A Study of University Students in Riobamba* suggest that the implementation of Chat GPT as a digital tool had a favorable impact on students' learning process. The participants who were immersed in the research felt supported and beneficiated when using this tool in their written tasks, as they were able to obtain several benefits by reviewing their mistakes, thus receiving immediate feedback. They were also able to verify the grammatical structures, which, through adequate and constant practice, permitted a better understanding of their writings.

Furthermore, the study highlights the potential of ChatGPT to create a supportive and non-threatening learning environment, where learners can engage in experimentation and self-correction without the fear of making mistakes publicly. These findings underscore the relevance of integrating AI-assisted tools into higher education to complement traditional

instruction and provide students with additional opportunities for personalized language practice.

In conclusion, while further research is required to confirm these results on a larger scale and over extended periods, the evidence from this study demonstrates that ChatGPT can be a valuable resource in improving grammatical accuracy and enhancing the overall learning experience of university students learning English as a foreign language in Ecuador.

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CONSTANCIA DE APROBACIÓN

Por la presente, se hace constar que el artículo:

"Improving grammatical accuracy through ChatGPT: A study of University Students in Riobamba"

De la autoría de:

- Gabriela Estefanía García Márquez
- Josceline Michell Pereira Loor

Ha sido arbitrado por pares Académicos mediante el sistema doble ciego y **Aprobado para su publicación.**

El artículo será difundido en la edición **Octubre-Diciembre, Volumen 12, N° 4**, y una vez publicado, será verificable en nuestra plataforma: www.uticvirtual.edu.py/revista.ojs/index.php/revistas

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