



EFL Students' Perceptions Towards the Use of Grammarly Application in Learning Writing Skills

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Abstract. This study explores the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students towards the use of the Grammarly application in improving their writing skills. Conducted at the University of Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. Hamka Jakarta, the research involved 120 students. A quantitative approach was used with survey administered a closed-ended questionnaire with 20 items. Data were collected using Google Forms and the analysis was carried out using a 5-Likert Scale, with averages generated in Microsoft Excel. The study evaluates a students' views regarding the efficacy, usability, and overall impact of Grammarly on their writing. The findings indicate that while Grammarly is perceived as a useful tool for identifying grammatical errors and enhancing writing quality, students also highlighted concerns about over-reliance on the tool, which could affect their attentiveness to writing without the software. Despite these concerns, the majority of participants reported improved writing confidence and skills. The study concludes that Grammarly can be an effective supplementary tool in EFL writing instruction, provided its limitations are addressed and it is used in conjunction with traditional teacher feedback.

Keywords: EFL, Grammarly, Writing skills, student perceptions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a social communication tool consisting of a sound sign system derived from human speech. Humans, as social organisms, require methods to engage with others in society. Language is necessary for social interaction [1]-[3]. Language serves as both a medium of communication and a tool for thinking. It might be argued that humans cannot think without language [4]-[6]. This property of language is highly significant because language has to evolve to live so that it is not abandoned by the times, disappearing and becoming extinct since there are no speakers [7], [8].

Grammar is a critical component of EFL writing, significantly influencing the quality of students' work and their comprehension abilities, which are essential for academic success. Students need to understand various grammatical principles, including sentence structure and article usage, which are often challenging for EFL learners. The difficulty in mastering grammar can lead to disillusionment and demotivation among students [9]-[11]. Corrective feedback is crucial in second language writing, as it helps improve writing skills, reduce grammatical errors, and simplify compositions [12]-[14]. Writing is a frequently recognized as a tough and sophisticated talent, particularly when creating in a second language [15]. However, writing is a skill that maybe improved with constant practice and timely feedback [16]-[18]. Common issues in English writing include capitalization and punctuation errors, poor organization, and grammar and spelling mistakes. Online grammar checkers, such as Grammarly, can assist students by identifying and correcting errors, thus enhancing their writing abilities [19]- [21].

With the rise of technology in EFL instruction, tools like Grammarly have become popular for providing real-time grammar and style advice. Grammarly offers two versions: a free version with basic features and a premium version with advanced capabilities like plagiarism detection and vocabulary enhancement [22]-[24]. Despite its benefits, Grammarly has limitations, including the relevance of its feedback and the need for a stable internet connection, which can be a barrier for students [25]. Grammar is fundamental to effective writing, and its mastery is essential for academic success in higher education. EFL students often struggle with grammar, which affects their writing quality and comprehension [9]. Corrective feedback from teachers can significantly enhance students' writing skills by addressing common errors and improving composition structure [12].

Grammarly is a widely used digital tool designed to help users improve their writing by providing real-time grammar and style suggestions. It offers both free and premium versions, each with varying levels of functionality [22]. The tool's ability to provide instant feedback helps students identify and correct errors, thereby enhancing their writing proficiency [19].

Students report that Grammarly helps in improving writing accuracy by providing both direct and indirect feedback. However, there are notable limitations, such as the relevance of feedback in specific contexts and the reliance on a stable internet connection [25]. Some students also feel that over-reliance on Grammarly can hinder the development of their independent writing skills [22]-[27]. This research indicates that while Grammarly is beneficial in identifying common grammatical errors, it often falls short in handling complex, context-specific issues. Studies also highlight the importance of integrating such tools with traditional teaching methods to maximize their effectiveness in language learning [25]-[29]. As a result, students do not need to be afraid to write because they can utilize the Grammarly application [30]. While most studies aim to improve students' writing, there is a lack of research on how Grammarly affects self-directed learning [31]

This study aims to address the students' perception when using the Grammarly application and in improving writing. The focus of this research is to investigate EFL students' views on Grammarly's impact on their writing abilities, its efficacy, usability, and contribution to their overall language competency. This study contributes to the existing literature on technology-enhanced language learning by examining EFL students' perceptions of Grammarly. The findings can inform students, curriculum designers, and future researchers on optimizing digital tools in EFL writing classes.

2. METHOD

This section discusses the research methodology. In this research, there are several research methodologies including research design, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Design

This research used a quantitative methodology with a cross-sectional design. The quantitative technique utilized in this study to generate quantitative or numerical representations of demographic pattern attitudes or views [32]. It attempts to gather information about the students' opinions of how Grammarly affects their writing abilities and when they use the application [29]-[31]. To gauge the students' perception of the usefulness of the Grammarly app in the learning of writing abilities, the researcher gave 20 statements to the researcher. The statements describe how devoted they are to the Grammarly app and its impact on their writing abilities, specifically in regards to increasing their knowledge of grammar. The responses provided are a scale of Likert, which ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The participants are students at the University of Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. Hamka Jakarta. A total of 120 students participated in the survey. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire that included closed-ended questions. The questionnaire was designed to capture students' perceptions of Grammarly's usability, efficacy, and the challenges encountered while using the tool. A questionnaire is an option to collecting data in textual form. It is often used to gather data and help research [36]. The gathered information was analyzed using statistical methods to identify trends and patterns in the students' opinions. Descriptive statistics were employed to describe the data, and inferential statistics were used to test the hypotheses. After obtaining the necessary information, the researcher studied the data. The researcher utilized Microsoft Excel's formula calculator to calculate the information with a formula. The researcher discovered the average of the Likert scale, then after obtaining the average, the researcher will narrate the results in descriptive terms of each statement.

3. FINDINGS

The primary objective of this study was to examine the perceptions of EFL students towards the Grammarly application in enhancing their writing skills. Perception is a process that is preceded by sensing, which is the act of receiving a stimulus through an individual's sense organs, also known as sensory processing. However, the process does not just end; instead, a stimulus is sent, and the text phase is the perceptual process [37]. In language acquisition, perception refers to how individuals understand and stimulate based on their surroundings and knowledge [38]. Data were collected from 120 students at University of Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. Hamka Jakarta through a structured questionnaire.

Perception of Grammarly Usability

Table 1. Perception of Grammarly Usability

No	Statement	Answer Options				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The Grammarly app is easy to use.	0	0,8%	11,7%	40,0%	47,5%
2	Grammarly's user interface is intuitive and easy to understand.	0	7,5%	15,8%	39,2%	37,5%
3	I often experience technical issues when using Grammarly.	0	0,8%	4,2%	41,7%	53,3%
4	Grammarly is quick to provide feedback.	0	1,7%	10,8%	37,5%	50,0%
5	Grammarly is easy to integrate with other platforms I use for writing.	0	5,8%	15,8%	44,2%	34,2%

Table 1 shows that most students expressed their comfort in using the perceived usefulness of grammar in the Grammarly app. This can be seen in statement 1, where more than half of the sample said that the Grammarly app was very easy to use. In addition, most students agreed with the statements presented. It was noted that only a small percentage, specifically 3.32%, disagreed with the statement provided.

Grammarly Correction Accuracy

Table 2. Grammarly Correction Accuracy

No	Statement	Answer Options				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
6	Grammarly's grammar corrections are very accurate.	0	2,5%	10,8%	41,7%	45,0%
7	Spelling suggestions by Grammarly are very helpful.	0	5,8%	11,7%	37,5%	45,0%
8	Grammarly often gives irrelevant suggestions.	0	2,5%	7,5%	41,7%	48,3%
9	Grammarly helped me find mistakes that I missed.	0	9,2%	15,0%	28,3%	47,5%
10	Grammarly's grammar suggestions fit the context of my writing.	0	4,2%	11,7%	43,3%	40,8%

Table 2 above shows that 5 statements about grammarly correction accuracy gave relatively agreeing answers. However, some students disagree with the above statements, such as in statement 9 which shows that 9.2% of students feel less helped by Grammarly in finding mistakes that are missed. This indicates that students tend to prefer Grammarly's grammar suggestions rather than Grammarly find mistakes. This is related to statement number 10 which shows the results of 43.3% agreeing that students like grammar suggestions from Grammarly.

Grammarly's Impact on Confidence and Writing Skills

Table 3. Grammarly's Impact on Confidence and Writing Skills

No	Statement	Answer Options				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
11	Using Grammarly increased my confidence in writing.	0	0,0%	15,0%	57,5%	27,5%
12	Grammarly helped me improve my writing skills.	0	2,5%	12,5%	52,5%	32,5%
13	I feel more comfortable writing without using Grammarly.	0	4,2%	10,0%	56,7%	29,2%
14	Grammarly makes me more confident in my writing.	0	1,7%	9,2%	58,3%	30,8%
15	Grammarly helped me learn from my writing mistakes.	0	0,8%	10,0%	45,0%	44,2%

Table 3 shows that most students agreed on Grammarly's impact on confidence and writing skills. This can be seen in statement 11, where more than half of the sample said that using Grammarly can increase confidence in writing. In addition, most students agreed with the statements presented. It was noted that only a small percentage, specifically 1.84%, disagreed with the statement provided.

Comparison with Traditional Teacher Feedback

Table 4. Comparison with Traditional Teacher Feedback

No	Statement	Answer Options				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
16	Suggestions from Grammarly are more useful than feedback from teachers.	0	2,5%	12,5%	58,3%	26,7%
17	I trust the feedback given by the teacher more than Grammarly.	0	0,0%	4,2%	48,3%	47,5%
18	The feedback from Grammarly helped me understand my mistakes better than the feedback from the teacher.	0	0,0%	10,0%	41,7%	48,3%

Table 4 shows that most students expressed agreement on the comparison with traditional teacher feedback in the Grammarly app. This can be seen in statement 16, where more than half of the sample said that the suggestions from Grammarly were more useful than the feedback from the teacher. In addition, most students agreed with the statements presented. It was noted that only a small percentage, specifically 0.83%, disagreed with the statement provided.

Weaknesses of Grammarly App

Table 5. Weaknesses of Grammarly App

No	Statement	Answer Options				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
19	Grammarly often fails to detect errors in a broader context.	0	0,8%	7,5%	40,8%	50,8%
20	Some of Grammarly's suggestions were not relevant to the context of my writing.	0	0,8%	11,7%	40,0%	47,5%

Table 5 shows that most students agreed on the weaknesses of the Grammarly app. This can be seen in statement 17, where more than half of the sample said that Grammarly often fails to detect errors in a broader context. In addition, most students agreed with the statements presented. It was noted that only a small percentage, specifically 0.8%, disagreed with the statement provided.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings from this study provide significant insights into the perceptions of EFL students regarding the use of the Grammarly application in enhancing their writing skills. The data collected from 120 students at the University of Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. Hamka Jakarta indicate that while Grammarly is generally perceived as beneficial, there are also notable concerns and limitations.

One of the primary concerns raised by students is related to the usability of Grammarly. Students reported that the user interface is not always intuitive and technical issues often disrupt their usage. These usability issues align with findings from previous studies, such as those by [39], who noted similar challenges faced by students using Grammarly in their writing processes. According to [40] positive perspective is a vital give that boosts confidence resilience and ability to see beyond one self during difficult times. In academic and professional environment, it is crucial to strike a balance between perfect grammar and effective writing style. Grammatical errors and inconsistencies in writing style can impact even the most brilliant of thoughts and study findings. The purpose of Grammarly is to close this gap by empowering writers to create polished and powerful material that captures the essence of their ideas [41].

The research found that students have mixed views regarding the accuracy of the grammar and spelling corrections provided by Grammarly. While many students appreciate the tool's ability to identify and correct basic errors, there are concerns about the appropriateness of the suggestions in specific contexts. This finding is consistent with [42] study, which indicated that Grammarly often fails to provide suitable suggestions for complex writing issues. Inaccurate corrections can lead students to mistrust the tool and rely more on their intuition, which may not always be correct.

A significant number of students expressed that using Grammarly does not always boost their writing confidence. Some even feel that they become overly dependent on the application, which diminishes their ability to identify and correct errors independently. This observation is supported by [9] findings, which suggest that over-reliance on automated feedback technology can reduce students' confidence and hinder their ability to develop independent writing skills.

Students tend to appreciate direct feedback from teachers more than the suggestions provided by Grammarly. They feel that teacher feedback is more specific and helps them understand their mistakes better. This supports previous research indicating that human feedback is generally more effective in improving students' writing skills compared to automated feedback. According to [43], feedback provided by teachers can be more comprehensive and tailored to individual student needs, which is crucial in the language learning process.

The primary obstacle faced by students when using Grammarly is technical issues. Many students reported frequent difficulties in accessing certain features and were disrupted by unstable internet connections. These technical obstacles reduce the perceived ease of use, ultimately affecting the acceptance and usage level of the Grammarly application among students. This aligns with the findings of, who noted that technical difficulties can significantly hinder the effectiveness of technology in educational settings.

Students also complained about Grammarly's limitations in providing feedback relevant to the specific context of their writing. According to [39], feedback must be relevant and contextual to be effective in language learning. Grammarly's inability to provide contextual feedback creates obstacles in the students' writing learning process.

Some students feel that dependence on Grammarly reduces their overall writing skills. They become too reliant on automated suggestions and do not develop the ability to correct their errors independently. This hinders the development of critical skills necessary for good writing. According to, over-reliance on technology can hinder the development of essential language skills if the technology is not used in a way that supports active and reflective learning.

Based on the research findings and supported by relevant theories, it can be concluded that while Grammarly has the potential to assist in learning English writing, there are significant weaknesses and obstacles. Students' perceptions indicate that the accuracy and relevance of Grammarly's feedback need improvement and the application's usability must be enhanced to increase acceptance and effectiveness. Using technology like Grammarly should be accompanied by proper guidance and training to optimize its benefits in the context of language learning.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it is clear that while Grammarly has the potential to assist EFL students in improving their writing skills, there are significant limitations and obstacles that need to be addressed. Usability issues that students often experience technical difficulties and find the interface not very intuitive, which hinders the overall user experience. While the accuracy of corrections using Grammarly helps in identifying basic errors, its suggestions are not always appropriate for complex writing contexts, leading to mixed perceptions regarding its accuracy. This can have an impact on confidence in writing but reliance on Grammarly can reduce students' confidence and their ability to self-correct errors, which is crucial for developing independent writing skills. The preference for feedback from the teacher led students to favour direct feedback from the teacher, which they found more specific and useful compared to the automated suggestions from Grammarly. Technical and contextual relevance provide frequent technical issues and Grammarly's inability to provide contextually relevant feedback is a significant obstacle faced by students.

These findings suggest that while Grammarly can be a useful tool, it should be complemented with teacher feedback and proper training to maximize its benefits in the language learning process. Enhancing the usability and contextual accuracy of Grammarly could further improve its effectiveness as a supplementary tool for learning writing skills.

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