

EXPLOIT THE GRAMMARLY APPLICATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE
PROGRAM WRITING SKILLS: IN PERCEPTIONS

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history: Received: July 24, 2025 Revised: July 28, 2025 Accepted: August 14, 2025 Published: August 30, 2025</p> <p>Keywords: Writing skill Grammarly Exploit Grammarly Perception</p>	<p>In recent years, educational technology has transformed how students develop academic writing skills. Digital tools not only improve efficiency but also enhance learning through interactive and adaptive feedback. Among these innovations, artificial intelligence-based writing assistants provide immediate feedback, linguistic accuracy, and stylistic improvement. Grammarly, in particular, has gained attention in higher education for its accessibility, user-friendly interface, and ability to address grammar, vocabulary, and coherence. Its widespread use among non-native English-speaking students underscores the need to understand how learners perceive and utilize such tools. This study examines English Education students' perceptions of Grammarly at Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Banyuwangi as a tool to enhance academic writing. Using a qualitative descriptive approach and purposive sampling, ten students participated in semi-structured interviews. The research explored usage frequency, perceived benefits, and limitations. Results indicate that students generally view Grammarly positively, especially for improving grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary. Features like real-time feedback, tone detection, and clarity suggestions are valued for aiding learning. However, concerns include occasional contextual inaccuracies and the risk of overreliance, potentially reducing self-editing and critical thinking skills. The study concludes that Grammarly should supplement, not replace, teacher feedback or manual revision, and recommends further research on its long-term impact and integration with other writing resources.</p> <p><i>This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA license.</i></p> <div></div>
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INTRODUCTION

One of the main objectives of learning English is for students to be able to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing. Writing is a fundamental skill in

English language learning, essential for both academic success and effective communication. It requires continuous practice and is especially important for English majors, as it supports the completion of academic tasks like theses (Rejeki, 2023). However, many students still struggle with grammar, vocabulary, and sentence construction (Ghufron and Rosyida 2018).

Technological advances have introduced tools that support writing development, one of which is Grammarly. Previous studies focused on general writing tasks (Bailey & Lee, 2020), but none examined how students perceive Grammarly's role in thesis writing, where technical language and critical thinking are essential. It is widely used by English education students for academic writing and is considered effective in reducing language errors (O'Neill and Russell 2019). However, it has limitations in improving content and organization. Some researchers warn that Grammarly should not replace teacher feedback, especially regarding conceptual aspects. However, this study also highlights several compelling reasons why students choose to use academic writing checkers.

Despite the growing body of research on Grammarly's role in enhancing writing accuracy and mechanics, there remains a limited understanding of how students perceive its application in high-stakes academic contexts, such as thesis writing, where critical thinking, content development, and disciplinary conventions are essential. Previous studies have primarily examined Grammarly's impact on general writing tasks or surface-level language improvement, often overlooking its influence on students' learning attitudes, self-editing strategies, and dependency risks in complex academic writing. This study addresses that gap by specifically investigating English Education students' perceptions of Grammarly in the context of completing final academic assignments, providing insights into both its pedagogical potential and its constraints.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the intersection between automated feedback and students' critical engagement with writing, highlighting not only the perceived benefits of Grammarly but also the challenges and limitations that influence its effective use. By examining these dimensions through a qualitative descriptive lens, the study offers a nuanced perspective that extends beyond mere error correction to encompass learners' autonomy, motivation, and digital literacy in academic writing.

Conducting this research is important because understanding students' perceptions can inform more balanced integration of AI-powered tools into higher education writing instruction. Insights from this study can guide educators in designing pedagogical strategies that maximize Grammarly's strengths—such as real-time feedback and clarity suggestions—while mitigating overreliance and fostering independent writing competence. Ultimately, the findings contribute to ongoing discussions about the role of emerging technologies in shaping academic literacy and supporting sustainable writing development for EFL learners.

This research is important because Grammarly has become one of the most widely used writing aids by students, especially in compiling final assignments. Many students tend to rely on this application as their main writing aid, so it is important to know whether they fully understand Grammarly's advantages and limitations. By understanding students'

perceptions, this research is expected to help both educators and students optimize the use of Grammarly in academic writing and avoid excessive reliance on automated feedback.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies have consistently highlighted the role of Grammarly as a supportive digital tool in improving students' academic writing. (Bailey and Lee 2020) emphasized its effectiveness in enhancing surface-level writing aspects such as grammar and mechanics through automated feedback. Similarly, (O'Neill and Russell 2019) reported that university students perceive Grammarly positively; however, they noted its limitations in improving content organization and critical thinking. Furthermore, (Ghufron and Rosyida 2018) found that while Grammarly reduces language errors, it cannot fully replace teacher feedback, particularly regarding conceptual aspects of writing. More recent studies by (TM Inayah 2024) as well as (FA Khonirin and R Roslaini 2024) revealed that positive perceptions of Grammarly are linked to increased learning motivation and linguistic awareness, although concerns about overreliance on the tool persist. These findings support the importance of exploring students' perceptions to better understand how Grammarly influences academic writing development, which is the focus of the present study.

Writing Skills

Writing is a fundamental skill in academic settings, particularly for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. (Nova 2018) emphasized that writing proficiency is necessary for academic communication, especially when completing final assignments. (Visser and Sukavatee 2020) explained that writing demands not only the ability to form grammatically correct sentences but also the capacity for structured thinking, organization, and clarity. Additionally, found that writing about personal experiences in English can improve psychological well-being, based on a qualitative study of students' reflective practices. These studies confirm that writing is both a cognitive and affective process essential for academic and personal growth.

Grammarly

Grammarly is a digital tool designed to support writing development by automatically detecting and correcting grammar, punctuation, and style errors. (Karyuatry 2018) introduced Grammarly as a helpful proofreader capable of addressing both basic and complex writing issues. (Lailika 2019) noted that Grammarly's efficiency and speed made it especially useful for students facing time constraints. In a mixed-method study, (Ardhy 2023) found that 72.32% of 13 English Education students at IAIN Manado had positive perceptions of Grammarly due to its real-time feedback, user-friendliness, and learning support. Similarly, (RS Dewi 2022), using a quantitative descriptive design with 75

respondents, reported that Grammarly helped students improve grammar, vocabulary, and paraphrasing skills, although the limited features in the free version and the need for internet access were noted as drawbacks. (FA Khonirin and R Roslaini 2024), through a Likert-scale survey with 120 students, confirmed Grammarly's perceived usefulness, though some students expressed concerns about overreliance and reduced independent editing skills.

Perception

Perception plays a crucial role in determining how students engage with digital tools in academic settings. (Goldstein and Brockmole 2016) defined perception as the process of interpreting sensory input to respond to one's environment. In the context of learning technologies, perception influences motivation and behavioral outcomes. (Shambodo 2020) argued that perception is central to communication and learning effectiveness. (Jamulia 2018), in a qualitative study, explored students' views on Grammarly and found that perceived usefulness, ease of use, and alignment with academic goals significantly shaped students' willingness to adopt the tool. Supporting this, (TM Inayah 2024) concluded that positive perceptions of Grammarly were linked to increased motivation and linguistic awareness, based on interviews and observations with English Education students using Grammarly for writing tasks.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative description approach, which is appropriate for exploring social phenomena and understanding participants' experiences in depth (Pakdaman et al. 2019). Data were presented in a narrative form, emphasizing context, meaning, and the subjective perspectives of participants. This research design was chosen because it is particularly effective for capturing participants' perceptions in their natural context without manipulating the study environment. The aim is not to test a hypothesis but to obtain a detailed understanding of English Education students' experiences in using Grammarly for academic writing. A qualitative descriptive approach allows the researcher to present participants' perspectives in their own words, producing rich and contextually grounded data. This method is especially relevant for studying perceptions, which involve subjective interpretations that cannot be fully measured quantitatively. It also aligns with the flexibility required in semi-structured interviews, enabling deeper exploration of emerging themes and clarifying participants' viewpoints (Pakdaman et al. 2019)

The research focused on the perceptions of English Education students at Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Banyuwangi (UNTAG) regarding their use of the Grammarly application in academic writing. To obtain meaningful data, the researcher used purposive sampling to select participants who were considered information-rich cases and aligned with the study's objectives (M Ahmad and S Wilkins 2024). A total of ten undergraduate students from the English Education Program (2020–2021 cohort) were purposively selected based on the following criteria: (1) actively enrolled in the English Education Study Program, (2)

prior experience using Grammarly in academic contexts, (3) used Grammarly primarily in urgent or high-pressure situations such as approaching deadlines, grammatical uncertainty, or low writing confidence, (4) used Grammarly at least three times within a one-month period, and (5) applied it to high-stakes assignments such as thesis drafts, research papers, or coursework valued at over 30% of their total grade.

The main method of data collection was semi-structured interviews. Each interview lasted approximately 15–20 minutes and was conducted in English. The interview protocol consisted of ten guided questions divided into two areas: students' perceptions of Grammarly's impact on their academic writing and their perceived advantages and limitations of the application (Taherdoost 2022). All interviews were audio-recorded with permission and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. Through these interviews, documentation, and observation—the study aimed to ensure credibility, depth, and validity in capturing students' perceptions of Grammarly as a digital writing support tool.

Despite efforts to maintain the rigor and trustworthiness of the research process, this study faced several limitations in its research procedure, data collection, and data analysis. In terms of the research procedure, the study was conducted within a limited time frame, which restricted the ability to conduct follow-up interviews or prolonged engagement with participants. The absence of long-term observation also limited the depth of insight into how students' perceptions of Grammarly might evolve over time or across different academic tasks.

Regarding data collection, the primary reliance on semi-structured interviews while effective for capturing subjective experiences, may have introduced biases related to self-reporting. A semi-structured interview is a qualitative data collection method where the researcher prepares a set of predetermined questions but allows flexibility for participants to elaborate on their answers and for new questions to emerge during the conversation. Unlike structured interviews, which strictly follow a fixed set of questions, semi-structured interviews enable researchers to explore participants' perspectives in depth while maintaining focus on the research objectives (Taherdoost 2022). Participants may have provided socially desirable responses or overemphasized the benefits of using Grammarly.

Data analysis relied solely on participant triangulation. Responses from all participants were compared to confirm key perceptions about Grammarly, without thematic coding or document analysis. Moreover, although purposive sampling allowed the researcher to select participants with relevant experience, the small sample size (ten participants) and the focus on a single institution limit the generalizability of the findings.

These limitations should be considered when interpreting the results, and future research could address them by incorporating a larger and more diverse participant pool, using mixed-method approaches, or conducting longitudinal studies to capture changes in perception over time (Creswell and Plano Clark 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study based on data collected through semi-structured interviews with ten participants. The results are organized into key themes that emerged from the analysis, including the frequency of Grammarly use, its perceived impact on writing skills, the specific aspects of writing it improves, and students' practical experiences with the tool. Additionally, participants' views on Grammarly as a learning aid, the most helpful features, as well as its limitations and suggested improvements are discussed. These findings provide a comprehensive understanding of how students engage with Grammarly as a digital tool to support their academic writing development.

Frequency of Using Grammarly

The frequency of Grammarly use varied among participants. Six out of ten participants reported using Grammarly regularly, especially during the editing and proofreading stages of their academic tasks, while four participants used it only when necessary or under specific circumstances, such as approaching deadlines.

"Not very often, only when I need it. Usually when I'm unsure about grammar or when I'm writing in a hurry." (P1)

"I use Grammarly almost every time I write academic assignments, especially during the editing and proofreading stages." (P5)

Grammarly's Impact on Writing Skills

Nine out of ten participants agreed that Grammarly positively contributes to improving their writing skills. They stated that Grammarly not only corrects grammatical errors but also raises their awareness of sentence structure and word choice.

"Yes, Grammarly does help improve my writing skills. It not only corrects my mistakes but also explains why they are incorrect, which helps me learn and avoid repeating the same errors." (P5)

"It contributes quite a bit. It doesn't just fix mistakes—it also introduces new vocabulary and correct sentence structures that I didn't know before." (P1)

Specific Writing Aspects Improved

All participants mentioned that Grammarly is particularly helpful in improving grammatical accuracy, sentence structure, and vocabulary. The suggestions provided by Grammarly made their writing clearer, more formal, and easier to understand.

"Grammarly helps me the most with grammar and sentence structure because I often don't realize there are mistakes." (P2)

"Grammar that I often find confusing with punctuation and tense. Grammarly can be a helpful thing to break down sentences to make them clearer and easier to read." (P3)

Practical Use Cases

Most participants reported using Grammarly in significant academic situations such as revising thesis drafts, research papers, or final projects. Seven out of ten participants provided concrete examples where Grammarly helped them refine sentence flow and maintain an academic tone.

“When I was about to have a thesis supervision session with my lecturer, Grammarly provided quick feedback, so I could fix my thesis before it was reviewed.” (P4)

“Once, I was working on a research paper and was unsure about the formal tone and sentence flow. Grammarly helped me revise awkward sentences and improved the overall clarity.” (P5)

Grammarly as a Learning Tool

Eight out of ten participants perceived Grammarly not only as a correction tool but also as a learning aid. They appreciated its explanations, which helped them understand grammar rules and apply them independently.

“It supports my learning process rather than merely correcting errors. The explanations provided help me internalize the rules and apply them more effectively in future writing.” (P8)

Helpful Features

The most valued features were real-time feedback, tone detection, clarity suggestions, and grammar checks. These features were considered highly effective in helping participants correct errors instantly while writing.

“Real-time feedback is the feature I appreciate the most. So, I can fix mistakes while I’m writing instead of waiting until I finish.” (P1)

“The most helpful features are the grammar checker, tone detector, and clarity suggestions. These make my writing more polished and appropriate for academic purposes.” (P5)

Limitations and Challenges

Some participants reported contextual inaccuracies in Grammarly’s suggestions, particularly in complex or technical academic writing. Four out of ten participants also expressed concerns about overreliance on the tool.

“Sometimes Grammarly suggests changes that don’t match the context, especially with complex academic language.” (P5)

“Sometimes, yes. When I’m in a rush, I tend to just accept Grammarly’s suggestions without thinking too much about them.” (P1)

Suggestions for Improvement

Participants suggested that Grammarly should include more advanced academic features, such as citation checks, enhanced context detection, and better support for technical vocabulary.

“I would recommend the development of features specifically designed for academic writing, such as citation checks and support for disciplinary vocabulary.” (P8)

“Grammarly needs to explore other language enhancements, not just focusing on English, by developing detection and suggestion capabilities for other languages.” (P10).

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that Grammarly is widely recognized by English Education students as a helpful digital tool for supporting academic writing. Before conducting the research, it was assumed that students mainly use Grammarly as an instant correction tool without deeply engaging with its feedback. The interviews confirmed that

this assumption holds true for some participants; however, the results also revealed that a majority of students actively use Grammarly not only to correct their mistakes but also to learn from them.

Before the study, students' use of Grammarly was generally driven by practicality. Most participants relied on it during high-pressure situations such as approaching deadlines, thesis submission, or when they lacked confidence in grammar accuracy. Their expectations were primarily focused on Grammarly's ability to detect and correct grammatical errors quickly. For instance, only a few participants initially recognized its potential as a learning aid that could enhance long-term writing skills.

After the study, through interviews and reflections, it became evident that students gained a broader understanding of Grammarly's features and its impact on their writing development. The majority (9 out of 10 participants) acknowledged that Grammarly not only corrects errors but also improves their awareness of sentence structure, vocabulary usage, and formal academic tone. This shows a shift from perceiving Grammarly as a mere editing tool to recognizing it as a supplementary learning resource.

The detailed analysis also indicates that students' perceptions evolved during the research process. Several participants highlighted that engaging critically with Grammarly's feedback helped them internalize grammar rules and develop self-editing skills. For example, one participant (P8) stated that the explanations provided by Grammarly supported independent learning, helping her apply grammar rules more effectively in future writing. This aligns with previous studies by (TM Inayah 2024), which reported that positive perceptions of Grammarly can increase linguistic awareness and learning motivation.

However, the study also confirmed that concerns regarding overreliance persist. Four participants admitted they tend to accept Grammarly's suggestions without much evaluation, particularly when under time pressure. This finding is consistent with Alfian and Mahmud (2023), who warned that excessive reliance on digital grammar checkers may hinder the development of critical thinking and independent editing skills.

Moreover, the interviews revealed a recurring issue of contextual inaccuracies in Grammarly's suggestions, especially in technical and academic writing. Students observed that Grammarly occasionally fails to detect discipline-specific language nuances, requiring them to manually assess whether the suggestions fit the context. These findings reinforce the argument by (A Maypida and ESD Damanik 2024) that automated tools cannot replace teacher feedback, particularly regarding conceptual and content-related aspects of writing.

In terms of students' expectations for improvement, many suggested that Grammarly should integrate features tailored for academic writing, such as citation checks, improved detection for complex contexts, and greater adaptability to individual writing styles. This reflects a demand for more sophisticated AI writing tools that go beyond surface-level corrections.

Overall, this study shows a clear progression in students' perceptions—from initially viewing Grammarly as a quick-fix solution to recognizing its role as a valuable supplementary

learning aid. It also highlights the need for educators to guide students in using Grammarly critically and thoughtfully, ensuring that its use enhances rather than replaces the development of independent writing skills.

Thus, the discussion reinforces that the effectiveness of Grammarly lies not only in its technological capabilities but also in how students engage with it before and after gaining awareness of its strengths and limitations. Educators should encourage students to balance automated feedback with manual revision and teacher input, maximizing the pedagogical benefits of digital tools in academic writing.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion above, it can be concluded that Grammarly is perceived by English Education students as a practical and supportive tool that significantly helps improve their academic writing skills. Most participants agreed that Grammarly is useful for enhancing grammar accuracy, refining sentence structure, and expanding vocabulary choices. It also provides valuable real-time feedback that allows students to correct errors immediately and learn from the explanations given.

However, this research also highlights several limitations of Grammarly, such as its sometimes-inaccurate suggestions for complex or technical contexts and the risk of students becoming overly reliant on automated corrections without critically reflecting on their own writing. Students suggested that Grammarly could be further developed with more features specifically designed for academic purposes, such as citation checks and support for various writing styles and languages.

Therefore, it is recommended that students use Grammarly wisely as a complementary tool rather than a primary writing guide. Educators should encourage students to balance the use of Grammarly with manual proofreading, peer feedback, and teacher guidance to maximize the development of independent writing skills and critical thinking. Future research could explore a larger sample, compare the effects of Grammarly with other writing aids, or evaluate how students combine Grammarly with teacher feedback in the writing process.

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