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STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE USE OF GRAMMARLY IN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS WRITING

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate the students' perception of using Grammarly in their undergraduate thesis writing. It also explores the Grammarly application's strengths and weaknesses. A random sampling technique was used to collect the sample. The mixed-method sequential explanatory design was used in this study. The participants of the study were 35 students enrolled in the English Education program at IAIN Palangka Raya of 2017. The SPSS 25 program was used to examine the data. The data in this study was gathered through the use of a questionnaire and an interview. The study's results showed that 80.1% of the participants highly agreed. This study found that students gave positive responses to the use of Grammarly to assist them to analyze their thesis writing. The findings showed that the Grammarly application has several strengths such as clear and easy-to-understand feedback, time savings for students when checking grammar, and a useful feature. Meanwhile, Grammarly's weaknesses are that it can't detect tenses that the students used in a time, students can't download the feedback in form of a file and they must pay to access all of Grammarly's premium features.

Keywords: EFL Students Perception, Grammarly, Undergraduate Thesis Writing

INTRODUCTION

Grammar is one of the most important linguistic components in EFL writing. The quality of EFL student's academic writing, according to Yang (2018, p. 328) shows their intelligibility and comprehension, which is always focused in higher education. Of course, being grammatically correct is important because it is one of the things that defines the quality of a writing as well as readers' ability to comprehend it. In addition to developing their writing ideas, according to Karyuatry (2018, p. 83) students should be knowledgeable of a variety of grammatical rules, stretching from sentence construction and forms to the use of articles. Because of its complexity, students may grow dissatisfied and demotivated to study writing. To put it differently, EFL students have a difficult time mastering this component.

According to Sabarun (2019, p.1), providing corrective feedback to learners is a crucial aspect of the learning process in the context of L2 writing. Corrective feedback from teachers can help students minimize grammatical errors, develop writing abilities, and makes composition writing easier. According to Habibi, Wachyunni, & Husni (2017) capitalization errors, punctuation errors, poor organization/illogical sequencing, grammatical errors, spelling errors, and confusion on supporting arguments are all common challenges in English writing. Writing, particularly academic writing, takes a great deal of study and practice in order to improve a student's writing ability.

Perdana & Farida (2019, p. 2) state that an online grammar checker is a tool that evaluates for grammar in writing. It includes not only grammar but also punctuation and spelling. It can check for contextual factors, word choices, and plagiarism in addition to simple mending. The use of a grammar checker benefits students. The tool helps kids become better students who aren't

ashamed to write even though they commit errors since they can recognize and repair their problems on their own. It can assist students in improving their writing skills by highlighting and correcting grammar errors. Grammar rules can be taught by studying the feedback provided by the grammar checker. According to (Perdana & Farida, 2019) one of the automated feedback programs that can be used in an EFL student writing class is Grammarly. It's a checking tool that can help student find grammar errors in their writing.

Undergraduate thesis is one type of academic writing. It is a structured research project in which undergraduate students create a scientific report based on the findings and literature. While (Richard, 2010) claims that a thesis is a concept that a person argues for and commits to defend through rational and fact-based arguments. A thesis is a report on a research project that was submitted as part of a university degree program. Every university student must complete a thesis in order to graduate.

The aim of this study is to know about students' perceptions of Grammarly's use in undergraduate thesis writing, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of Grammarly application. Students are unsure whether their grammar is correct, thus Grammarly can assist them in correcting their mistakes while writing their thesis. Grammarly, as an online grammar checker software, has both strengths and weaknesses. The strengths and weaknesses of Grammarly as experienced by students were studied in this study.

METHOD

This study used a mixed-method sequential explanatory design in which quantitative data was collected and analyzed, then qualitative data was used to explain or elaborate the quantitative data's findings. The participants in this study are students enrolled in the 2017 English Education study program. The participants were 35 students who are working on their thesis and have used Grammarly before. The study began on September 5, 2021, and ended on September 12, 2021, at the State Islamic Institute of Palangkaraya. The researcher used a closed-ended questionnaire and an interview to gather data. The closed-ended questionnaire was distributed via WhatsApp using a Google Form link.

First, the researcher will collect the instruments which the questionnaire spread to the students. The researcher collected the main data (item score/responses) of 2017 students in English education. Next, the researcher arranged the collect score In the spread of frequency of score table, the researcher looked at the mean, median, and mode of the students' scores, as well as the standard deviation score. Then, the researcher did interview to students who were chosen randomly. The results of the questionnaire are supported and explained by the interview data. Following the collection of data, the researcher interprets the analytic results. The data was also categorized and reviewed by the researcher depending on the categories. The results of the questionnaire were supported up with data from the interviews. Last, the researcher explained the conclusion reached as a result of the data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Perception of the features of Grammarly

The first result is Grammarly features which consists of four themes, namely language style, Grammar, Spelling, and Punctuation. The following tabel 4.1 shows the result of interval:

Table 4.1
Student's Perception of Grammarly Features

Theme	Interval%
Language Style	84
Grammar	90
Spelling	85
Punctuation	87

Table above shows percentages that 35 respondents of the use of Grammarly in statement 12-15 in the questionnaire. Based on the data, the highest percentage was obtained 90% by Grammar. Punctuation were second got strongly agree category with 87%. Also, spelling were third got strongly agree category with the result of 85% percentage. Then, language style was fourth got strongly agree category with 84%.

The result of questionnaire also supported by the interview data. From the students who have been interviewed, the following were interview expert:

"Most of my mistakes were spelling. Grammarly helps me to correct my spelling automatically and I don't need to look for how to spell word in the dictionary". (RS)

"Grammarly can directly check the thesis writing errors especially my grammar mistakes. It helps me to change my grammar mistakes using the feedback". (NFV)

"Grammarly helps me to check my punctuation because sometimes I forget to use punctuation in my writing". (J)

Strengths and Weaknesses of Grammarly Application

The second result is strengths and weaknesses of Grammarly. The data were got from interview. As follow:

"The strengths are it can fix the spelling accurately and make the sentence as simple as possible". (RS)

"The strength of Grammarly is when I upload my file in Grammarly, they can give directly the suggestion and then we can click the revision in Grammarly. And in our writing, they can automatically change". (NFV)

"The strengths of Grammarly are helping by remain and replace the wrong word, helping by provide the equivalent of word, and helping the author to analyze the plagiarism of sentence or paragraph". (RA)

Then, the students also faced the weaknesses of Grammarly.

"I can't download my writing which has been granted in Grammarly according to the file what I want. For the example, when I import a file in form of Ms. Word, I can't download it in the same file. So I must copy paste the sentence from Grammarly to the blank space of Ms. Word". (NFV)

“The weakness of Grammarly is when it corrected my thesis specially to shorten the sentences or paragraph, it can change the meaning. So, I need to check it many times. I am afraid of making people misunderstand when they read it”. (RS)

“Grammarly can’t detect what tenses that I have to use in some parts of my writing such as simple past or simple present. The Grammarly is just able to detect my own mistakes such as punctuation, subject verb agreement, and spelling without seeing what tenses I have to use in some parts in my thesis”. (RA)

Discussion

EFL Students’ Perception of the Use of Grammarly

Grammarly has a variety of tools that cover significant aspects including grammar, spelling, punctuation, and style. Ghufon (2019) states that Grammarly is more effective in minimizing mistakes in word usage (diction), language usage (grammar), and writing mechanics (spelling and punctuation). However, improving the content and structure of students’ EFL writing, on the other hand, is less beneficial. In terms of vocabulary usage, language use, and mechanics, Grammarly can clearly and directly identify EFL writing difficulties and faults. Grammarly may also detect missing spaces after periods and misspelled words, including proper nouns, and provides many alternative options (feedback provision) for the misspelled terms. Grammarly feedback helped them figure out which one was correct. The students can then independently evaluate their writing based on the input. Grammarly not only improves their writing, but it also makes them more motivated and optimistic about using an online learning system.

Grammarly, according to the study, is better at minimizing errors in terms of word usage (diction), language use (grammar), and writing style, which is similar to Ghufon’s findings (2019). (Punctuation and spelling) Improving the content and structure of students’ EFL writing, on the other hand, is less beneficial. According to one of the students, “Grammarly” can clearly and directly identify EFL writing problems and/or faults in terms of vocabulary usages, language use, and mechanics.

The study indicated that Grammarly is better in minimizing errors in terms of word usages (diction), language use (grammar), and writing style, which is similar to Ghufon (2019) data findings. (spelling and punctuation). However, improving the content and structure of students’ EFL writing, on the other hand, is less beneficial. According to one of the students, ‘Grammarly’ can clearly and directly identify EFL writing problems and/or mistakes in term of vocabulary usages, language use, and mechanics.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Grammarly Application

Grammarly, according to the majority of students, provides both direct and indirect feedback that is simple to interpret. Cavaleri & Dianati (2016, p. 3) argue that Grammar checker recognize comments on grammatical errors. O’Neill & Russell (2019, p. 44), state that Grammarly offers a number of advantages of its users. For starters, Grammarly provides both direct and indirect feedback. The note with the correction and explanation can provide quick feedback, but the error with the emphasized error can provide indirect feedback. Grammarly’s tool for detecting EFL students’s writing errors is also really useful. Cavaleri & Dianati (2016, p. 4) state that Grammarly is one of most popular online grammar checker nowadays. Grammarly is widely regarded as the most accurate English grammar checker.

Hakiki (2021, p. 6) states that Grammarly can also be used using add-ons or extensions in several web browsers by downloading it first, which can then be used directly on Google translate, email, Facebook, and others.

According to this study, the researcher found some weaknesses of Grammarly. It is unable to determine the writer's tense in a time. Simple past or simple present, for example. Grammarly's use is also restricted. If students want to use all of Grammarly premium's features, they must pay for it. Cavaleri & Dianati (2016, p. 5) state that Grammarly's free version is effective at detecting small errors such as comma errors and the misuse of articles. Meanwhile, the students used the free version of Grammarly in this research. As a result, it can only verify the article, space, and punctuation. It's possible that they'll get dissatisfied with Grammarly's performance. Furthermore, customers must pay to access the premium version. The premium version of Grammarly offers 150 more grammar points, as well as plagiarism detection, vocabulary enrichment suggestions, and contextual spelling. It also contains a short and comprehensive explanation of each grammar error.

It was also related to the result of Nova (2018), Grammarly has four distinct advantages. The software, for example, provides critical feedback on learning progress. In order to prepare for the next written text, students might practice self-revision and learn how to repair their mistakes. The efficiency with which documents can be downloaded is the second factor. Learners will have no trouble downloading the assessment results. Finally, there is a high rate of evaluation. The technique for checking is quick. It assists students in saving time when reviewing and revising their academic papers. Last but not least, Grammarly is a totally free service. Grammarly, on the other hand, has weaknesses such as inaccurate feedback, needless reference list checking, and an inability to evaluate content and context.

CONCLUSION

The research examined towards how students perception about using Grammarly in their undergraduate thesis writing. It was held in IAIN Palangka Raya for English education students of 2017. The use of Grammarly has been seen positively by students, with 80.1% strongly agree category. Grammarly has both strengths and weaknesses. Grammarly's strengths are that it provides both direct and indirect feedback, and that the feedback is simple to interpret. Grammarly also includes simple tools that can detect small mistakes in students' writing. Meanwhile, Grammarly's weaknesses include limited usage, the requirement to pay if students want to use all of Grammarly's premium features, and Grammarly's feedback was not always clear, requiring students to have a good understanding of grammar.

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