

## EFL STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES USING GRAMMARLY IN ENGLISH WRITING CLASSROOMS

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### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman mahasiswa EFL dalam menggunakan Grammarly pada kelas menulis bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus yang melibatkan dua belas mahasiswa semester tiga Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di sebuah universitas di Bogor, Jawa Barat. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner tertutup berbasis skala Likert dan wawancara semi-terstruktur, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan teknik analisis kualitatif yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa menggunakan Grammarly terutama pada tahap revisi untuk meningkatkan ketepatan tata bahasa dan kejelasan kalimat. Mahasiswa menulis draf awal tanpa fokus pada akurasi gramatikal, kemudian menggunakan Grammarly untuk mengevaluasi dan merevisi tulisan mereka secara selektif. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa Grammarly berperan sebagai alat pendukung pembelajaran yang dapat meningkatkan kesadaran linguistik, kemandirian, dan refleksi mahasiswa dalam menulis. Oleh karena itu, integrasi Grammarly secara kritis dapat memberikan kontribusi positif dalam pembelajaran menulis di konteks EFL.

**Kata kunci:** Grammarly, EFL students, writing process, automated writing evaluation, writing revision

### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to explore EFL students' experiences in using Grammarly in English writing classrooms. A qualitative case study was conducted involving twelve third-semester students from an English Education Program at a university in Bogor, West Java. Data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews and analyzed using qualitative data analysis procedures. The findings show that students mainly use Grammarly during the revision stage to improve grammatical accuracy and sentence clarity. Students tend to write initial drafts without focusing on grammar and later revise their writing by selectively applying Grammarly's feedback. These findings indicate that Grammarly functions as a supportive learning tool that enhances students' linguistic awareness, autonomy, and reflective writing practices. Therefore, the guided and critical integration of Grammarly can positively contribute to EFL writing instruction.*

**Keyword:** Grammarly, EFL students, writing process, automated writing evaluation, writing revision

### INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the most complex language skills for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). This skill requires not only the ability to express ideas in writing, but also mastery of grammar, vocabulary, and coherent and accurate text organization. In the context of EFL, many students experience difficulties in writing due to limited linguistic competence and a lack of confidence in

using English in writing (Hyland & Hyland, 2019). These difficulties often cause students to focus excessively on grammatical errors, thereby hindering the smooth development of ideas.

With the development of digital technology, writing instruction in EFL classrooms has begun to utilize various technology-based tools to support the writing process of students. One of the most widely used technologies is automated writing

evaluation (AWE) tools, which provide automatic feedback on students' writing. Grammarly is one of the most popular AWE tools and is widely used by EFL learners. This application provides direct and systematic feedback on grammatical errors, spelling, punctuation, word choice, and sentence clarity.

Previous research shows that Grammarly can help EFL students identify language errors and improve the accuracy of their writing. According to (Ranalli, 2018), automatic feedback from AWE tools has the potential to support the writing revision process and increase students' linguistic awareness, although its effectiveness is highly dependent on students' ability to critically utilize the feedback. According to (O'neill & Russell, 2019), students respond positively to the use of Grammarly because the feedback provided is instant and easily accessible, helping them to correct language errors independently.

However, several studies also highlight Grammarly's limitations in the context of writing learning. According to (Ghufron & Rosyida, 2018), while Grammarly is effective in helping with linguistic corrections, it provides less support for developing ideas and organizing writing without guidance from lecturers. In addition, unguided use of Grammarly has the potential to cause students to become dependent on automatic feedback and reduce critical thinking in writing.

Although a number of studies have discussed the effectiveness and perceptions of students towards Grammarly, studies that highlight the real experiences of EFL students in using Grammarly during the writing process in class are still limited. Understanding the experiences of students is very important because it can illustrate how Grammarly is actually used, how students interact with automatic feedback, and the challenges they face in the context of writing learning.

In English writing classes, EFL students generally follow a systematic writing procedure that begins with writing a first draft without focusing on grammatical accuracy, so that ideas can develop freely. After completing the draft, students upload or enter their writing into Grammarly to receive

automated feedback. They then analyze the feedback provided, revise their drafts accordingly, and finally evaluate the improvements in their writing after using the tool. Based on this writing process, this study is guided by the following research question: how do EFL students use Grammarly for writing? This study aims to explore EFL students' experiences in using Grammarly in English writing classes. This study focuses on how students utilize Grammarly during the writing process, the benefits they gain, and the obstacles they encounter. The results of this study are expected to contribute to writing instruction in the EFL context, particularly in effectively and critically integrating digital technology in writing classes.

#### **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the use of Grammarly by students in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) program in English writing classes. Qualitative research was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of students' experiences and perspectives in a natural learning context (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). This study was conducted at a university in Bogor, West Java, involving twelve third-semester students from the English Education Program who had experience using Grammarly as an artificial intelligence (AI)-based writing assistant in their writing classes. Data were collected through a closed questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire, distributed via Google Forms, was designed using a four-point Likert scale to explore students' use and experiences in writing activities, while semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants to gain deeper insights into how Grammarly was used during the writing process and its impact on writing practices. The collected data were analyzed using the qualitative data analysis procedure proposed by (Miles et al., 2014), which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data triangulation between the questionnaire and interview results was applied to ensure the credibility and reliability of the findings.

#### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The results of this study indicate that EFL students use Grammarly primarily as a tool during the

revision stage of the writing process. Questionnaire data shows that 89.58% of students strongly agree that they prefer to write their first draft without focusing on grammatical accuracy. Interview findings support these results, revealing that students feel more comfortable developing ideas freely when they are not distracted by automatic feedback. This practice reflects a process-based approach to writing, where idea development precedes linguistic accuracy.

After completing their initial draft, students generally upload or copy their writing into Grammarly for revision. The questionnaire results show that 87.50% of respondents strongly agree that they use Grammarly after completing their drafts. These findings indicate that students deliberately view Grammarly as a revision tool rather than a writing generator. By separating the drafting and revision stages, students can maintain their focus on content development before addressing linguistic accuracy, which is in line with the principles of process-based writing.

Further findings show that students actively interact with Grammarly's automatic feedback. A total of 83.33% of students strongly agree that they read the explanations provided by Grammarly before revising. Interview responses indicate that students use these explanations to understand grammar rules and recognize recurring errors in their writing. This indicates that Grammarly functions not only as an error detection tool but also as a learning aid that supports students' metalinguistic awareness, as suggested by (Ranalli, 2018).

When revising their drafts, 77.08% of students agreed that they applied Grammarly's feedback to improve their writing. However, interview data showed that students did not automatically accept all suggestions. Instead, they selectively applied corrections based on contextual relevance and intended meaning. This selective use indicates critical engagement with AI-generated feedback and supports previous findings emphasizing the importance of student judgment in using automated writing tools (Astuti & Sumarni, 2023).

Finally, the results show that students reflect on their writing improvements after using Grammarly. Questionnaire data shows that 85.42% of students strongly agree that they evaluate changes in the quality of their writing, especially in grammatical accuracy and sentence clarity. This reflective practice shows that Grammarly encourages student autonomy by helping them become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses in writing. Overall, the findings and discussion show that EFL students systematically integrate Grammarly into their writing process, using it primarily to support revision, improve accuracy, and develop greater awareness of language use.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Grammarly is used by EFL students primarily as a tool to assist in the revision stage of the writing process. Students tend to separate the idea development stage from the language improvement stage, allowing them to write their first draft more freely before paying attention to grammatical aspects. Grammarly helps students improve their grammatical accuracy, sentence clarity, and awareness of errors that often appear in their writing. In addition, students demonstrate a critical attitude by not fully accepting all automatic suggestions, but rather applying them selectively according to the desired context and meaning. These findings indicate that Grammarly functions not only as a language correction tool, but also as a learning tool that supports independence and reflection in writing. The implications of this study suggest that lecturers need to integrate Grammarly in a targeted and critical manner into writing instruction so that this technology can support the development of writing skills without reducing students' critical thinking abilities. Further research is recommended to involve a wider range of participants and examine the long-term impact of Grammarly use on the quality of students' writing.

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