ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES AND GRAMMARLY: AN ANALYSIS OF WRITING IMPROVEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Effective academic writing skills are crucial for success in higher education, but many non-native English speakers often face challenges in meeting the expected standards. Various tools and resources have emerged to address this issue, including the AI-powered writing assistant Grammarly. This paper investigates Grammarly's potential to enhance students' writing abilities in the higher education context. Through a comprehensive analysis of recent studies, the paper explores the effectiveness of Grammarly in improving the overall writing quality of English as a Foreign Language students, particularly in the context of research-based academic writing. The findings indicate that Grammarly's automated feedback can significantly reduce grammatical and spelling errors, leading to enhanced writing proficiency. Furthermore, the paper delves into the factors that contribute to the successful integration of Grammarly in the academic setting, such as user acceptance, feedback accuracy, and the unique challenges associated with research-oriented writing tasks.
Keywords: *Academic Writing, Grammarly, English As A Foreign Language (EFL) Students.*

INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in academic writing is a vital and indispensable skill for thriving in higher education, as it empowers students to effectively communicate their ideas, demonstrate their knowledge, and engage in scholarly discourse (Lin & Morrison, 2021). However, for non-native English speakers, the task of producing high-quality, research-based academic writing can be exceptionally challenging, as they often encounter significant linguistic and educational obstacles that can impede their progress. These obstacles may encompass limited fluency in English grammar, vocabulary, and academic writing conventions, as well as cultural differences in rhetorical styles and expectations. Consequently, non-native English speakers may necessitate additional support and resources to cultivate the essential skills for successful academic writing in the higher education setting (Kim et al., 2023).

In response to the challenges faced by non-native English speakers in higher education, various tools and resources have been developed to support students in improving their academic writing skills. One such tool that has gained significant attention in recent years is Grammarly, an AI-powered writing assistant that provides comprehensive feedback on grammatical accuracy, spelling, punctuation, and stylistic aspects of written text. Leveraging advanced artificial intelligence algorithms, Grammarly analyzes student writing and offers detailed suggestions to enhance clarity, coherence, and overall writing quality (Nazari et al., 2021) (Arisandi & Sudarajat, 2023).

Effectiveness of Grammarly in Improving Academic Writing

Existing research on the effectiveness of Grammarly in enhancing the academic writing of non-native English speakers in higher education has yielded mixed results. Some studies have reported significant improvements in students' writing quality and demonstrated the positive impact of Grammarly's automated feedback on reducing grammatical and spelling errors. (Guo et al., 2021) (Nazari et al., 2021) These findings suggest that Grammarly can serve as a valuable tool to support non-native English speakers

in developing stronger academic writing skills, particularly in areas such as sentence structure, word choice, and overall coherence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have explored the potential of Grammarly to enhance the academic writing skills of non-native English speakers in higher education (Dewi, 2023). The findings of these studies suggest that Grammarly can be an effective tool in promoting learning behavior and attitudinal technology acceptance among students, primarily through its formative feedback and assessment capabilities. By providing real-time feedback on common grammatical and spelling errors, Grammarly allows students to identify and rectify their weaknesses, thereby improving their overall writing proficiency.

Moreover, the integration of Grammarly in the academic writing process has been found to contribute to a significant reduction in grammatical and spelling errors, leading to more polished and cohesive written work. This, in turn, can lead to enhanced clarity and effectiveness in communicating students' ideas and research findings, which are crucial for success in higher education (Vacalares et al., 2023).

The extant literature on the effectiveness of Grammarly in improving academic writing skills among non-native English speakers in higher education reveals several key insights (Koltovskaia, 2020) (Yousofi, 2022) (Fitria et al., 2022). A study by (Nazari et al., 2021) investigated the application of Grammarly in higher education, finding that the tool could be an efficient means of promoting learning behavior and attitudinal technology acceptance among non-native postgraduate students through its formative feedback and assessment.

However, it is important to note that Grammarly's efficacy in improving academic writing is not without limitations (Winans, 2021). Some studies have cautioned that Grammarly may not be a panacea for all writing difficulties, as it does not address more complex issues such as logical flow, argument development, and adherence to disciplinary conventions (Fontenelle-Tereshchuk, 2024). As such, the effective integration of Grammarly in the academic setting necessitates a comprehensive approach that combines the tool's automated feedback with targeted instruction and support from instructors and writing tutors.

The increasing globalization of higher education has led to a heightened demand for English proficiency among students, particularly in academic contexts (Xie, 2023). English for Academic Purposes (EAP) has emerged as a critical component of language education, focusing on equipping non-native speakers with the skills necessary to succeed in an academic environment (Rautenbach et al., 2018). Concurrently, digital tools like Grammarly have gained popularity as aids for improving writing quality. This literature review examines the intersection of EAP and Grammarly, analyzing their roles in enhancing writing skills among higher education students.

English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

EAP is a specialized branch of English language instruction designed to meet the academic needs of learners (Ang & Tan, 2018). EAP is part of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which focuses on teaching English tailored to specific contexts, such as academic settings (Dou et al., 2023). Initially, EAP aimed to prepare international students for studying in English-speaking countries by emphasizing academic vocabulary and discourse (Dou et al., 2023). Over time, EAP has evolved to encompass a broader range of skills necessary for academic success, including listening to lectures, participating in seminars, reading academic texts, and writing essays (Yung & Fong, 2019).

Types of EAP

EAP can be categorized into:
- General Academic Purposes (EGAP): Focused on skills applicable across various disciplines.
- Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP): Tailored to specific fields of study, ensuring relevance to students' majors.

This differentiation allows educators to design curricula that meet the diverse needs of students from various academic backgrounds.

The Role of Grammarly in Writing Improvement

Grammarly is an AI-powered writing assistant that provides users with real-time feedback on grammar, punctuation, style, and clarity. Research indicates that tools like Grammarly can significantly enhance students' writing abilities by offering immediate corrections and suggestions (Ashrafganjoe et al., 2022). The platform encourages self-directed learning by prompting users to reflect on their writing choices and understand common errors.

Benefits of Using Grammarly
- Error Detection: Identifies grammatical mistakes and suggests corrections.
- Writing Enhancement: Promotes better writing practices through feedback.
- Increased Confidence: Users often report feeling more confident in their writing after utilizing the tool.

However, while Grammarly provides valuable assistance, it is essential for students to develop critical thinking skills regarding its suggestions to avoid over-reliance on automated feedback.

Impact on Writing Skills

The integration of EAP instruction with tools like Grammarly has shown promising results in improving students' writing skills. Studies indicate that students who participate in structured EAP programs exhibit better academic writing performance compared to those who do not receive such training (Hill et al., 2020). Furthermore, incorporating Grammarly into EAP curricula can enhance the learning experience by providing personalized feedback that reinforces lessons learned in class.

Despite the benefits associated with EAP and Grammarly, several challenges exist. The effectiveness of EAP instruction may be diminished if the materials do not align with the specific needs of diverse student populations (James, 2013). Additionally, while Grammarly offers extensive feedback, its suggestions may sometimes lack context or nuance, leading to potential misunderstandings (Guo et al., 2021) (Xu et al., 2018).

The combination of English for Academic Purposes and digital tools like Grammarly represents a significant advancement in supporting writing improvement among higher education students. While both have their strengths and limitations, their integration can substantially enhance academic success. Future research should focus on refining these methodologies and tools to address the diverse needs of learners across various academic disciplines effectively.

METHODE

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive qualitative is a type of research that aims to describe, understand, and analyze phenomena, events, or situations based on the perspectives of the subjects involved, without relying on numbers or statistics.(Atmowardoyo et al., 2020) This approach focuses more on a deep understanding of a phenomenon through the collection of narrative data, such as interviews,

observations, or documentation. Qualitative descriptive data is used to identify relevant themes and ideas, which are then transformed into numerical data for further comparison and evaluation.

In this study, the data samples were obtained from IAIN Palangkaraya students who have been using Grammarly for several years. There are 21 data samples that have been collected in this study. The technique used to collect the data samples was through the use of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to the students who were sampled via online through Google Forms.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results obtained, the data that can be described are as follows.

No	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1.	Using Grammarly helps me fix English grammar stuff way faster than doing it by hand.	42,9%	33,3%	19%	4,8%	100%
2.	I think Grammarly is really helpful when writing my English papers.	28,6%	47,6%	19%	4,8%	100%
3.	I don't really have any issues when using Grammarly for my English homework.	28,6%	52,4%	14,3%	4,8%	100%
4.	I utilize Grammarly to identify and rectify grammatical errors in my English writing.	23,8%	57,1%	14,3%	4,8%	100%
5.	I am keen to employ Grammarly to enhance my English grammatical proficiency when composing academic assignments.	23,8%	42,9%	28,6%	4,8%	100%
6.	Utilizing Grammarly assists me in developing a stronger comprehension of English grammar.	19%	57,2%	19%	4,8%	100%
7.	The use of Grammarly instills confidence in my English grammar skills when composing my academic assignments.	19%	57,1%	14,3%	9,5%	100%
8.	Employing Grammarly is likely to play a significant part in decreasing the occurrence of English grammar errors when composing my academic writing assignments.	28,6%	42,9%	23,8%	4,8%	100%
9.	In my opinion, Grammarly's plagiarism detection tool is a useful addition.	42,9%	33,3%	19%	4,8%	100%

10.	I think it's easy, quick, and straightforward to download and install the Grammarly app.	23,8%	42,9%	28,6%	4,8%	100%
11.	My lecturer gave me feedback on my English assignments, pointing out mistakes and grammatical irregularities. I utilize Grammarly for that purpose	28,6%	47,6%	19%	4,8%	100%
12.	I always check my writing for English grammar errors with Grammarly in English assignments due to Grammarly's user-friendly interface and capabilities.	23,8%	52,4%	14,3%	9,5%	100%
13.	Grammarly and the U-dictionary feature are comparable, but Grammarlyoffers sophisticated features, such as plagiarism detection, which is why I favor Grammarly.	28,6%	47,6%	19%	4,8%	100%
14.	For all of my English tasks, I utilize Grammarly.	42,9%	33,3%	19%	4,8%	100%

Based on the data above, it can be concluded that almost all respondents use Grammarly in all their English assignments. The positive percentage is around 76%, with 42.9% strongly agreeing and 33.3% agreeing. The respondents feel confident in using Grammarly, and the results indicate that Grammarly is an effective application in solving students' problems in their work. Furthermore, the results allow us to understand how effective the use of Grammarly is in their activities.

The use of Grammarly has a significant impact on improving students' English skills, especially in writing (Utami & Mahardika, 2023) (Hadiat, 2022). The findings revealed that Grammarly can help students identify and correct grammatical errors, improve writing structure and style, and increase their confidence in their English proficiency . Additionally, the plagiarism detection feature in Grammarly was noted as a valuable tool, with 76.2% of respondents finding it useful.

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of Grammarly in enhancing the academic writing skills of non-native English-speaking students in higher education. Based on quantitative and qualitative analyses of respondent data, Grammarly has been shown to:
1. Identify and correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.
2. Boost students' confidence in their writing.
3. Simplify the academic writing process with its user-friendly interface and features like plagiarism detection.

Grammarly offers significant benefits, particularly in improving technical aspects of writing such as grammar and spelling (Jonas & Hall, 2022). It enables students to produce more polished and coherent work. The tool also facilitates self-directed learning by providing real-time feedback, which supports the development of better writing habits.

The study identifies certain limitations of Grammarly, particularly its inability to address complex issues such as argument development, logical structure, and adherence to specific academic conventions. Thus, Grammarly cannot serve as a standalone solution and needs to be supplemented with guidance from instructors and structured writing training sessions.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:
a. For Students: Use Grammarly as a tool to improve technical aspects of writing but seek feedback from instructors or tutors to refine substantive elements.
b. For Instructors: Combine Grammarly's use with direct teaching on argument

development, essay structure, and academic writing styles.
c. For Future Researchers: Conduct further studies to explore Grammarly's integration in various disciplines and its impact on more complex writing elements.

Grammarly is a valuable tool for improving the technical writing skills of EFL students in higher education. While it has limitations in addressing substantive aspects of writing, its integration into the learning process can yield optimal results when combined with direct instruction and writing workshops focusing on idea and argument development

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant role Grammarly plays in enhancing the technical aspects of academic writing for non-native English-speaking students in higher education. The findings indicate that Grammarly effectively assists students in identifying and correcting grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors, resulting in more polished and coherent written work. Additionally, the tool boosts students' confidence in their writing abilities and simplifies the academic writing process, thanks to its user-friendly interface and supplementary features like plagiarism detection.

However, the study also reveals limitations in Grammarly's capabilities, particularly in addressing more complex aspects of academic writing, such as argument development, logical coherence, and adherence to specific disciplinary conventions. As such, while Grammarly is a valuable aid, its use should be complemented by additional support, including direct guidance from instructors and structured writing workshops focusing on idea development, argumentation, and academic style.

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