

# STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARD THE USE OF GRAMMARLY IN CHECKING GRAMMAR IN ASSIGNMENTS

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to find out about the students' perceptions of the use of Grammarly in checking grammar in written assignments and the students' obstacles when using Grammarly. This quantitative study used questionnaire to collect the data. The participants of the study were ten students from semester sixth of the English Department at a private university in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. The results of the study showed that many students gave positive responses toward using Grammarly to learn and check their grammar in assignments. In addition, the study found that the students' obstacles when using Grammarly included some issues such as problems in the internet connection and lack of understanding of Grammarly suggestions. The study suggests that Grammarly to be applied for grammar checking among EFL students.

**KEYWORDS:** *Assignments, Grammarly, Grammar Checker.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In English language, grammar is an aspect of the language that supports other skills such as speaking and writing (Richards & Renandya, 2002; Schleppegrell, 1998). In Cambridge Dictionary, grammar is defined as the "use of the rules about how words change their form and combine with other words to express meaning" (Grammar, 2021). Therefore, a user of English needs to arrange correctly the English words and clauses to create proper English sentences so that others will understand the meaning of the sentences. Conversely, other people will be unable to understand what one says or write if the sentences are produced in incorrect grammar.

Likewise, English as a foreign language (EFL) learners should also be able to use grammar correctly. When they can write English sentences with good grammar, the



readers can grasp the information in their writing appropriately. Thus, the ability to write with correct grammar is also beneficial for EFL learners to succeed in academic writing. However, many Indonesian EFL learners still have a difficulty in using English grammar properly when writing (Toba, Noor, & Sanu, 2019). To deal with such an issue, EFL learners need to find ways to help them enhance their writing, particularly in the grammatical aspect. In this era of technological advancements, there are a number of ways that EFL learners can use to improve their skills, one of which is by applying an application for grammar. The grammar applications are a tool that offer several functions, including improving learners' writing and checking learners' grammar in writing, and some popular choices of grammar applications are Ginger, Whitesmoke, Grammarly, Hemingway, and CorrectEnglish (Insider Guides, 2020). Learners can utilize these to check the grammatical errors found by the apps in their writing such as incorrect use of articles and punctuation, among others (Mozgovoy, 2011).

In this study, the researchers focused on the use of Grammarly, a widely-used online grammar checker. Grammarly allows users to specify the kinds of errors they would like to detect, such as spelling, the use of tense, or repetition, all of which the users can be self-assured that Grammarly helps them check (Insider Guides, 2020). In addition, Grammarly not only informs the users where they have made a mistake and suggests alternative solutions, but it also informs the users why that is incorrect, and thus, the users may learn from their mistakes (Insider Guides, 2020).

For university students, Grammarly is a useful tool to help them find mistakes in their writing and correct them. In the case of university students who major in English, they usually have many assignments that require them to write in English, and so, the existence of grammar applications such as Grammarly can help the students check the grammatical errors in written assignments (Ghufon & Rosyida, 2018; Hakiki, 2021; Lailika, 2019).

In this study, the aim was to investigate the students' opinions of the use of Grammarly in checking grammar in written assignments and the students' obstacles when using Grammarly. The study concerned with the views of Indonesian EFL students at a private university in Aceh Province on the use of Grammarly.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

Established by Maz Lytvyn and Alex Shevchenko in 2009, Grammarly has been hailed as the world's best online English grammar checker (Cavaleri & Dianati, 2016). Grammarly currently has two versions: free and premium. Grammarly Free can help the users to check spelling, grammar, and punctuation mistakes, as well as to detect writing

tone and to suggest conciseness in writing, whereas Grammarly Premium provides more services such as tone adjustment, delivery, engagement, fluency, and formatting suggestions, as well as plagiarism detector, in addition to the services offered in the free version (Grammarly, 2021).

There are a number of studies that concern with the use of Grammarly in checking writing in English. Fahmi and Cahyono (2021) have analyzed EFL students' perception of Grammarly on their writing and found that the students had a positive perception toward the use of Grammarly in checking writing. Their findings corroborated those in a previous study by Cavaleri and Dianati (2016) which showed that the students viewed Grammarly as a beneficial tool that could help enhance their writing and grammar knowledge. Likewise, research by O'Neill and Russell (2019) has also revealed the same positive attitudes of students when getting language feedback from Grammarly on their writing.

In addition, Ghufron and Rosyida (2018) found that Grammarly was more effective in reducing errors in language use (grammar), vocabulary use (diction), and writing mechanics (spelling and punctuation), and less effective in improving the content and organization of EFL students' writing. Their findings were in line with those in Karyuatry (2018) which showed that students' errors in writing could be minimized after using Grammarly to check their writing.

#### RESEARCH METHODS

The use of method in a study is very necessary because it will be able to help a researcher to get and to analyze data easily. The method used in this study was quantitative. The participants of the study consisted of ten students of English Education Department at a private university in Banda Aceh, Aceh Province. The study chose the participants randomly.

The study utilized questionnaire to collect the data on the EFL students' perception of the use of Grammarly in checking grammar in their assignments and their difficulties when using Grammarly. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions related to using Grammarly with the following options: agree, strongly agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Data were analyzed by calculating the percentage.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The following describes the results of the questionnaire distributed to the students.

TABLE 1. *Students' Opinions on the Use of Grammarly*

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Grammarly is a widely used application	40%	60%	-	-
Grammarly is suitable to use for students	30%	60%	10%	-
Grammarly is useful for students to learn grammar	30%	70%	-	-
Grammarly help students better understand grammar	40%	50%	10%	-
Grammarly help improve students' grammar	40%	60%	-	-
Grammarly is helpful in checking grammar errors	40%	50%	10%	-
Students can use Grammarly through smartphones	50%	50%	-	-
Students can learn grammar through Grammarly anytime and anywhere	30%	60%	10%	-
Grammarly can help complete assignments faster	30%	50%	20%	-
Grammarly makes students feel bored	-	50%	50%	-

Note: SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree

The study found that in general, all students have known that Grammarly has been used worldwide (40% SA; 60% A), and mostly viewed that Grammarly was quite suitable to be used by students (30% SA; 60% A). In relation to using Grammarly to study grammar, all students felt that Grammarly was a great tool to learn grammar (30% SA; 70% A), could make them better understand grammar (40% SA; 50% A), help them improve their grammar (40% SA; 60% A), and help them check grammatical errors (40% SA; 50% A). These findings are in line with those in the study by Cavaleri and Dianati (2016) who reported that students positively evaluated Grammarly as helpful and easy to use, as Grammarly provided some grammar rules and suggestions which helped them understand grammar.

Further, nearly all students had positive opinions that Grammarly could be accessed through smartphones (50% SA; 50% A), and anytime and anywhere (30% SA; 50% A). In terms of assignments, the majority of the students also positively perceived that using Grammarly could help them finish their written assignments quickly (30% SA; 50% A).

TABLE 2. *Students' Difficulties when Using Grammarly*

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Internet access makes it difficult to use Grammarly	-	20%	80%	-
It is difficult to look for important words in Grammarly	-	-	70%	30%
It is difficult to understand some words in Grammarly	-	20%	60%	20%
Grammarly cannot be used offline	-	30%	60%	10%
It is confusing to use Grammarly	-	-	60%	40%

Note: SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree

It can be seen from table 2 that the students encountered some obstacles when they used Grammarly to check their writing. Firstly, some students (20%) agreed that they had an issue using Grammarly due to the internet access. Secondly, some students (20%) felt a difficulty understanding some words suggested by Grammarly. Lastly, some students (30%) felt that they had a problem when they could not access Grammarly offline, or without internet connection. These results are similar to those in the study by Lailika (2019) which found that students had a trouble due to technical issues such as internet connection when using Grammarly since this application required good internet accessibility, and also some students had problems understanding the feedback given by Grammarly due to their lack of grammar knowledge.

#### CONCLUSIONS

According to the findings of the study, many students expressed a favorable attitude toward using Grammarly to learn and check their grammar in written assignments. Furthermore, the study discovered that some of the students' challenges when using Grammarly included issues such as poor internet connection and a lack of understanding of Grammarly feedback. It is suggested that Grammarly be used for grammar checking among EFL students, especially for any written assignment.

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