The Use of Grammarly in the Academic Writing of Undergraduate Students: Advantages, Weaknesses, and Challenges (Systematic Review)

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ABSTRACT

The fact that "Grammarly" is one of the available online grammar checkers has had a quick influence on technological development. The purpose of this study was to examine the benefits, drawbacks, and difficulties of utilizing Grammarly in an academic writing course. This study used qualitative library research. The data was collected from 10 relevant articles on Google Scholar with the keyword "Grammarly, Academic Writing, and undergraduate students". The main issues addressed in this study were the benefits, weaknesses, and challenges of Grammarly in the period from 2019 to 2023 The result showed that there were six categories of advantages in using Grammarly, they were to check correctness, clarity, engagement, delivery, plagiarism, and convenience. On the contrary, the weaknesses of Grammarly were it could not be accessed without an internet connection; it needed stability of electricity and an internet connection, it needed high-speed internet connectivity to access the complete feature; it was ineffective to use Grammarly in another connected platform; it was incomplete service of free version, while it needed to pay to access the premium one; and it could not identify some proer noun. In conclusion, applying Grammarly is recommended because it enhanced students' writing skills for students at university, especially in Academic Writing Course.

Key Words: *Academic Writing, Grammarly, Undergraduate Students*

INTRODUCTION

Technology plays a vital role in almost all fields including the education field in Indonesia. The use of technology in education is very massive. Nowadays, teaching and learning processes are usually held using a computer or smartphone. It allows students to freely access the internet and computer software to meet their needs. The use of learning software is popular among modern students. One of the software is Grammarly.

Grammarly is a program that checks written English for mistakes. To keep errors out of context, it serves this goal. In order to prevent more mistakes from appearing, this program monitors or maintains the proper flow of writing. Additionally, Grammarly offers non-plagiarized writing aid to rectify spelling and grammatical mistakes. By examining and comparing other online-available textual material, this technology can also identify poor academic behavior, such as plagiarism. Grammarly has the following features: (1) correctness (i.e., grammar, punctuation, and consistency in spelling and punctuation; fluency); (2) clarity (i.e., conciseness, clarity-focused sentence rewrites, and formatting); (3) engagement (compelling vocabulary and lively sentence variety); (4) delivery (tone detection, confident writing, politeness, formality level, and inclusive language); and (5) plagiarism, it ensures that the work is original and fresh by checking in against 16 billion web pages (Javier, 2022). Contextual spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, style, and vocabulary improvement are the six areas in which Grammarly groups mistakes (O'Neill & Russell, 2019).

Writing is an increasingly important skill in English language learning that can be promoted by technology. To solve the obstacles in academic writing, the online grammar checker namely Grammarly can help students in writing. This tool can detect the students' mistakes in writing and give them feedback. Grammarly is an American cloud-based writing assistant (Wikipedia, 2023). It was founded by Alex Shevchenko et.al. in 2009. This application can check for faults in spelling, grammar, punctuation, clarity, engagement, and delivery in English tests. It also identifies plagiarism and offers alternatives for the issues it finds. Additionally, it enables users to alter their language's style, tone, and context. Grammarly consists of two kinds of services, they are free and premium versions. In academic writing classes, Grammarly is a great tool for improving writing abilities.

There have been several thorough evaluations of Grammarly in Academic Writing. Participants' perceptions of using Grammarly during the academic writing process were examined using data

study(Faisal & Carabella, 2023). The participants got some benefits from using Grammarly, such as its handy and practical use; It offers several useful tools, like a grammar checker, punctuation checker, and spelling checker, which might aid people in fixing their mistakes. Students who use Grammarly for academic writing report feeling more secure and saving time, particularly during the editing phase. This is true even if they are only using the free version of the software. On the contrary, the Grammarly free version also had some weaknesses. It had limitations to its non-contextual and irrelevant feedback. The feedback was not always 100% grammar accurate. It was because of the different features between the free and the premium version of Grammarly. The efficiency of Grammarly as a tool for assessing grammar in learning exercises for college students was investigated (Daroina et al., 2022). The findings demonstrated the advantages of using Grammarly, including its effectiveness and efficiency in grammar, punctuation, and spelling features based on the principles of practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity, and washback; Grammarly helps students see their writing errors in terms of correctness, clarity, etc.; Grammarly is not time- or location-bound, so students have the option to access it whenever it is most convenient for them. However, Grammarly's failure to recognize sentence structure, inability to identify semantic problems in sentences, and requirement for a steady internet connection are additional weaknesses mentioned in this study. Both studies have found that generally, Grammarly had some benefits and weaknesses, while there was no challenge stated in the use of Grammarly in the research. Hence, it is necessary to conduct research on the benefit, weaknesses, and challenges of the use of Grammarly.

This study's objective is to look at how the benefits, weaknesses, and challenges of Grammarly in undergraduate students especially in academic writing courses. The study undertook a thorough analysis of the available literature on the usage of Grammarly in order to accomplish these goals in undergraduate students in Google Scholar, focusing on the period of 2019 – 2023. The results of this study should advance knowledge of how technology may be successfully incorporated into writing training in higher education. The study offers insightful information for educators and instructional designers who wish to improve their students' writing abilities in academic writing courses by highlighting the advantages, disadvantages, and difficulties using Grammarly in this setting. The goal of this research is to provide a thorough evaluation of the literature on Grammarly's application in higher education. The authors hope that this review will

add to the body of knowledge about the usage of Grammarly in academic settings.

1. **Literature Review**
   a. **Grammarly**

   Grammarly is an online proofreader recognized to be the most innovative company in the AL field (Grammarly, 2021). A free version of Grammarly was released in 2015 with the intention of providing everyone with writing assistance. It was initially established in 2009 by Max Lytvyn, Alex Shevchenko, and Dmytro Lider (Grammarly, 2021). Grammar Checker 'Grammarly®' is a piece of computer software (automated internet-based software) that may be used in an EFL writing lesson. Initially released in 2009, Grammarly® is a grammar-checking tool in a software package or online versions to be installed on the Microsoft Office Word platform to correct grammatical mistakes that enhances writing significantly during typing. This application offers grammar checking, spell checking, passive voice misuse, punctuations in compounds, correcting hard-to-read texts, wordy sentences, and services for detecting plagiarism, as well as advice on writing clarity, conciseness, vocabulary, delivery style, and tone. Additionally, it can discover the error that Grammarly® adds at the end of every record to be an efficient way of showing just how much editing and enhancing the job the user has left. This program was shown to be more successful in reducing mistakes in terms of vocabulary use (diction), language use (grammar), and writing mechanics (spelling and punctuation) (Ghufron & Rosyida, 2018). However , it is, less successful to enhance the structure and substance of students' EFL writing. Apparently, this application has had its advantages in promoting not only the writing skill of EFL learners but also may have benefits for learning the language with appropriate teacher's monitoring and guidance. According to (Karyuatry, 2018), Grammarly is a website for online proofreading that may be used to check texts for grammatical errors. It may also be described as a web-based tool for checking typographical, grammatical, and other problems. Grammarly includes a wide range of capabilities, including checks for spelling, grammar, punctuation, plagiarism, and writing style. The user may check for simple and complex grammatical mistakes, alliteration, fragments, and other issues with the grammar and punctuation tool. In the meanwhile, it may examine every word in your work for misspellings using the spell check

tool. The user may check the file for several instances of plagiarism using the plagiarism tool. The customer may learn about some who are supplying writing style recommendations, guidance, or suggestions using the last function, which is writing style. Grammarly comes in two flavors: premium and free. The difference between the two options depends on whether you pay monthly or annually. An automatic proofreading tool called Grammarly Premium may find mistakes in 250 different grammatical rules (Grammarly, 2021). The monthly fee for Grammarly premium usage is $29.95. The free version of Grammarly has fewer functionality than the premium version. Users must first log onto this website with their email addresses before utilizing this application. The users upload their assignment after which they are presented with two scores. The first score is determined by an accuracy %, and the second by the total number of errors the computer has discovered. According to six categories—contextual spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, style, and vocabulary improvement—Grammarly classifies faults (O'Neill & Russell, 2019).

Considering the special difficulties of instructing academic writing to English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) students, Grammarly can be utilized to enhance classroom instruction. It is clear that Grammarly verifies the following: (3) engagement (compelling vocabulary and lively sentence variety); (4) delivery (tone detection, confident writing, politeness, formality level, and inclusive language); and (5) correctness (i.e., grammar, spelling, and punctuation; consistency in spelling and punctuation; and fluency). (5) plagiarism (by comparing the work to 16 billion online pages, it assures that it is new and unique), (6) Convenience (i.e., easy to be operated, time effectiveness, and connected with another platform like Microsoft Word, Google docs, Google Translate, Instagram, etc.).

b. Grammarly as an Automatic Grammar Checker
Grammarly is well-known for providing a variety of helpful services for consumers. It can identify several possible grammatical mistakes and automatically fix them (Nova, 2018)(Lailika, 2019; Nova, 2018; Ummah, 2022), which is helpful for pupils who are having trouble with difficult English grammar rules and spelling. Additionally, it provides tailored writing advice based on the students' writing voices, circumstances, and styles (Hakiki, 2021; Nova, 2018). Additionally, its artificial intelligence-

powered features can offer students and academics evaluative and constructive criticism to help them write more accurately and fluently (Ambarwati, 2021; Hakiki, 2021). Such elements not only help students learn from their mistakes more fully, but they also provide helpful support to increase confidence and motivation when writing (Perdana et al., 2021).

c. Academic Writing

Writing styles like creative and personal writing are different from academic writing (Oshima & Hogue, 2007). Academic writing has certain distinctive characteristics in this regard. A writer must first compose all materials properly, refraining from using things like slang and poorly structured phrases. Second, she has to produce coherent subject sentences with pertinent supporting elements while writing academic writings. Finally, she must structure each paragraph logically. In order to exhibit mastery of certain academic thinking, interpretation, and presenting abilities, a writer must possess adequate and applicable writing knowledge and competence (Irvin, 2010). Academic writing is writing for educational objectives. She should also possess the necessary abilities, such as research, reading complicated materials, comprehension of important academic concepts, and analytical techniques.

Academic writing not only only has one phase, but it also requires many, graded steps. Prewriting, organizing, writing, and polishing are the four stages of the writing process (Oshima & Hogue, 2007).First, prewriting is the process when a writer selects a subject and gathers information to further describe the topic at hand. She may brainstorm subjects, ideas, or problems in this stage, after which she would put words or phrases that came to her on a piece of paper or on a word processor. The second phase, organizing, involves condensing the previous step's concepts into a clear blueprint. It is advised that a writer draft an outline that includes pertinent contextual terms or phrases she learns from the first phase. The third phase is writing, when she begins by creating rough drafts using her outlines as a guide. She should write down her thoughts in this stage and expand on the actions from the previous ones with more words or phrases. The fourth step, polishing, consists of the revision and editing steps. When revising, a writer should make major changes to the content and organization. The goal of editing is to correct little mistakes in language and mechanics. The theoretical underpinnings of this study were specifically centered on the construction of the questionnaire on the key characteristics of the polishing

processes with its revising and editing stages. English as a second language (EFL) learners can utilize tools like Grammarly to verify their writing at this stage. The advantages and disadvantages of Grammarly, as well as earlier research on its application in various study contexts, are all covered in the section that follows.

2. Methods

James Lind's approach of systematic literature review was employed in this study (Daroina et al., 2022). The systematic literature review's objective is to locate, assess, and compare the findings of prior studies with the current study. Google Scholar was used by the researcher to conduct the data search for the study. Grammarly, academic writing, and undergraduate students were research keywords. Researchers collected 41 journal papers as a result of the method. A higher education level, Grammarly, Academic Writing, five years of prior research, and the exclusion of EFL pupils are all included. In addition, researchers discovered 10 journal publications that might be analyzed.

3. Results and Discussion
a. Result

Ten publications that were published and pertinent to the study. From 2019 through 2023, these articles has been published. Researchers gathered information from these published studies that were categorized into benefits, drawbacks, and problems.

Table 1. The finding articles

No.	Outhors	Title	Year
1.	Indra Perdana, Sardjana Orba Manullang, and Fina Amalia Masri	Effectiveness of online Grammarly application in improving academic writing: review of experts experience.	2021
2.	O'Neil, R. And Russell, A	Utilizing Grammarly In An Academic Writing Process: Higher-Education Students' Perceived Views	2019
3.	Mohsen Ashrafganjoe, Mohammad Javad Rezai, Seyedeh Elham Elhambakhsh	Providing Computer-Based Feedback through Grammarly® in Writing Classes	2022
4.	Rohullah Yousofi	Grammarly deployment (in)efficacy within EFL academic writing classrooms:	2022

		an attitudinal report from Afghanistan	
5.	Ghaida Nurul Rahma Hakiki	Perception of EFL Students on the Use Grammarly Application in Writing Class	2021
6.	Farah Rakai Yasmin, Putri Rahayu, and Binti Muifatun Nazilah	From EFL Learners' Perspective: Does Grammarly As Online-Proofreader Help Them with Their Academic Writing?	2021
7.	Utami Dewi	Grammarly as automated writing evaluation: Its effectiveness from EFL students' perceptions.	2022
8.	Darren Rey Javier	App Review Using Tech Tools for Academic Writing: Grammarly as a Pedagogical Tool	2022
9.	Sephia Oktaviani, Bahrani, Widya Noviana Noor	Students' Perception Towards the Use of Grammarly in English Writing Skill of Fourth Semester english Education Department at UINSI Samarinda in the Academic Year 2021/2022	2022
10.	Kesi Fitriana, and Laeli Nurazni	Exploring English Department Students' Perceptions on Using Grammarly to Check the Grammar in their Writing	2022

The result of the study of the 10 related articles showed that each researcher found some benefits and weaknesses of Grammarly. The detailed findings were in the following explanation.

It was investigated how academic learning counselors felt about Grammarly, an online grammar checker (O'Neill & Russell, 2019). The result showed that Grammarly had time effectiveness because it could provide more feedback faster than the traditional method; it provided detailed feedback on grammar, it made the students more motivated to make the corrections, and it would promote greater autonomy in students. On the contrary, Grammarly also had some weaknesses, such as the feedback in this study had problems with the fact Grammarly missed errors, misrepresented errors, gave inaccurate advice, and generated too much.

A study looked at how well the online Grammarly tool worked to enhance academic writing through the process of reading published papers (Perdana et al., 2021). They read a wide range of works and listened to the perspectives of other academics who had their experiences published in various international magazines. The outcome demonstrated how useful the Grammarly tool is since it offers linguistic adjustments and other tests to address a variety of writing standards and non-academic writing challenges. While the impact after prolonged usage is the weakening, it should be emphasized that the dependency on such a significant amount on the user.

It was investigated how EFL students used the Grammarly program in their writing classes (Hakiki, 2021). The study's findings demonstrated the value of Grammarly's features for those writing English essays. This was due to the fact that it was simple to use, including useful suggestions, clear explanations, accurate grammatical checks, and quick repairs. Additionally, using Grammarly helps students' writing abilities and self-confidence, especially when it comes to writing essays. They can learn additional English grammar rules by using Grammarly. Besides, Grammarly is handy and easy to use because it is integrated with other several browsers like Word, google translate, email, Facebook, and Extra. However, the weakness of the use of Grammarly was also described. Although Grammarly is integrated with another browser, meanwhile the use of Grammarly does not work as maximal as in Grammarly tools.

The learner perspective of Grammarly to help students with Academic Writing was studied (Yasmin et al., 2021). The outcome demonstrated that Grammarly's free version was practical and simple to use since it improved students' writing, particularly in academic writing; it has impacted their writing positively and improved their understanding of grammar rules; it helps the students to get writing feedback; it makes helpful suggestions for improving their writing; and it gives a good explanation about errors. On the contrary, the weakness also explained such as the suggestions provided by Grammarly should be considered carefully since the accuracy of AI cannot replace human ability.

It was evaluated how well EFL learners wrote in writing lessons using Grammarly software, a new technology-based quick corrective feedback system (Ashrafganjoe et al., 2022). The results revealed a positive effect on attitude after using Grammarly because of significantly improved the learners' achievement in writing skills. Correcting spelling, grammar,

passive voice, and article usage using Grammarly made a noticeable improvement to four writing abilities.

In writing classes, Grammarly's efficacy as an automated writing evaluation was investigated (Dewi, 2022).The findings demonstrated that Grammarly's benefits included making it easier to spot writing errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and phrase construction; Grammarly made it possible to reduce faults in writing output; it also teaches students how to paraphrase; it could be used from anywhere at any time; it helps students increase their vocabulary; and it made it simpler to spot errors. Along with the benefits, Grammarly also has certain drawbacks, such the restricted mistake checking capabilities of the free edition and the premium version's high cost for students. Additionally, Grammarly cannot be used offline.

It was investigated how the students felt about using Grammarly to verify the grammar in their work (Fitriana & Nurazni, 2022). The outcome demonstrated the advantages, such as Grammarly's assistance in helping students check their articles' grammar; its simplicity and full feature set; and its drawbacks, such as its limited free version's ability to correct mistakes and its fewer persuading corrections.

Grammarly was examined as a pedagogical aid in an app evaluation employing tech tools for academic writing (Javier, 2022). The findings demonstrated the advantages of using Grammarly, including its potential to be used to teach academic writing, focusing particularly on micro-level revisions (i.e., tense, agreement, pluralization, pattern, and rules); it provided grammar rules, checking errors and potential stylistic mistakes; it gave useful feedback; and it was convenient. However, the free version only has a few features (such as spelling, grammar, and punctuation), whereas the premium version has many extra features (such as everything is free, clarity-focused sentence rewrites, tone adjustments, plagiarism detection, word choice, formality level, fluency, and additional advanced suggestion); it is also less effective at enhancing the content and structure of writing; and finally, the free version only has a small number of features (such as spelling, grammar, and punctuation), whereas the

It was investigated how the students felt about using Grammarly to improve their writing skills in English (Oktaviani et al., 2023). According to the findings, using Grammarly helps students identify correct answers and can be used to independently assess writing based on feedback. It also motivates and encourages them

to use online learning platforms by checking for grammar errors like misspelled words and improper punctuation. The drawback of utilizing Grammarly is that it cannot tell what tenses students are using at the moment or in a paragraph, and students must pay to use the premium features.

It was investigated how well Grammarly was used in EFL academic writing classes (Yousofi, 2022). According to the study, using Grammarly has advantages such as improving writing quality, providing quick feedback, saving teachers' time, improving writing mechanics, and checking for plagiarism. The survey also revealed certain drawbacks to using Grammarly, including as the necessity for reliable energy and an internet connection, the requirement for high-speed internet access to access all functions, and the requirement for a premium membership to evaluate all features.

b. Discussion

This study's findings indicated that Grammarly has a variety of strengths and disadvantages. According to the pertinent articles, the benefits of Grammarly were categorized into five categories: (1) correctness (i.e., grammar, spelling, and punctuation); (2) clarity (i.e., conciseness; (3) engagement (compelling vocabulary and lively sentence variety); (4) delivery (tone detection; politeness; formality level; and inclusive language); and (5) plagiarism (it entails); (6) Convenience (i.e., easy to be operated, time effectiveness, and connected with another platform like Microsoft Word, Google docs, Google Translate, Instagram, etc.).

The benefits of Grammarly based on correctness were it provided grammar rules; it provided detailed feedback corrections on grammar or linguistics issues, especially in micro-level revisions (grammar, spelling, punctuation, passive voice, articles, tense, agreement, pluralization, and pattern); it provided good grammar accuracy, it gave a good explanation about errors; and it gave the correct one option (Ashrafganjoe et al., 2022; Dewi, 2022; Fitriana & Nurazni, 2022; Hakiki, 2021; Javier, 2022; Oktaviani et al., 2023; O'Neill & Russell, 2019; Perdana et al., 2021; Yasmin et al., 2021). The clarity also provided by Grammarly such as; it gave an easy understanding explanation; it provided helpful suggestions for w improving students' writing; it gave alternative words or phrases; it gave effective feedback; it provided potential stylistic mistakes; and it provided the correct option, it had clarity-focus sentence rewrites (Dewi, 2022; Hakiki, 2021; Javier, 2022; Oktaviani et al., 2023; Yasmin et al., 2021). The benefit of Grammarly based on engagement also delivered, such as it provided the complete

features (in the premium version), it helped the students how to paraphrasing, it has fluency and advanced suggestions, and it has word choice (Dewi, 2022; Fitriana & Nurazni, 2022; Javier, 2022). The benefits of delivery in Grammarly such as it would promote greater autonomy of the students; it improving students' writing and self-confidence in writing; it improved students' understanding of grammar rules; and it improved students' vocabulary; it encouraged the students to use online learning system, tone adjustments, and it has formality level (Dewi, 2022; Hakiki, 2021; Javier, 2022; O'Neill & Russell, 2019; Yasmin et al., 2021). Plagiarism also delivered as the benefit of Grammarly, it was because it could be used to check plagiarism (Fitriana & Nurazni, 2022; Javier, 2022; Yousofi, 2022). The last benefit which delivered by Grammarly was convenience because it could be accessed flexibly in time and place; it was saving time; it Grammarly provided more feedback faster than the traditional method, it was handy to be used; it could be used independently to evaluate writing, and it was connected with other browsers like Ms. Word, Google Translate, etc. (Dewi, 2022; Fitriana & Nurazni, 2022; Hakiki, 2021; Javier, 2022; Oktaviani et al., 2023; ONeill & Russell, 2019; Perdana et al., 2021; Yasmin et al., 2021; Yousofi, 2022).

Besides the advantages the weaknesses also explained by the researchers such as the feedback given sometimes missed errors, and misrepresented; the advice is given sometimes inaccurate and generated too much (ONeill & Russell, 2019); it could not access without an internet connection (Dewi, 2022); it has Grammarly that connected in other platforms/browsers did not work maximally than Grammarly itself (Hakiki, 2021); it had limited correction for the free version, it needed to pay to access the full version (Fitriana & Nurazni, 2022); it was less efficient in enhancing the writing's structure and substance because it was unable to recognize some proper nouns (because it was developed in the United States, some terms that are proper nouns in various contexts, such the name of a location or a platform, are proper nouns in those contexts) (Javier, 2022); it needed the stability of electricity and an internet connection, need high-speed internet connectivity to access the complete feature, need a premium account to assess complete features (Yousofi, 2022).

Although there are certain drawbacks to using Grammarly, such as how it may affect you after a while, it should be emphasized that this depends a lot on the person(Perdana et al., 2021); it is a machine that can not do the job 100% accurately, it needed the

human correction to get the maximal result (O'Neill & Russell, 2019); since the accuracy of AI can not replace the human ability, it needed to recheck to ensure the final result (Yasmin et al., 2021); the teacher should provide appropriate instruction to improve student's English language skills, especially using Grammarly(Ashrafganjoe et al., 2022); The instructor was required to create an assessment-based evaluation rubric.

4. Conclusion

The analysis of the eleventh article revealed that Grammarly users saw its use as having benefits, drawbacks, and obstacles. Grammarly might be utilized in academic writing classes, according to the majority of the researchers. It was because of the benefits of Grammarly that could check the correctness, clarity, engagement, delivery, plagiarism, and because of convenience. However, some articles described the weaknesses of Grammarly that it needed electric stability and an internet connection, it was an incomplete service of Grammarly's free version to the premium one, and it gave some inaccurate feedback. Besides, the use of Grammarly also had some challenges such as the dependence on such a large amount of users after a long time of use; it needed to recheck the final result because AI could replace human ability, and the teacher needed to develop an appropriate instructional to improve student's English language skills and an evaluation rubric. It is line with the reaserch of (Oktaviani et al., 2023) which explore that Grammarly supported in writing skills. It was because Grammarly could check grammar, correctness, punctuation, style language, and gave feedback. It was also easy to be understood, simple fiture, and time effectiveness. However, it had uncomplete feature in grammarly free version. It should spent some money to access premium version. While the challenge, it could not detect appropriate tenses in a paragraph.

The current study has done its best on the advantages, weaknesses, and challenges of using Grammarly in Academic Writing courses. Even though Grammarly offered some advantages that support instructional Academic Writing courses, it still has some weaknesses in the process of using it. Therefore, it is advised that future studies learn deeper about the challenges of using Grammarly, in order to it is maximally supported in Academic Writing courses.

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