

Teachers and Students' Perceptions toward the use of Grammarly to Improve EFL Students' Academic Writing

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Abstract:

The aim of this research was to investigate teachers and students' perceptions toward the use of Grammarly to improve the process of writing skill of EFL students. This study utilized the qualitative approach to meet the research goals. The sample of the study consisted of 10 EFL teachers and 10 EFL students (who were selected for this research using purposive sampling) of second intermediate stage at Sumer School intermediate school for boys during the academic year 2024/2025. A questionnaire consisted of five closed questions were used to collect data. The analysis revealed that both teachers and students have positive perceptions regarding the use of Grammarly Premium to improve the process of writing skill of EFL students.

Keywords: Perceptions, Grammarly, and the Process of Writing Skill.

Introduction

Mastering writing is essential in the process of learning English. Writing involves not only getting thoughts down on paper but also ensuring that the writing is well structured. Writing demands more complex English language proficiency compared to other abilities.

Writing serves as a means for individuals to communicate, exchange thoughts, and convey the writer's emotions. In relation to EFL, learners need to master four English skills, with writing being one of them (Al-Abdali, 2024 a). According to Nunan (2003), the process of writing involves various stages, including identifying suitable concepts and language in order to create coherent

statements and paragraphs that are comprehensible to the reader. EFL students are closely tied to writing tasks like papers, articles, and essays. When given a writing assignment, all students strive to produce high-quality work.

Educational technologies have greatly contributed to EFL learners developing their four skills to become good foreign language speakers (Naji and AL-Abdali, 2024). Moreover, educational technologies are varied and do not stop at using just one program. Researchers (Al-Fahadawi and Al-Abdali, 2023) argued, “Using a technology-based program had a positive impact on the speaking skill of learners of English as a foreign language in Iraq. This indicates the role that technology plays in supporting and assisting both the learning and teaching process.

Grammarly is a tool, which provides essential grammar checks for students who are able to consider passive suggestions or receive corrections on something that the reader can easily comprehend. Grammarly also provides simple editing along with checking for spelling errors. It instantly increases the range of words the user can choose from and gives the user a score if the writing is powerful enough. Grammarly is a writing tool designed to assist writers by identifying different grammatical issues in English.

Grammarly free version offers simple writing tips, tone identification, and spellchecking. At the same time, Grammarly paid premium version provides 400 different checks for grammatical errors, such as improving tone, detecting plagiarism, expanding vocabulary, and suggesting citations.

It can be purchased for a minimum of \$12 per month and is designed for personal use. For the business edition, it is accessible to groups comprising 3 to 149 users. The price is \$12.50 USD monthly for each member (Grammarly inc., 2022).

Hao & Hao (2020) state that a grammar checker is a tool, which can be either a website or an app, designed to assist users in fixing mistakes in grammar. Numerous online grammar checkers, like Grammarly, Ginger, Pro Writing Aid, Language Tool, After the Deadline, etc., are available for users to access. Each of these tools offers features that help users identify and correct their grammar mistakes. In this research, the researcher utilized Grammarly software as a tool to collect data.

In this modern age of technology, everything relies on technology. In education, particularly in writing, students require technology as a resource to enhance their understanding of English writing. Students need to master writing as it is a crucial component. Pronto (2004) defines writing as the act of translating ideas into written form or communicating with others through written words. Writing can also be seen as a means of articulating emotions through written expression. In simpler words, writing enables us to communicate in a roundabout way.

Mastering writing skills is difficult due to various reasons, such as limited vocabulary and idioms, spelling errors, punctuation usage, and correct grammar. The issue is also present among students studying English education. Alfiyani (2013) says that occasionally “students studying English Education Department make errors in grammar when writing. A lot of them continue to utilize non-standard language.” Chomsky argues, “The ability to produce and comprehend sentences in a language is based on grammatical knowledge” (Richards, 1987).

The Aim of the Study

The study aimed at Investigating Teachers and Students’ Perceptions toward the Use of Grammarly to Improve EFL Students’ Academic Writing **Questions of the Study**

What are the Teachers and Students’ Perceptions toward the Use of Grammarly to Improve EFL Students’ Academic Writing?

Problem Statement

EFL students struggle with writing due to challenges in grasping the writing process, lack of motivation, and ineffective organization of ideas (Aidil, 2019). Furthermore, Karyuwatry (2018) found that students struggle to create quality English writing due to the many disparities between writing English and Indonesian sentences. Additionally, students often lack awareness of the correctness of their grammar and are unaware of the specific locations of their grammatical mistakes. Multiple repetitions of tasks are frequently needed to prevent errors. Nevertheless, they still commit errors in grammar. Luckily, thanks to the advancement of technology, students have access to various websites and apps that can help them improve their writing. As an example, grammar checkers also referred to as Automatic Writing Evaluation, can be utilized.

Literature Review

1. Writing

In the field of language learning, students must excel in four essential skills: Speaking, Writing, Reading, and Listening. Constructing written content is challenging, as it requires conveying information effectively to engage the audience. According to Harmer (2001), “writing is a way to convey ideas and emotions through the written word. It signifies that individuals can use writing as a means of communicating their thoughts or emotions to others through written form”. Different types of writing vary depending on the intention behind them. Narration is about past events, while Description focuses on what is seen or felt, Exposition provides background information.

Al-abdali (2024 b) investigated teachers’ perceptions towards the importance of teaching the writing skill in ELT classrooms. After analyzing the questionnaire, it was found that teachers’ perceptions towards the importance of teaching the writing skill in ELT classrooms in Iraq were positive. Thus, it can be said that the writing skill is very important for EFL learners.

Various experts provide numerous definitions of writing. Olive and Levy (2002) describe writing as a task done by an individual to communicate his thoughts, emotions, and viewpoints on paper. According to Ramelan (1994), writing is crucial in human culture as it can maintain thoughts, ideas, and speech sounds.

Al-Fahadawi and Al-Abdali (2024) determined how word processors affect EFL students’ mechanics of writing in Iraq. The study found that the experimental group students’ writing achievement increased when word processors were used in the classroom. It has been discovered that the use of word processors in the classroom significantly improves pupils’ grammar and spelling proficiency. This demonstrates how effectively the word processor aided in the third-grade students’ writing skill development.

Another perspective was given by Ur (1996) stating that writing serves as a means of articulating thoughts and communicating messages to an audience. Therefore, writing plays a crucial role in enhancing language learning as it allows students to engage effectively and actively with the target language. Additionally, students can utilize the sentences, ideas, vocabulary, and grammar they have been taught in class. Moreover, writing serves as a means of expressing thoughts. Writing can aid students in developing effective thinking skills.

2. Academic Writing

Academic writing is the kind of writing that is used at colleges and universities. According to Oshima (2007), academic writing as formal writing that needs to be concise, straightforward, and to the point. It makes use of real texts and illustrations from numerous disciplines (Bailey, 2011). Academic writing should therefore be clear, literal, and explicit. Bailey (2011) states that the most common reasons people write are to summarize prior research on a topic, answer questions they have chosen or presented to the writer, explore a topic from their own perspective, and report on a study that has been completed.

3. Perceptions

According to Qiong (2017), perception is the speed at which our senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch allow us to think, observe, and comprehend something. Eggen, Kauchak, and Garry (2001) defined perception as the process by which an individual assigns a particular meaning to their experiences. It implies that attention to particular stimuli in sensory memories precedes perception. After people arrange and interpret the stimuli they are exposed to, they begin to perceive it in a way that makes sense to them. Every person arranges and interprets the stimuli they receive through the perceptual process, meaning that each person's interpretation of the stimulus is unique.

4. Technology

Researchers have discussed the usefulness of using different techniques to develop English language learners' skills. (Julaid and Al- Abdali, 2022) used YouTube to develop apology strategies in the English language, Julaid and Al-Abdali, (2022) using YouTube to develop communicative approach, Julaid and Al-Abdali (2021) used mobiles applications to develop non-native speakers' communicative skills, grammatical competence and pronunciation. Similarly, Al-Dulaimi and Al-Abdali, (2021) investigated mobile technology in the process of teaching English. Al-Abdali and Alzayadi (2020) addressed the usefulness of emerging E-learning in the educational system in Iraq. Habeeb and Al-Abdali, (2020) explored the use of technologies in the teaching and learning English, Julaid and Al-Abdali (2020) investigated the utilization of written and oral blogs to Improve EFL Students' Fluency and Accuracy. Moreover, Abbas and Elttayef (2019) expressed the effectiveness of adopting ICT for teaching English language. Al-Abdali (2016) explored the use of Cam Chat as a tool for communication to develop EFL students' communicative language skills. Elttayef (2016) addressed the use of touch screen on developing students' linguistic competence. Bataineh and Al-Abdali (2015, 2014) explored using web-cam to enhance learners' socio-cultural and paralinguistic competences.

Amal(2024)the set of words that an individual has knowledge of in a language, regardless of whether they actively utilize them. The expansion and maturation of vocabulary typically occur as individuals mature, as it serves as the major means of communication and knowledge acquisition.

All these studies tackled the use of instructional technologies as an effective tool for enhancing and supporting second and foreign language learning and teaching.

5. Grammarly as a Grammar Checker Tool

Established in 2009 by Maz Lytvyn and Alex Shevchenko, Grammarly has expanded to rank among the most widely used online grammar checkers. Grammarly is an online proofreading tool that lets users check their writing for problems related to mechanics, grammar, and spelling (Ghufron & Rosyida, 2018). Grammarly's tools automatically detect writing faults. Grammarly is able to discern fragments and suggest verb forms in addition to identifying punctuation and mispronounced phrases, according to Daniels & Leslie (2013). Students can improve their self-assurance, drive, and interest in their studies by utilizing Grammarly.

Ummah (2022) states that Grammarly comes in three flavors: free, premium, and business. The business kind is intended for groups of three to 149 users, whereas the free and premium types are intended for individual use. Offering spelling errors, poor grammar, and punctuation errors without sacrificing grammar correctness. In the meantime, more extensive features like plagiarism detection, citation suggestions, vocabulary improvement, and over 400 other grammatical error checks and features are included in the premium version, which is accessible as a paid upgrade.

Methodology

Research Design

The present study employed a qualitative research approach to gather insights into students' attitudes towards the utilization of Grammarly Premium during the writing process. Sukmadinata (2016) defines qualitative research as the examination and reporting of people's experiences, opinions, perceptions, social interactions, events, and thoughts, either individually or collectively. The researcher employed a descriptive qualitative method to convey the findings. According to Muhammad (2019), social phenomena and people's everyday lives were described using the descriptive qualitative method.

Participants

The sample of the study consisted of 10 EFL teachers and 10 EFL students (who were selected for this research using purposive sampling) of second intermediate stage at Sumer intermediate school for boys during the academic year 2024/2025.

Data Collection Instrument

A questionnaire consisted of five closed questions were used to collect data.

Results

The study tried to answer the following question:

What are the Teachers and Students' Perceptions toward the Use of Grammarly to Improve EFL Students' Academic Writing?

After analyzing the data, it was found that teachers' perceptions towards using Grammarly in the process of writing were positive. The teachers expressed their complete satisfaction with the use of Grammarly software to improve students' academic writing as the features of this software helped greatly in improving students' writing skills.

Table (1) the mean scores of teachers' perceptions

| No. | Item | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No | Std. Deviation | Mean Score | Percentage |
|-----|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|----|----------------|------------|------------|
| 1 | Grammarly features, such as, identifying spelling errors and providing suggestions for these errors, contributed to developing the components of academic writing. | 7 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0.66 | 4.6 | 92% |
| 2 | Practicing academic writing correctly has become better with the use of the Grammarly software | 4 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 10 | 0.87 | 4.2 | 84% |
| 3 | Using the Grammarly software contributed in saving and reducing time of reviewing and revising texts in the English language | 3 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 1.17 | 3.8 | 76% |
| 4 | Using Grammarly help | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 10 | 1.43 | 3.6 | 72% |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|----|------|-----|-----|
| | students pointing out the misuse of using sentences within the English context and offers the correct use of these sentences within the correct context. | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | Grammarly re-duplication feature strength students' academic writing through writing with different styles. | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 1.37 | 3.9 | 78% |

Table 1 reveals the positive perceptions of teachers using Grammarly. Teachers responded strongly agree about item no. 1 “Grammarly features, such as, identifying spelling errors and providing suggestions for these errors, contributed to developing the components of academic writing.” They believed that the innovated and unique features of Grammarly enhanced the spelling mistakes committed by students while writing. These features offered academic suggestions to correct the spelling mistakes, this, with no doubt, contributed to improve the style of academic writing. Nine teachers responded strongly agree and agree to this item, the mean score is 4.6 with 92% percentage. As for item 2, nine of ten teachers responded strongly agree and agree that Grammarly features make academic writing very easy. The mean score is 4.2 with 84% percentage. According to the mean score of item no. 3, seven of ten teachers responded strongly agree and agree that Grammarly saved and reduced the time of revising writing, thus, the mean score is 3.8 with percentage 76%. Item no.4 was about Grammarly offers suitable sentences within the context, six teachers responded strongly agree and agree to this item with 3.6 mean scores and 72% percentage. Seven teachers believed that Grammarly re-writing feature enhanced students' writing style as the features offered many styles of a good writing. The mean score is 3.9 with 78% percentage.

Table (2) the General average, Mean Scores, Std. Deviation, Percentage, and Sample Direction of EFL teachers

| General average | Mean Score | Std. Deviation | Percentage | Sample Direction |
|-----------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------------|
| As a whole | 4.02 | 1.19 | 80.4% | Agree |

Table 2, shows the whole mean score of the five questions was 4.02, with 1.19 std. deviation, the percentage was 80.4 %, thus the teachers' directions were agree to the five questions.

Table (3) the mean scores of students' perceptions

| No. | Item | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No | Std. Deviation | Mean Score | Percentage |
|-----|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|----|----------------|------------|------------|
| 1 | Grammarly features, such as, identifying spelling errors and providing suggestions for these errors, contributed to | 2 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 10 | 0.87 | 3.8 | 76% |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|------|-----|-----|
| | developing the components of academic writing. | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Practicing academic writing correctly has become better with the use of the Grammarly software | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 10 | 1.43 | 3.6 | 72% |
| 3 | Using the Grammarly software contributed in saving and reducing time of reviewing and revising texts in the English language | 1 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 1.35 | 3.3 | 66% |
| 4 | Using Grammarly help students pointing out the misuse of using sentences within the English context and offers the correct use of these sentences within the correct context. | 7 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0.66 | 4.6 | 92% |
| 5 | Grammarly re-duplication features strength students' academic writing through writing with different styles. | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 1.28 | 3.6 | 72% |

Table 3 shows that students showed positive viewpoints towards using Grammarly as a tool for developing writing skills. Students responded strongly agree about item no. 1 “Grammarly features, such as, identifying spelling errors and providing suggestions for these errors, contributed to developing the components of academic writing.” They argued that Grammarly has several useful features, which help in detecting students’ spelling mistakes and correcting these mistakes. Seven students responded strongly agree and agree to this item, the mean score is 3.8 and the percentage is 76%. Six students responded strongly agree and agree that Grammarly features make academic writing better than before. The mean score is 3.6 and the percentage is 72%. As for the mean score of item no. 3, 7 students responded strongly agree and agree that Grammarly saved the time of revising writing, thus, the mean score is 3.3 with 66% percentage. It was about Grammarly offers syntactically and semantically good sentences within the context, thus, nine students responded strongly agree and agree to item number 4. Mean score is 4.6 with 92% percentage. Six students agreed and strongly agreed that Grammarly paraphrasing feature enhanced students’ writing style as the features offered many styles of a good writing. The mean score is 3.6 and the percentage is 72%.

| General average | Mean Score | Std. Deviation | Percentage | Sample direction |
|-----------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------------|
|-----------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------------|

| | | | | |
|------------|------|------|-------|-------|
| As a whole | 3.78 | 1.24 | 75.6% | Agree |
|------------|------|------|-------|-------|

Table (4) the General average, Mean Scores, Std. Deviation, Percentage, and Sample Direction of EFL students

Table 4, shows the whole mean score of the five questions which was 3.78, with 1.24 std. deviation, the percentage was 75.6 %, thus the students' directions were agree to the five questions.

Conclusion

According to the questionnaire analysis, participants had a positive perception of using Grammarly in their academic writing process. It is clear from the discussion and the data that both teachers and students had a generally positive opinion towards Grammarly. When using Grammarly, teachers and students thought it was motivating, as it had many helpful features, was simple to use, and had more functions than other programs. The study findings demonstrated that, overall, EFL teachers and students had a positive opinions of Grammarly when writing essays in English language. That may attributed to its simplicity to use, offering guidance, clear explanations, accurate grammar, and quick fixes. Additionally, using Grammarly helps students write better and feel more confident about their writing, especially when they are writing essays. They can also learn more grammatical rules by using Grammarly.

Furthermore, students stated that Grammarly is an indispensable tool, particularly for academic writing. Students use Grammarly for a variety of purposes and gain a lot from its capabilities. Besides, students typically employ the five essential features: correctness, clarity, engagement, delivery, and plagiarism detecting. Correctness is the most feature used by students, particularly when it comes to grammar and spelling mistakes.

Grammarly is a helpful tool for non-native English speakers to improve their writing. The study discovered that the use of Grammarly improved the overall writing quality, vocabulary use, and grammatical accuracy of English language learners. Moreover, Grammarly users expressed a favorable attitude toward the application and said it helped them become better writers. The teaching and learning of the English language will be significantly impacted by using Grammarly. Teachers of English can advise their pupils on how to use Grammarly efficiently and urge them to use the application to enhance their writing abilities. Grammarly is also a self-study tool that language learners can use to get better at writing outside of the classroom. Due to Grammarly convenient and useful application, teachers and students had positive perceptions of utilizing it for academic writing. Compared to other grammar checkers that could assist them in fixing their mistakes, they argued that Grammarly was easier to use. Grammarly offers a number of useful functions, including spelling, punctuation, and grammar checking. Students can save time and feel more confidence while using Grammarly for academic writing because of these capabilities. Even though they just utilized Grammarly free version, they felt satisfied using the program.

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