

Student's Perception Towards the Use of Grammarly's Free Version on Students' Writing

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the student's perception towards using Grammarly's free version as a medium for learning writing. It examined whether they have a positive or negative perception, and the perceived advantages and challenges of this media. In this study, the population was the students in the second academic year enrolling in Writing III class at the English Study Program. This study applied a quantitative survey design. The findings revealed that most of the students rate Grammarly's free version positively based on perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and user acceptance. In terms of ease of use, it helps or makes students easier to learn writing. In terms of usefulness, it allowed them to learn writing effectively and enjoyably, for it is easy to use and explain all students' writing mistakes. Concerning the acceptance, the students perceived it positively as they learn how to do grammatically-correct writing. Moreover, the results of the open-ended questionnaire indicated that perceived advantages of Grammarly's free version are: (a) it shows, explains, and corrects grammatical mistakes; (b) it is fun, easy to use, and understandable; (c) it increases students writing skill; (d) it gives suggestions for the mistakes in writing. Despite this, the internet connection has been an issue for the students while using Grammarly's free version.

Keywords:

Grammarly's Free Version, Student's Perception.

1. Introduction

English comes in many types around the world. Tegegne (2015) believes that every sort of English has its' own set of writing system conventions, some delicate variation in synchronic linguistic, spelling, and punctuation usage, too. It is based on the region where English is used as a communication tool, such as British English and American English, called the English dialect. A regionally produced language can be called language preference (As cited in Tegegne, 2015). While it is critical in writing, many students do not really concern about it as they perceive writing as a simple skill. In fact, it is very contradictive and is not easy as it is spoken. Writing is not a spontaneous talent or nonheritable. Instead, it is viewed as 'probably the foremost troublesome issue to try and do in language' (Nunan, 1999:271). Even Hedge (2005) emphasizes that whereas speech permits the speaker to take advantage of numerous devices like body movement, gestures, countenance, tone of voice, pitch, hesitation, and stress to facilitate communication, this is not available for the writer. Nor can the writer clarify, revise or backtrack ideas when there is miscommunication or misunderstanding between reader and writer (As cited in Anabela, 2008:2). That causes them only to follow and take every learning and material which their teacher

gives. Most of them do not realize that sometimes they write a text in two or more English dialects.

On the other hand, teaching students based on their language preferences is also tricky for a teacher. Jones, Myhill, and Bailey (2013) say that all students have different writing preferences because they are different from the others. Teachers possibly think that give detailed grammatical feedback on students' papers is not their responsibility. The lack of confidence in explaining the complex grammatical rules can also be felt by teachers (As cited in Michelle & Saib, 2016:A-223). Besides, the lack of time for students to consult their writing also influences their writing. It absolutely will be hard for the teacher to teach each of them with all those limitations. However, with the existence of technology that keeps developing time by time, some applications are also created to fulfill the limitation and help people. One application that is recommended to help students and anyone as a tool to improve their writing is Grammarly.

Grammarly has become one of some recommended applications in improving students' writing skills. It can help students find and correct their grammar mistakes or miss the spelling of some words in their writing text. Grammarly also provides four language preferences such as American, British, Australian, and Canadian English. Laptop/PC or Mobile phone and internet network are the devices needed to access Grammarly. Thus, Grammarly's Free Version is a very suitable application for students in improving their writing.

Erni and Reni (2017) investigated a study entitled "Utilizing Grammarly in Teaching Writing Trough Genre-Based Approach." Their investigation found out that students showed a positive perception in learning writing recount text by utilizing Grammarly through the genre-based approach. They understood the material explained while they were enjoying the learning process. Getting a better understanding of genre-based, students felt it easier to produce recount text. Pair and group discussion had a significant part in the writing phases (Hyland, 2007:136-137 and Harmer, 2007:30). Moreover, the data showed that students had a positive perception of using technology to write recount text. The students thought that using word processing and Grammarly, an online rater, helped them write (Gebhard, 2009:222). Grammarly told the students' error that students were intended to revise their works. Therefore, the researcher felt interested in investigating how the students' perception and perceived advantages and challenges in using the Grammarly's Free Version student's writing based on their language preferences.

Some researchers have investigated the students' perception and the effectiveness of using Grammarly for writing. The results showed that Grammarly helps students improve their writing skills by giving them feedback and correcting their writing mistakes. Those studies can be seen in this section.

Erni and Reni (2017) investigated the use of Grammarly in teaching writing through a genre-based approach. They found that the students' perception in learning writing recount text was positive. The students understood the teacher's explanation of the material and enjoyed the learning process as well. Getting a better understanding of genre-based, students felt it easier to produce recount text. Pair and group discussion had a significant part in the writing phases (Hyland, 2007:136-137 and Harmer, 2007:30). Moreover, the data showed that students had a positive

perception of using technology to write recount text. The students thought that using word processing and Grammarly, an online rater, helped them write (Gebhard, 2009:222). Grammarly told the students' error that the students need to revise. Therefore, the researcher is interested in investigating how the students' perception and perceived advantages and challenges in using Grammarly's Free Version while writing based on their language preferences.

1.1 Literature Review

Some researchers have investigated the students' perception and the effectiveness of using Grammarly for writing. The results showed that Grammarly helps students improve their writing skills by giving them feedback and correcting their writing mistakes. Those studies can be seen in this section.

First, a study by Ruth and Alex (2018) in a journal entitled "Stop! Grammar Time: University Students Perception of the Automated Feedback Program Grammarly". Ruth and Alex (2018) investigate the students' perceptions of Grammarly when used in conjunction with advice from an academic learning advisor. It used a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design. The study compared one group of students' responses to the feedback they received from Grammarly(n = 54) with another group's responses to the traditional non-automated grammar feedback they received from the Academic Learning Centre at CQ University (n= 42). The result showed that students who received feedback from Grammarly responded more positively to 9 of the 15 survey items and were significantly more satisfied with the grammar advice they received than non-Grammarly students. No significant differences were registered between cohorts or delivery mode, which suggests that Grammarly can be used effectively by academic learning advisors to provide grammar support for both international and domestic students, online and on campus. However, it is recommended that the program is used in conjunction with academic learning advisor input as the program is currently not accurate enough for independent use to be justified. Besides that, their study was conducted abroad where the facilities and internet connection are available and stable. It is very contradictory to the current study where the facilities and internet connection are doubtful.

Second, Abolfazl and Hasan (2016) conducted a study about The Impact of Feedback Provision by Grammarly Software and Teachers on Learning Passive Structures by Iranian EFL Learners. Abolfazl and Hasan (2016) investigated the Impact of Feedback Provision by Grammarly Software and Teachers on learning passive structures by EFL learners. In this study, 70 intermediate males and females were selected, then they were randomly assigned into two main groups: the experimental and control group. A grammar pre-test, post-test, and a delayed post-test were administrated to the participants in six sessions. The data result showed a significant difference between feedback provision through Grammarly Software and teacher on retaining passive structures by EFL learners. In short, it can be concluded that Grammarly can become one alternative tool to get feedback towards students' writing on learning a passive voice.

Third, Erni and Reni's (2017) investigated a study about utilizing Grammarly in teaching writing through a genre-based approach (GBA). This study described GBA application in the class, utilizing Grammarly and GBA, which led to students' writing

recount text and knowing students' perception of utilizing Grammarly in GBA in writing recount text. This study employed a pre-experimental design, one group pretest-posttest (Creswell, 2008). Data in this study were obtained from the questionnaires and pretest-posttest. The result revealed that students had a positive perception in learning writing recount text by utilizing Grammarly through the genre-based approach. Students understood the material explained while they were enjoying the learning process. Getting a better understanding of genre-based, students felt it easier to produce recount text. Pair and group discussion played an essential role in writing cycles (Hyland, 2007 and Harmer, 2007). Moreover, the data showed that students had a positive perception of using technology in learning writing recount text. These studies believe that using word processing and Grammarly, an online rater, helped them write and tell the students' errors until they were motivated to revise their works.

To sum up, most of the previous studies aimed to determine students' perception of Grammarly and Grammarly's impact in writing. The finding of their study showed that students were motivated to write with Grammarly as their grammar checker because it can give the right feedback and suggestion. They enjoyed the learning process when they were writing because the feedback and suggestion were easy to understand. However, those studies were conducted in universities abroad and schools with complete facilities and equipment such as computer laboratory, laptop, Wi-Fi, and good connector facilities. Thus, the situation might be different if research is conducted at a college lacking facilities and finances to pay the Grammarly premium version. Thus, in this study the researcher analyzed the students' perception of Grammarly's Free Version on student's writing. In the present study, the researchers just focused on the premium version of Grammarly from all those previous studies. Also, even though language preference is one of the attractive factors why Grammarly should be used in writing but all the researchers just focused on the feedback of Grammarly.

In summary, the researcher felt interested in conducting a study to investigate the students' perception towards the use of Grammarly's free version in improving students writing skill grammatically based on their language preferences and the perceived advantages and challenges of using Grammarly's free version in writing. The researcher expected that this study would become an essential reference that would be able to provide valuable information to the EFL environment about the observed variables, particularly in the English Study Program of Halu Oleo University.

2. Methods

In this study, the researcher used descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey design is a research design that used to collect knowledge from a sample of people through their responses to questions (Check & Schutt: 2012). In other word, descriptive survey design takes some people from one population to be the representative of them about an information or understanding towards one object. Based on the statement, the researcher used a descriptive survey design to find out the student's perception towards the use of Grammarly Free Version and its' perceived advantages and challenges of this media. The instrument of this study were

close-ended and open-ended questionnaires. The close-ended questionnaire consists of perceived ease of use (PEOU), perceived usefulness (PU), and user acceptance (UA) which was adapted from Technology Acceptance Model by Davis (1993) to find out the student's perception towards the use of Grammarly Free Version. On the other hand, the purpose of the open-ended questionnaire was to gain information about student's perceived advantages and challenges of Grammarly Free Version. The result of the close-ended questionnaire was reported based on the result of the frequency distribution analysis of each item of the questionnaire from SPSS 16. While, the result of the open-ended questionnaire was reported based on the result of using a coding approach which is introduced by David and Peter (2003).

3. Results

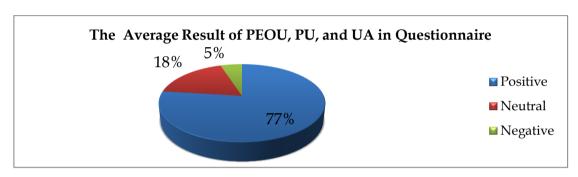


Figure 1.The Student's Perception after Using of Grammarly Free Version on Their Writing Based on the Ease of Use, Usefulness, and Acceptance of This Media

The above graphis about the average result of three aspects in the questionnaire. In general, most of them which are 77% of 19 students respond positively towards the use of Grammarly free version in their writing. Meanwhile, there are 18% of them state neutral after using Grammarly free version and there are only 5% of them respond negative about using Grammarly free version on their writing.

No.	QUESTIONS														
Sample	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5
2	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	2	4	4	4	2	5
3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	5	4	2	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	4
5	4	3	3	2	4	4	4	4	2	3	3	3	2	3	4
6	3	3	3	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4
7	4	4	4	3	5	3	4	4	3	4	5	3	3	3	4
8	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	4
9	3	3	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	3	5	5	3	4	5
10	4	2	5	3	2	2	4	4	2	5	4	3	2	5	4
11	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	2	5	5	4	5	3	4
12	3	4	3	4	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	4
13	4	3	5	2	3	3	5	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	5

14	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	4	
15	4	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	5	
16	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	
17	5	4	4	5	5	4	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	
18	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	5	5	4	5	4	4	
19	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	
Mean								4.02								

Table 1. The Average Value of the Students Answers towards Close-ended Ouestionnaire

Based on the table above, the mean value of students answer towards the close-ended questionnaire was 4.02. It can be concluded that, on the average, all the students responded Agree towards the ease of use and the usefulness of Grammarly free version, and also agree to accept this application as one of tools in assisting and helping them in writing. In short, the rating of Grammarly free version based on the students' perception was 4.02 or Grammarly free version is useful as assistance in writing

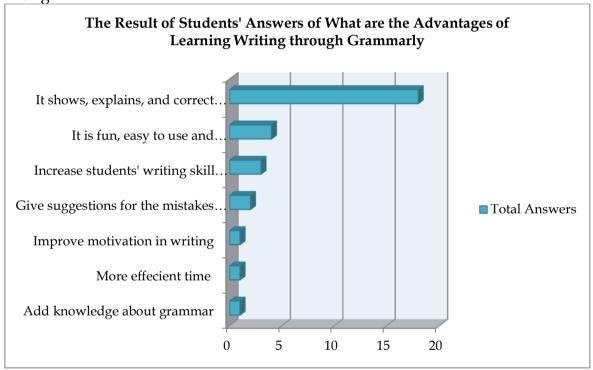


Figure 2. Chart of the result of students' reason of what are the advantages of learning writing through Grammarly Free Version

The result that the researcher acquires from the students is that there are 4 main advantages of Grammarly Free Version which has been reported by the students. First, majority of them which are 18 out of 19 students reported that Grammarly shows, explains, and corrects mistakes in writing grammatically. This result shows relation with the result of Q7 of close-ended questionnaire which is "Grammarly gives good explanation about my errors" where all of the students wrote it. Second, the perceived advantage by using Grammarly free version is that it is fun, easy to use and understand in making writing with Grammarly. Out of 19 students, 4 students state

this. This result clarifies the result of Q1 and Q3 of close-ended questionnaire that "It was easy to understand the errors because the explanation given were clear" (16 students wrote this) and "It was easy to make grammatical changes to my work using the feedback from Grammarly" (15 students wrote this). Third, the perceived advantage of Grammarly free version is that by using this application, it increase students' writing skill grammatically (3 students stated this). It is connected to Q11 of close-ended questionnaire that "The use of Grammarly enhanced my English writing skill" (17 students wrote this). The last one is it gives suggestions for the mistakes in writing. This result has a strong relation with the result of Q5 of close-ended questionnaire that "Grammarly gives helpful suggestions for improving my writing" (17 students wrote this);

However, despite the 4 advantages which are dominant to be reported by students, there are also some advantages that students mentioned. They are Grammarly Free Version improve motivation in writing; more efficient time; and add knowledge about grammar (each of the advantages are stated by one student).

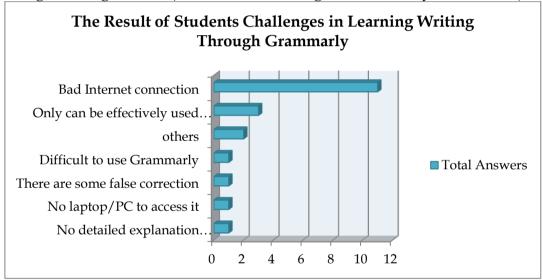


Figure 3. Chart of the result of students' answer of what are the challenges of learning writing through Grammarly

Based on the result, there is one main challenge of learning writing through Grammarly that students tend to report. They state that the challenge of using this application is the quality of internet connection which is not always good. There are 11 students among 19 report that the challenge of Grammarly free version is that the use of this application too depends on the quality of internet connection. This one has become the main challenge that students face when they are using Grammarly Free Version on their writing.

Despite those challenges, there are also students who report that the challenges of Grammarly Free Version are it only can be effectively used in laptop (3 students stated it). One student state that it is difficult to use Grammarly and there are some false corrections. Moreover, there is a student who report that the challenge of using Grammarly is no laptop/PC to access it and no detailed explanation about the mistakes in writing.

Besides all those challenges above, there are a student who stated that the challenge of using Grammarly free version was that they always try to make writing which grammatically well, so the Grammarly cannot find any error in their writing and another student stated he/she become more challenged to write because of Grammarly. This is actually a good thing because it indirectly motivates students to improve their writing because of Grammarly Free Version.

4. Discussion

4.1 Perception towards Grammarly Free Version

Students' perception questionnaire was distributed to students in a form of close-ended questionnaire. The result from Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)'s aspect was 78% positive, 16% neutral, and 6% negative. The result from Perceived Usefulness (PU)'s aspect was 80% positive, 16% neutral, and 4% negative. The result from User Acceptance was 74% positive, 21% neutral, and 5% negative. As a result, it was found that the students' perception towards the use of Grammarly free version was positive. A large number of students who participated in this study tended to give the positive responses in the 3 aspects of perception towards Grammarly free version. Furthermore, this study found that the students agreed to the ease of use, the use of Grammarly free version, and the user acceptance after using this application. This result has a positive correlation with O'Neill and Russell (2018) in a journal entitled "University Students Perceptions of the Automated Feedback Program Grammarly". O'Neill and Russell (2018) investigated the significant comparison between one group's responses who received automated feedback program from Grammarly and another's responses to the traditional non-automated grammar feedback they received from the Academic Learning Centre at CQ University. The respondents of the study were 96 students who came from a CQ University. The instruments of this study were close-ended questionnaire that consisted of Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness and open-ended questionnaire which was consisted of 3 items. The findings of the research showed that the significant of using Grammarly was at the high level. In short, the conclusion of this research, there were two major finding of the comparison between students perception towards the use of automated feedback of Grammarly and non-automated feedback from Academic Learning Centre at CQ University in Australia. First, Grammarly is a significant useful application which can improve and develop students' confidence and language skills. Second, students have a bit higher positive perception towards the automated feedback of Grammarly than the non-automated feedback from Academic Learning Centre at CQ University. However, their study was conducted in abroad university where any facilities and internet connection were stable. On the contrast with this current study where doubtful and worried to access any application for learning because the availability of internet and facilities are exist.

In addition, this study found that students responded positively to the usefulness of Grammarly. Karyuatry, Rizqan, and Darayani in a journal entitled Grammarly as A Tool to Improve Students' Writing Quality (2018) investigated the impact of using Grammarly in improving students' writing quality related to writing descriptive. To achieve this, interview, students' essays, and questionnaires were done

by the researchers. The study revealed that when Grammarly was used in teaching descriptive, there were 32 (82%) out of 40 students passed the passing grade. The researchers concluded that Grammarly can be used as an appropriate tool to minimize errors and improve students' writing quality.

This study also concluded that students had positive perception towards the use of Grammarly free version in writing class. They also stated that Grammarly free version also increase their confidence, motivation, and skill towards writing. The result did not higher than the previous study because of the facilities to use this application was not as stable as facilities from the abroad university and they used the premium version of Grammarly in their studies. However, the students of this study still have positive perception towards the use of Grammarly free version which motivated them to use it in their writing activities. It is because this application is something new which can assist them in writing and give new knowledge about grammar to them. This is also supported by Robbins (2002) who says that positive perception is a perception that comes from the satisfaction of an individual about a certain object that becomes her/his source perception, the individual knowledge, and the individual experience of the object perceived (As cited in Aprianto, 2017). It can be concluded that students in this study have positive perception because they were satisfied, pleased, and content towards the experiences and feedback they got when using Grammarly free version. This is why Grammarly free version becomes an interesting application for students in learning writing. Furthermore, by concerning in the theory, previous studies, and the result of this present study, it can be stated that generally 77% students of the English study program who involved in writing class have the positive perception, 18% of them respond neutral, and only 5% of them respond negative towards Grammarly free version.

4.2 Discussion of Students' Perceived Advantages and Challenges towards Grammarly Free Version

An open-ended questionnaire was also conducted as well to acquire the information about the perceived advantages and challenges from using Grammarly free version application. After analyzing students' opinion regard with this issue, it was found that the students were really enjoying this application. This application gets a lot of the various advantages.

First, the advantages from the result why do they enjoy Grammarly free version, where 89.5% of total students reported that they enjoyed using this application because it helps them in making writing because it will check and give explanation for mistakes clearly based on students' language preferences. In addition, it also gives correction to the mistakes in writing. Also, this application was easy and simple to be used in writing. This finding has similarity with Michelle and Saib's (2016) study. They found that Grammarly was helpful and easy to use for students which made them enjoyed it and would continue to use it. They also found that the suggestion from Grammarly was helpful in improving their writing and helped achieve a better mark in their assignments. In addition, most of the students felt that the explanations had helped them understand grammar rules. This indicates that Grammarly that the students had positive perception towards the use of Grammarly because it was helpful and easy to use.

Second, from the question number 2 of open-ended question was also found that the students achieved many advantages by using Grammarly free version because it is fun, easy to use and understand in making writing through Grammarly. It is not only shows, explains, and corrects mistakes in writing but also give suggestions for the mistakes in writing which made students use more efficient time in making their writing. Grammarly free version also gives addition knowledge about grammar. Because of all of these advantages, students' motivation and writing skill were improved. This issue has a similarity with Erni and Reni (2017) who found that the students had positive perception in using (Grammarly) in learning writing recount text. They stated that Grammarly had helped them in writing process because it told the students' error that made students were motivated to revise their works.

On the other hand, the perceived challenges of Grammarly free version also had been revealed. Based on the open-ended questionnaire, the majority of the students concerned that internet connection was the biggest challenge in using Grammarly free version. It is also supported by the students' answer as suggestion in Q4 of open-ended questionnaire where they said that Grammarly free version should have offline version. It showed that the quality of internet network has an important role in this activity. They also stated that it is difficult to use Grammarly because it can only be effectively used in laptop while not all of them had laptop/PC to access it. There were also some false correction and no detailed explanation about the mistakes in writing.

Based on the findings, perceived advantages that the students get from the use of Grammarly free version are: (a) shows, explains, and corrects mistakes in writing grammatically; (b) it is fun, easy to use and understand in making writing with Grammarly; (c) increases students' writing skill grammatically; (d) gives suggestions for the mistakes in writing. Those advantages have clearly showed the reasons why students should use Grammarly free version on their daily writing with all those benefits. While the perceived challenge of this application were depends too much on the availability of internet connection.

5. Conclusion

From the above discussion, it found out that majority of the students (77% of 19 students) tend to have positive respond to the questionnaire given. Grammarly free version according to students' perception in general is positive because it is easy to use for them, give many benefits to them, and they can be well accepted to use in their writing activity. It is supported by Robbins (2002:14) who describes that a perception can be called positive if it comes from the individual satisfaction about a certain object that becomes her/his source of perception, satisfy with the knowledge and the experience received from the object perceived (As cited from Aprianto, 2017:6). Based on the students' perceived ease of use can be seen that Grammarly free version can help or make students easier in learning writing in English based on their language preferences. In regard to usefulness, the Grammarly free version allowed them to learn writing effectively because it is easy to use and also give explanation and the examples to students. Furthermore, the students' acceptance toward Grammarly free version is positively high. They stated that using Grammarly is an interesting thing because of it is easy to use and helpful for them. There were only 18% of 19 students

(3 students) who responded neutral and 5% of them (1 student) responded negative after using Grammarly free version their writing. Overall, the student's perception is 4.02 which means that they tend to have positive perception towards the use of Grammarly free version on their writing. In short, the student's perception towards the use of Grammarly free version is positive because of their satisfaction, pleasure, and content toward the easiness in using this application to their writing, the usefulness they received while and after use it, and their well acceptance to use Grammarly free version continuously on their writing. Besides, they also believed that there are 4 main advantages of using Grammarly free version which are: (a) it shows, explain, and corrects mistakes in writing grammatically; (b) it is fun, easy to use and understand in making writing with Grammarly; (c) it increases students writing skill grammatically; and (d) it gives suggestions for the mistakes in writing. Despite those four advantages above, there was only one main challenge for students in using Grammarly where they were annoyed with unstable internet connection while using Grammarly free version to their writing. In summary, Grammarly free version is one of best applications that should be used to assist students in their daily writing with all those advantages given to them.

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