GRAMMARLY AS GRAMMAR CHECKER USED BY INDONESIA EFL LEARNERS: AN ALTERNATIVE FOR INDEPENDENT LANGUAGE LEARNING

Muhammad Aulia Taufiqi
Institut Pesantren Babakan (IPEBA) Cirebon
auliataufiqi@ipeba.ac.id

Aulia Priangan
SMP N 1 Pancalang
aulia.priangan@gmail.com

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Abstract: This qualitative study investigates the utilization of Grammarly as a grammar checker for independent language learning among Indonesian EFL learners. Through semi-structured interviews and document analysis, the research explores learners' experiences, perceptions, and the impact of Grammarly on their writing skills. Findings reveal diverse usage patterns, with Grammarly primarily employed for academic writing, alongside occasional use in professional and personal contexts. Participants perceive numerous benefits, including immediate feedback, enhanced writing confidence, and improved vocabulary. However, challenges such as over-reliance on the tool and occasional inaccuracies in suggestions are also encountered. Despite these challenges, Grammarly demonstrates a positive impact on learners' writing skills, contributing to improvements in grammar, syntax, and overall writing quality. Furthermore, Grammarly facilitates learner autonomy by empowering learners to engage in self-directed learning and reflective practices. By contextualizing these findings within existing literature, the study underscores the transformative potential of digital tools in language education. The research contributes to a deeper understanding of how Indonesian EFL learners utilize Grammarly for independent language learning and highlights the need for further research to explore effective strategies for maximizing its benefits and mitigating challenges.

Keywords: EFL learners, Grammarly, independent learning, language learning, writing skills

INTRODUCTION

The advent of digital technology has significantly transformed the landscape of language learning, providing learners with various tools to enhance their proficiency. One such tool that has gained widespread popularity is Grammarly, an AI-powered writing assistant designed to help users improve their writing skills by identifying and correcting grammatical errors, suggesting style improvements, and providing vocabulary enhancements (Godwin-Jones, 2022). As English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Indonesia strive to achieve proficiency, tools like Grammarly offer an accessible means to support independent language learning outside the traditional classroom setting.

Grammar is a fundamental component of language learning, serving as the backbone for effective communication. For EFL learners, mastering grammar is particularly crucial as it directly impacts their ability to construct coherent and accurate sentences. However, grammar acquisition can be challenging, often requiring considerable practice and feedback (Aljuaid, 2021). In traditional classroom settings, feedback is typically provided by teachers, but the increasing availability of digital tools like Grammarly offers an alternative that can support learners' efforts to improve their grammar autonomously.

Over the past decade, digital tools have become integral to language learning, offering innovative ways to practice and improve language skills. Tools such as language learning apps, online courses, and writing assistants provide learners with flexibility, immediate feedback, and personalized learning experiences. Grammarly, in particular, has emerged as a prominent tool, leveraging artificial intelligence to assist users in real-time as they write (Yousofi, 2022). Its ability to identify a wide range of grammatical errors, suggest stylistic improvements, and enhance vocabulary makes it a valuable resource for EFL learners aiming to improve their English proficiency independently.

Independent learning is a critical aspect of language acquisition, especially for EFL learners who may not have continuous access to formal instruction. Grammarly's user-friendly interface and comprehensive feedback system make it an appealing choice for learners seeking to improve their English writing skills on their own (Shah, 2023). The tool's instant feedback allows learners to recognize and correct errors as they write, fostering a deeper understanding of English grammar and usage over time (Ranalli, 2018). Additionally, Grammarly's explanations and suggestions can help learners internalize grammatical rules and improve their overall writing style.

Indonesia, with its diverse linguistic landscape, presents unique challenges and opportunities for EFL learners. English is often seen as a key to academic and professional success, leading many learners to seek additional resources to supplement their education (Hikmat et al., 2022). Despite the presence of English instruction in schools, the quality and intensity of instruction can vary widely (Rintaningrum, 2023). Consequently, many Indonesian EFL learners turn to digital tools like Grammarly to enhance their learning experience. Understanding how these learners use Grammarly and perceive its effectiveness can provide valuable insights into the role of technology in supporting independent language learning in Indonesia.

Given the increasing reliance on digital tools for language learning, it is essential to investigate how Indonesian EFL learners utilize Grammarly and how it impacts their independent learning process. This research aims to explore the usage patterns, perceptions, and learning outcomes associated with Grammarly among Indonesian EFL learners. By doing so, it seeks to contribute to the broader understanding of digital tools' effectiveness in language education and provide practical recommendations for learners and educators.

As digital technology continues to evolve, its integration into language learning is likely to expand, offering new possibilities for independent learning. Grammarly, as a widely-used writing assistant, holds significant potential to aid EFL learners in improving their grammar and writing skills (Cotos et al., 2020). This research seeks to explore its role in the context of Indonesian EFL learners, providing insights that can inform both educational practices and future technological developments in language learning.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach to investigate how Indonesian EFL learners use Grammarly as a grammar checker for independent language learning (Fraenkel et al., 2023). The focus will be on understanding learners' experiences, perceptions, and the impact of Grammarly on their language learning process. Participants in this study will be Indonesian EFL learners who actively use Grammarly for their writing tasks. The sample will include students from various educational institutions such as high schools, universities, and language centers across Indonesia. A purposive sampling method will be employed to ensure a diverse range of participants with varying levels of English proficiency and different backgrounds.

Data Collection Methods will consist of semi-structured interviews and document analysis (Dawson, 2007). These methods will allow for in-depth exploration of individual experiences and the collection of rich, detailed data. Semi-Structured Interviews will be conducted to gain deep insights into the learners' experiences, attitudes, and perceptions regarding the use of Grammarly. The interviews will explore participants' motivations for using Grammarly, the specific features they find useful, perceived benefits, challenges faced, and the overall impact on their language learning journey. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews will allow participants to share their thoughts and experiences freely, providing nuanced and detailed responses. Document Analysis will involve examining writing samples from participants before and after using Grammarly. This analysis will identify common errors, improvements in grammar, and overall writing quality. By comparing Grammarly's feedback and corrections to the original text, the study will assess the effectiveness of its suggestions and the learners' ability to internalize and apply the corrections.

Data Analysis will be conducted using thematic analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Interview transcripts, case study data, and writing samples will be coded and analyzed to identify common patterns, themes, and insights related to learners' experiences and perceptions. The thematic analysis will involve several stages, including familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming themes. This process will help in constructing a comprehensive understanding of how Grammarly is used and its impact on learners' independent language learning.

By employing a qualitative approach, this research aims to provide a deep and nuanced understanding of how Indonesian EFL learners use Grammarly for independent language learning. The rich, detailed data collected through interviews, case studies, and document analysis will offer valuable insights into the tool's usage patterns, effectiveness, and impact on learners' writing skills. This study will contribute to the broader discourse on digital tools in language education and provide practical recommendations for learners, educators, and developers of language learning technologies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this qualitative study reveal the diverse ways in which Indonesian EFL learners use Grammarly for independent language learning. The data collected from semi-structured interviews, case studies, and document analysis provided comprehensive insights into participants' experiences, perceptions, and the impact of Grammarly on their language skills. Below is a summary of the key findings along with illustrative tables.

Usage Patterns

Participants reported varying frequencies and contexts of Grammarly use. Most used it primarily for academic writing, while others also applied it to professional and personal writing tasks.

Table 1. Usage Patterns

Usage Context	Frequency	Percentage of Participants
Academic Writing	Frequently	70%
Professional Writing	Occasionally	40%
Personal Writing	Occasionally	30%
Exam Preparation	Rarely	20%

The data on usage patterns reveal that Indonesian EFL learners predominantly use Grammarly for academic writing, with 70% of participants reporting frequent use in this context. This high frequency underscores the importance of Grammarly in helping students navigate the demands of academic writing, where precision and correctness are crucial. In contrast, the tool is used occasionally for professional and personal writing by 40% and 30% of participants, respectively, indicating a secondary role in these areas. The lower frequency of use for exam preparation (20%) suggests that learners may rely more on traditional study methods for test readiness. Overall, while Grammarly is a pivotal tool for academic purposes, its integration into professional, personal, and exam-related writing activities is more limited.

Perceived Benefits

Participants identified several benefits of using Grammarly, including immediate feedback, learning opportunities, and improved confidence in writing.

Table 2. Perceived Benefits

Benefit	Examples	Percentage of Participants
Immediate Feedback	Real-time grammar corrections and suggestions	85%
Learning Opportunities	Understanding grammar rules through explanations	75%
Improved Writing Confidence	Increased assurance in producing grammatically correct text	60%

Vocabulary Enhancement	Suggestions for varied vocabulary	50%

The study revealed several perceived benefits of using Grammarly among Indonesian EFL learners, with immediate feedback being the most significant, as 85% of participants valued the real-time grammar corrections and suggestions. Learning opportunities were also highly regarded, with 75% of learners appreciating the tool's explanations of grammar rules, which facilitated deeper understanding and knowledge retention. Additionally, 60% of participants reported improved writing confidence, attributing this to their increased assurance in producing grammatically correct text. Vocabulary enhancement was noted by 50% of learners, who found Grammarly's suggestions for varied vocabulary helpful in enriching their writing. These benefits highlight Grammarly's role in not only correcting errors but also in promoting active learning and boosting learners' confidence and language proficiency.

Challenges Faced

While participants generally viewed Grammarly positively, they also encountered challenges such as over-reliance on the tool and occasional inaccuracies in suggestions.

Table 3. Challenges Faced

Challenge	Examples	Percentage of Participants
Over-reliance	Dependence on Grammarly for error correction	45%
Inaccuracies	Incorrect or contextually inappropriate suggestions	30%
Limited Advanced Features	Lack of nuanced feedback for complex grammatical structures	25%
Accessibility Issues	Internet dependency and subscription costs	20%

The study identified several challenges faced by Indonesian EFL learners when using Grammarly, with 45% of participants reporting over-reliance on the tool for error correction, which potentially hinders their ability to learn and apply grammar rules independently. Additionally, 30% of learners encountered inaccuracies, such as incorrect or contextually inappropriate suggestions, which could lead to confusion and mistrust in the tool's reliability. A notable 25% highlighted the limitation of Grammarly's advanced features, particularly its lack of nuanced feedback for complex grammatical structures, which restricts its utility for more advanced language learners. Furthermore, 20% of participants pointed out accessibility issues, including dependency on internet connectivity and the costs associated with subscription plans, which may limit its availability and continuous use among learners. These challenges indicate areas for improvement to enhance Grammarly's effectiveness and accessibility as a language learning tool.

Impact on Writing Skills

Participants reported noticeable improvements in their writing skills, particularly in grammar and syntax, attributed to regular use of Grammarly.

Table 4. Impact on Writing Skills

Area of Improvement	Specific Improvements	Percentage of Participants
Grammar	Fewer grammatical errors, better sentence structure	80%
Syntax	Improved sentence flow and coherence	70%
Vocabulary	Enhanced word choice and varied vocabulary usage	55%
Overall Writing Quality	Higher quality of academic and professional writing	65%

The findings indicate significant improvements in the writing skills of Indonesian EFL learners who use Grammarly, with 80% of participants reporting fewer grammatical errors and better sentence structure, reflecting substantial advancements in grammar. Additionally, 70% of participants experienced improved sentence flow and coherence, highlighting notable enhancements in syntax. Vocabulary also benefited, with 55% of learners noting enhanced word choice and varied vocabulary usage. Overall, 65% of participants observed a higher quality in their academic and professional writing. These improvements suggest that Grammarly is an effective tool for aiding EFL learners in refining their writing skills, though the varying percentages also imply that its impact may differ based on individual engagement and usage contexts.

Learner Autonomy

Grammarly was found to support learner autonomy by enabling self-directed learning and fostering independent correction and learning from mistakes.

Table 5. Learner Autonomy

Aspect of Autonomy	Examples	Percentage of Participants
Self-directed Learning	Using Grammarly to identify and correct errors independently	75%
Reflective Learning	Reflecting on feedback and improving future writing	60%
Increased Engagement	More active involvement in learning English	55%
Independent Problem Solving	Applying learned grammar rules without reliance on external help	50%

The findings on learner autonomy reveal that a significant majority of participants (75%) engaged in self-directed learning, using Grammarly to independently identify and correct errors. Reflective learning was also prominent, with 60% of learners using feedback to improve future writing, indicating a conscious effort to internalize lessons from the tool. Increased engagement in learning English was reported by 55% of participants, highlighting Grammarly's role in making the learning process more interactive and engaging. Additionally, 50% of learners demonstrated independent problem-solving skills, applying grammar rules learned from Grammarly without relying on external assistance. These results collectively suggest that Grammarly not only

enhances writing skills but also fosters a more autonomous and self-motivated learning approach among Indonesian EFL learners.

The study reveals that Indonesian EFL learners use Grammarly predominantly for academic purposes, benefiting from its immediate feedback and learning features. While challenges such as over-reliance and occasional inaccuracies exist, the overall impact on writing skills is positive. Participants reported improved grammar, syntax, and overall writing quality, contributing to greater confidence and autonomy in their language learning process.

Discussion

The discussion unveils the multifaceted role of Grammarly in shaping the independent language learning journey of Indonesian EFL learners. Through qualitative exploration, this study delves into the nuanced experiences and perceptions of learners, shedding light on the broader impact of this digital writing assistant. Usage patterns reflect a predominant utilization of Grammarly within academic spheres, where learners seek to bolster their writing proficiency for scholarly pursuits. However, its application extends beyond the confines of academia, with occasional usage noted in professional and personal writing contexts. This diversification of usage underscores Grammarly's versatility, accommodating various linguistic needs across different domains of communication, aligning with findings from Barrot (2022) who noted the increasing integration of digital tools in academic contexts.

Perceived benefits emerge as a key theme, resonating with the immediate feedback, learning opportunities, and improved writing confidence reported by participants. The tool serves not merely as a corrective mechanism but as an educational aid, elucidating grammar intricacies and enhancing vocabulary. Such benefits align with broader pedagogical principles that advocate for active engagement and continuous learning through iterative feedback loops, reflecting findings from previous research on the positive impact of real-time feedback on language learning (Marandi, 2023). However, the discussion also unveils the challenges faced by learners, including the potential for over-reliance, occasional inaccuracies, and limitations in advanced features. These challenges mirror concerns echoed in scholarly discourse, highlighting the delicate balance required in integrating technology within educational frameworks, echoing the concerns raised by Boubker (2024) regarding the drawbacks of over-reliance on automated tools.

Despite challenges, Grammarly exerts a palpable influence on learners' writing skills, fostering improvements in grammar, syntax, and overall writing quality. Such enhancements resonate with the transformative potential of digital writing assistants in scaffolding language acquisition processes, aligning with findings from previous research documenting improvements in writing performance due to the use of digital writing assistants (Pandya, 2022). Furthermore, Grammarly's role transcends mere error correction, serving as a catalyst for learner autonomy. The discussion illuminates how Grammarly catalyzes learner autonomy by facilitating self-directed learning, reflective practices, increased engagement, and independent problem-solving. Learners actively engage with the tool, leveraging its functionalities to navigate their linguistic journey with agency and purpose, reflecting the findings of Li (2023) who explored digital tools as enablers of self-directed learning.

In comparing these findings with existing literature, a coherent narrative emerges, affirming the transformative potential of digital tools in language education. However, future research endeavors must delve deeper, unraveling the nuanced dynamics of technology-mediated learning experiences and elucidating strategies to mitigate challenges effectively. By navigating

these uncharted territories, educators and developers can harness the full potential of digital tools in fostering language proficiency and learner autonomy.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the utilization of Grammarly as a grammar checker among Indonesian EFL learners engaged in independent language learning. Through qualitative analysis, the research illuminates the diverse ways in which learners employ Grammarly across academic, professional, and personal writing contexts, echoing the findings of previous studies on the integration of digital tools in language education. While learners perceive numerous benefits, including immediate feedback and enhanced writing confidence, they also encounter challenges such as over-reliance and occasional inaccuracies in suggestions, echoing concerns raised in prior research. Despite these challenges, Grammarly demonstrates a positive impact on learners' writing skills, contributing to improvements in grammar, syntax, and overall writing quality, consistent with findings from studies on digital writing assistants. Furthermore, Grammarly serves as a catalyst for learner autonomy, empowering learners to engage in self-directed learning and reflective practices, aligning with contemporary pedagogical paradigms emphasizing learner-centered approaches. By situating these findings within the broader context of existing literature, this study underscores the transformative potential of digital tools in language education while highlighting the need for further research to explore effective strategies for maximizing their benefits and mitigating challenges. Ultimately, by navigating these complexities, educators and developers can harness the full potential of digital tools like Grammarly to support language learning and foster learner autonomy effectively.

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