

The Experience of the 7Th Semester Students on Using Grammarly Application in Academic Writing at English Education Department UIN Alauddin Makassar

Muhammad Safri

English Education Department, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training
Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar
Email: muhammadsafri081@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the experience of the seventh-semester students in using the Grammarly application for academic writing at the English Education Department of UIN Alauddin Makassar. The study also seeks to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors that affect students' use of the application in the context of academic writing. Therefore, this study also seeks to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors that affect students' use of the application in the context of academic writing. This study employed a qualitative descriptive method. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with selected students who had used Grammarly in their academic writing process. The informants were chosen using purposive sampling to ensure they had relevant experience. The data were then analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes related to their experiences and influencing factors. The findings revealed that most students found Grammarly helpful in improving their grammar, punctuation, and writing clarity. They also mentioned that the real-time suggestions and feedback made it easier to revise their writing independently. However, some students reported limitations such as inaccurate suggestions and overdependence. Supporting factors included Grammarly's user-friendly interface and availability, while inhibiting factors involved limited access to premium features and reliance without understanding the grammar behind the correction. The implication of this study is that Grammarly can be an effective writing support tool when used appropriately. However, students should be encouraged to use it critically, combining it with manual proofreading and grammatical understanding. Teachers and institutions can also consider integrating Grammarly with writing instruction to help students develop both technical accuracy and critical writing awareness.

Keywords: *Grammarly, academic writing, students' experience, supporting and inhibiting factors*

1) INTRODUCTION

Academic writing plays a crucial role in higher education, particularly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. It requires accuracy, coherence, and critical thinking. However many students struggle with writing. they have passed a writing course but still face difficulties in writing. Due to their lack of ability and knowledge about writing, many of them use tools or AI to help them

Paper presented at The 2nd ICONETT, 2025
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar
South Sulawesi-Indonesia

write well. According to Karyuatri (2018), students often have trouble with phrases, unfamiliar words, adverbs, and passive sentences. Students also have difficulties with using irregular verbs, consistency, parallel structure, verb tenses, and clearly expressing their ideas.¹ These problems usually arise from a lack of knowledge about writing skills. To overcome these obstacles, students can ask for feedback from peers or lecturers. Additionally, technology especially the internet offers helpful tools like online grammar checkers to support the writing process.

One of the technological innovations that can improve writing quality is the Grammarly application. It can be obtained on the App Store and web. One technological development has given us many benefits with the program that users can download to improve their quality of writing. Grammarly application is an online grammar and spell checker that helps you rectify problems in your writing (Rahmadani, 2022). For example, if there are incorrect terms in the English structure, Grammarly delivers the right word recommendations.

The focus of this research revolves around two main objectives. First, to explore the experiences of students in using Grammarly for academic writing. Second, this research focuses on identifying the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence students' use of Grammarly.

2) METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research approach, aiming to explore and interpret social phenomena through the perspectives of the students involved. As described by Asper and Corte, qualitative research involves the systematic exploration and interpretation of phenomena through methods that prioritize depth, context, and understanding over quantification and statistical analysis.² It emphasizes subjective understanding and often employs methods such as interviews, observations, and textual analysis to uncover underlying meanings and patterns.

¹ Arham Arif, et al, 'An Investigation on Academic Writing Problems Encountered by Undergraduate Students of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Sanghar Campus', *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics*, 2020 <<https://doi.org/10.7176/jlll/68-03>>

²Aspers and Corte, 'What Is Qualitative in Qualitative Research', *Qualitative Sociology*, 42.2 (2019) <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-019-9413-7>>

Based on the research topic, this study investigates students' experience on using Grammarly in academic writing. Interviews were conducted to collect data for this research. A total of five informants were included, chosen for their relevance to the research questions and to achieve data saturation in qualitative analysis. with informants selected through purposively to ensure representation of students who have used Grammarly applications.

This research was conducted at UIN Alauddin Makassar, located at Jl. Sultan Alauddin No. 63, Romangpolong, Somba Opu, Gowa Regency. The study involves students from the seventh semester of the English Education Department during the 2020/2021 academic year. It was conducted on 1 March 2024 – 5 June 2025. The researcher selected this location because UIN Alauddin Makassar is one of the universities that actively encourages the integration of technology in the learning process, including in academic writing. Moreover, seventh-semester students were considered appropriate informants since they are assumed to have sufficient experience in academic writing and are more likely to have used writing assistance tools such as Grammarly, making them relevant to the focus of this study.

In this research, interviews were employed as the primary data collection method. An interview is a direct interaction between the researcher and the respondents, guided by a structured or semi-structured set of questions. This technique enables the researcher to explore respondents' perspectives, beliefs, and emotions in relation to specific situations or experiences.

Each selected student underwent semi-structured interviews to gather in-depth data on their perceptions of using Grammarly. Interviews were conducted by using Zoom and WhatsApp, with each session lasting approximately 15 to 30 minutes. Accurate transcription and analysis of the interviews conducted to provide a detailed understanding of informants' perceptions and viewpoints. Therefore, this research aims not only to understand individuals' experiences with AI technology but also to provide valuable insights into the development of language learning technologies at UIN Alauddin Makassar.

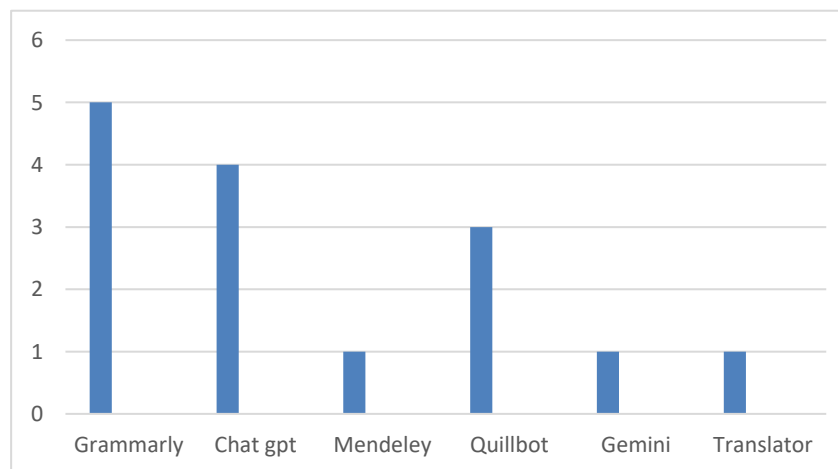
Data collection ceased once data saturation was achieved, meaning no new information or themes emerged from additional respondents. At this point, the collected data was deemed sufficient to comprehensively address the research questions and objectives, ensuring the study's reliability and validity.

This research followed the general qualitative data analysis procedures as outlined by Miles and Huberman, which served as a comprehensive guide throughout the analysis process.³

3) RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the interviews, it was found that students use a variety of tools in the academic writing process. The findings showed that Grammarly was the most frequently used tool, with four out of five participants mentioning it explicitly. Grammarly is utilized for proofreading, checking spelling and grammar errors, and improving the quality of writing.



Picture 1. *Tools Used by Students in Academic Writing*

Apart from Grammarly, ChatGPT was also quite popular and was used by four informants to help organize ideas and beautify writing. Then there are some additional tools mentioned by one informant each, such as Gemini (alternative AI tool), Quillbot (for paraphrasing), Translate (for translation), and Mendeley (for reference and bibliography management). This shows that students utilize technology widely and diversely according to their needs in academic writing.

³ (Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M. and Saldana, 2014)

a) Students' Experiences in Using Grammarly

Most informants reported using Grammarly for about two to three years, particularly since they began their university studies. Informants S1, S2, S3, and S5 all mentioned that they had started using Grammarly either in their first year of university or around the year 2022. They stated that during this time, academic writing tasks became more demanding, which encouraged them to use Grammarly as a writing support tool. For instance, S1 mentioned using Grammarly for two to three years and becoming more aware of AI tools since entering university. Similarly, S3 stated that they began using Grammarly actively in 2022 when academic writing tasks became more intense.

Table 1: *Students' Experiences in Using Grammarly*

NO	Code	Frequency	Informants
1	2-3 year (semester 2 and 3)	4	S1, S2, S3, S5
2	Less than a year (semester 7)	1	S4

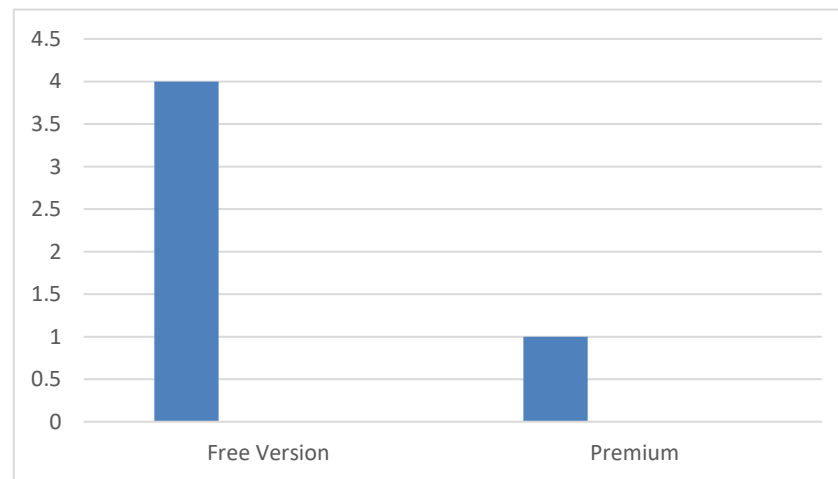
In contrast, one informant (S4) reported using Grammarly for less than a year. This suggests that their exposure to or need for Grammarly began more recently, possibly due to increasing academic writing tasks or new awareness of the tool.

Overall, these findings indicate that most students begin using Grammarly during their early university years as a response to the growing demand for academic writing. The length of use tends to increase as students progress in their studies and recognize the usefulness of writing assistance tools.

Based on the interview data, it was found that there were two versions of Grammarly used by the informants: the free version and the premium version. Out of the five informants, four of them (S1, S3, S4, and S5) reported using the free version, while only one informant (S2) used the premium version.

Most of the informants chose the free version because it was considered sufficient to support their writing needs, particularly in checking grammar, sentence structure, and spelling errors. Informant S1 mentioned that there were certain limitations in the free version, but it was still useful. Informant S3 emphasized that using the free version helped save costs while still providing helpful

writing support. Similarly, S5 stated that even without the premium features, the free version was still able to check grammar and sentence structure effectively.



Picture 2. *Grammarly Version Use by Students*

On the other hand, one Informant (S2) stated that use the premium version because it offered more features compared to the free version. This included more in-depth grammar suggestions, writing style improvements, and plagiarism detection, which were considered useful for producing better-quality academic writing.

These findings indicate that students' choice of Grammarly version is influenced by practical considerations such as financial constraints and personal writing needs. While the free version is preferred by most due to accessibility and cost-saving, the premium version is chosen by those who seek more comprehensive writing support.

The interview results show that all five students use Grammarly regularly when working on their assignments. One student said they “almost always” use Grammarly because it is connected directly to Word and helps check grammar while writing. Four other students said they use Grammarly “often” or “quite often,” especially when doing academic tasks like writing papers, creating PowerPoint slides, or checking for grammar and typing mistakes. This means Grammarly is an important tool for most students when writing in English, especially for assignments. No student said they rarely or never use it.

The interview results show that all five students use Grammarly regularly when working on their assignments. One student said they “almost always” use Grammarly because it is connected directly to Word and helps check grammar while writing. Four other students said they use Grammarly “often”

or “quite often,” especially when doing academic tasks like writing papers, creating PowerPoint slides, or checking for grammar and typing mistakes.

The interview findings show that all informants have good and positive feelings toward using Grammarly in academic writing. One informant said they like using Grammarly because it is very helpful and can be integrated directly with Microsoft Word, making it easy to check writing while working. Another informant explained that Grammarly helps make their language more understandable and natural. It also supports grammar checking and writing techniques like capitalization, spelling, and punctuation.

Table 2: *Students Perception*

NO	Code	Frequency	Informants
1	Very helpful	4	S1, S4, S5, S2
2	helpful	4	S2, S5, S4, S3
3	useful	1	S3

Other informants mentioned that Grammarly helps them identify mistakes and gives clear and useful suggestions. Some informants also said Grammarly is very helpful in improving academic writing, especially for writing proposals or theses. Another informant said the tool gives fast and easy-to-understand corrections. Lastly, one student added that Grammarly helps ensure their writing is neat, with fewer errors and typos. These findings show that informants use Grammarly not only for grammar correction but also to improve the overall quality and clarity of their academic writing.

The interview results show that all informants see Grammarly as an effective and useful tool for academic writing. one informant clearly stated that Grammarly is effective, especially when used to support writing tasks. one informant said Grammarly is very useful for students, particularly university students who often write in English. Another informant shared that Grammarly is helpful in correcting grammar and sentence structure mistakes, making the writing clear and more accurate. One more informant mentioned that Grammarly is beneficial and time-saving, as it helps check and fix sentences more efficiently. Overall, these responses show that the informants view Grammarly as not only helpful but also an efficient tool that supports their academic writing process.

In conclusion, all five informants consistently recognized Grammarly as a valuable tool in their academic writing process, each highlighting different yet complementary benefits. Whether for its

automatic grammar correction, time-saving efficiency, general support for students, or its ability to improve sentence structure and clarity, Grammarly was seen as an essential aid in enhancing writing quality. These findings indicate that Grammarly not only assists students in minimizing language errors but also contributes significantly to the overall effectiveness and ease of the writing and editing process.

Based on the interview results, most informants stated that the corrections and suggestions provided by Grammarly were fairly accurate, especially in terms of grammar, spelling, and word choice. Informants S5 and S4 expressed that they almost always followed the suggestions given, as they found them helpful in improving their writing errors. However, not all informants followed every recommendation made by Grammarly. Informants S1, S2, and S3 mentioned that they only selected suggestions that were relevant and contextually appropriate. They believed that although Grammarly is accurate, it still has limitations in understanding sentence context. S2 specifically emphasized the importance of having basic knowledge of grammar and word choice to evaluate whether the suggestions should be applied. Additionally, S1 pointed out the limitations of the free version of Grammarly, particularly the restricted auto-correction feature, which requires users to upgrade to the premium version. S3 highlighted the importance of manually rechecking writing despite using Grammarly to ensure the output aligns with the writer's intended meaning. Therefore, although Grammarly is perceived as helpful, users must remain critical and not rely entirely on the application.

Based on the interview results, most informants identified several limitations while using Grammarly. One informant (S1) mentioned technical problems, such as the Grammarly extension not appearing in Microsoft Word or suddenly becoming inactive, which affects its auto-correction function. Others (S2, S3, S4) highlighted contextual limitations, saying that Grammarly sometimes gives suggestions that do not fit the meaning or academic context of their writing. Informants explained that Grammarly may misinterpret complex or technical sentences and offer suggestions that are unclear or not helpful. Additionally, two informants (S4 and S5) pointed out that the free version of Grammarly has limited features, and more useful functions are only available in the premium version. These findings show that while Grammarly is a helpful tool, users still face technical issues, context mismatch, and feature restrictions when using it.

b) Supporting Factors

The informants reported that Grammarly support their academic writing. One of the most mentioned strengths is Grammarly's ability to detect grammar errors quickly and provide accurate recommendations to improve sentence structure, phrasing, and vocabulary. Informants also appreciated Grammarly's help in technical aspects of writing, such as capitalization, spelling, and punctuation. Another important strength highlighted was the feature that helps adjust the tone and style of writing to match the desired level of formality, which is crucial in academic contexts.

Table 3: *Strengths of Grammarly*

No.	Code	Frequency	Informants
1	ability to detect grammar errors quickly	3	S1, S3, S5
2	Help with the technical aspects of writing	1	S2
3	Adjust the tone and style of writing	1	S2
4	Supporting academic formatting styles	1	S2
5	easy to use, accessible, and provides helpful and instant suggestions	2	S4, S3, S5

Some informants also noted that Grammarly is easy to use, accessible, and provides instant suggestions, which help them improve their writing efficiency. Additionally, Grammarly was recognized for supporting academic formatting styles, such as APA style, making it a practical tool for writing papers and assignments. Overall, Grammarly is viewed as a helpful and efficient tool that enhances both the clarity and quality of academic writing

c) Inhibiting Factors

Although Grammarly is helpful in many ways, the informants also pointed out several weaknesses. A common issue mentioned was the limitation of the free version, which restricts access to full features, leading some users to consider subscribing to the premium version to get better suggestions and support. Several informants also highlighted that Grammarly sometimes provides suggestions that do not match the context, especially in academic or technical writing. This includes words or phrases that may sound unnatural or are not suitable for formal or academic settings.

Table 4: *Weaknesses of Grammarly*

No.	Code	Frequency	Informants
1	Limitations in the free version	1	S1
2	Suggestions do not match the context	4	S2, S3, S4, S5
3	Misinterpret	2	S3, S5

Furthermore, Grammarly was noted to occasionally misinterpret complex or technical sentences, offering corrections that are either unnecessary or incorrect. This suggests that while Grammarly is a helpful tool, it still requires critical review and manual editing by the writer to ensure accuracy and appropriateness in academic contexts. Therefore, informants agreed that Grammarly should be used as a supporting tool rather than being fully relied upon for academic writing.

Discussion

Students' writing in academic contexts includes various forms of writing, such as reports, articles, papers, theses, and essays. This writing process often begins with determining the important points to be discussed, such as topics and main ideas, before students begin to pour their thoughts into writing. This is in line with research showing that good planning can improve the quality of writing (Asianna, 2024). In addition, many students utilize artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and tools like QuillBot, and Grammarly to support their writing process. The use of these tools not only helps in constructing better sentences but also in improving grammar and increasing the clarity of ideas conveyed. A study by Farhan in (2025) found that students who use AI tools in writing tend

to feel more confident and are able to produce more structured work. Thus, writing habits that involve planning and using this technology can contribute to improving students' overall academic abilities.

Based on the research findings, the students utilized two versions of the Grammarly application: the free version and the premium version. Out of the five informants, four of them used the free version. The main reason for choosing this version was to save money and reduce expenses, as stated by informant S3. In addition, some students chose the free version based on recommendations from friends and lecturers, as mentioned by informants S1 and S3. They believed the free version was already helpful in checking grammar, spelling, and improving ineffective sentence structures.

However, both S1 and S4 indicated that, as users of the free version, they encountered limitations due to restricted access to several features. They believed that Grammarly would be more beneficial if they had access to the premium version. This finding aligns with the study by Cavaleri & Dianati, which stated that Grammarly is effective at detecting minor errors, such as comma usage and article misapplication. On the other hand, one informant chose to use the premium version because it offers more complete features, such as plagiarism detection and more in-depth writing style suggestions. These features were considered very useful in improving the overall quality of academic writing.

Therefore, students' choice between the free and premium versions of Grammarly is influenced by several key factors: their specific writing needs, recommendations from others, and their financial situation. Each student makes their decision based on a combination of these factors, according to their personal context and priorities.

The findings show that all informants had positive perceptions of Grammarly. Students appreciated its ability to correct grammar errors, improve clarity and coherence, and provide quick and useful suggestions. This aligns with previous research by O'Neill & Russell, 2019, which found that students see Grammarly as a useful automated writing evaluation (AWE) tool that supports their academic performance. The real-time feedback and ease of use enhanced students' motivation to write more carefully and attentively.

Informants highlighted Grammarly's assistance with grammar checking, sentence structure, and spelling checker. Some used it for academic purposes such as writing papers, reports, or their thesis. These findings support Barrot who emphasized that writing tools like Grammarly are particularly helpful for non-native English speakers to refine their academic writing.

Several supporting factors encouraged informants to use Grammarly. First, accessibility, informants found the free version sufficient for basic writing needs, making it a practical choice. Second, ease of use, most informants said Grammarly was easy to use, even for first-time users. Third, peer and lecturer recommendations, some informants began using Grammarly after being introduced to it in writing classes. These factors reflect Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), especially in terms of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness (Davis, 1989).

In addition, Grammarly's integration with other tools (e.g., Microsoft Word) and combination with other apps like ChatGPT, Quillbot, and Google Translate further supported informants' writing process. Informants created an ecosystem of digital tools to maximize their output, which reflects a growing trend in AI-assisted language learning (Dewi, 2023).

Despite the overall positive feedback, informants also reported several inhibiting factors. The most common limitation was the lack of contextual accuracy. While Grammarly may suggest grammatically correct sentences, those suggestions were sometimes not appropriate for the intended meaning. This aligns with the critique found in Ranalli, who noted that AWE tools often lack sensitivity to context and discourse-level feedback (Ranalli, 2018).

Another significant factor was feature limitation in the free version. Informants acknowledged that some helpful features, such as tone adjustment, advanced grammar explanations, and plagiarism detection, were not fully available unless they upgraded to the premium version. This limitation is often cited in studies that evaluate the effectiveness of freemium-based learning technologies.

Finally, a reliance on technology without understanding was also addressed. Informants emphasized the need to critically evaluate Grammarly's suggestions and still rely on manual proofreading. This caution is supported by studies such as Ghufroon, who stressed the importance of human oversight when using automated feedback tools (Ghufroon & Rosyida, 2018).

4) CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that seventh-semester students at the English Education Department of UIN Alauddin Makassar have generally positive experiences using Grammarly in their academic writing specifically when they are writing a thesis. Most students reported using Grammarly regularly for two to three years, primarily relying on the free version due to financial considerations. Grammarly is widely used not only for grammar correction but also for improving

sentence clarity, coherence, and formality in academic texts such as essays, reports, research proposal and theses. Students often integrate Grammarly with other tools, such as ChatGPT, Quillbot, and translation apps, to enhance their writing process. While the grammar check feature is the most frequently utilized, students also benefit from style and punctuation suggestions. The students found Grammarly easy to use and effective in supporting their academic writing tasks, although they were also aware of its limitations, especially regarding the contextual accuracy of suggestions and feature restrictions in the free version. Overall, Grammarly was perceived as a useful, user-friendly tool that significantly contributes to improving writing quality, boosting confidence, and making the academic writing process more efficient.

In relation to the supporting and inhibiting factors, the findings revealed that students perceived Grammarly as a valuable tool due to its ability to detect grammatical errors quickly, suggest improvements for sentence structure, vocabulary, and tone, and assist with technical writing aspects such as capitalization, punctuation, and formatting. Its ease of use and instant feedback also helped improve the efficiency and quality of students' academic writing. However, several inhibiting factors were also noted. One major limitation was the restricted features in the free version, which limited access to advanced suggestions and features. Additionally, Grammarly sometimes gave suggestions that were contextually inaccurate or unsuitable for academic writing, especially for complex or technical sentences. These limitations highlight that while Grammarly is helpful, students still need to critically evaluate its suggestions and complement it with their own knowledge to produce high-quality academic writing.

REFERENCES

- Arham Arif, Syed Hyder Raza Shah, Fakhra, A. A. (2020). An Investigation on Academic Writing Problems Encountered by Undergraduate Students of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Sanghar Campus. *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics*. <https://doi.org/10.7176/jlll/68-03>
- Asianna, M. (2024). Kajian Penulisan Teks Akademik Bagi Mahasiswa Terhadap Peningkatan Keterampilan Menulis. *Bhinneka*, 2(3), 115–122.
- Aspers, P., & Corte, U. (2019). What is Qualitative in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Sociology*, 42(2). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-019-9413-7>
- Barrot, J. S. (2022). Integrating Technology into ESL/EFL Writing through Grammarly. *RELC Journal*, 53(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688220966632>

Paper presented at The 2nd ICONETT, 2025
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar
South Sulawesi-Indonesia

- Cavaleri, M., & Dianati, S. (2016). You want me to check your grammar again? The usefulness of an online grammar checker as perceived by students. *Journal of Academic Language & Learning*, 10(1), 223. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320618419>
- Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly: Management Information Systems*, 13(3), 319–339. <https://doi.org/10.2307/249008>
- Dewi, U. (2023). Grammarly as Automated Writing Evaluation: Its Effectiveness from EFL Students' Perceptions. *Lingua Cultura*, 16(2). <https://doi.org/10.21512/lc.v16i2.8315>
- Farhan, H. (2025). *The Impact of AI-Powered Writing Tools on Students' Writing Performance : A Content Analysis and Future Prospects*. The Impact of AI-Powered Writing Tools on Students' Writing Performance : A Content Analysis and Future Prospects By. March. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.22893.09445>
- Ghufron, M. A., & Rosyida, F. (2018). The Role of Grammarly in Assessing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Writing. *Lingua Cultura*, 12(4). <https://doi.org/10.21512/lc.v12i4.4582>
- Karyuatry, L. (2018). Grammarly as a Tool to Improve Students' Writing Quality: Free Online-Proofreader across the Boundaries. *JSSH (Jurnal Sains Sosial Dan Humaniora)*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.30595/jssh.v2i1.2297>
- Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M. and Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. Sage, London.
- O'Neill, R., & Russell, A. M. T. (2019). Stop! Grammar time: University students' perceptions of the automated feedback program Grammarly. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 35(1), 42–56. <https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.3795>
- Rahmadani, P. (2022). *the Effectiveness of Using Grammarly Application on Students Writing Quality of Analytical Exposition Text At the 11 Th Grade of Sman 2 Luvu Timur English Language Education Study Program Tarbiyah and Teachers Training Faculty Stated Islamic Institute of*.
- Ranalli, J. (2018). Automated written corrective feedback: how well can students make use of it? *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 31(7). <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2018.1428994>