

The Effectiveness of Grammarly Application on the Students' Argumentative Writing Progress

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Abstract: This research aims to describe the effectiveness of Grammarly feedback on students' progress in argumentative writing. Grammarly is an online automated writing evaluation tool that focuses on giving feedback on the language used in any type of writing. The tool was used in argumentative writing courses for 34 third-semester students at a state university in Mataram. The research used a descriptive qualitative method to collect data on the students' perceptions. The data was collected using validated questionnaires with a four-point Likert scale and supported by interviews. The findings show that students generally had positive perceptions of Grammarly. They found it effective for identifying and correcting errors in their writing, especially in grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. They considered the correctness feature to be the most helpful. Additionally, they believed that using Grammarly improved their motivation and grammatical competence in argumentative writing. However, some participants had negative perceptions of Grammarly's weaknesses, particularly in providing feedback on the arrangement of thesis statements, counter-arguments, and the use of evidence in argumentative writing.

Keywords: perception, grammarly application, argumentative writing

INTRODUCTION

Argumentative writing is a complex activity in which the writer takes a position on a controversial issue and provides reasons and supporting evidence to convince the reader to accept the writer's position. Argumentative writing has become an important skill, especially focusing on reasoning and debate, in this century (Putri & Ahmad, 2022; UNESCO, 2016, cited in Meral et al., 2022). Apart from that, in argumentative writing, students are also required to be accompanied by a good knowledge of linguistics, writing genres, and topics (McCutchen, 2011, cited in Arihasta, 2023).

As a complex type of writing, students in the argumentative writing process face several difficulties including psychological problems, linguistic problems, and cognitive problems (Byrne, 1993). The problems faced by students are related to students' lack of self-confidence and motivation in writing, and students' difficulties in choosing sentence structures and how the sentences are connected and sequenced, as well as difficulties in arranging their ideas well so that they are relevant to the topic or position the students are taking, so, readers can understand the argument (Septyana et al., 2021). So, in the argumentative writing process, feedback is needed to help students improve and develop their argumentative writing. The main source of motivation or core component of the writing process is feedback. In this context, feedback is information about aspects of student performance or understanding that is intended to encourage students toward goals or to improve (Facullo, 2022; Harliani et al., 2021).

In the writing process, various media or tools can be used that can provide feedback to support students' writing development, especially with the development of technology, internet-based tools are available that can make it easier for students to face difficulties in writing. Grammarly is an online application that offers a variety of functions for better writing, including checking spelling, punctuation, grammar questions, sentence structure, and verb phrases. It also contains useful

suggestions to make writing easier to read, clear, and error-free. Based on data from Grammarly Inc. (2022), 30 million people use the Grammarly application to improve their writing skills every day (Nova, 2018; Perdana & Farida, 2019).

Research related to the Grammarly application has been carried out by several previous researchers. Research conducted by O'Neill and Russell (2019) concluded that students who received a lot of benefits and feedback from Grammarly from a 15-item survey were significantly more satisfied with Grammarly's features compared to non-Grammarly students. However, Grammarly also has shortcomings in several aspects, including incorrect feedback and undetected errors. The teacher's role is still needed to provide feedback. In addition, research conducted by Nova (2018) concluded that Grammarly software has provided useful feedback with examples and explanations, a high level of evaluation speed, easy access to download and use, and free service. However, some flaws in the feedback provided by Grammarly need to be investigated further, and more research is needed.

In this research, the focus is on student perceptions, especially in the context of Argumentative Writing courses. In contrast to previous research which explored general perceptions of different writing genres, this research focuses on how students perceive the effectiveness of the feedback provided by Grammarly on argumentative writing genres in Argumentative Writing courses at the University of Mataram. Grammarly is implemented as technology to help students overcome the difficulties they face when writing argumentative essays. This research allows a deeper understanding of Grammarly's effectiveness in helping students overcome difficulties in targeted academic areas and provides insights that can be applied directly to students to create higher-quality argumentative writing at the college level.

Based on the explanation above, researchers conducted research that aimed to (1) To describe students' perceptions of

the effectiveness of Grammarly feedback in improving the quality of their argumentative writing in college-level courses. (2) To describe the specific feature of Grammarly feedback that students find most or least helpful in improving their argumentative writing skills in an academic setting (3) To describe the extent to which students believe that integrating Grammarly feedback into an argumentative writing course improves their understanding and application of grammatical concepts.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a descriptive qualitative research design. Bogdan and Taylor (cited in Moleong, 2018) define qualitative methodology as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written words or writings from people and observable behavior. The subjects of this research were 34 third-semester students of classes A and B, who had taken the Argumentative Writing course at the English Education Program, University of Mataram. The object of this research is students' perceptions of the effectiveness of grammar feedback in students' Argumentative Writing courses.

In this research, the data collection tools were questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire was administrated online via WhatsApp to third-semester students. The questionnaire used a four-point Likert scale consisting of thirty statements adapted from Ummah & Bisriyah (2022) which were then adjusted to this study. The questionnaire in this study was divided into three themes, namely eight statements for the theme of motivation to use Grammarly, sixteen statements for the strengths of Grammarly, and six statements for the weaknesses of Grammarly. The next data collection technique was an interview. In this research, interviews were conducted with 5 students as representatives of all subjects. Furthermore, interviews were conducted using semi-structured interviews with students with 8 questions that had been prepared in advance. Thus, there is data from the questionnaire and interviews. The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using the formula mentioned in Oktaviani et al. (2022) to determine the percentage of each student's perception statements regarding the effectiveness of Grammarly feedback in the Argumentative Writing course.

$$P = \frac{F \times 100}{N}$$

$$P = \frac{\text{Total Score} \times 100}{\text{Total Respondents}}$$

Apart from that, data from interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis. According to Dawadi (2020), thematic analysis has six phases, namely familiarization with data, generating initial code, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming the theme, and writing a report. Aside from analyzing the data, researchers need to test the validity of the data to ensure the data they obtain is valid. Triangulation according to Moleong (2018) is a technique for checking the validity of data which is carried out by utilizing something else. The triangulation technique used in this research is triangulation according to Denzin (cited in Moleong, 2018), namely triangulation with sources. Triangulation with sources is carried out by comparing and rechecking the level of trustworthiness of information

obtained through different times and tools in qualitative research (Patton, 1987, cited in Moleong, 2018).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Students' Perception of the Effectiveness of Grammarly Feedback in Argumentative Writing

This section presents the results for students' perception of the effectiveness of Grammarly feedback in Argumentative Writing courses.

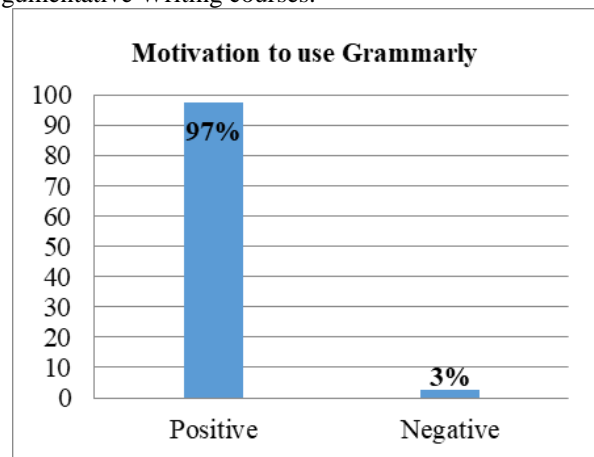


Figure 1. Bar Chart of Motivation to use Grammarly

In the motivation for using the Grammarly theme, there are eight statements that get positive results from students. The motivation for using the Grammarly theme gets dominant positive results for each statement. The average percentage obtained from students is 97% for positive results and 3% for negative results. Furthermore, students' motivation to use Grammarly is due to several aspects, namely the role of grammar in improving the quality of students' argumentative writing, the difficulties faced by students in argumentative writing, and the effectiveness of Grammarly in helping students improve the quality of their writing.

1. Grammatical Roles

In the results of the questionnaire above, it was found that students view grammar as an important aspect that needs to be considered in argumentative writing, the important role of grammar in argumentative writing received 100% positive responses from students and to improve the quality of argumentative writing, students agreed that good grammar is needed. This is supported by statements given by students in interviews where grammar has an important role in argumentative writing. The data obtained from the interviews are as follows:

Student#1 AR: "For me, I think grammar is very important in writing, Proper grammar helps to effectively convey the argument, making it easier for readers to understand and follow the writer's reasoning."

Student#3 ATF: "My perception of the role of grammar in argumentative writing is that I think that grammar is very important in argumentative writing with accurate and precise grammar, it will allow the writer to present information in a relevant or clear and also logical manner. So that it will make the reader understand the content of the writing more easily."

Based on the questionnaire and student interviews, it can be concluded that grammar is an important aspect of writing in argumentative writing where the two statements related to the importance of the role of grammar in improving the quality of argumentative writing received 100% positive responses from students and supported by student interview statements that grammar is important to be able to convey arguments well.

2. Students difficulties

Students face some difficulties in argumentative writing, Grammarly is responded positively by students to help with some problems such as one of the student's problems in the questionnaire statement received a response of 100% from students that student motivation and confidence in writing argumentative writing can be improved with Grammarly. This statement is supported by the statement given by students in the interview as follows :

Student#4 AFH: *“Actually my reason for using Grammarly is because I am not sure about my writing. . . because I am not confident enough.”*

Student#5 BSL: *“ . . . because I write based on my knowledge, I doubt what I write so I check it through Grammarly if there is miss spelling, miss punctuation, or there are incorrect grammar, that's my reason to use Grammarly.”*

Based on the questionnaire and interview data above, it can be concluded that Grammarly can help students increase their confidence and motivation in the Argumentative Writing course, students gave 100% positive responses, and this statement was supported by students during the interview that Grammarly increases students' confidence and reduces doubts about their own writing.

3. Effectiveness of Grammarly

The data in the questionnaire showed that students viewed Grammarly as an effective tool in helping students improve the quality of argumentative writing and students gave 100% positive responses to this statement. Grammarly helps students identify and correct mistakes made by students, especially grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure errors. This is supported by students' statements in the interviews which obtained the following data:

Student#3 ATF: *“My view on it is that Grammarly can be an effective tool for improving the quality of argumentative writing. Grammarly can assist students in improving the quality of argumentative writing by providing more specific and detailed feedback.”*

Student#1 AR: *“Grammarly helps identify and correct grammatical errors, punctuation mistakes, and issues with sentence structure, which are essential for clear and coherent writing. Additionally, Grammarly provides suggestions for enhancing vocabulary and style, making the argument more persuasive and polished.”*

Student#5 BSL: *“Maybe it's improved a little, because you know the advanced level, the more advanced feature in Grammarly is paid features. So, I cannot use that, I only use the basic one, the free one to check the grammar, the punctuation, and the suggestions word. So, using those features,*

I think I can learn a little, like I use the wrong punctuation, Grammarly correct it. So I know it's wrong, and I learn from that.”

Based on the results of the questionnaires and interviews above, it can be concluded that Grammarly feedback effectively helps students improve the quality of argumentative writing at the college level. Grammarly feedback helps students identify and correct errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and several other aspects of writing, thus improving the clarity and coherence of their writing. Moreover, Grammarly helps students overcome a lack of confidence and hesitation in argumentative writing. On the other hand, Grammarly has limitations on the features available in the free version.

The Specific Useful Features of Grammarly Feedback in Improving Argumentative Writing

This section presents results for specific useful features of Grammarly feedback in improving argumentative writing.

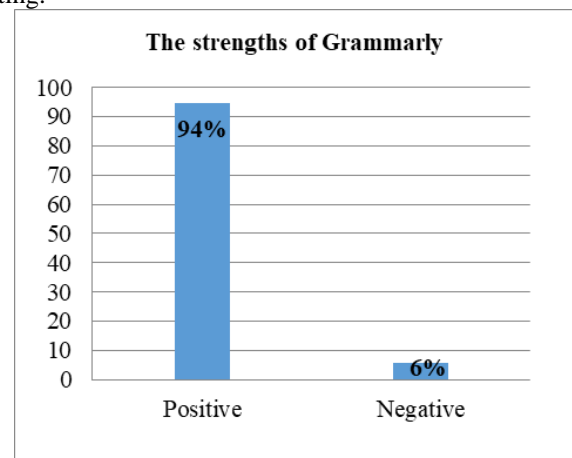


Figure 2. Bar Chart of the strengths of Grammarly

In the strengths of Grammarly theme, there are sixteen statements covering the strengths of Grammarly feedback and the features it contains. Students viewed Grammarly's strengths as a whole positively where the average percentage obtained in this theme for positive results was 94% while 6% showed negative results. Based on data from the questionnaire, students have a dominant positive perception where the positive perception is 94% on the strengths of the Grammarly theme. Students view the features in Grammarly as useful tools for improving students' ability to write argumentatively. Students showed positive views towards the Correctness and Clarity features.

1. Correctness

The questionnaire results showed that Correctness helps students in checking the mistakes they make in sentence structure, grammatical errors, spelling errors, and punctuation errors. Statement number six in the questionnaire about the strength of the Grammarly theme, namely "The correctness feature helps me check sentence structure in argumentative essays" received 100% positive responses from students and 97% for the other three statements related to Correctness which can help students in checking errors in their writing such as grammatical errors, spelling errors and punctuation errors. Correctness provides the most feedback on students' argumentative writing. Thus, students consider correctness as

the most useful future for students. This is supported by the statements given by students in the following interviews:

Student#1 AR: *"I think the most useful element is correctness because this is probably the first reason why many people use Grammarly, which is to correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling mistakes."*

Student#2 BEN: *"Correctness is the most helpful in grammar, then punctuation, and spelling. What helps more in the correctness is grammar, and spelling, which is the feature we get the most feedback on."*

It can be concluded from the two data collection techniques above that the Correctness feature is the most useful feedback for students, this is indicated by students predominantly giving positive responses which are then supported by students in the interview statement that Correctness is the reason many people use Grammarly.

2. Clarity

Clarity received positive feedback from students in the Argumentative Writing course. Clarity helped students check confusing writing, 97% of students agreed with this, and 94% of students agreed that Clarity helped students check redundant sentences so that writing became clearer and easier to understand. However, Clarity did not detect many errors such as Correctness and in some suggestions, students were concerned that Clarity would change the original intention of the student's writing. Statements related to Clarity features were given by students in the interview as follows:

Student#3 ATF: *"Grammarly's feedback regarding clarity was also beneficial to students, as it helped us improve the readability of our writing by suggesting rewrites and focusing on concise sentences."*

Student#2 BEN: *"In terms of clarity, there is a little detected. I rarely use it and sometimes I'm not sure about the feedback given to me, for example, such as the clarity of our writing and then Grammarly suggests a word that we should use that's different from what I think, so I'm afraid that's a bit different."*

It can be concluded from the data above that Clarity helps students in terms of clarity of writing where students have a positive perception on this and even so there are some suggestions that are doubted by students because they are worried about changing their original ideas.

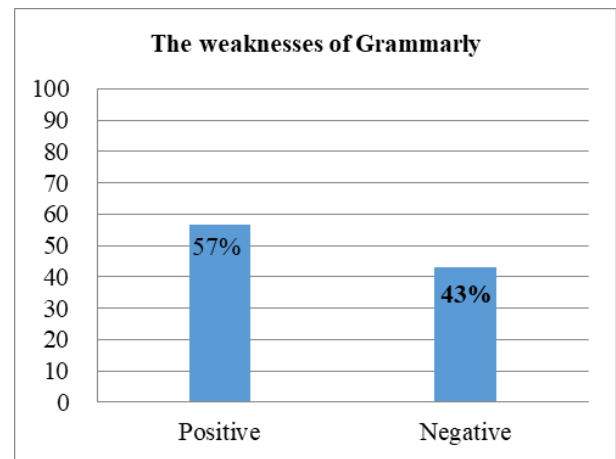


Figure 3. Bar Chart of The Weaknesses of Grammarly

The last theme is the weaknesses of Grammarly, there are six statements in this theme Based on the questionnaire data above, the results of the study show that students have different views on Grammarly's weaknesses in helping them write argumentative writing. Students in the Grammarly theme's weaknesses chose to agree and disagree in a close range as shown by the difference in the average percentage obtained, namely 57% to agree with Grammarly's weaknesses and 43% for students who disagree with Grammarly's weaknesses. Furthermore, Grammarly's weaknesses are found in different aspects for each student. In addition, students view Grammarly's weaknesses in the Argumentative Writing course as having elements of argumentative writing that are not met, this is explained by students in interviews as follows:

Student#2 BEN: *"In my opinion, that in In argumentative writing or the structure of Essay Writing, there are sections like a, for example in the introduction there is a hook section, there is a thesis statement, the argumentative structure, and if it's the lecturer they can give feedback like this, the structure for the first paragraph is still wrong, so you can give suggestions, Grammarly usually gives suggestions such as grammar and spelling."*

Student#3 ATF: *"Grammarly's resources and tools mainly focus on improving writing skills in general but do not provide specific guidance on argumentation techniques, such as crafting persuasive arguments or handling counter-arguments. This can make it difficult for students to develop strong argumentation writing skills."*

Student#1 AR: *"No direct feedback on the use of transitions and linking words: Grammarly's feedback does not specifically address the use of transitions and linking words in an argumentative essay, which are essential for creating a cohesive and logical flow of ideas."*

It can be concluded from the data above that Correctness is the most useful feature for students because students get the most feedback they need, such as grammar, punctuation, and spelling checkers, where these elements are part of the Correctness feature. Students use Grammarly with the aim of improving their argumentative writing by identifying errors made in students' argumentative writing and improving their understanding of grammar. On the

other hand, students look at the shortcomings of Grammarly's features in aspects of student needs that have not been met by Grammarly's features, such as suggestions given by Grammarly that students feel are unclear or inappropriate. In addition, Grammarly's shortcomings in a more specific context relate to the structure of argumentative essays, such as thesis, counter-argument, and use of evidence.

The Integrity of Grammarly Feedback in the Application and Understanding of Grammar Concepts

In this section, the focus is on students' belief that Grammarly feedback has an effect on improving their understanding and application of grammar concepts in their writing. In the questionnaire data in the motivation to use Grammarly theme statement number eight "Integrating Grammarly feedback into my argumentative writing course improved my understanding and application of grammar concepts," shows that 38% of students strongly agreed, 59% of students agreed, and 3% of students disagreed.

In addition, in the strengths of Grammarly theme on the fourteenth statement "Grammarly provided me with necessary material explanations related to grammar and rules" shows that 29% of students strongly agree, 65% of students agree, and 6% of students disagree. Statement number fifteen discusses increasing students' understanding of grammar and writing conventions "Grammarly increased my understanding of grammar rules and writing conventions" shows that 41% of students strongly agree, 50% of students agree, and 9% of students disagree. The last statement regarding the strength of the Grammarly theme "Grammarly helped me apply grammar rules in argumentative writing" showed that 32% of students strongly agreed, 62% of students agreed, and 6% of students disagreed. This questionnaire statement regarding grammar concepts and rules is supported by the explanations given by students during interviews as follows:

Student#2 BEN: *"Grammarly can improve our understanding of grammar and other things too. Because in my experience, when I use Grammarly, there is the feedback that is given and for example, I don't know about the feedback before, so I automatically try to remember the feedback that is given for the future."*

Students#1 AR: *"Integrating Grammarly feedback into an argumentative writing course can significantly enhance my understanding and application of grammar concepts and writing conventions. Grammarly's automated feedback helps students identify and correct grammatical and punctuation errors, which is crucial for effective communication in writing. By incorporating Grammarly feedback, students can refine their grasp of grammar rules and conventions, leading to better-written arguments"*

Based on the data above, it can be concluded that students believe that integrating Grammarly into the Argumentative Writing course can improve students' understanding and application of grammar rules. Apart from that, the main reason why students use Grammarly is the correctness feature where students rely on this feature to improve aspects of grammar and writing. Furthermore,

students learn and apply grammar rules based on feedback obtained on errors that occurred in previous writing when checking argumentative writing using Grammarly, then students build an understanding of the feedback given and apply it to subsequent argumentative writing.

Discussion

Based on the results of the study above regarding students' perceptions of the effectiveness of Grammarly feedback in the Argumentative Writing course, the results of the study show that most students gave positive responses to the effectiveness of Grammarly in improving the quality of their writing, such as the motivation to use Grammarly theme which received an average percentage of 97% positive responses and 94% positive responses were given by students on the strengths of the Grammarly theme, although there were some students who agreed with some of the weaknesses or limitations of Grammarly. Students use Grammarly to help overcome mistakes made in Argumentative writing. Grammarly is useful for identifying errors in student writing such as grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. Apart from that, Grammarly provides easy-to-access and fast feedback and helps students save time in checking writing. This is in line with research conducted by Oktaviani et al. (2022) that Grammarly is rated positively by students even though it includes several shortcomings. Grammarly is claimed to be able to help students check mistakes made in their writing which includes errors such as the use of articles, spelling, and punctuation. Apart from that, advantages such as being faster, more efficient, and easier to use Grammarly were also explained by students in this research.

In addition, the Correctness feature is the most useful feature for students because most students use Grammarly to check for grammatical errors and improve their argumentative writing, furthermore, students gave statements related to this in interviews, one of the students said "What helps more in the correctness is grammar, and spelling, which is the feature we get the most feedback on.". This is similar to the results of research conducted by Ismawati et al (2021), which is correctness that detects the most errors in student writing. The errors found by Correctness in student writing amounted to 332 with a percentage of 73.1%. of all participants.

Additionally, Grammarly provides students with the necessary materials regarding grammar concepts and rules. Students also believe that integrating the feedback provided by Grammarly can help them improve their understanding and application of grammar concepts in writing. Students showed a positive response regarding this with 97% of students agreeing. Furthermore, in student interviews, it was shown that students learned to apply grammar rules from the feedback obtained on previous mistakes. This is in line with the research referred to by Setyani et al. (2023), namely research by Cavaleri (2016) which stated that Grammarly helps teach grammar, and helps introduce terms and rules in grammar. Students showed a positive view with a percentage of 72.3% of students agreeing that Grammarly helps them understand grammar rules.

On the other hand, there are some differences between the findings in this study with other studies. Students view Grammarly as a useful tool despite the limitations of the free version features because the free version of Grammarly provides the feedback students need such as the elements contained in the accuracy feature, furthermore in an interview

one of the students. The findings in this research contrast with one of the findings in a research conducted by Armanda et al. (2022) the majority of students view the free version of Grammarly negatively, there are 70% of students agree that Grammarly is inefficient if used in the free version.

In addition, there are differences in the results of this research with other research in terms of student confidence and motivation. In this study, a positive response of 100% was obtained from students who chose to agree that Grammarly application helps them to increase confidence and motivation. In the interview students said that Grammarly was used by students because they had doubts about their own writing results and Grammarly motivated students to learn grammar based on the feedback given by Grammarly on their mistakes so that these mistakes can be corrected in the next argumentative writing. In this findings, there is a slight difference with the results of the study conducted by Fitriana & Nurazni (2022) regarding the motivation to learn grammar from the feedback given by Grammarly in this study, although many positive responses were received from students in the questionnaire, students gave contradictory answers during the interview. The results of interviews with students regarding the motivation to learn grammar show that Grammarly does not affect student motivation and they only do their habits, namely rereading the mistakes in their writing.

CONCLUSION

Based on data from the questionnaire and interviews, it can be concluded that students view Grammarly application feedback positively as an effective tool in helping the improvement of the quality of students' argumentative writing in university-level. Students view Grammarly application is effective for help the students recognizing the error and inappropriateness forms of their writing because it provides feedback regarding grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure which then helps students improve the clarity and coherence of their writing. However, as this application just focus on the linguistic form, the human critical control and feedback on the messages or issues organization are needed.

The most useful feature for students is the correctness feature because this feature is most helpful in identifying and correcting mistakes made by students in writing in argumentative writing courses, thereby improving students' argumentative abilities in an academic environment. Furthermore, students perceived that integrating feedback from Grammarly could help improve their understanding and application of grammar concepts in their writing. Students learn from the feedback provided by Grammarly and apply the knowledge gained to future assignments. On the other hand, some students also gave some negative responses to the shortcomings of Grammarly, especially regarding the structure of argumentative essays, such as thesis statements, counter-arguments, and the use of evidence. Despite some shortcomings, overall students' perceptions of Grammarly as an effective tool for students to help them improve their argumentative quality.

For future research, it is recommended to explore the integration of Grammarly with other forms of feedback, such as peer review or instructor comments, to address its limitations in evaluating argumentative essay structures, such as thesis statements, counter-arguments, and evidence usage. Future studies could also investigate how students balance

automated feedback with human feedback to enhance both linguistic accuracy and the organization of ideas. Additionally, researchers might examine the long-term impact of using Grammarly on students' independent writing abilities, including whether reliance on the tool diminishes over time as students develop stronger writing skills. Comparative studies across different academic contexts or disciplines could also provide deeper insights into how Grammarly performs in diverse learning environments and writing genres.

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