


Students' Perception towards the Use of Grammarly for Academic Writin: A Systematic Literature Review

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Melda, *Urai Salam, Surmiyati^{abc}

¹²³English Education Study Program, Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Tanjungpura University, Pontianak, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: urai.salam@untan.ac.id

A B S T R A C T

Dependency on AI tools in academic has increases, Grammarly become one of the most frequent application to support students' writing processes. Most previous literature reviews have emphasized Grammarly's technical benefits in improving grammar and writing skills, along with pros and cons, while giving limited attention to students' experiences and attitudes. This study addresses that deficiency by focus on analyzing students' perceptions of Grammarly, both positive and negative. A systematic literature review collected relevant studies, and thematic analysis identified common themes. The results indicate that students generally view Grammarly positively due to its accessibility and usefulness in improving writing quality and skills. However, limitations such as the need for a stable internet connection, restricted features, and high subscription fees reduce its acceptance. This study offers valuable insights for educators and developers to enhance the educational relevance and effectiveness of AI writing tools.

Keywords: *Grammarly, Students' Perceptions, Academic Writing, Systematic Literature Review*

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INTRODUCTION

As EFL students, writing ability greatly impacts academic achievement. Writing is a fundamental component of perpetual learning competencies because many student assignments are required in written form (UNESCO, 2017). However, students often face various writing challenges from micro-level issues such as grammar and vocabulary to macro-level issues such as idea development, organization, and coherence (Faisal & Carabella, 2023). To resolve these problems, students swicth to technology-based solutions, especially Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based writing tools.

The development of artificial intelligence (AI)-based writing tools in the context of education has positioned them as promising solutions for text analysis and processing in digital learning environments (Safitri & Fithriani, 2024). These tools provide various writing support features, including grammar verification, plagiarism detection, and advanced suggestions that improve overall writing quality (T. N. Fitria, 2021). In addition, these tools are user-friendly and accessible to various groups of users, including college students (Chang et al., 2021). Many studies report positive results, with students showing improved writing competence through the use of AI tools (Kurniati & Fithriani, 2022; Nurhayati, 2022; Syahnaz & Fithriani, 2023; Wang, 2022), especially through automated writing evaluation (AWE) systems that provide simultaneous assessment and feedback (Palermo & Wilson, 2020; Yao, 2021).

However, several studies also highlight concerns regarding potential weaknesses, including excessive dependence, weakening of motivation to learn, the risk of plagiarism, data privacy issues, limitations of accessibility, and weak accurations (Burkhard, 2022; Liu et al., 2022; Lund & Wang, 2023; Qadir, 2023). These perspectives highlight the importance of analyzing student perceptions as their attitudes directly influence the adoption and

integration of AI tools in academic settings. To Understand these perceptions provide insights into the effectiveness of AI tools, their impact on conventional writing approaches and inform educators and policymakers on how to integrate these tools into educational settings in alignment with objectives and student needs.

Among AI writing tools, Grammarly has emerged as the most widely used platform, with its advanced algorithms providing comprehensive feedback on grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and writing style elements. Although existing empirical research has explored students' perceptions of Grammarly (Fahmi & Cahyono, 2021; Faisal & Carabella, 2023; R. A. Fitria et al., 2022; Susiana & Yolanda, 2024), yielding diverse findings and previous literature reviews have largely focused on technical benefits (Llausas et al., 2024) or strengths and limitations (Astuti et al., 2023), but a comprehensive synthesis specifically analyzing perception patterns is still lack of result. This systematic literature review aims to addresses the gap by identifying common patterns, variations, and trends in students' perceptions toward Grammarly usage, while exploring potential to moderate variables to influence these perceptions in various academic contexts.

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into educational technology has given rise to automated writing evaluation (AWE) tools that utilize machine learning and natural language processing to provide instant feedback on students' written texts (Park, 2019; Wilson & Andrada, 2016; Wilson & Czik, 2016). These tools have attracted attention in the context of academic writing in English as a foreign language (EFL) due to their potential to help students overcome persistent challenges in grammar and organization. Among the various AWE tools, Grammarly has become one of the most widely used artificial intelligence-based writing assistants in higher education. As a cloud-based writing tool, Grammarly provides automatic feedback on grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, vocabulary, clarity, and writing style, making it easily accessible and practical for university students (T. N. Fitria, 2021; Rudnicka, 2023; Bulatović et al., 2024; Chang et al., 2021). Previous studies have shown that Grammarly contributes to improving the quality of academic writing by reducing language errors, improving clarity, and supporting text organization, and its use is often recommended in academic writing assignments, including thesis and research proposal development (Nour et al., 2024; Rejeki, 2023; Setyani et al., 2023; Setyowati, 2024).

Although there are reported benefits, existing research also identifies several limitations associated with Grammarly. These limitations include concerns about over-reliance on automated feedback, limited functionality in the free version, grammatical inaccuracies in certain contexts, and broader issues related to plagiarism detection, data privacy, and internet accessibility (Burkhard, 2022; Liu et al., 2022; Lund & Wang, 2023; Qadir, 2023; Zuhriah, 2024). These findings suggest that Grammarly's effectiveness cannot be evaluated based on its technical features. As a result, student perceptions emerge as a critical factor in understanding how AI-based writing tools impact the academic environment. Student perceptions reflect their experiences, attitudes, and beliefs toward technology use, which directly influence learning engagement and teaching effectiveness (Scherer et al., 2016; Sumakul et al., 2022). Empirical studies generally report positive perceptions of Grammarly, particularly regarding ease of use, time efficiency, and useful feedback, while also revealing negative perceptions regarding feedback accuracy, dependence on AI assistance, and the need for manual revision (R. A. Fitria et al., 2022; Fahmi & Cahyono, 2021; Faisal & Carabella, 2023; Zuhriah, 2024; Susiana & Yolanda, 2024).

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research approach with a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) design to provide a structured and comprehensive overview of existing research on students' perceptions of Grammarly in academic writing. By systematically collecting, analyzing, and critically evaluating relevant previous studies, this approach allows researchers to synthesize patterns, themes, and insights related to how Grammarly is perceived and used by students in an academic context. To ensure comprehensive coverage of

relevant literature, a systematic search strategy was applied. The search process began by identifying keywords closely related to the research focus. The main keywords included "student perceptions," "Grammarly," and "academic writing." To improve the accuracy and coverage of the search, alternative terms such as "student views" were also included. These keywords were combined using Boolean operators (AND, OR) to refine the search results and ensure relevance, then these keywords were applied to the search databases, including Google Scholar and ScienceDirect. The literature search was conducted using Harzing's Publish or Perish software for Google Scholar and a direct search on ScienceDirect.

Clear inclusion and exclusion criteria were also applied to ensure that only relevant and high-quality studies were selected. It focused on peer-reviewed studies published in English between 2014 and 2024 that examine students' perceptions of Grammarly in the context of academic writing. Eligible studies involve English language learners, primarily college students, and use qualitative or mixed-method designs with qualitative data. Studies were excluded if they focused on AI tools other than Grammarly without discussing academic writing, did not explore student perceptions, relied solely on quantitative methods, involved non-English language learners, were not peer-reviewed, or were published outside the specified time frame. A modified PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses) framework guided the data collection process, which involved four main stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The flow of the literature selection process is shown in the following figure.

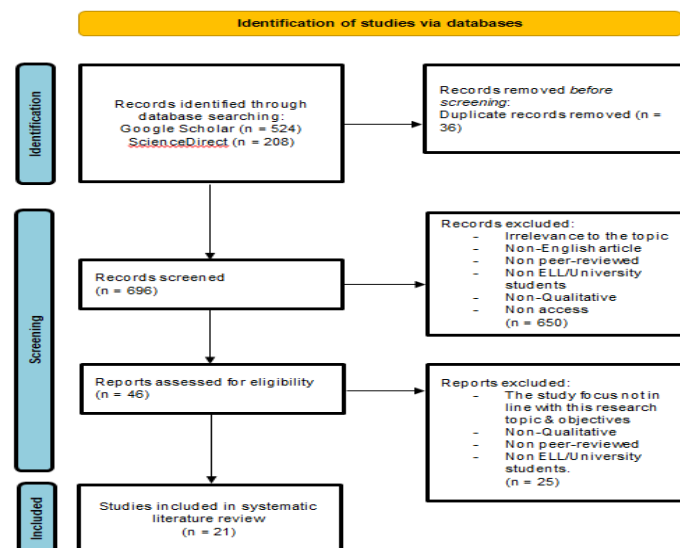


Figure 4. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analysis (PRISMA)

The figure shows that 732 articles were identified through database searches, then using the automatic filtering feature, 36 duplicate articles were removed. Then, an initial screening process was conducted based on the titles and abstracts. As a result, 650 articles were excluded at this stage. Furthermore, the remaining 46 articles were re-evaluated through a full-text reading process and 21 studies were deemed eligible and included in the systematic literature review. The list of the eligible studies can be seen in the following table below.

Table 1. List of 21 Articles

| Author/Year | Title | Objectives | Method |
|---|--|--|--|
| 1 A Maypida, ESD Damanik (2024) | Exploring Grammarly's Effectiveness in EFL Writing through a Student Perception Study | Identify the advantages and disadvantages experienced by students using Grammarly in students writing activities | Case study (Questionnaire & interviews) |
| 2 A Yolanda, E Susiana, N Nizarrahmadi (2024) | Students' Perception On The Use Of "Grammarly" In Thesis Writing At Nahdlatul Ulama University | To find out how students' perception use Grammarly in the process of preparing their thesis at Nahdlatul Ulama University. | Qualitative (semi-structured interviews) |

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| 3 | MO Khan, M Nazim, AAF Alzubi (2024) | Exploring Arab EFL Learners' Attitudes: Is Grammarly a Game-Changer in Academic Writing Classes? | Analyze Arab students' attitudes toward Grammarly deployment in the EFL academic writing skills classes | Descriptive (Survey questionnaire & interviews) |
| 4 | LA Driane, V Roza, M Melani, Reflinda (2024) | EFL Students' Perceptions on Using Grammarly in Thesis Writing at English Education Department Students | Identify EFL students' perceptions of using Grammarly in writing their thesIs | Descriptive qualitative (semi-structured interviews) |
| 5 | T Wahyu, S Zur (2024) | EFL Students' Perceptions on Grammarly Use in Proofreading Essay Tasks | Investigate the EFL students' responses to writing acquisition learning facilitated by Grammarly in terms of lexical process based on their cognitive perspectives in one of the higher Islamic universities in Kendari. | Mixed-method sequential explanatory |
| 6 | S Putri, E Erni, M Masyhur (2024) | English Study Program Students' Perception on Using Grammarly as an Online Grammar Checker in Academic Writing | Find out English study program students' perception on using grammarly as an online grammar checker in academic writing | Mixed-method (Questionnaire & interviews) |
| 7 | T Irawati (2024) | Grammarly in Essay Writing through the Lens of Students' Perception | Exploring students' perceptions regarding the use of Grammarly as a writing assistant in essay classes. | Qualitative case study (questionnaire & interviews) |
| 8 | RE Prasetya, DH Raharjo (2023) | Enhancing English language writing skills: An evaluation of the efficacy of Grammarly application | Investigated the effectiveness of using the Grammarly application in teaching English language writing skills. | Mixed-method (pre-test/post-test & survey/interviews) |
| 9 | G Puri, AA Setiamunadi (2023) | The Use of Grammarly by Tertiary English Language Learners in Their Online Writing Classes | To find out how Grammarly helps tertiary-level students in their online Writing Classes. | Descriptive qualitative (questionnaire) |
| 1 | S Oktaviani, B Bahrani, WN Noor (2023) | Students' Perception Towards The Use of Grammarly In English Writing Skill Of Fourth Semester English Education Department at UINSI Samarinda | - To know the English Education Department students' perception towards using Grammarly as an online grammar checker in writing skills. - To know the advantages and disadvantages of the use of Grammarly | Descriptive Qualitative (questionnaire, interviews, & documentation) |
| 1 | AAS Ardhy (2023) | Students' Perception of The Use of The Grammarly Application in Their Writing | To explore students' perceptions regarding using the Grammarly application in their writing process and identify the advantages and disadvantages of Grammarly in the writing of English Language Education Study Program students | Mixed-method (questionnaire & interviews) |
| 1 | RB Febriani, L Irianti (2023) | EFL Students' Perception of Using Grammarly in Undergraduate Paper Writing | To elaborate the challenges faced by students' in writing a research paper by using Grammarly and investigated the students' perception of using Grammarly in undergraduate paper writing | Descriptive qualitative (questionnaire) |

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| 1 | HT Wibawa, S Nabhan (2023) | THE USE OF "GRAMMARLY" APPLICATION AS AI-POWERED WRITING ASSISTANT: UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTION | To explore the students' perception of the use of the Grammarly application as an AI-powered writing assistant | Qualitative case study (interviews and documents) |
| 1 | NK Wardani (2023) | INVESTIGATING EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF GRAMMARLY PREMIUM AS AN AUTOMATIC WRITING EVALUATION IN THE ASPECTS OF WRITING: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY | To find out students' perceptions of the use of Grammarly Premium as an automatic writing evaluation in the aspects of writing. | Narrative inquiry (interview) |
| 1 | MS Alotaibi (2023) | "It Makes Me Aware": Undergraduates' Perceptions Toward Using Automated Corrective Feedback Program (Grammarly) to Improve Their Writing Skills | Investigate undergraduate students' perceptions of using Grammarly's automated corrective feedback to improve their academic writing skills. | Qualitative (semi-structured interview) |
| 1 | SA Samosir, SH Daulay (2023) | EFL students' perception of the use "Grammarly application" as Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) | To find out the perceptions of EFL students about using the Grammarly application to check grammatical errors in their assignments. | Descriptive qualitative (questionnaire & interview) |
| 1 | RA Fitria, S Sabarun, MZ Miftah (2022) | Students' perception of the use of grammarly in undergraduate thesis writing | Investigate the students' perception of using Grammarly in their undergraduate thesis writing as well as the strength & weaknesses. | Mixed-method (questionnaire & interviews) |
| 1 | EK Fernando, M Suryaman (2022) | Appropriating Grammar as a Tool in Writing Activities: Student's Perception | Explores the motivations and perspectives of 2 university students in Indonesia | Qualitative (Interview) |
| 1 | U Dewi (2022) | Grammarly as automated writing evaluation: Its effectiveness from EFL students' perceptions | To describe EFL students' perceptions of the effectiveness of Grammarly as an Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE). | Qualitative (questionnaire & interview) |
| 2 | K Fitriana, L Nurazni (2022) | Exploring English Department Students' Perceptions on Using Grammarly to Check the Grammar in Their Writing. | To find out the English department students' perspective of Grammarly software as the media to check the grammar in their writing. | Descriptive qualitative (questionnaire) |
| 2 | LK Ummah, M Bisriyah (2022) | EFL students' perception on Grammarly premium's feedback and dealing with inaccuracies | This study aims to: - Explore EFL students' perceptions of Grammarly premium feedback. - Provide a detailed analysis of the types of inaccurate feedback provided by Grammarly premium. - Investigate how students handle inaccurate feedback. | Mixed-method (questionnaire, interview, & documentations) |

Data analysis

The collected research data was analyzed manually following thematic analysis procedures to identify common themes and patterns related to students' perceptions of Grammarly. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) in data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). This method allows researchers to

uncover recurring themes related to students' attitudes and opinions regarding the use of Grammarly in academic writing. The steps include: (1) Data familiarization. (2) Generating initial code. (3) Identification. (4) Reviewing themes. (5) Defining and naming themes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the literature review which was carried out using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method and thematic analysis to identify student perceptions of using Grammarly in the context of academic writing. The purpose of this research is to provide a comprehensive picture of how students view Grammarly as a tool in academic writing, as well as to answer the research question "What is students' perception towards the use of Grammarly for academic writing?"

The results of this research are organized based on themes that have been identified through the thematic analysis process from relevant studies. Each theme found was explained in depth, equipped with quotes and findings from the literature analyzed, and linked to existing research to answer the research objectives and questions. The analysis results can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. Thematic Analysis Results

| Themes | Codes | Frequency of Appearance | Excerpt of the Findings |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------|--|
| Writing Improvement and Accuracy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall Writing Enhancement - Writing Accuracy - Writing Confidence - Grammar Learning | 11 | Students attest to Grammarly's capacity to increase their confidence in writing by providing immediate corrections and recommendations, thus facilitating error-free composition. Additionally, it serves as a valuable learning tool, enhancing students' understanding of English grammar rules and helping perfect their language proficiency. Overall, these findings are underscoring Grammarly's significant contribution as a writing assistant in the English classroom, emphasizing its role in improving essay writing skills and empowering students to excel academically (Nurhidayah & Irawati, 2024) |
| Accessibility and Usability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ease of access - Ease of use - Automated feedback - Helpful suggestions - Quick correction - Efficiency - Clear explanation - Usefulness | 18 | Students appreciate Grammarly's ability to provide fast, detailed feedback on their writing, allowing them to efficiently identify and correct their mistakes. Grammarly's accessibility and ease of use are highlighted as significant advantages, making it a convenient tool for students to use anytime and anywhere (Maypida & Damanik, 2024) |
| Challenges and Limitations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limitations Features - Usability challenges - Over-correction - Costs issues - Performance and reliability issues | 17 | Grammarly's weaknesses include limited usage, the requirement to pay if students want to use all of Grammarly's premium features, and Grammarly's feedback was not always clear, requiring students to have a good understanding of grammar (RA Fitria, S Sabarun, MZ Miftah, 2022). Based on the findings of the study, it can be seen that students perceive Grammarly has several |

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|------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| | | | | disadvantages, such as Grammarly is NOT helpful with an unstable internet connection, Grammarly is NOT helpful because it changes the intended meaning of the sentence, Grammarly is NOT helpful because the feedback given was not the same as ideas needed, and Grammarly is NOT helpful because Grammarly does an over-checking on the reference list (G Puri, AA Setiamunadi, 2023) |
| Behavioral and Motivational Impact | - Behavioral Intentions - Motivation - Over-reliance - Independence in Using Grammarly | 5 | | The author found that the participants used Grammarly independently because they were motivated by feedback, which was one of the crucial things to improve their writing skills and the inconsistency of their instructors in providing feedback, which caused them to use Grammarly (Fernando & Suryaman, 2022) 47% of the participants stated that relying too much on Grammarly is not a good thing, and 19% thought that excessive use of Grammarly could have a negative impact on their spelling (Alotaibi, 2023) |

Based on the thematic analysis that has been carried out on the 21 studies that have been collected, there are four (4) main themes related to student perceptions of using Grammarly in academic writing. These themes include, Writing Improvement and Accuracy, Accessibility and Usability, Challenges and Limitations, Behavioral and Motivational Impact. These themes embrace students' perceptions of Grammarly, both in a positive and negative way, as well as the various benefits and challenges they face while using this application. Each theme was analyzed based on its frequency of occurrence in the articles reviewed, and the implications of each theme were discussed in a broader context.

The first theme analyzed was the theme Writing Improvement and Accuracy. Based on the results of the analysis, this theme appeared in 11 studies which means it covers 52% of the data. This theme includes codes such as overall writing enhancement, writing accuracy, writing confidence, grammar learning. This theme indicates that students view Grammarly positively through the benefits it provides to their individual abilities such as improvements in writing quality, confidence in writing, writing accuracy, and grammar. These findings show that the findings from some of the studies reviewed highlight Grammarly's potential to help students improve their ability and confidence in writing, as well as improve the quality of their writing. Not only providing benefits for improving students' writing skills, Grammarly also has other benefits that give students the best experience while using Grammarly as discussed in the second theme.

The second theme in this research is Accessibility and Usability theme. Based on the results of the analysis, the theme Accessibility and Usability was identified as the theme that appeared most frequently among the 21 studies that had been analyzed. This theme appeared in 18 studies which mean 86% of the number of studies analyzed. This theme relates to students' perceptions regarding ease of access and ease of use of Grammarly tools, as well as the positive views they have regarding the help they get from Grammarly features. This help includes auto-correction, personalized feedback, suggestions for paraphrasing, grammar checking, punctuation, spelling, etc. Apart from that, students also appreciate Grammarly's user-friendly interface and the ease of accessing Grammarly even via the platform. Based on the number of studies in which this theme emerged, it indicates that students' views of Grammarly are mostly influenced by the benefits they receive from this tool. This is in line with studies which say that according to TAM theory two factors such as "perceived

usefulness" and "ease of use" play a role in predicting attitudes towards using a technology (Salloum et al., 2019). When educational technology is easy to understand and use, individuals will have a positive tendency towards using the technology (Hong et al., 2021). In the findings of this research, both the first and second themes tend to highlight the benefits of Grammarly which make students view Grammarly positively.

However, even though students have a positive perception of Grammarly because of the benefits this tool provides, the challenges students face when using Grammarly can also affect their perception in a negative way. In this research, this problem is identified in the Challenges and Limitations theme. This theme was one that emerged frequently in 17 studies, covering 81% of the studies analyzed. Challenges faced by students highlighted in this theme include limitations of Grammarly features, usability issues, excessive corrections, cost issues, as well as issues related to the performance and reliability of this tool. The findings of this research indicate that there are problems in the usability aspects of Grammarly, such as limited features, excessive correction and the performance and reliability of this tool. Apart from that, there are still challenges from other external factors that prevent students from using Grammarly, such as subscription fees, internet connections or devices issues. This is still in line with the previous theory, namely TAM, that perceived usefulness is related to perceived ease of use, and additionally, external factors also impact perceived ease of use in addition to perceived usefulness (Zaineldeen et al., 2020). If these two beliefs influence students' positive views, then when they are not achieved as in this third theme, students will have a tendency to view Grammarly negatively.

Lastly, the theme that emerged was Behavioral and Motivational Impact which was related to students' perceptions of the influence of Grammarly on their intentions, motivation and behavior. Aspects in this theme include behavioral intentions, motivation, over-reliance, and independence in using Grammarly. Even though it only covers 24% of the total studies analyzed, this theme provides implications about how Grammarly can influence student motivation and behavior. Students' intention to use Grammarly was primarily driven by the tool's ease in checking grammatical errors, recommendations from experienced individuals, and its role in overcoming challenges in English writing (Driane et al., 2024). This finding is in line with the results of prior research on technology use intentions which revealed that computer self-efficacy is very important in users' behavioral intentions to use technology through perceived ease of use (Ibrahim et al., 2018). This suggests that Grammarly's recognized usefulness is one of the motivations for using this tool. Additionally, due to the lack of feedback they received from instructors, students were motivated to get feedback from Grammarly and independently use the tool (Fernando & Suryaman, 2022). However, students also feel that Grammarly can influence them negatively because it has the potential to make them rely too much on the tool and ultimately lose the ability to write independently.

Based on the results of the data analysis that has been explained, it was found that the majority of students had a positive perception of Grammarly as a tool to help their academic writing process, with some others having a negative perception of several aspects. In relation to previous research which discusses the effectiveness of Grammarly for improving writing skills, as well as the benefits and weaknesses of Grammarly, this research provides insight into how students view this tool based on these aspects. In line with research by Llausas et al., (2024) and Astuti et al., (2023), this research also highlights how Grammarly helps students by offering benefits such as detecting and correcting writing errors, increasing ability and confidence in writing, accessibility and ease of use, etc. Apart from that, the weaknesses of Grammarly highlighted in this research are also not much different from the two previous studies, including Grammarly's limitations in correcting errors, expensive subscription fees, accessibility and usability issues, and concerns about over-reliance issue.

CONCLUSIONS

This research aims to identify students' overall perceptions of the use of Grammarly in academic writing through a systematic review of the literature. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that students generally have a positive perception of using Grammarly to support their academic writing. Grammarly is viewed as an effective tool for improving the quality and accuracy of writing, reducing grammatical errors, and providing fast and accessible feedback. Most students also felt an increase in self-confidence in writing. This research also highlights aspects related to Grammarly's accessibility and usability as the most frequently discussed aspects in the analyzed studies. Students appreciate Grammarly's ease of access and user-friendly interface. Apart from that, Grammarly also provides various features and provides clear feedback for students. However, there are also some concerns regarding excessive dependence on Grammarly which can affect especially writing skills and creativity. In addition, the findings of this research also highlight the limitations in Grammarly's accessibility and usability, especially regarding premium features that require costs, as well as dependence on a stable internet connection. Moreover, Grammarly is also not always effective and precise in correcting writing errors. This challenge underscores the importance of managing the use of Grammarly in the learning process, so that students do not only rely on this tool but also develop their writing skills independently.

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