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## **Students' Perception On The Use Of "Grammarly" In Thesis Writing At Nahdlatul Ulama University**

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**Abstract.** *This study aims to find out how students' perception use Grammarly in the process of preparing their thesis at Nahdlatul Ulama University. The research method used is a qualitative method. The participants in this study were eight-semester students who were in the process of preparing their thesis. The participants in this study were eight people. How to collect data using the interview method and the Google form, the Google form was distributed to 6 students and 2 students conducted direct interviews to explain more deeply about students' perceptions of using grammarly in writing thesis. This research is also to find out what are the strengths and weaknesses of grammatical applications. The results of this study indicate that students have positive responses and opinions toward the use of Grammarly in their thesis writing. Students found Grammarly very helpful in the process of checking grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. The feedback that is easy to understand and its many features make students use the Grammarly application a lot. The weakness of Grammarly is that its feature cannot detect what tenses are used in a paragraph. Students also have to pay if they want to get complete premium features*

**Keywords:** *grammarly, perception, thesis writing*

### **INTRODUCTION**

One of the goals of learning English is so that students can communicate well. To be able to communicate well, students must be able to write so that student can convey what is on their minds. According to Chitra and Shaifali (2021), there are four skills in learning English such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In this chapter, the researcher will discuss writing. Writing is a very important skill because if students have good writing skills, students can give a message or information. In writing skills, students also have to pay attention to several things, such as punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure. Rachmawati (2013) explained that in learning English, the first basic skill that must be mastered is writing.

Writing skills include activities to express ideas through words, text, sentences, and paragraphs. It is very important in paying attention to the mastery of writing in English, because of the need for academic writing to be written in English (Nova, 2018). In achieving various goals, the most useful instrument is writing (Graham, 2006). According to Chiara and Cristina (2021) writing about experiences and feelings can be beneficial psychologically. People can create fictional worlds, share experiences, and tell themselves by writing. It is used as a means of maintaining communication with the closest people such as family, and friends who cannot be there in person to talk to us. Writing skills require planning, grammar, and grouping ideas, writing is not only a skill to recognize letters (Visser & Sukavatee, 2020).

Writing is a productive skill that is used to help students express their idea in writing. Writing skills can support people to communicate certain ideas, thoughts, and experiences (Marpaung, 2019). Writing is needed in various aspects, for example in the academic field, students are usually asked to write various types of text, such as essays, a thesis, a report, recount, descriptive texts, and various other academic texts. Most of the students have difficulties in writing. Phrases, passive words, and adverbs are part of the difficulty (Karyuatry, 2018). Writing is considered more difficult than other skills, because writing is not just expressing ideas, but the existing aspects must also be considered (Setyowati, 2016)

Students' problems in writing are usually confused in compiling vocabulary, grammar, and placing verbs. Therefore, it is necessary to do a lot of writing exercises there must be guidance from the lecturer to pay attention to and improve the way of writing. Mubarak (2017) explains students have a problem with using irregular verbs, consistency, applying verbs and expressions, and the poor in expressing ideas in writing. With the advancement and development of technology now, the internet is very helpful in any learning process, including learning to write. Many applications can help in the writing process, one of which is the grammar checker program, that is Grammarly application. Grammar is also one of the things that must be considered in writing. Grammar is an important part that must be considered because it is very necessary for building sentences.

Among the many grammar checker tool applications, the researcher chose Grammarly in this study, because Grammarly is a good software to help students check for errors in writing. Grammarly is widely used by students majoring in English education. This software is used in the world of higher education because it is used in academic writing, such as writing essays, papers, articles, journals, and theses.

Grammar checker can be used for free by its users, by using this software the writer can see the errors. Apart from being free to use, Grammarly also helps students improve their writing style and make their writing more effective and interesting. Not just fixing spelling and grammar, Grammarly can also fix punctuation errors such as commas and capital letters. Ghufon (2019) claims that Grammarly an important role in assessing writing errors. Grammarly also provides a free plagiarism check feature, which can detect online-based data similarities. In the context of learning to write, Grammarly software is a relevant application (Bailey & Lee, 2020).

For students or anyone who wants to be effective in writing English texts, writing on social networks is also possible. Qassemzadeh & Soleimani (2016) also said that this application controls writing properly so that there are no errors. Grammarly is one of the applications developed from Automatic Writing Evaluation (AWE). The program AWE makes students feel helped in checking grammatical errors and improving their quality of writing (Mozgovoy, 2011). Besides Grammarly, there are many software to assist with writing activities, such as Pro Writing Aid, Ginger, Whitesmoke, and Reverse. According to Grammarly Inc. (2022), 30 million people improved their writing skills using Grammarly. Nova (2018) also explain that Grammarly includes a grammar checker tool that automatically provides many useful features for students. For academics, they must use formal English in their writing. Grammarly is more widely used by people outside of Englishspeaking countries.

Grammarly has two features available, Grammarly is free and paid, the free version is very limited because it does not provide automatic corrections (Cavaleri & Dianti, 2016). Unlike the premium version, Grammarly provides free corrections and can be used easily by clicking on the highlighted area. According to Syafi'i (2020), Grammarly is an automatic application to support

writing English. This application connects users with software that assists when users want to fix problems in academic writing.

According to Nova (2018), despite its popularity, Grammarly has its weaknesses in examining the content of the written context. Several studies have been conducted to see how effective the Grammarly software is. According to the researchers' observation, many students still have grammar problems, this is the basis for researchers to conduct this research. Apart from being able to improve writing skills, the strength of Grammarly is that it saves time (Lailika, 2019; Nova, 2018). Behind the strength, there are also weaknesses to the internet connection. This software cannot provide feedback because the internet connection is unstable. After all, Grammarly software is online-based (Lailika, 2020; Pratama, 2020; Fitria, 2021).

The strength of Grammarly makes most people prefer it, including students at University. One of the universities in Australia has trusted Grammarly for its writing activities (O'Neill & Rusell, 2019). This statement is supported by Cavaleri & Dianti's research (2016) which states that universities in Australia have positive responses about Grammarly. They are greatly helped by the Grammarly software because it makes it easier for them to understand grammar rules in the process of academic writing.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

In this study, the researcher used qualitative research methods as a method of data collection and data analysis. Researchers choose qualitative because these methods are suitable for research topics that focus on social phenomena or problems. The researcher tries to analyze how students think about the use of Grammarly application in the process of academic writing. The answer from the analysis will later be described by the researcher in the form of words, not in the form of numbers.

This research was conducted at Nahdlatul Ulama University, West Kalimantan, English Education Study Program. The location of this research at Jalan Ahmad Yani II, Parit Derabak. The population of this study was all students in the eighth semester of the English Education and Study Program. A purposive sampling technique was used to find suitable participants for this study. Purposive sampling is a data collection technique that researchers choose based on certain considerations

(Sugiyono, 2021). Based on the purposive sampling technique used, the researcher determined two criteria for research participants, as follows :

- a. Eighth-semester students of English Education
- b. Students who have used the Grammarly Application

In this study, the researcher used semistructured interviews because in this interview the participants invited to the interview would be asked for their opinions and ideas. In this interview, the researcher will listen carefully and record what the informant said. The interview will consist of 10 questions, and the questions will be divided into two types. The first question is about students' perception, Is Grammarly software an application that supports students' writing skills? The second question is about aspects of writing that can be improved by Grammarly software. Interviews were recorded and conducted in English. The researcher interviewed for about 15 minutes.

The results of this research data collection were analyzed descriptively. Researchers need to read the transcript repeatedly to better understand. The researcher also repeatedly listened to the audio recording of the interview to understand the information provided by the students. Because the interview questions were divided into two themes, the researcher also summarized each theme obtained in each interview.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **RESEARCH FINDING**

This chapter explains the findings and discussion based on the data collected from the interviews. The interview was made to complete a research question about how students think about the Grammarly application in assisting thesis writing. Besides that, it contains questions about what aspects of writing can be improved using the Grammarly application. The participants in this research interview were students in the eighth semester of the English education study program who were preparing their thesis. Eight participants were named Abdul Mukib, Ryan, Irma, Emayra, Eftaria, Irawati, Ayu, and Rika. The research was conducted on 10 July 2023.

The number of questions in the implementation of this interview amounted to 10 questions, the first to third questions were only questions that were used to find out how students learned to write in English, so that could not be said to be a finding. Subsequent questions focused on the topic of how to use the Grammarly application, its effectiveness, and how helpful the Grammarly application is in writing a thesis.

#### **Students' Perception on The Effectiveness of Grammarly Application as a Supporting Tool for Thesis Writing Process**

Based on the topic of the first interview, many students use the Grammarly Application and they have conveyed their perceptions of Grammarly. All respondents acknowledged that the Grammarly application was easy to use and very helpful in the process of writing a thesis. The researcher provides primary data from questions number 4 to 7 a question about how students perceive the effectiveness of Grammarly. The question is focused on getting any reasons about Grammarly as a supporting tool for thesis writing.

In this case, Ira agrees that Grammarly is useful and helps in improving grammar. The application also helps work on his thesis from scratch. Ira also said that the Grammarly application helped correct punctuation errors because according to Ira the use of punctuation was very influential in sentences. Wrong punctuation would make the meaning of the sentence wrong. Ira utilizes the Grammarly feature to check the use of punctuation in this thesis. Ira realizes that he still has many mistakes in using punctuation in sentences.

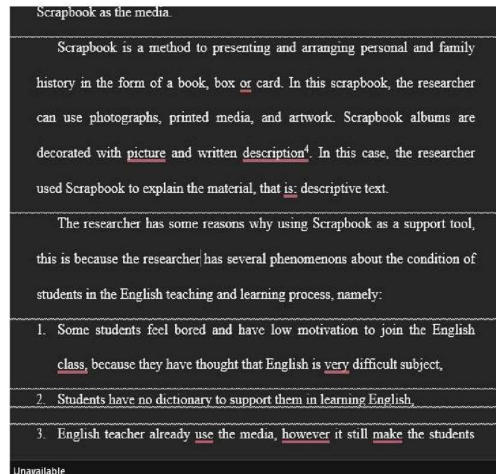
Respondents realized the Grammarly application helped them learn English on their own without guidance. They can also find out how to write well and correctly in English, making it easier for respondents to check their thesis writing. Besides that, it can also increase vocabulary memorization through feedback provided by Grammarly. According to interviews, students have experienced many benefits from using the Grammarly application. Therefore the researchers concluded that the benefits of Grammarly are several points, including free access, automatic correction, and useful feedback.

##### **a. Free access**

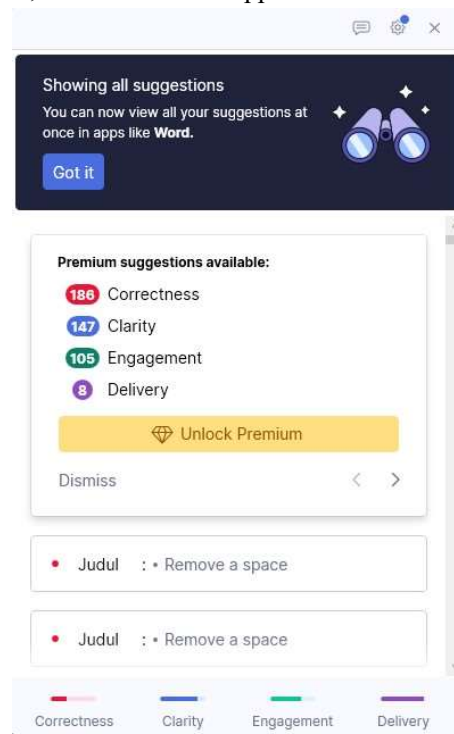
The first strength of the Grammarly application is known when the respondents tell about their experiences when using Grammarly for the process of learning to write. Grammarly only has two versions, namely free and premium, of the two versions, many students use the free version because they don't have to pay for the premium version. Grammarly is easy to access either on a laptop or on a mobile phone. Use of this application requires an internet connection or WIFI. Students easily check their writing by submitting their writing on the Grammarly page. Based on interviews, of the 8 participants, only Irma used Grammarly Premium, and the rest used Grammarly Free. The simple reason Ryan said is that the price for using Grammarly Premium is quite expensive.

b. Auto-Correction

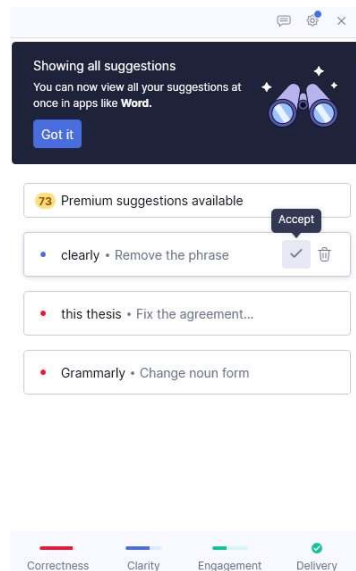
The following is a picture that shows Grammarly quickly in the writing process of checking, the underlined words are the wrong word



On the right of the worksheet, a check box will appear as follows.



By looking at the boxes to the right of the worksheet, it's also easier to see the checks. The researcher uses one of these theses to prove Grammarly's application. The researcher found that there were 446 errors in writing the thesis, 186 correctness, 147 clarify, 105 engagement, and 8 delivery. But not all of the errors can be fixed, some have to use Grammarly premium first. If students want to register for the premium version, students only need to select "Unlock Premium", after that they will be asked to make a payment. The dialog box makes it easier for us to find writing errors without the need to scroll until they run out. Just by clicking on the red circle, then there will be a choice, does the user want to delete the word, or fix it by selecting the checkmark?



If there are some wrong words in a sentence, and the word doesn't match the sentence, Grammarly will give suggestions to change it into the right sentence arrangement.

c. Useful Feedback

The next benefit that exists in the Grammarly Application is useful feedback. Grammarly not only checks writing but also provides clear feedback which will make students more thorough in writing. Based on Eftaria's experience, she received feedback when checking her thesis on Grammarly. For example, we type the word "are" in a sentence, and the word does not match the sentence. Then Grammarly suggests replacing it with the word "is" so that the sentence becomes correct. Grammarly is considered a supporting tool for checking thesis writing. According to Abdul, the weakness of Grammarly is that it is quite expensive to use the premium version, The free version is quite helpful, it's just that there is a limit to the number of words. Another weakness found by the respondents was excessive checking of people's names, places, and titles.

**Aspects of Improving Thesis Writing by Grammarly**

The characteristics of academic writing are divided into several aspects. These characteristics are the difference between personal writing and academic writing. Based on the interviews that have been conducted, students have shared about the effectiveness of Grammarly in the aspect of thesis writing. The writer found that the students were greatly helped by using Grammarly in the process of writing their thesis. There are four aspects corrected by Grammarly, including complexity, objectivity, formality, and hedging.

a) Complexity

The researcher found that most of the respondents got a solution to the difficulty of thesis writing. Irma said the Grammarly application was very helpful because Irma often used the application even from the second semester. The Grammarly application provides some structured corrections and this helps Irma in maintaining the complexity of her writing.

b) Objectivity

In academic writing, the vision of a text or paragraph is expressed with objectivity. The idea to write, of course, comes from yourself and your thoughts. Grammarly only helps in changing the correct vocabulary for our writing, such as antonyms, synonyms, and words that are appropriate for the writing we make.

c) Formality

Formality becomes the main thing in the process of checking in academic writing. All respondents agreed that their thesis writing was corrected grammatically in the formality section. Rika shared her experience while checking writing on Grammarly. When entering the Grammarly application, users will be given suggestions for determining goals before writing.

d) Hedging

According to Birhan (2017), hedging refers to the level of accuracy of written information or facts. Some respondents have been assisted in examining sentences, especially in hedging. Wulan is very helpful in hedging, by using the suggestions provided by Grammarly, students can adjust the suggestions provided with the writing students make. To ascertain whether students need to use suggestions or not, it depends on students.

## DISCUSSION

The finding reveals that students' perception of using the Grammarly application have positive perceptions. Features that are easy to use and can provide immediate feedback make students feel helped in writing their thesis. However, Grammarly cannot detect what tenses are used and if students want to get the full features of Grammarly premium, students must pay.

According to Ghufroon (2019), in reducing errors in the use of words, grammar, and writing mechanisms, the Grammarly application is very effective to use. Grammarly corrections help students find out which ones are correct. Students independently evaluate their writing based on automatic input from Grammarly. Based on the results of the interview, the participants said the weakness of Grammarly is a premium paid feature which is rather expensive.

Based on the research that has been done, most of the respondents have the same perception about the Grammarly application as a supporting tool in checking thesis writing. The results also show that the Grammarly application supports students in achieving good thesis writing. According to Nova (2018), Grammarly is one of the programs that has been built to support the language learning process. Based on the research question about how students think about the effectiveness of Grammarly tools in helping students in writing their thesis.

Respondents indicated that they were assisted in correcting grammatical, spelling as well as punctuation errors. Students also easily use Grammarly anywhere. The next main data are aspects of academic writing which are corrected by Grammarly. According to the research results, there are four aspects of academic writing, namely complexity, objectivity, and hedging.

The screenshot shows the 'Set goals' screen in the Grammarly application. At the top, there's a blue target icon and the title 'Set goals'. Below it, a subtitle reads 'Get tailored writing suggestions based on your goals and audience.' The interface is divided into several sections: 'Audience' with buttons for 'General', 'Knowledgeable' (selected), and 'Expert'; 'Formality' with buttons for 'Informal', 'Neutral', and 'Formal' (selected); 'Domain' with buttons for 'Academic', 'Business', 'General' (selected), 'Technical', 'Casual', and 'Creative'; and 'Tone' with buttons for 'Neutral', 'Confident', 'Joyful', 'Optimistic', 'Friendly', 'Urgent', 'Analytical', and 'Respectful'. A 'Go Premium' button is also visible. At the bottom, there's a checkbox labeled 'Show Set Goals when I start a new document' which is checked, and two buttons: 'RESET TO DEFAULTS' and 'DONE'.

The third, grammatically also sets the purpose of writing. Student writing is formally examined. Students can also help in choosing the tone of writing. Hedging provides a choice of how the author conveys the message.

The findings of this research are also in line with previous research related to Grammarly. Research conducted by O'Neill and Russel (2019), regarding student perceptions of grammarly applications. The results of the research show that students use grammar a lot in the process of checking descriptive writing. The second research is about the perceptions of EFL students about using the Grammarly application in writing classes conducted by Hakiki (2021). The results of this study indicate that EFL students in the fifth semester of English Education have good responses about Grammarly and are very helpful in the process of writing essays. Previous research used Grammarly in writing essays, while this study used Grammarly in the process of writing a thesis

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research is to find out students' perceptions of the Grammarly application in assisting in the process of writing a thesis. The participants were selected based on certain criteria. The selected participants are eighth-semester students who use Grammarly and are in the process of writing a thesis. The results of the research show that students agree that Grammarly can be used effectively as a supporting tool in correcting thesis writing. This is explained in two topics, namely students' perception of the effectiveness of Grammarly as a supporting tool and aspects of improving thesis writing by Grammarly.

In using Grammarly, students find strengths and weaknesses in the Grammarly application, there are three strengths that it has, namely free in accessibility, auto-correction, and useful feedback. The weakness of this application, namely sometimes there are excessive checks, and the Grammarly application cannot detect what tense is used by students.

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