



THE USING OF GRAMMAR CHECKER APPLICATION AND STUDENT'S ABILITY IN ACADEMIC WRITING

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ABSTRACT

Writing is an activity to mark or convey ideas or to interpret utterance in language into a visible symbol. In university level, writing skill is highly needed by the students to convey their idea. Students are demanded to write academic writing to succeed them to write paper, report, essay and thesis effectively. In Indonesia, most of universities demand their undergraduates students to write thesis as the requirement to pursue the degree. The practice of academic writing in university level not only discuss about how to write descriptive, analytical, persuasive and critical writing, but the most detail in those four main types of academic writing is about how to write correctly of the punctuation, spelling and grammar. The need of correct details in academic writing like punctuation, spelling and grammar usually needed by EFL (English as Foreign Language) students. Nowadays, students are well-assisted by the application which help the students to correct their grammar automatically when they type by using computer. Grammar checker is one of the most used application automatically correct students' grammar in their computer. The investigation aimed to find out how effective the use of grammar checker application to help EFL students in completing their task of academic writing in English. To find the answer, the researchers observed and interviewed the students after they completed some observation phases. The result show that grammar checker improved the quality of their writing.

Keywords: Microsoft Grammar Checker, Student's Academic Writing

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 30-5-2024

Revised 01-06-2024

Accepted 30-6-2024

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INTRODUCTION

This topic was chosen by the researcher to find the effectiveness of grammar checker application used by the university students to assist them in the process of academic writing making. EFL (English as Foreign Language) students are demanded to be able to create academic writing frequently as their main activity in university, hence the ability of EFL students to arrange good writing formally and academically must be assisted by the grammar checker application, because EFL students do not apply English language as their first language, so the finding of misused grammar, grammar error, grammar mistake are commonly found in the process of creating academic writing. The research was done in Budi Darma University towards thirty students by giving English academic writing task about Pros and Cons of Social Media. The students are EFL learners who are speaking Bahasa Indonesia as their first language. It was found that many of EFL students in Budi Darma University made mistakes in the process of creating academic writing, they are not used to make good writing formally and academically. The most common mistake found is the use of English grammar. The using of Bahasa Indonesia as their national language and the using of



mother tongue as their daily language used at home consequently much influence the students in the process of academic writing, so the English grammar does not well-applied in academic writing. To solve this problem, the researcher would like to find the solution by using grammar checker application so the EFL students will be able to arrange good sentences and assist them in academic writing activity.

The development of technology especially internet and computer, ease the students mostly for EFL students in Indonesia to acquire English language, for example online dictionary, English translator, grammar checker, and many others. Writing is not easy for the students because writing needs some techniques, for example: ideas, writing structures, experience, grammar, and others. By using technology available recently, the EFL students would be assisted in grammar. Grammar is a system of rules that allows the writers to build sentence structures, that is why grammar is the essential part to make a good academic writing. Every language has its own grammar uniqueness, including the EFL learners in Indonesia, where the mother tongues are vary as the ethnics number are galore. Every province has their own ethnic language, there are 38 provinces in Indonesia so the vary of mother languages will influence EFL learners unconsciously when they apply English grammar. English grammar is a set of rules about how words change their form and combine with other words to make sentences (Cambridge Dictionary). Grammar checker application help the EFL students because it can detect mistakes like inaccurate preposition usage, subject-verb opposition, run-on paragraphs, broken verb conjugations, double negatives and etc. (Maulidina and Wibowo, 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing in English language is not an easy process for EFL students (English as Foreign Language). It could be a challenging activity for EFL students especially in Indonesia where national language and mother tongues influence the students to create good writing in English language and they are not the only reasons which challenge EFL students, there are some backgrounds like the mastering of vocabulary, grammar, sentence structures and confidence also affect the ability of EFL students in writing process. The role of English teacher is considered as essential to encourage EFL students writing skill. (Putri Ramadhani 2019) observed that social media is one of some effective mediums to stimulate student's confidence to write in English language, the feature of correct spelling in mobile phone helps the student to write with less mistakes. The other challenges for EFL students are the influence of Bahasa Indonesia and mother tongue used in daily communication. (M. Baule 2023) concluded that mother tongue does affect someone's ability in speaking English psychologically, grammatically and environmentally. Less confidence and grammar mistakes are real elements which block the students to speak English. Academic writing or scholarly writing refers primarily to nonfiction writing that is produced as part of academic work in accordance with the standards of a particular academic subject or discipline, including: reports on empirical fieldwork or research in facilities for the natural sciences or social sciences, monographs in which scholars analyze culture, propose new theories, or develop interpretations from archives (Wikipedia).

Grammar is set of rules in English language both speaking and writing form. Grammar governs how word can be combined together to form a good sentence. There are five fundamentals in grammar; punctuation, tenses, word order, determiners and connector. Those elements must work together to create meaning, and when any of them are used incorrectly will affect the meaning of the sentence (Millie Dinsdale, 2022). Grammar affects the meaning of the sentence significantly, one of the samples is the using of tenses in a sentence will interpret different meaning, example; Winter weather brought high winds and snow to parts of Pacific



Northwest. The sentence informed the reader that the weather situation happened in the past from the using of the past verb “brought”, that is how grammar works and significantly needed in the writing process.

EFL students, confidence and writing capability are inseparable discussion in English language skill. The confidence factor for EFL students really affect their skill in English language. Writing skill considered difficult subject for EFL students since they must struggle with different rules of grammar which is much different to the grammar in daily speaking language (national language and mother tongue), in addition the idea of writing is also block EFL students to arrange their ideas into readable text. (Sasmita, 2021) in *Linguista Journal* wrote that there are four main problems experienced by EFL students in learning to write in faculty of letters, Universitas Negeri Malang, they are: writer’s block, difficulty in expressing ideas, less confident and the anxiety of making mistakes, in addition some factors like the content (the unity and coherence), the organization, and the grammar are also block EFL students’ ability and confidence in writing. (Putri Ramadhani, 2023) stated that vocabulary stimulation like pre-teaching vocabulary effective enough to help ELF student’s more confidence to speak English. Lecturers, language trainers should be involved to encourage EFL students to level-up their confidence by writing training and using additional technology assistant like grammar checker and google translate to minimize the mistakes made by EFL student in writing process.

Grammar checker assists EFL students in academic writing process, it can be proved by previous research written by (Lipalam et al. 2023) “The research indicated that English majored students who are engaged in self-monitoring and self-assessment strategies showed significant improvement in their writing performance. The findings demonstrated that when grammar checkers were integrated as a tool for error correction and feedback, students showed significant improvement in their writing accuracy and proficiency”.

METHOD

This research employed a descriptive qualitative research design. (Sugiyono 2010) stated that descriptive qualitative is the presentation of data research in the form of words rather than number. It is a method used in research to describe or to analyze the result of a research in simpler conclusion. (Aspers & Corte 2019) stated that qualitative research is a social inquiry type that focuses on examining individuals' interpretation and sense-making procedures to better understand their social reality. The research population was taken from thirty EFL students who are the first semester students of English class in Budi Darma University Medan. The participants selected for this research are the students who are assigned by English lecturer to write a simple speech of their thought toward the topic “Pros and Cons of Social Media”. The format of simple speech however should be written in formal form supported with the facts and analysis from any formal resources like media, internet, books and others. The writing should be written in three steps of common speech like introduction, content, closing.

To collect the data, researcher used data collecting techniques which were recorded in the form of report analysis. In addition, field notes were utilized as a secondary instrument to highlight some findings in the research. The researcher checks the grammar mistakes from the students’ work-paper, then the researcher administered the grammar mistakes in the table based on five fundamentals in grammar.



FINDING AND DISCUSSION

As written above, there are five fundamentals in grammar; punctuation, tenses, word order, determiners and connector. Those elements must work together to create meaning, and when any of them are used incorrectly will affect the meaning of the sentence (Millie Dinsdale, 2022). This research highlighted the using of determiner in EFL student’s writing task. The writing should be written in academic writing, in formal way about their opinion toward a contrary situation, supported with fact and real report from media. The title of the writing is “Pros and Cons of Social Media. The writing should be written at least three paragraphs consists of; introduction, content, and closing. In the first phase of observation, the students were not allowed to use the assistance of grammar checker application to complete their writing.

Determiners are words or phrases that describe a noun by clarifying what it refers to, determiners usually come before noun (<https://www.scribbr.com/parts-of-speech/determiners>). Determiners are important to explain the context of a noun. The kinds of determiners are;

1. Articles (a, an, the)
2. Demonstratives (This, that, these, those)
3. Possessives (My, our, your, his, her, their, its)
4. Quantifiers (A few, a little, much, many, a lot of, must, some, any, enough)
5. Numbers (one, ten, some, any, many, a few, all, several, each, every, either, neither and etc.)

Based on the finding from EFL students’ work, the researcher noted some mistakes related to the determiners, and the determiner mistakes are shown in the table 1.

Table.1 The Grammar Mistakes of Determiner Use

Articles	Demonstratives	Possessives	Quantifiers	Numbers
43.3 %	23.33 %	30 %	56.6 %	46.6%
13 students	7 students	9 students	17 students	14 students

Articles

In English, article “the” is used to refer specific or particular nouns (definite article). Article “a” and “an” are used to modify non-specific or non-particular nouns (indefinite article). The researcher noted that there are 13 students made mistakes in the use of article the, a and an. There are 9 students made mistakes in the use of article “the”, there is 1 student misused article “a”, there are 3 students misused article “an”. The samples of misused articles wrote by the students are:

- Honorable lecturer, colleagues, and participants. X
- The Honorable lecturer, colleagues, and participants. √
- Social media also has a complex impacts. X
- Social media also has a complex impact. √
- Spending time more than a hour in front of the gadget. X
- Spending time more than an hour in front of the gadget. √

Demonstratives

Demonstratives are used to specify the distance of something in space or time in relation to the speaker. Demonstratives in English grammar; this, that (for singular noun) and these, those (for plural noun). The researcher noted there are 7 students misused demonstratives in writing. Some of



the samples are:

- In this occasions, I would like to deliver speech. X
- In this occasion, I would like to deliver speech √
- This is the positive sides of social networking X
- These are the positive sides of social networking √

Possessives

Possessive adjectives used to express who owns (possesses) something, usually positioned before the noun. The researcher noted there are 9 students misused the using of possessive pronouns. Some of the samples are:

- Social media will take children time. X
- Social media will take their time. √
- Teenagers must consider wisely for benefits X
- Teenagers must consider wisely for its benefits √

Quantifiers

Quantifiers in English grammar are adjectives or adjectival phrases that describe “how much” (uncountable) or “how many” (countable) of a given noun. Some quantifiers can only go with countable (precise quantity) nouns, while others can only modify uncountable (imprecise quantity) nouns. A few quantifiers can modify both. The samples of quantifiers are A few, a little, much, many, a lot of, must, some, any, enough. The researcher noted there are 17 students misused the quantifiers in writing. Some of the samples are:

- Students spend more time in front of the laptop. X
- Students spend much time in front of the laptop. √
- The parents do not have some time to supervise the children. X
- The parents do not have any time to supervise the children. √

Numbers

Numbers in English grammar is the category of singular and plural noun, they are used to count the amount of noun like one, ten, some, any, many, a few, all, several, each, every, either, neither and etc. The researcher noted 14 students misused the numbers in writing. Some of the samples are:

- The notifications do not send to every students. X
- The notifications do not send to every student. √
- Each parents must be aware to their children X
- Each parent must be aware to their children √

DISCUSSION

The research above is based on EFL students’ writing without acquiring the assistance of grammar checker. The next phase, the researcher asked the students to rewrite their writing task with the same topic by acquiring the assistance of grammar checker, and the result showed that the misused grammar in their writing was significantly decreased compared to their previous writing made. It showed that grammar checker really assist EFL students to write in correct grammar, so their confidence level is upgraded and the process of practising academic writing is no longer stressful and difficult for EFL students. Since English is not their first language nor



daily communication language used by EFL students, the assistance of grammar checker does help EFL students in the process of academic writing. The interview was done after the second phase of observation, thirty students (100% of participants) agreed that grammar checker is very helpful to correct mistakes in English grammar. EFL students' confidence is levelled up when they write by acquiring grammar checker. based on this observation, The researcher recommends grammar checker to assist EFL students to improve the quality of academic writing in English language especially in grammar accuracy. As previous research proved that Grammar checker assisted EFL students in academic writing process (Lipalam et al. 2023) "The research indicated that English majored students who are engaged in self-monitoring and self-assessment strategies showed significant improvements in their writing performance. The findings demonstrated that when grammar checkers were integrated as a tool for error correction and feedback, students showed significant improvement in their writing accuracy and proficiency". The role of teachers, EFL language trainers are also important to help EFL students to improve the confidence of EFL students in writing and speaking skill by various method of language teachings.

CONCLUSION

As the conclusion, grammar checker was proven to help the students in writing process, especially EFL (English as Foreign Language) students in university level. Writing is the most essential task frequently assigned to the university students, because they must be able to share the ideas, opinion, academic report, thought and wisdom through their writing. For some universities, writing academic research like thesis is also needed as one of the academic requirements for the students to pass the university level before the graduation. Writing academic writing in English language is really challenging for EFL students. Since English is not their first language nor their daily communication used in Indonesia. Numerous factors challenge EFL students in Indonesia to be able to write in English in proper way. One of the challenges is EFL students are able to write academic writing in correct grammar. Grammar in English is far different to grammar in Bahasa Indonesia. This research proved that beside language teachers' stimulation and teaching method application which were treated to EFL students, the assistance of technology like grammar checker also benefit EFL students to improve the quality of their English writing skill, even improving their confidence to write in English language with less worry of grammatical error. This research was held in Budi Darma University Medan, showed that thirty EFL students in the first semester were assigned to write a topic in English language. The first treatment, the students wrote with no assistance of grammar checker, the results showed that lots of grammar error found mostly in one of five fundamental in grammar, they are: punctuation, tenses, word order, determiners and connector. This research highlighted the grammar error found in demonstrative use, they are: articles, demonstratives, possessives, quantifiers, and numbers. The results show misused grammar by EFL students' writing can be stated as: 43.3 % students misused in the articles, demonstratives 23.33 % students, possessives 30 % students, quantifiers 56.6 % students, numbers 46,6 %. The data can be seen in table 1. The researcher then asked the students to rewrite their writing task with the same topic by acquiring the assistance of grammar checker, and the result showed that the misused grammar in their writing was significantly decreased compared to their previous writing made. It showed that grammar checker really assist EFL students to write in correct grammar, so their confidence level is upgraded and the process of practising academic writing is no longer stressful and difficult for EFL students.



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