



## **Grammarly in students' self-directed learning for writing skills: Advantages and disadvantages**

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**Abstract:** Grammarly as an online grammar checker impacted technology development rapidly. This study aimed to look at the benefits and weaknesses of utilizing Grammarly to improve students' self-directed learning, particularly in writing skills. This study used a qualitative literature review. The data were collected from 10 relevant articles on Google Scholar with the keyword "Grammarly, self-directed Learning, and writing skills". The main issues addressed in this study were the benefits and the weaknesses of Grammarly in the period from 2018 to 2023. The result showed that Grammarly could enhance 'students' self-directed learning. It was because of the advantages offered by Grammarly that could check the correctness, clarity, engagement, delivery, plagiarism, and convenience. However the weaknesses of Grammarly; it needed the stability of electricity and an internet connection; it needed high-speed internet connectivity to access the complete feature; it was incomplete service of a free version, while it needed to pay to access the premium version. In conclusion, Grammarly enhanced the caliber of their work and inspired them to gauge their development. Therefore, Grammarly is recommended because it enhances 'students' self-directed learning in writing skills.

**Keywords:** Grammarly; self-directed learning; writing skills.

### **A. Introduction**

Technology plays a vital role in almost all fields, including the education field in Indonesia. The use of technology in education is very massive. The importance of technology has enabled teachers to impart knowledge and for students to acquire it (Raja & Sivakumar, 2023). The use of technology has made the process of teaching and learning all the more enjoyable. It is also in line with the characteristic of the Merdeka Curriculum that the teaching-learning process should be learner-centered by using technology (Merdeka Curriculum, 2022). It aims to make it easier for pupils to become technology

literate and hence increase their capacity to explore digital information. Instead of an applied epistemological viewpoint, a student-centered learning culture refers to a "constructivist" approach to learning that emphasizes the autonomous learning theory (Mieg, 2017). A Students-centered learning culture emphasizes constructivist findings, it is because the activity of the 'learners' knowledge acquisition emphasizes self-regulation and autonomous learning in social interaction (Taylor, 2013). Besides, involves an emancipated interaction between teachers and students in an open, flexible, competence-oriented learning environment. Include emotional and motivational components of the learning process and cognitive variables responsive to different past knowledge and experiences.

Nowadays, teaching and learning processes are usually held using a computer or smartphone. It allows students to freely access the internet and computer software to meet their needs. The use of learning software is popular among modern students. One of the software is Grammarly. In their writing classes, teachers and students can experiment using Grammarly as a potent tool (Barrot, 2023). The 'students' writing performance significantly increased, and they approved of the AI-based writing evaluation method as evidenced by written comments (Wei, 2020). That is why technology in education is important to support the teaching and learning process.

Writing is an increasingly important skill in English language learning. Writing is one of the most crucial abilities to develop when learning English since it is a skill that applies to many job domains and is not only an academic one (Huy, 2015). Students' difficulties with the writing process can be reduced, and education can be made more individualized by incorporating technology-mediated learning to facilitate student writing (Regan et al., 2021). To communicate in writing, one of the most crucial language abilities is writing. As a result, it is vitally crucial to continue working on improving 'students' writing abilities (Mantra et al., 2021). It is one of the language skills that can be promoted by technology. Technology boosted social contact and peer cooperation, increased student participation in writing projects, and encouraged student engagement (Williams & Beam, 2019). Writing influenced by technology Students' writing processes and skills, as well as their understanding and use of new literacies, all improved as a result of teaching. Students created, published, and presented a range of multimodal and digital texts that

demonstrated their familiarity with and comprehension of literary works and current social justice problems. That is the reason why the role of technology is important in education, especially in enhancing writing skills.

In reality, writing is difficult. Writing is one of the most challenging abilities in studying English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL). As a result of having to write academic essays, which are challenging and might irritate pupils, many language learners have had writing challenges ([Budjalemba & Listyani, 2020](#)). In enhancing 'students' writing skills, the teacher needs an appropriate technology or application. Teachers' attempts to incorporate technology into the writing curriculum ran into a variety of obstacles ([Williams & Beam, 2019](#)). Concerns raised by students' and lecturers' attitudes during instruction and learning are classed as follows: affective difficulties, Cognitive issues with writing standpoint, language transfer, and the writing process, as well as linguistic issues with lexico-grammar, vocabulary, and essay structure, are all addressed in the essay writing course ([Bulqiyah et al., 2021](#)). The pupils struggle with general organization, syntax, and spelling problemshile producing descriptive texts ([Ismayanti & Kholiq, 2020](#)). Students' issues with producing recount texts are connected to the content, particularly in orientation and reorientation ([Husna & Multazim, 2019](#)). One of the challenges that students face when writing is grammar mistakes ([Kharmilah & Narius, 2019](#)). It can be concluded that most 'students' difficulties in writing are correctness, clarity, engagement, and delivery.

Technology, namely Grammarly, can be one of the solutions to solve 'students' difficulties in writing skills. To solve the obstacles in academic writing, the online grammar checker, namely Grammarly, can help students in writing. It can detect the 'students' mistakes in writing and give them feedback. This application can check for faults in spelling, grammar, punctuation, clarity, engagement, and delivery in English tests. It also identifies plagiarism and offers alternatives for the issues it finds. Additionally, it enables users to alter their language's style, tone, and context. Some advantages of Grammarlyre that it is used to check correctness, clarity, engagement, delivery, plagiarism, and convenience ([Astuti et al., 2023](#)). Grammarly consists of two kinds of services, they are free and premium. There are some functions of each service, but they will be explained in another report. Grammarly is a tool that helps 'students' writing skills.

Grammarly as an online learning platform mostly helps 'students' writing. The online learning paradigm has more or less provided individualized options for autonomous study. The learners' motivation, self-regulation, personal responsibility, and autonomy have all improved as a result of self-directed learning in this situation (Brandt, 2020). One of the options that is thought to be included in today's educational environments is self-directed learning. Due to the numerous opportunities for exploration, it helps students acquire a wide range of information. Additionally, the use of self-directed learning strengthens the learning continuum that closely links to the requirements of 21<sup>st</sup>-century learners (Morris, 2019). Since it asks learners to take responsibility for their learning, development, style, and evaluation, it suggests that self-directed learning is essential to be incorporated with today's conditions (Khat, 2015; Moradi, 2018).

Achievement of curriculum goals and targets and superior learning are carried out in a planned manner by involving students directly and comprehensively. Therefore, the defense focuses on students using appropriate methods and media (Lince, 2022). By informing them of Grammarly's advantages for enhancing writing quality and encouraging them to assess their progress, Grammarly helped students with self-directed learning (Halim, 2022). Self-learning gives each person the freedom and independence to select the learning resources that best fit their requirements (Francis, 2017; Mahlaba, 2020). Self-learning is an individual, focused, and evolving idea of learning (Morris, 2019), a short-term, largely self-directed continuum (Brandt, 2020). Autonomy becomes one of the crucial scaffoldings that must be covered in the context of self-directed learning. Because self-directed learning and integrating technology are highly correlated with learner freedom, learners have a wide range of chances to acquire information at their speed or location (Bosch, 2019; Mentz, 2020; Silamut & Petsangsri, 2020).

Self-directed learning may be used to improve writing abilities when technology is included (Bosch, 2019; Ramadhani et al., 2020). Accordingly, writing is a critical ability that a person may master (Bush, 2021; O'Neill & Russell, 2019). It's because writing makes it possible to preserve experiences permanently. In addition, it enables the authors to process their feelings and thoughts without being burdened by face-to-face conversation (Schwienhorst, 2012). Writing abilities are moving in a more digital direction as a result of technology integration due to the ease it provides. Self-learning and technology, in

particular, have a potentially close link to language training (Kho et al., 2022; Sayedi et al., 2012; Smith, 2017). It can be said that technology has a vital role in 'students' self-directed learning, especially in writing skills.

In light of the foregoing rationale, the writer is eager to investigate using Grammarly in self-directed learning for writing skills. This study focuses on the advantages and weaknesses of using Grammarly for writing skills. It also focuses on the use of Grammarly in students' self-directed learning for writing skills.

## B. Method

James Lind's approach to the systematic literature review was employed in this study. The systematic literature review's objective is to locate, assess, and compare the findings of prior studies with the current study (Nygaard, et.al., 2019). The researcher used Google Scholar to conduct the data search for the study. Undergraduate students, self-directed learning, and Grammarly were research keywords. Researchers collected 41 journal papers as a result of the method. A higher education level, Grammarly, Academic Writing, five years of prior research, and the exclusion of EFL pupils are all included. In addition, researchers discovered 10 journal publications that might be analyzed.

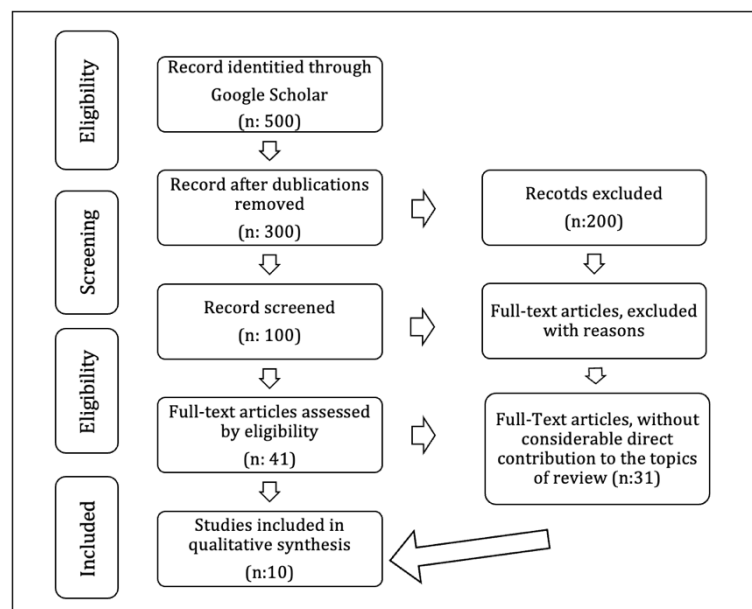


Figure 1. Flowchart from PRISMA 2009 (Liberati et al., 2009)

Ten publications were published and pertinent to the study. From 2018 to 2023, these papers have been published. Researchers gathered data from published publications that might be divided into advantages and weaknesses.

**Table 1.** The finding articles

No.	Authors	Title	Year
1.	K. Jayavalan, A. B. Razali	Effectiveness of online grammar checker to improve secondary 'students' English narrative essay writing	2018
2.	M. A. Ghufon, F. Rosyida	The role of Grammarly in assessing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing	2018
3.	R. O'Neill	Stop! Grammar time: University 'students' perceptions of the automated feedback program Grammarly	2019
4.	J. S. Barrot	Using automated written corrective feedback in the writing classrooms: Effects on L2 writing accuracy	2021
5.	N. Nazari, M. S. Shabbir, R. Setiawan	Application of Artificial Intelligence powered digital writing assistant in higher education: randomized controlled trial	2021
6.	N. S. Lengkanawati, Y Wirza	The Use of Technology to Promote Learner Autonomy in Teaching English.	2021
7.	A Halim, S. Sharina, S. Zur	Grammarly as a Tool to Enhance Students' Self-Directed Learning.	2022
8.	A. R. S. Tambunan, W. Andayani, W. S. Sari, F. K. Lubis	Investigating EFL 'students' linguistic problems using Grammarly as automated writing evaluation feedback	2022
9.	F. N. Wardatin, S. Setiawan, A. Mustofa	Integrating self-directed learning in facilitating writers engagement through Grammarly: Exploring the perceptions of premium users	2022
10.	G. Jason	Fostering Self-Directed Writers Using AWE and WBMT: A Pilot Case Study.	2023

## C. Result and Discussion

### 1. The advantages of Grammarly

Grammarly offers a multifaceted set of user advantages, categorized into six key areas (Astuti et al., 2023). Firstly, it ensures correctness by meticulously addressing grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. Secondly, it enhances clarity by promoting conciseness in writing. Thirdly, Grammarly boosts engagement through suggestions for compelling vocabulary and diverse sentence structures. Additionally, it assists in delivering messages effectively by detecting and adjusting tone, formality, and inclusivity. It also aids in plagiarism detection, maintaining the integrity of content. Finally, Grammarly is known for its convenience, as it is user-friendly, time-efficient, and seamlessly integrates with various platforms like Microsoft Word, Google Docs, Google

Translate, and even social media platforms like Instagram, making it a versatile and indispensable writing tool.

Firstly, Grammarly was its meticulous focus on correctness, addressing grammar, spelling, and punctuation issues. It has been shown to enhance writing skills, particularly in sentence construction and grammar usage, especially among secondary school students (Halim, 2022; Jayavalan & Razali, 2018; Lengkanawati, 2021). It also positively impacts cognitive and noncognitive aspects of learning, potentially enhancing language proficiency (Nazari et al., 2021). It acted as a scaffolding tool, delivering real-time feedback and suggestions to aid learners in enhancing their writing skills (Jason, 2023).

Secondly, Grammarly enhanced clarity by promoting conciseness in writing. Grammarly enhanced writing accuracy, making it a valuable tool for individuals seeking to improve their writing skills (Barrot, 2023). It also assists in identifying and addressing linguistic problems, streamlines feedback, enhances the quality of written content, and offers a consistent and efficient tool to improve students' writing skills, ultimately creating a more effective and comprehensive learning experience (Tambunan et al., 2022).

Thirdly, advantage Grammarly boosts engagement through suggestions for compelling vocabulary and diverse sentence structures. Grammarly is excellent at reducing errors since it tackles several writing-related issues, such as vocabulary and language usage, and technical faults like misspelled words and gaps. It also provides useful recommendations for substitute terms and verb form adjustments (Ghufron & Rosyida, 2018.). It provided adaptive metalinguistic explanations, increased engagement, and awareness of errors (Barrot, 2023; Ghufron & Rosyida, 2018). It was recognized as an efficient assist-writing tool, particularly in sentence construction for non-native students engaged in English academic writing, offering valuable support for academic success (Jayavalan & Razali, 2018; Nazari et al., 2021). Furthermore, it fostered motivation and awareness among students, inspiring them to utilize the tool to enhance their writing (Halim, 2022).

Fourthly, Grammarly effectively delivered messages by detecting and adjusting tone, formality, and inclusivity. Grammarly is an effective tool for enhancing English writing skills and precision, underscoring its potential to benefit students' language proficiency. Furthermore, it is commended for its ability to furnish valuable feedback and suggestions



about language usage, further enhancing its appeal in the educational setting ([Lengkanawati, 2021](#)).

Fifthly, Grammarly played a crucial role in enhancing content integrity by aiding in plagiarism detection. With its advanced algorithms and comprehensive database, Grammarly can identify similarities between the text being checked and a vast array of online sources, academic databases, and previously published material. This feature helped writers and researchers ensure that their work is original and free from unintended plagiarism. By promoting ethical and original content creation, Grammarly not only assists in maintaining the credibility of the author but also upholds the principles of academic and professional integrity.

Sixthly, Grammarly is unique in that it offers students lucid, helpful feedback that makes it easier for them to identify and correct their errors. This promotes a learning environment and noncognitive aspects focused on the students' needs while helping with error correction ([Ghufron & Rosyida, 2018](#); [Nazari et al., 2021](#)). Meanwhile, its practicality and user-friendliness were praised, as it was easy to install, integrate into various applications, and use for web-based writing ([Wardatin, 2022](#)).

The advantages aligned with Knowles' Self-Directed Learning approach, suggesting that Grammarly can support independent learning and skill development in writing ([Jayavalan & Razali, 2018](#)). Grammarly boosts student motivation by promoting self-directed learning, which raises student engagement and the possibility of improvement of language proficiency ([Ghufron & Rosyida, 2018](#)). Grammarly encourages self-directed learning, empowering students to actively enhance their writing skills, which is a valuable skill both in academia and beyond (Barrot, 2023). Teachers acknowledge its utility as an aid for autonomous learning, supporting students in their self-directed language improvement ([Lengkanawati, 2021](#)). The students also engaged in self-revision and evaluation to identify any remaining errors and assess the overall quality and improvement of their writing (Halim, 2022). It is beneficial for individuals struggling with writing fluency. It serves as a self-editing and revising tool, empowering users to independently refine their writing ([Jason, 2023](#)).



## **2. The disadvantages of Grammarly**

Grammarly, a popular writing assistance program, is a multidimensional platform with both laudable qualities and notable faults, necessitating a thorough assessment. Without a doubt, its strength came in its ability to detect and correct grammatical and spelling issues, giving users a useful resource for careful proofreading and language improvement. However, a further inspection found that Grammarly fell short in certain areas, most notably judging content and organizational coherence.

Grammarly's shortcomings became obvious in the complex world of content evaluation, as it failed to judge the delicate features of subject relevance and paragraph coherence, as underlined by [Ghufron and Rosyida \(2018\)](#). This limitation limited its capacity to provide comprehensive feedback on the overall quality of written content. Furthermore, as stated by the same authors ([Ghufron & Rosyida, 2018](#)), the intricacy of some feedback explanations supplied by Grammarly may inadvertently contribute to user misunderstanding, adding an extra layer of difficulty to its usage.

Overcorrection was a significant problem, in which Grammarly might have proposed modifications that, although technically accurate, strayed from the writer's original meaning. As [Barrot \(2023\)](#) pointed out, this proclivity for aggressive correction had the potential to jeopardize the writer's distinct voice and artistic preferences. Furthermore, the sheer number of Grammarly ideas and comments provided may overwhelm users, particularly students, making it difficult to focus on specific errors and execute focused changes ([Barrot, 2023](#)).

[Wardatin \(2022\)](#) reported that technical difficulties occasionally ruined the otherwise flawless Grammarly experience for certain users. These disruptions highlighted the necessity of assessing the tool's dependability and consistency, since users might have experienced issues that impair their writing productivity.

[Tambunan \(2022\)](#) also highlighted Grammarly's possible shortcomings in analyzing content and structure, underlining the necessity for additional direction, particularly in educational situations. This raised serious concerns about the tool's function in promoting a thorough comprehension of underlying grammar and language difficulties. To properly navigate Grammarly's limits, teacher interaction and critical criticism of its use were required. A significant aspect was the effect of Grammarly on individual creativity and

writing style. It was suggested that the instrument may not completely enable the particular expression of creativity required by specific writers. The imposition of conventional corrections might be accidentally suffocate the originality of one's writing voice, provoking contemplation on the balance between obedience to grammatical standards and the preservation of individuality. Cost concerns added an extra degree of complexity to the decision-making process. While Grammarly's premium membership service provided expanded capabilities, it might be judged too expensive and useless by certain customers. This involved a careful assessment of the advantages received in relation to the financial expenditure, urging consumers to evaluate the usability of premium features against their financial limits.

To sum up, while Grammarly appeared as a vital weapon in the writer's armory, its strengths and drawbacks need users to be cautious. As a technology created to improve textual communication, users must negotiate its complexities while acknowledging its limitations and wisely using its benefits. Finally, the decision to use Grammarly should be guided by a thorough assessment of individual requirements, preferences, and the general aims of good written communication.

## **D. Conclusion**

It could be concluded that Grammarly appeared as a powerful and adaptable writing tool with several distinguishing advantages. Its painstaking attention to accuracy, promotion of clarity, and development of engagement through word and sentence construction suggestions all help considerably to enhance writing abilities. The program successfully communicated messages by modifying tone and formality, assisted in plagiarism detection to ensure content integrity, and connected with self-directed learning methodologies, encouraging users to actively improve their writing abilities. Grammarly, on the other hand, was not without any disadvantages. It fell short in evaluating content and organizational coherence, which might lead to problems recognizing topic relevance and paragraph flow. Overcorrection risks distorting the writer's original meaning and voice, and a plethora of recommendations may overload users. Some users' reported of technical issues underscore the need to analyze the tool's dependability. The limited of content analysis raised questions about its efficiency in

providing a complete grasp of grammar and language issues, particularly in educational contexts. Furthermore, the influence of Grammarly on individual originality and writing style raised concerns about achieving a balance between adhering to grammar norms and maintaining distinctiveness. Cost factors, particularly for premium memberships, added a further degree of complication to the decision-making process.

In conclusion, while Grammarly was a great tool for writers, users should proceed with caution, taking into account both its advantages and disadvantages. A careful assessment of individual requirements, preferences, and the general aims of successful written communication should lead the decision to utilize Grammarly, while also acknowledging its function as a tool to be used carefully within its stated scope.

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