

Grammarcheckers: the benefits and drawbacks in English learning under students' viewpoints

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Abstract: This study investigates the benefits and drawbacks of Grammar Checkers (GMs), great resources for language learning and grammar correction with side effects if over-reliance, from the perspectives of the TDMU English majors. The illumination of students' viewpoints through a survey replied by 104 English major students and 16 participants in an interview, indicated that students were aware of the gains and loss in depending too much on AI or technology.

Keywords: Grammar Checkers, Benefits, Drawbacks

Background of the study

In this research, a Grammar checker (GM) is considered a software tool that detects and corrects errors in written text, including translations. Although there are various types of Grammar Checkers (GMs), they typically work in a similar way by checking the text for issues and offering suggestions for improvement or fixing them automatically (Daniels & Leslie, 2015).

Along with the development of technology, GMs have significantly progressed in various types of programs like Grammarly, Quillbot, ChatGPT, and Pi AI. Beyond just spell-checking, these modern GMs now provide more insightful comments on mistakes. They have developed into tools that not only fix grammar but also offer insightful writing advice. Teachers have begun to investigate the educational possibilities of these advanced GMs throughout time, taking into account their application in instructing and evaluating writing skills. These changes imply that GMs have evolved from their modest origins as Writer's Workbench to become essential instruments in the fields of writing and teaching (Yang, 2018).

In addition to being helpful for a variety of writing tasks, GMs can also identify plagiarism, reword sentences, summarize paragraphs, and perform other functions. Furthermore, its AI-powered features can give academics and students constructive and evaluative comments to help them write more accurately and fluently (Hakiki, 2021). Instead of waiting for teachers' correction, which normally lasts a long time, students can copy paste and see the check results within minutes. Since then, they also can study from their grammatical mistakes and the utility of GMs is frequently empowered within the context of

English writing classes. These not only help students learn from their mistakes more thoroughly, but they also provide important support in boosting self-esteem and motivation during the writing process.

GMs are essential in making sure that our writing is clear, succinct, complete, and that the words and punctuation are used correctly. Actually, effective communication requires excellent writing, and a GM is a useful instrument for doing this. By supporting students at various phases of the writing process, these tools increase intrinsic motivation, strengthen self-efficacy beliefs, and have a favorable impact on students' attitudes and intentions about the adoption and use of grammar checkers. Moreover, under the impact of AI (Artificial Intelligent), GMs have been become vital tools for students in their learning process. In particular, GMs have long played a pivotal role in aiding students' language comprehension and error correction (Lailika, 2019). In assessing QuillBot's efficacy in lowering plagiarism, Nurmayanti and Suryadi (2023) discovered that students valued QuillBot's ability to paraphrase text for avoiding plagiarism while Lipalam A. et al. (2023) appreciated GMs in enhancing learners' language proficiency.

However, the extent of their impact often remains underestimated by students, leading to a need for deeper introspection. GMs sometimes provide inaccurate recommendations, possibly misinterpreting the entire text; this is especially true in natural language, where meaning is expressed through an almost limitless vocabulary. Moreover, concerns regarding their accuracy and the potential to inadvertently alter the meaning of text, which raises questions about their exclusive reliance (Nurmayanti & Suryadi, 2023). Im (2021) found that while experienced writers can harness GMs to enhance their skills and save time,

over-dependence may stifle creativity and foster complacency among less-experienced writers.

Overall, these studies demonstrate how grammar checkers' role has changed over time, with initial reservations progressively giving way to an awareness of their usefulness and functioning in supporting better writing and language use. In the case of Thu Dau Mot students, who are able to access the internet at ease thank to the public Wi-Fi system of the university, have the habit of clarify their piece of writing with websites of GMs, particularly the ones which paraphrase texts automatically. Though, the over-reliance on the apps might result in unexpected consequences. Our research aims to investigate students' awareness of the benefits of GMs and their drawbacks on developing students' writing skills. Specifically, we seek the answer for how much GMs develop students' English proficiency and to what extent they perceive the negative impact of GMs on their learning journey.

Research methods

The study aimed at comprehensively understanding the impacts of Grammar Checkers, in which the research scope encompasses exploring students' perspectives on the advantages and drawbacks of these tools to provide insights for informed decision-making in writing enhancement. Leveraging a quantitative method, a three-section questionnaire was devised and disseminated among TDMU-English-faculty students via Google Forms. The survey aimed to ascertain the usage patterns, reliability perceptions, impact on academic writing proficiency, the awareness of potential drawbacks, and their expectations towards instructors. Students of four writing classes were asked to participate the survey, and two of them are freshmen and the others are sophomores. After collecting data, 104 sets of collected responses, in which the rate of sophomore and freshmen is 1:1, were meticulously analyzed using mean score, stand aviation score for statistical evaluation, and interpretation. Among these participants, the 16 were randomly interviewed to clarify the positive and negative impact of the correction applications on the users.

The paper was focused on the two main research questions:

How helpful are Grammar Checkers towards students' writing skills?

What negative impacts do students recognize while applying Grammar Checkers in their writing papers?

Results

Data collected illustrates the two considering aspects of the study, (1) whether the students recognize the benefits of Grammar checkers and (2) figure out

the negative impact of overusing the apps.

Table 1. The benefits of Grammar checkers

	Freshmen		Sophomores	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Gains from using Grammar checkers				
Grammar checkers are friendly-users apps.	4.02	0.85	3.58	0.94
Grammar checkers give fast and immediate results.	4.04	0.82	3.71	0.96
Grammar checkers give useful suggestions to enhance vocabulary budget	4.10	0.82	3.75	1.08
Grammar checkers limit ambiguous and wrong structural sentences.	3.83	0.92	3.52	0.83
Grammar checkers remind spelling mistakes.	3.96	0.91	3.58	0.89
Grammar checkers help to use prepositions properly.	4.10	0.85	3.56	0.87
Grammar checkers improve correct punctuation to improve writing styles...	3.98	0.96	3.62	0.95
Grammar checkers helps to paraphrase faster and more professional than doing by themselves.	4.13	0.86	3.60	0.96
Grammar checkers are more helpful than a teacher in correcting a piece of writing.	3.16	1.29	2.92	0.95

Table 1 depicted that most of participants had positive attitudes about what they gained from using GMs. Specifically, the Mean scores of satisfactory ranged from 3.56 to 4.13 with the $Std. \leq 1$, which proved that the participants confirmed Grammar checkers helped them in some aspects of writing skills like vocabulary, structures, prepositions and paraphrasing. It is also shown that the participants most noted the quality "Grammar checkers helps to paraphrase faster and more professional than doing by themselves." ($Mean=4.13$, $Std. \leq 1$), and "Grammar checkers give fast and immediate results." ($Mean=4.04$, $Std. \leq 1$): which could be inferred that the apps could satisfy the immediate needs of the students. However, the collected data pointed out that there was a superior difference between the satisfying ratios of the two participation groups. The sophomores' rates were always lower than the freshman's ones, and the pleasing ranks were also higher in simple grammatical points (like prepositions) and lower in the more complicated (like structures and styles). The difference might clarify why students did not completely believe in the apps; evidently, the striking rate of negative attitude about the necessity of a teacher was noted among the second-year students, ($Mean=2.92$, $Std. \leq 1$). The superiority of the freshman's score to the sophomores also proved that the apps might be more beneficial for the lower level students.

Table 2. The drawbacks of Grammar checkers

	Freshmen		Sophomore	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Loss from using Grammar checkers				

Grammar checkers may not accurately detect and correct advanced grammatical issues in writing.	3.83	0.86	3.44	0.85
Grammar checkers may not be reliable in handling the nuances of language, such as idiomatic expressions or colloquialisms.	3.77	0.88	3.54	0.78
Grammar checkers may not be reliable in detecting and suggesting improvements for punctuation and formatting.	3.65	0.95	3.42	0.75
Grammar checkers may sometimes misinterpret the intended tone or style of a piece of writing.	3.81	0.93	3.52	0.98
Grammar checkers make students dependent	3.85	1.00	3.75	1.08
Grammar checkers lessen students' confidence in writing.	3.75	0.97	3.42	0.96

Table 2 illustrated a big rate of the participants hesitated about the drawbacks from the apps of Grammar checks although the others confirmed negative impacts. Both of the sophomores and freshmen most noted the biggest bad impact was “Grammar checkers make students dependent”, (Mean=3.85 and Mean=3.75), though there was still a slight difference, less than 0.4 between the two types of participants. Despite not too much agreement, the participants were aware of the dark influence on confidence in writing, and the uncertainty about the accuracy of the Grammar checkers’ performance.

The interview with the random 16 participants supplemented the confirmation of what the participants could gain and lose while depending too much on the apps. Although all of them agreed that they took advantages of the using the apps in correcting minor mistakes in spelling, prepositions and some uncomplicated structures, they admitted that they were confused to judge the accuracy of the applications. To the more complicated structures, like word choice, nuances of cultures in languages, the interviewees found that the apps could not show its effectiveness; however, most of the respondents showed their interests in particular paraphrasing apps like QuillBot AI, AI Paraphraser or Paraphrasing tool, which help them to revise the sentences and make them sound more professional. On the negative side, the data revealed that the students found themselves less confidence in writing without AI apps around, they also confessed their absence of mind in spelling vocabulary. Finally, 10 out of them suggested Grammar checkers should be allowed, instructed and encouraged to use properly in writing classes while they agreed that such apps should be banned in examinations.

Conclusion and discussion

The findings from this study points out that the participants generally figured out the positive a

negative sides of using Grammar checkers. In details, the results are consistent with Nurmayanti and Suryadi (2023) at the point of the helpful but confusing apps. Students found that the apps were always available for them to correct their writing whenever they needed; however, they always doubted the accuracy. The free apps have limitations, so the data proved that lower level students were keener on GMs than the higher group, which might be explainable due to the results that more simple grammatical mistakes were solved than the complicated ones. Im (2021) confirmed the value of the apps on micro-level rather than the macro-level; however, the author stated that it was more challenging for the early learners to ensure the accuracy of suggested options. Particularly, Nurmayanti and Suryadi (2023)’s valuation on QuillBot app shows the similar admiration of the students in paraphrasing texts to avoid plagiarism. Most of the participants were satisfied with the app and accepted that they could learn and improve their writing skills.

On the negative side, the study found that students themselves perceived the risk of over reliance on the apps, which might lead to the decline of creativeness in writing and independence in writing without Grammar checkers. Im (2021) stated the apps might tie the creativity among the less-experienced writers, though they seem fruitful to the more ones.

Therefore, Grammar checkers are reprovod beneficial to students with alongside drawbacks, which urges instructors to have appropriate act in helping their students exploit the convenience and limit the deficiency.

The study has its limitation. The group of participation should be expanded to the juniors and seniors; in particular, then the comparison between the freshmen and seniors might give a more distinctive contrast. This is also the further direction that the author plans the target to gain in the field of Grammar checkers.

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