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Grammarly as a Teachers' Alternative in Evaluating Non-EFL Students' Writings

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ABSTRACT

In evaluating students' EFL writing, lecturers nowadays can implement corrective evaluation by using an online automatic software. Grammarly is automated online software that is comonly used in EFL writing classes. It is an internet proofreading service that evaluates the correctness grammarl, spelling, punctuation, and vocabulary as well as detects plagiarism. This paper reports research aimed at exploring the use of Grammarly software for evaluating non-EFL students' writings. This research employed descriptive-qualitative method with students of ITB AAS Indonesia as the data sources. The results of analysis show that in correcting students' language errors, lecturers can evaluate and analyze in details without a lot of correcting efforts or improvements. Grammarly can be considered as a useful tool for lecturers who need to correct non-EFL students' writings. Grammarly will automatically check or detect the work being typed from various related aspects. Various writing errors made by the students were found in Grammarly's reports, both in the aspect of correctness and clarity. Correctness is concerned with the mechanical norms in writing, whereas clarity deals with concise and direct language use. The spelling errors found in students' writings are text inconsistencies, misspelled words, and improper formatting whereas for grammatical there are subjectverb disagreement, passive voice misuse, as well as unclear, wordy, and incomplete sentences. Meanwhile, the errors in punctuation are shown by inappropriate use of punctuation marks in compound/complex sentence, comma misuse within clauses, and improper formatting. It can be concluded that Grammarly can be an alternative for lecturers' in evaluating non-EFL students' writings.

Key words: Grammarly, evaluate, non-EFL students, writing

INTRODUCTION

In learning English, several skills or abilities must be mastered, one of which is writing. The ability to write is not only an activity that transfers thoughts into written form but also must be done in writing that is arranged properly. Writing remains the problem of English skills (Swarbrick 2002). It is supported by Bassot (2015) that writing is a much more difficult skill to master. Writing or composing is a complex activity. Complexity writing lies in the guidance of the ability to organize and organize ideas coherently and logically, and present them in a variety of written language and other writing rules .However, despite its complexity, writing promises such great benefits in helping to develop the power of initiative and creativity, self-confidence and courage, habits, as well as the ability to find, collect, manage, and organize information.

In writing good English, students need to have basic to moderate skills in the rules of writing English. This will be very helpful in guiding and minimizing grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. Brown (2007) mentions five aspects of English writing, namely: (1) content, as the essence of writing and the ideas described in the writing which relates to the author's knowledge of writing including substance, thesis sentence development, and relevance in presenting the topic; (2) forms, as the arrangement or organization in writing that shows the whole preparation of the right writing structure on the type of text written; (3) vocabulary, as the consideration of students in choosing the right words inexpressing his/her identity; (4) grammar/language use, as the use of grammatical forms and syntax forms in writing which is usually

judged from the accuracy of sentence structures such assubject-verb agreement, tenses, word order, etc.; (5) mechanic, as the consideration in writing applications that includes punctuation and spelling.

In general, language errors are more obvious in written language (Fitria 2018). It is because written language is a form of language that can be analyzed many times. In the process of fabricating, written language is needed as a medium to elevate ideas and thoughts, someone, to the reader (Paramitha, Sudiara & Nurjaya 2014). Therefore, learning to write, especially writing English, is very important to improve one's writing skills (Fitria 2019). However, writing activities often encounter errors in the relevant language structure, diction or word choice, and spelling.

Language errors are part of conversation or composition that deviate from some linguistic normsof adult language performance. There is an error that is often caused by a lack of knowledge about the rules of the English language. Error in using language that occurs marks language learning has not been successful. It can also be said to fail (Fitria 2020a). Then, from that, the language errors should be improved, reduced, or even eliminated. To make this happen, there must be a match to fix the language errors to students.

In correcting errors in learning to write, the students need direction, stimulation, and even a reprimand from educators (teachers or lecturers). Educators, in this case English lecturers, can provide good responses to their students. It is the main task of the educator (teacher or lecturer). The teacher's or lecturer's responsibilities are closely related to the ability of the teacher in improving the learning process and student learning outcomes. This requires guidance in order to lead the students to even better skills and competence. A competent teacher will be able to create a learning environment effectively and will be more capable of controlling the teaching and learning process effectively so that student learning outcomes are at a more optimal level. Lecturers need to have a variety of teaching theories that will be applied to students for the sake of optimizing students' language, especially in the field of writing. Syafi'i (2020) states that teachers should have a variety of options for assisting students in improving their writing skills via internet-based instruction. To achieve this goal, educators (teachers) need the techniques appropriate for learning, which are developed in the learning process in class. Lecturers must grow to develop students' language skills.

In correcting language errors made by students (in learning to write), teachers can do an evaluation to look fo rerrors and analyze details without any effort correction or improvement. In other words, the language error must be corrected or repaired (Fitria 2020c). Correcting students' writing needs to be done by lecturers. This activity aims to improve language errors made by students, especially in writing. Besides, the teacher or lecturer's goal is to evaluate the students' writing, so that the students know where are the errors and can be directed to be more responsive in correcting the errors they made. The evaluation can be used as feedback for improvement efforts. Evaluation can be done by correcting students' writing. By doing the evaluation, students will be able to know the correct use of the English language. When students know how to use language correctly, they can avoid the errors (Fitria 2020b). In the activity of evaluating or correcting the students writing and their language errors manually, the lecturer can use an online software or application for grammar, punctuation, and spelling checker as a helping instrument.

Grammarly® software, as artificial intelligence (AI) and technological research in the area of natural language processing, advances many applications, such as offer a solution to accommodate the community's growing demands (Ventayen & Orlanda-Ventayen 2018). Grammarly can be accessed on the website https://www.grammarly.com/. Grammarly is easy to use editing and grammar-checking application (Whitman & Haddock 2018). Grammarly is one of the best English grammar checking tools in the field of innovation related to it. Anyone can use Grammarly for free to improve the grammar, sentences, or syntax of English documents and writings. Grammarly is the most popular grammar check application because of its ability to catch ten times more mistakes than other similar applications (typing applications). Bailey & Lee (2020) point out that *Grammarly* is applicable for checking local surface-level language errors (e.g. articles, prepositions, noun, and verb-noun agreement) and many more, . Grammarly will check or detect the writing that is being typed from various aspects related to writing, starting from detecting grammatical errors, spelling, sentence construction, plagiarism, to detecting and correcting prepositional errors, irregular verb conjugations, improper use of nouns, as well as correcting misused words.

According to Busc, Wendler & Steinicke (2020), Grammarly is digital writing with embedded artificial intelligence that can check grammar, spelling, and detect plagiarism. Apart from common grammatical errors, Grammarly also detects incorrect sentence construction, and corrects prepositional errors, irregular verb conjugations, improper use of nouns, and also corrects misused words. People can get all these features for free and they can also upgrade to the Premium version to get more advanced features. The Grammarly subscription account has the ability or facility to correct sentences by simply right-clicking on the error shown and given the correct choice (Setiyo 2017).

Meanwhile, Kusuma (2020) states that Grammarly is a web-based application intended for checking the grammar of an English text. This application is very helpful to correct grammar mistakes that were missed when writing. Even the settings can be adjusted to American English or British English. Grammarly can also give suggestions of what words should be used in our writing. This application is available in free and paid versions. Version the fee provides many useful features that are not provided the free features. However, the free features will be very helpful in the process of checking the grammar of writing in English. This is supported by Darayani et al. (2018) who state that when Grammarly was used to teach writing, 32 (82%) of the 40 students received a passing grade. So, Grammarly is considered an effective tool for reducing mistakes and improving students' writing quality.

Several previous studies related to *Grammarly* have been conducted by many other researchers. Nova (2018) states that Grammarly has given helpful color-coded comments with explanations and examples, as well as simplicity of account access, a fast rate of assessment, and a free service for assessing Meanwhile, Ghufron & Rosyida (2018) states that the academic work. students who have their work assessed using Grammarly have been proven to be more successful in terms of reducing mistakes in word use (diction), language usage (grammar), and writing mechanics (spelling and punctuation). Darayani et al. (2018) state that Grammarly can be an effective tool for reducing mistakes and improving students' writing quality. On the other hand, O'Neill & Russell (2019) state that *Grammarly* has gained students responses positively to 9 of the 15 survey items and they were significantly more satisfied

with the grammar advice. Fitriani (2020) states that after using *Grammarly* in writing class, pupils' writing skills improved significantly. After utilizing the the application, the students received satisfactory results. Therefore, *Grammarly* has given a beneficial impact on students' writing skills, as shown by the results. According to Fitria (2021b) *Grammarly* has been shown useful to improve one's writing performance. Before using Grammarly, the test performance score was 34 out of 100 but after using Grammarly it was 77 out of 100. This score indicates that the writing quality of the testee has improved. In a Premium account, the performance may be improved by using Grammarly's suggestions.

All of the six studies outlined above focus on the use of *Grammarly* for students and shows the positive results of using the application for improving students' writing. Besides, there are indications of benefits from using *Grammarly* according to the findings of the studies performing the application. From the findings, the research subjects who use *Grammarly* argue that it helps teachers to instruct as well as makes students more confident, save time, and get higher marks in writing. *Grammarly* is likely to be recommended by the majority of the previous studies because grammar checkers get favorable feedback from users as a result of technological developments.

This current study also examines Grammarly but it was focused on the teacher's point of view in evaluating students' writing. This was focused on the implementation of correction techniques in the evaluation of students' writing essays to find students' language errors that require correction by the teacher. Therefore, the researchers raised the problem with the title *Grammarly as a Teachers' Alternative in Evaluating Non-EFL Students' Writing*. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore the use of Grammarly software in evaluating non-EFL students' writing, particularly at ITB AAS Indonesia as the research location.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed descriptive-qualitative method. According to Maxwell (2013, 30), the strengths of qualitative research come from its process orientation, inductive methodology, focus on particular circumstances or persons, and emphasis on descriptions rather than statistics. Researchers using such an approach typically investigate the experience of participants to better understand the nature of a problem. Therefore, it tends to describe the condition that exists and explore the phenomenon that cannot be quantified and explained statistically.

The technique for collecting data in this research was documentation. Altheide & Schneider (2013) state that documents are selected for their research topic. In this research, the documents were in the form of students works from the assignments given. The assignment was writing a descriptive text with the topic *My Daily Activity During Pandemic Covid-19* in simple present tense. This topic was taken because it was related to the situation at that moment.

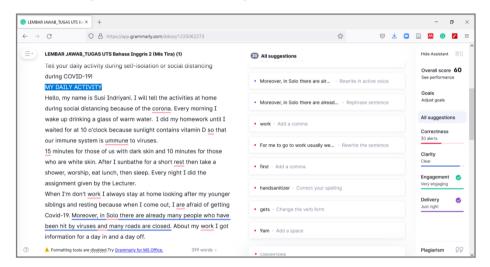
For the analysis, qualitative methods were applied (Bazeley 2013). The steps of analysis included reducing the data, displaying the data, and then drawing conclusion (Miles & Huberman 1994). The reduced data were considered to give detailed picture and made the researcher easily collect the data as well as look for additional data if needed. It was intended to avoid data accumulation that would lead to the complexity of the analysis . The

presentation of the data was directed in a pattern so that the reduced data were properly arranged and easy to understand by the readers. The presentation of data was done by narrative descriptions and completed with pictures as necessary. After displaying the data, some conclusions were be drawn based on the research results presented in either narrative or descriptive form.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The purpose of this research was to explore the use of *Grammarly* software for evaluating non-EFL students' writing at ITB AAS Indonesia, Surakarta.

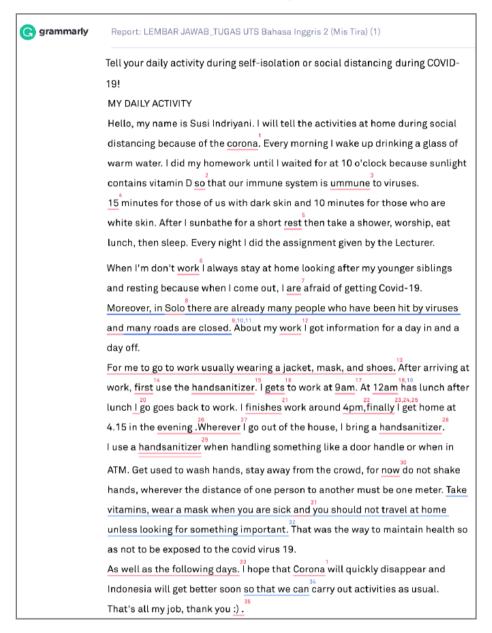


Picture 1: The View of Grammarly' Work

Based on the report of Grammarly Premium as canbe seen in *Picture 1*, the text score is 60 out of 100. This score represents the quality of writing of the essay. There are several steps before starting the correction of student essays. First, open Grammarly Website. Next, login to the application click New Upload and click Upload File menu. Then, specify the writing style settings and correct errors. If yes, click *Download* menu, and the work is done. Lastly, the Grammarly report will appear.

As shown in *Picture 2*, there are 35 errors in students' essays. These 35 errors consist of the correctness and clarity aspects. Correctness is related to the mechanics of writing, spelling, grammar, and punctuation and the suggestions are highlighted in red. Correctness is vital, even if it is not the only Clarity is related to readability, conciseness, and thing that matters. suggestions for improving the readability of our work. These are highlighted in blue. It is an important aspect of excellent writing. Simply, it is because a statement that is grammatically accurate does not imply that it is easy to comprehend. Wordy and unnecessarily complicated phrases are difficult to follow and need extra work on the part of the readers.

As can be seen in Table 1, the writing errors made by the student lie in the aspects of clarity and correctness. In the former, it relates to the mechanical norm in writing. In the students' essay, spelling errors are found such as intext inconsistencies, misspelled words, and improper formatting. While, in the latter, it relates to concise and direct language. In the students' essay, grammar and punctuation errors are found as well. Grammatical errors are shown by subject-verb disagreement, passive voice misuse, unclear sentences, wordy sentences, and incomplete sentences. On the other hand, the punctuation errors lie in its misuse in compound/complex sentence, comma misuse within clauses, and improper formatting.



Picture 2: The View of Grammarly Report

Discussion

There is a lot more to good writing than just spelling, grammar, and punctuation. It is a delicate balancing act of clear information, enticing language, and the perfect tone. However, misspellings, grammatical errors, and errant punctuation may all detract from an otherwise excellent piece of writing. *Grammarly* writing assistance provides detailed comments on a wide range of topics, including grammar, spelling, and punctuation. No matter what we are writing, *Grammarly* accuracy suggestions are meant to help us exhibit our most professional, believable selves. We can read on to discover about some of the punctuation hazards, spelling mistakes, and grammatical blunders *Grammarly* can help us avoid, whether we are working on a future best seller novel or a cover letter that will get us our dream job.

Table 1. Assessing Students' Writing Errors By Using Grammarly

Students' Writing	Language Error	Kind of Error	Aspect
corona; Corona	Text inconsistencies	Spelling	Correctness
so	Punctuation in compound/complex sentences	Punctuation	Correctness
ummune →immune	Misspelled words	Spelling	Correctness
5→Fifteen	Improper formatting	Spelling	Correctness
rest,	Punctuation in compound/complex sentences	Punctuation	Correctness
work,	Punctuation in compound/complex sentences	Punctuation	Correctness
are →am	Error of subject-verb agreement	Grammar	Clarity
Solo,	Punctuation in compound/complex sentences	Punctuation	Correctness
and	Comma misuse within clauses	Punctuation	Correctness
Moreover, in Solo there are already many people who have been hit by viruses and many roads are closed.	Passive voice misuse	Grammar	Clarity
Moreover, in Solo there are already many people who have been hit by viruses and many roads are closed.	Unclear sentences	Grammar	Clarity
work,	Comma misuse within clauses	Punctuation	Correctness
For me to go to work	Incomplete sentences		Correctness
usually wearing a jacket, mask, and shoes.	•		
first,	Comma misuse within clauses	Punctuation	Correctness
Handsanitizer > hand sanitizer, hand-sanitizer	Misspelled words	Spelling	Correctness
Gets → get	Error of subject-verb agreement	Grammar	Clarity
9am → 9 am	Improper formatting	Spelling	Correctness
12am → 12 am	Improper formatting	Spelling	Correctness
12am → midnight,noon	Wordy sentences	Grammar	Clarity
ı	Punctuation in compound/complex sentences	Punctuation	Correctness
finishes → finish	Error of subject-verb agreement	Grammar	Clarity
1am → 4 am	Improper formatting	Spelling	Correctness
finally→ . Finally, ; finally	Punctuation in compound/complex sentences	Punctuation	Correctness
finally	Improper formatting	Punctuation	Correctness
finally,	Comma misuse within clauses	Punctuation	Correctness
evening .	Improper formatting	Punctuation	Correctness
Wherever	Improper formatting	Punctuation	Correctness
landsanitizer → hand sanitizer, hand-sanitizer	Misspelled words	Spelling	Correctness
Handsanitizer→ hand sanitizer, hand-sanitizer	Misspelled words	Spelling	Correctness
now,	Comma misuse within clauses	Punctuation	Correctness
and	Punctuation in compound/complex sentences	Punctuation	Correctness
Take vitamins, wear a mask when you are sick and you should not travel at home unless looking for something important.	Unclear sentences	Grammar	Clarity
As well as the following days.	Incomplete sentences	Grammar	Clarity
so that we can→to	Wordy sentences	Grammar	Clarity
)	Improper formatting	Punctuation	Correctness

In term of correctness, it relates to the mechanical norm in writing. It affects grammar, punctuation, spelling, and even capitalization. Misspellings, punctuation errors, subject-verb disagreement, and other frequent faults are instances of errors in accuracy. Correctness which is also related to mechanics of writing spelling, grammar, and punctuation suggestions are highlighted in red. Correctness is vital, even if it is not the only thing that matters. The early version of *Grammarly* writing assistant was focused on mechanics like spelling, grammar, and punctuation as its name reflects that. Clean and error-free writing helps people come off as genuine, confident, and competent, which is exactly what their writing mechanics ideas are meant to assist it.

In the students' writing essay, there are found spelling errors such as intext inconsistencies, misspelled words, and improper formatting. In an academic environment, the necessity and usefulness of writing consistently utilizing consistent pronouns, punctuation, and adhering to a certain style guide are discussed. We learn to write in the English language using grammatical best practices, which may be challenging given the English language's many exceptions and inconsistencies as well as its proclivity for breaking its own rules. Everyone is also familiar with the difficulty of spell-check that your term may be spelled correctly, yet it may be incorrect. There are many words in English that sound the same yet are written differently. It is also chock-full of terms with similar (but not identical) meanings that are easily misunderstood. Good formatting can make the difference between the students' writing works.

In terms of achieving clarity, concise and direct language work best. It implies using words or groupings of words properly to convey the desired message (Fitria 2021a). Clarity related to readability, conciseness, and suggestions for improving the readability of our work are highlighted in blue. Clarity is another important aspect of an excellent writing. Simply because a statement is grammatically accurate does not imply that it is simple to comprehend. Wordy and unnecessarily complicated phrases are difficult to follow and need extra work on the part of our readers.

In the students' essays, there are found a naumber of grammatical and punctuation errors. The former is exemplified by error of subject-verb agreement, passive voice misuse, unclear sentences, wordy sentences, and incomplete sentences. The subject-verb agreement is crucial in English. This indicates that the characteristics of the subject should be reflected in the verb. The active voice, in general, makes your writing stronger, more direct, and, yet, more active. The subject is something or performs the activity of the verb in the phrase. The subject is acted upon by another performer of the verb in the passive voice.

Meanwhile, wordy sentences include an excessive number of unnecessary words that clog up the text. Good writing is straightforward and it employs the simplest word that communicates the same idea. This clarity is harmed by wordiness. A subject and a verb are required for a complete sentence. It is possible to have a full sentence consisting of only two words. A sentence fragment (also known as an incomplete sentence) is one in which the subject, verb, or both are absent.

On te other hand, punctuation errors occur in its use in compound/complex sentences, and comma misuse within clauses. A sentence with two clauses are referred to as a compound or complex sentence. Two independent clauses (each with a subject and predicate) or an independent

clause and a dependent clause are both possible (missing a subject or predicate). The kinds and positions of the clauses determine whether or not a comma is used between them. In compound sentences, two punctuation rules to follow when writing. One of which is to put a comma before the coordinating conjunction. Place a semicolon between each phrase if we are not using a coordinating conjunction. The second independent sentence begins with a lowercase letter, as is customary. Only the initial letter of the first clause is capitalized since a compound sentence constitute a single sentence.

Fortunately, *Grammarly* can assist users in ensuring that our readers never have to go through such an ordeal. When a sentence may be difficult to read for our target audience, a warning will appear in the Grammarly Editor. We will also see ideas for reducing the length of our sentences by removing superfluous words and substituting long phrases with the shorter ones. These recommendations can help the readers comprehend our message more quickly and avoid miscommunications. Grammarly is one potential option that may be used as a writing aid for pupils when the instructors are delivering certain tasks. Working on Grammarly will be beneficial to the students in that they will be able to create whatever languages they are familiar with, and Grammarly will then take over to assist them to correct their works such as writing an essay.

Several previous studies related to *Grammarly* have been conducted by many other researchers support the use of *Grammarly* to assist students in writing practices. Firstly, Nova (2018) states that this software has given helpful color-coded comments with explanations and examples, as well as simplicity of account access, a fast rate of assessment, and a free service for assessing academic work. More research on the effectiveness of Grammarly's comments in enhancing students' writing quality is required. Then, according to Pratama (2021), Grammarly can help the students verify their grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Grammarly's comments may assist students in improving their grammar. In addition, Ghufron & Rosyida (2018) argue that the students who had their works assessed by using Grammarly got fewer errors than students who had their works examined by a teacher (indirect corrective feedback). The program has been proven to be more successful in terms of reducing mistakes in word use (diction), language usage (grammar), and writing mechanics (spelling and punctuation). However, improving the substance and structure of EFL students' writing is less successful. This study may provide EFL/ESL instructors with an alternate evaluation for students' writing that promotes autonomy in the classroom.

Meanwhile, O'Neill & Russell (2019) find that students who received feedback from *Grammarly* responded more positively to 9 of the 15 survey items and were significantly more satisfied with the grammar advice that they received compared to non-Grammarly students. Next, according to Fahmi & Cahyono (2021), students view the usage of Grammarly and the instructor comments favorably. The students' attitudes in using *Grammarly* and receiving their instructor's comments were unaffected by their English skill levels. Grammarly and instructor comments were well received by students with both high and low English skill levels. Lastly, Fitriani (2020) explains that after using Grammarly program in writing class, students' writing skills were improved significantly. After utilizing the *Grammarly* program, the majority of students received satisfactory results at the conclusion of each session. The results of the students' scores in each cycle of the writing exam proved it. Grammarly might have a beneficial impact on students' writing skills, as shown by the results.

Grammarly is a tool that identifies duplicate materials as well as errors in grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, and style of writing (Barrot 2020). As a result, this tech review gives an outline of its features and how they may be used to writing in English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Therefore, Grammarly may be a useful tool for instructors to assess or evaluate the students' writing or help students to use it in their writing classes. According to Syafi'i (2020), teachers should have a variety of options for assisting students, particularly EFL students, in improving their writing skills via internet-based instructions.

Thus, in evaluating the EFL students' writing, the lecturers can implement corrective evaluation by using automatic software. *Grammarly* is an automated online software that may be used in EFL writing classes. It is an internet proofreading service that evaluates papers for grammatical errors. It also includes features like spelling, punctuation, synonyms (vocabulary usages), and plagiarism detection. *Grammarly* is a useful tool for teachers who need to correct EFL writing. It is because *Grammarly* cannot only detect punctuation (such as missing spaces after periods) and spelling errors (including the proper noun and providing several alternative options for misspelled words) but also identify fragments and provide verb form advice, although there are often no suggested corrections and the explanations are complex.

CONCLUSION

Grammarly is an online application that does comprehensive grammatical tests, ranging from word spelling to sentence structure in standard grammar. Because Grammarly is free, it is suggested for students who wish to double-check their English papers or articles. Grammarly assists in checking grammar rules, spelling rules, and correcting writing mistakes such as punctuation and capitalization. Grammarly is powered by an Artificial Intelligence (AI) engine that uses a set of rules to evaluate English texts. When displaying errors or recommendations, Grammarly considers the context and informs students swiftly yet accurately. Two service choices are offered for accuracy, with both free and paid features. Of course, Grammarly free version has limits and inservice features, while the paid version (premium) includes all of the benefits and features, as well as a comprehensive set of functions. Therefore, Grammarly is recommended by the researcher to the lecturers or teachers or lecturers in evaluating the students' writing, especially in English.

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