

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF GRAMMARLY FEEDBACK AND TEACHER'S FEEDBACK ON ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS

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Abstract: This research was conducted to describe both (Grammarly and teacher's feedback) in one study used in argumentative essays. Using a qualitative approach with a single case study design. To obtain thorough information from students about their perceptions, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 23 questions (Grammarly and teacher's feedback) and document analysis. Three participants were taken because they had passed three writing courses from the first until the third semester. The participants are those who have excellent grades (A). The interview session was conducted for 20 minutes asking about students' perceptions of Grammarly and teacher feedback also analysis of student essays. Furthermore, the interview was conducted using the student's first language to ensure clarity and avoid ambiguity. The researcher used data analysis from Renz et al., (2018). The results of the data show that Grammarly and teacher feedback are well received by students. They received information about two aspects of argumentative writing using Grammarly feedback; practicality and the use of features to improve their writing. Furthermore, the teacher feedback that is often given is direct feedback using several symbols, such as underlining, circling, and immediately crossing out words with true or false marks around them. Additionally, the pedagogical implications are explained.

Key Words: *Students' Perception, Grammarly feedback, Teacher's feedback, Argumentative Essays.*

INTRODUCTION

The fact that English is the second and most frequently taught foreign language worldwide has encouraged many researchers to find out the difficulties faced by language learners (Alhaysony & Alhaisoni, 2017). One of them is the development of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), the language processing of students gets more attention (Gass, 2008). The connection between language and

students' minds occurs when processing language in the brain for the formation and perception of language (Dey, 2021). Perception is the effect of seeing through one's five senses to observe something in their immediate environment (Basyah & Yunus, 2016). By summarizing and interpreting information from other people, it is possible to create perceptions, which can then be used to measure whether the information is good or negative. According to Walgito (1993), the factors that play a role and become a condition for the occurrence of perception include the observed object or stimulus, the sensory organs, the nerves, and the central nervous system, which is necessary for physiological reasons.

Some theories about perception are proposed by different researchers. For example, Rahmat (2003) stated that a person's perspective on something, an event/experience, or knowledge depends on his personal experience. This statement is in line with Harisah and Masiming (2008) who said that in general experts argue that experience, prior knowledge, physical background, social background, and culture all have an impact on perception. A different point of view, Suwanto and Fajri (2018) stated that each student can have different perceptions. Albiansyah et al., (2021) added psychological factors influence perceptions in addition to information and experience, where these factors are related to students' processing of language learning.

One of the challenging skills to learn a language is writing argumentative essays. For undergraduate students, writing argumentative essays is a standard task (Wu, 2006). Oshima and Hogue (2005) stated that the presence of the author's arguments in an argumentative essay can support their position on a particular topic and can express their approval or disapproval. Moreover, writing an argumentative essay is required to arrange sentence components properly, such as vocabulary, structure, grammar, and mechanics (e.g. capitalization, punctuation, conjunctions, and spelling) in developing topics so that they are interrelated and can make people agree with our writing. So, in the writing process, the use of feedback is necessary to assist students in revising their argumentative assignments. Feedback is information on one's performance or knowledge given by an agent (such as a teacher, peer, book, parent, or self/experience) that helps close the gap between what is understood and what is intended to be understood (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Based on Lee (2008), some students appreciate it when the teacher points out errors in assignments so that they know which ones to avoid in the next class. In line, Fitria (2021) said that students were able to write more effectively, with fewer grammar problems when receiving constructive criticism from their teacher.

At the same time, Gamlem and Smith (2013) found recent writing research has focused more on automated writing evaluation (AWE) software,

sometimes known as computer-generated feedback. In addition, Shim (2013) stated that thanks to modern technological innovations like the AWE computer program, these verification procedures have been automated, supporting teachers and acting as a tool that gives students freedom and planning time to boost their enthusiasm. One AWE program that students often use is Grammarly, as it can correct their writing by checking for grammar (correcting sentence structure), punctuation (such as missing spaces after periods), and spelling errors (including proper nouns and some alternative spellings), as well as suggestions for verb forms and identification of verb fragments (Daniels & Leslie, 2013). Grammarly also offers thorough and helpful feedback, such as corrections and hints to make writing clearer, more precise, stronger, easier to read, error-free, and impactful, with a high degree of accuracy and review speed (Fahmi & Cahyono, 2021).

There are several studies related to this topic. First, Yulianti (2018) which only focus on examining one type of feedback, namely Grammarly in teaching writing recount texts. Furthermore, Zhao (2010) examined teacher feedback on writing. Then there is research that has combined the use of Grammarly feedback and teacher feedback (Fahmi & Cahyono, 2021). However, this study wants to describe both of them in one study used in argumentative essays. Also, this study focuses on students' perceptions by using an interview design to explore argumentative essay writing.

The purpose of this study is that researchers are interested in investigating students' perceptions, especially those receiving feedback from Grammarly and teacher's feedback on students' argumentative essays. The topic was chosen for a few reasons. Firstly, providing feedback on students' assignments is necessary because it can help students check their mistakes in writing. Secondly, some previous studies examined students' perceptions of feedback. However, previous research has only focused on one type of feedback either Grammarly or teacher's feedback. In addition, there are still rare studies that describe both in one study. Thirdly, an argumentative essay is a type of writing in which students have to research the subject, collect and assess supporting information, and concisely present their agreement or disagreement regarding the chosen topic. In the end, To achieve the research objectives, two research questions are addressed (1) What are the students' perceptions of Grammarly feedback on argumentative essays?, and (2) what are the students' perception of teacher's feedback on argumentative essays?

METHOD

Researchers used a qualitative approach with a single case study design. Three participants were taken because they had passed three writing courses from the first until the third semester. In the first and second semesters, they only

used the teacher's feedback. In the third semester, they used the Grammarly Application and got feedback from the teacher. Also, the participants are those who have an excellent grade (A) between 80-100 in argumentative essay writing in the third semester.

In terms of source of the data, the researcher used document analysis and interviews. The documents are in the form of students' essay and their final score on the argumentative essay writing test. This score is used by researchers to select three students according to the criteria in this study. The interview guidelines are adapted from previous research by Aidil (2019) and Pratiwi (2013) for research questions 1 and 2.

In the process of collecting the data, researchers used semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The interview session was conducted for 20 minutes. The researcher also divided the interview session into two parts. The first part was about students' perceptions of Grammarly feedback and teacher feedback. The second part was about the analysis of student essays from Grammarly feedback and teacher feedback. Furthermore, the interview was conducted using the student's first language to ensure clarity and avoid ambiguity. After obtaining the data, the researcher used data analysis from Renz et al., (2018) which included data preparation, reading the transcript, adding code to the transcript, using the team theme, creating a coding structure, giving the code, summarizing the coded data, and checking and explaining the results.

FINDINGS

RQ 1: Students' Perceptions of Grammarly Feedback on Argumentative Essays?

After using the Grammarly Application, each participant expressed her opinion about the subject of the first interview. All the students accepted that Grammarly was very useful as a application to use in writing argumentative essays. In describing the participants' answers, the researcher divided the 10 interview questions into two categories; practicality and features to help participants improve writing argumentative essays.

a. Practicality

In this topic, RN, FA, and FN participants answered that using the Grammarly Application helped them in writing argumentative essays. In addition, RN added that in the process of writing argumentative essays, they usually focus on the statement/content but forget grammar. Therefore, using Grammarly helps all the students. The answer of the participant is in the following excerpt.

"... it's used very well. I mean when writing argumentative essays, I usually focus on the statement/content. So I tend to forget grammar. So if I use

Grammarly, I don't have to worry about grammar." (RN)

In addition, FA also added the opinion that Grammarly helps in correcting spelling and grammar when writing argumentative essays. The excerpt of the interview with FA is below.

"... Grammarly helps me correct spelling and grammar when writing argumentative essays." (FA)

The next question is about the practicality and effectiveness of using Grammarly when writing. The two participants (FA and FN) said that Grammarly was very practical because they used one click to correct their writing. The participants' answer is presented in the following.

"... very practical because you just have to click and it's automatically corrected," (FA and FN)

In contrast to the answers of the RN participants who said that Grammarly is very practical because it shortens the time in terms of proofreading. RN said:

"... I think it's practical because I don't really think about the grammar when using Grammarly but just focus on the content."

b. The Use of Grammarly Features to Improve Their Writing Argumentative

Based on the interviews, participants have provided their comments on the use of Grammarly for several aspects of making argumentative essays. The researcher found eight features of Grammarly that can be useful when writing argumentative essays. They; 1) Grammar, 2) Punctuation, 3) Spelling, 4) Complexity, 5) Objectivity, 6) Formality, 7) Clarity, and 8) Coherence.

1. Grammar

The results of the interviews revealed that the grammatical features in Grammarly greatly helped FA and FN when writing argumentative essays. The responses from the participants are displayed below.

"This feature helps me because I am still a beginner in writing argumentative essays and it is rather difficult for me to determine what is good and correct grammar." (FN)

"Grammar is very thorough in my examination of writing, especially when it comes to grammar." (FA)

The interview answers above are following the documents that have been analyzed by the researcher (Appendix 2: Figure 4.2). Based on Figure 4.2, it is known that Grammarly feedback corrects and also provides suggestions for improvements to the grammar aspects of writing.

2. Punctuation

This feature detects the use of periods, commas, and others that are used to separate words, phrases, clauses, or sentences. RN says that using this feature

helps him in writing argumentative essays. RN said:

"... because I'm careless in terms of periods and commas so using the features in Grammarly is very helpful and thorough in detecting the mistakes I make."

3. Spelling

The next feature corrected by Grammarly is spelling. RN and FA participants said that when writing argumentative essays in the spelling section they often forgot to write double letters in words. FA and RN said:

*"... usually typo errors often occur when writing many words in one word, for example, word of **spelling**. Because I forgot the spelling, I wrote it wrong, and fortunately, it was immediately detected by Grammarly."*

Based on the interview above, the participants' answers regarding spelling corrections made by Grammarly in the argumentative essay assignment were supported by document analysis (Appendix 2: Figure 4.3).

4. Complexity

In complexity, the researcher found that FA, RN, and FN received assistance in writing complex argumentative essays. FN said:

"To be honest, this helps because I'm still a beginner in writing argumentative essays. My writing is still very messy, fortunately, Grammarly has provided some corrections and suggestions that allow me to maintain the complexity of my writing."

5. Objectivity

The objectivity of Grammarly lies in the correctness and readability of the text. RN and FA are accepted that Grammarly can handle their writing with objectivity. However, FN argued that:

"... for objectivity, I am helped, but sometimes there are some suggestions or improvements which in my opinion are not following the content of my writing. If it's like that sometimes I follow the advice from Grammarly but sometimes it's still the same as my initial writing."

6. Formality

In argumentative essays, formality features are needed in the checking process in Grammarly. All participants accepted that Grammarly corrected them and gave them suggestions in the formality section. RN said that:

"I think it helps a lot, because sometimes when I write I don't know about the correct formal sentences in writing English. Therefore I use Grammarly so I don't worry anymore."

Based on the participants' answers above, it was found that the participants chose the formality feature to write their argumentative essays (Appendix 2: Figure 4.4).

7. Clarity

The term "clarity" in the context of Grammarly refers to the ability of writing to be clearly comprehended by readers. Grammarly offers ideas and edits to make sure the meaning you wish to convey in your writing is unambiguous. All participants said that these features helped them in writing argumentative essays. The responses from FA and RN are displayed below.

"... like when Grammarly detects the truth in my writing, a blue underline appears in the sentence. Then there was the suggestion which I immediately followed." (FA)

"Very helpful because I got suggestions to strengthen my statement which is still not clear." (RN)

8. Coherence

In the last question in the interview, the researcher asked whether Grammarly detected coherence in their writing. FN, RN, and FA stated that they said yes if Grammarly detected the relevance of their writing when writing argumentative essays. FN answered:

"Yes, the transitions between paragraphs are coherent. Because initially, I used my typing, maybe the grammar was inconsistent, and the choice of words and synonyms was not quite right. So when I put it into Grammarly it detects and gives suggestions which I think makes my sentences coherent."

Question 2: Students' Perceptions of Teacher's Feedback on Argumentative Essays?

The researcher found that six aspects were corrected by the teacher which could help them in writing argumentative essays. The six aspects are a) frequency, b) types of feedback, c) clarity, d) objectivity, e) impact of teacher's feedback, and f) encouragement./1

a. Frequency

In the initial interview regarding students' perceptions of the teacher, the researcher asked how often they received feedback from the teacher. FN, FA, and RN admitted that they often received feedback from lecturers when writing argumentative essays in class. They say:

"...I often get feedback from lecturers when working on argumentative essay assignments and feedback sessions are things that every student and lecturer should do."

Based on the answers above, at the frequent stage, the participants receive feedback from the teacher supported by student assignments that have been analyzed by the researcher (Appendix 2: Figures 4.5 and 4.6).

b. Type of Feedback

There are two types of lecturer feedback, namely oral and written. The researcher found that the use of feedback from lecturers for participants was good (oral and written). FN replied:

"...Both of them. So, a lecturer in a class gives written feedback it is like leaving a note/error note. Usually, if I don't understand I will step forward and will be given oral feedback."

c. Clarity

Based on the interviews conducted, it is known that the clarity of feedback from the teacher (written and oral) to the participants is very clear and understood by them. RN replied:

"... Very clear and understandable, because the lecturer immediately gives corrections by circling, underlining, and crossing out directly (written feedback). Then proceed with giving suggestions or explaining orally (oral feedback)."

The participant's answers above were supported by document analysis carried out by the researcher in the participant's argumentative task. The teacher provides clarity in the last paragraph with the feedback "Point 3 has not been mentioned in the conclusion" (Appendix 2: Figure 4.6).

d. Objectivity

In this step, the researcher asked about the teacher's score for their argumentative essay assignment. All participants answered that when the teacher gave grades related to their assignments they were very objective because the teacher used an assessment rubric in their assessment. FN said:

"In my opinion, the grades given by the teacher to students are objective because my teacher uses an assessment rubric which also contains the reasons we get these grades."

e. Impact of Teacher's Feedback

Based on the questions the researchers asked the participants, it was found that the participants did not have negative feelings when receiving feedback from the teacher. They received all the feedback from the teacher because after perusing they realized their mistake. The FA mentioned:

"So far I have received positive teacher feedback. Because my teacher is also a humble person. It's also true that I wrote wrong there, so I'm aware of that."

f. Encouragement

In writing argumentative essays, FN, RN, and FA paid attention to excessive teacher feedback. However, after receiving feedback, initially with praise (not judgment), the anxiety was replaced with pleasure. They said:

"... when I come forward for a consultation session, the teacher always

gives praise first like “very nice”, “good work”, and “excellent work” that makes me motivated to improve my writing skills and revise my writing.”

In the document analysis that the researcher carried out on the participant's argumentative essay assignments, the student's answers regarding praise from the teacher were indeed written by the teacher during the written feedback. The teacher gives positive responses/praise as motivation so that participants can improve their writing (Appendix 2: Figure 4.7).

DISCUSSIONS

This research was conducted to describe students' perceptions of Grammarly feedback and teacher feedback on argumentative essays. The first research question focuses on students' perceptions of Grammarly feedback on argumentative essays. In general, Grammarly feedback gives positive and negative impressions when used by all participants in terms of writing. Referring to data obtained from interviews and document analysis, students answered that they received information about two aspects of argumentative writing using Grammarly feedback; practicality and the use of features to improve their writing. In practice, this application makes it easier for students to find out their mistakes when writing argumentative essays. The convenience provided is a one-click system which according to participants can save time in the process of revising their argumentative essay assignments (Wilson & Czik, 2016).

Additionally, all the participants agreed that Grammarly is a user-friendly and simple tool. This is supported by the many features of Grammarly which corrects well and quickly. This finding is in line with Moqsith et al. (2022), Fahmi and Rachmijati (2021), and Hakiki, (2021) who reported that Grammarly is a writing program that helps correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation and increases vocabulary use. Wilson and Czik (2016), and Hakiki (2021) added that the Grammarly feedback increased the students' writing results while also boosting their confidence. Even though it provides convenience, Grammarly has a weakness, namely that not all features in Grammarly can be accessed by students. In line with the findings of Cavaleri and Dianti (2016), students must pay to access several features in Grammarly.

The second research question is about students' perceptions of teacher feedback on argumentative essays. The researcher found from the data that it was very beneficial to use the teacher's written feedback during the writing process. This is following the findings of Forrer et al. (2015) who stated that providing feedback to students on their writing is widely considered to be the most important part of teaching, as it allows them to reconstruct their conceptual development. The researcher found that there were six types of corrections given by the teacher in improving their argumentative writing. The six corrections are related to frequency, types of feedback, clarity, objectivity, the impact of the

teacher's feedback, and encouragement.

Students have experience revising texts by responding to written feedback from teachers. Students' writing improved as a result of the feedback. Not only that, but the teacher's feedback also motivates them in terms of writing. This statement is supported by Harmer (2001) who stated that when making written comments, the teacher fulfills three important roles. One of them is a motivator. Farihah and Umamah (2021) added the motivation to learn English is influenced by the role of a lecturer when giving material or feedback. When the students are motivated, they are encouraged to be more enthusiastic in the writing process at the same time.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The results of the data show that Grammarly and teacher feedback are well received by students. They received information about two aspects of argumentative writing using Grammarly feedback; practicality and the use of features to improve their writing. Nonetheless, Grammarly feedback does not provide thorough feedback on the substance, organization, and general quality of an argumentative essay. Furthermore, the teacher feedback that is often given is direct feedback using several symbols, such as underlining, circling, and immediately crossing out words with true or false marks around them. Since they got positive responses for both feedbacks, the researcher suggests that students use both feedbacks from Grammarly and teacher's during the writing process. Future research is suggested to use different research methods such as experimental research to find out a significant comparison between the use of Grammarly feedback and teacher feedback in writing.

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