

ABSTRACT

Sanvita, Nanda Rizka. (2026). EFL University Students' Experiences in Using Grammarly to Support Their Essay Writing Process: A Case Study of English Education Students at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.

Essay writing remains one of the most challenging skills for EFL students, who often struggle with grammar, coherence, and idea organization. Grammarly, an AI-based writing tool, has been widely used to help students identify and correct errors, yet studies exploring how EFL university students actually experience this tool throughout the writing process are still limited, particularly in Islamic university contexts in Indonesia. This study aims to describe how English Education students at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung experience the use of Grammarly in their essay-writing process and to identify the benefits and challenges they encounter. A qualitative case study approach was used.

Data were collected through a closed questionnaire distributed to 26 students for participant selection, followed by semi-structured interviews with five selected participants. Data were analyzed following Creswell's (2012) six steps: collecting data, organizing and preparing data, reading through all data, coding data, interrelating themes, and interpreting the meaning of the data. The findings show that students' use of Grammarly varies across the planning, drafting, and revising stages, shaped by individual writing habits and English proficiency. Grammarly was most valued during drafting and revising for its real-time feedback and consistency in correcting tenses, prepositions, and articles, boosting students' confidence and linguistic awareness. Challenges included limited free-version features and inaccurate suggestions in complex contexts. In conclusion, Grammarly functions as a meaningful supplementary tool rather than a replacement for critical thinking or instructor feedback.

These findings imply that Grammarly should be integrated into writing instruction with guidance on its appropriate and critical use, helping students develop both technological literacy and independent editing skills.

Keywords: *Grammarly, essay writing, EFL students, students' experiences, AI writing tool*