Partnering with Automatic Writing Evaluation: Exploring teachers' perspective

Abstract no.: ABS-23075

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INTRODUCTION

Formative feedback in writing:
- Beneficial to students' domain-specific skills (van Zundert et al., 2010) and overall writing development (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012)
- Primarily delivered by teacher in many classrooms (Bearman et al., 2016)
- May focus on <u>form</u> and/or <u>content</u>

Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE):
- Apply computational method to analyze texts then automatically generate assessment of grammar, mechanics and style
- Generate form-focus feedback, hence, it should be utilized as an addition for teacher and peer feedback (Bayerlein, 2014; Engeness, 2018; Xu & Zhang, 2022)
- Research on utilizing AWE: experiments to writing development and accuracy

The current study:
Descriptions of teacher perceptions and use of Grammarly

# LITERATURE REVIEW

AWE in classroom contexts

- Experiments to utilize AWE reported mixed results: (1) significant progress of Iranian students (Hassanzadeh & Fotoohnejad, 2021); (2) students' grammatical knowledge increased while their writing apprehension decreased (Waer, 2021); (3) richer vocabulary (Shang, 2022).

- Contrastingly, participants were cognizant of the generated feedback due to the AWE's limitation (Bai & Hu, 2017). Similarly, critiques upon AWE's lack of syntactical and collocational analysis (Dikli & Bleyle, 2014) and accuracy (Ranalli et al., 2017) were reported.

- The majority of students confirm their positive perception towards the tools (Ambarwati, 2021; Dikli & Bleyle, 2014; Li et al., 2015; Nova, 2018; Pujiawati, 2018).

Teachers in AWE-supported classroom

- Feedback interacts with factors, such as learners' language proficiency, instructor's pedagogical approach as well as the socio-cultural contexts of language learning.

- Teachers as facilitator, may have different perceptions and different pedagogical strategies.

- Research: (1) Reducing teacher's workload: reduce the feedback on lower-level writing skills (e.g., spelling, grammar, and sentence structure (Jiang et al., 2020; Li et al., 2015); (2) Dissatisfaction on accuracy and score (Wilson et al., 2021); (3) supplementary but no division of labor (Koltovskaia, 2022); (4) potential in building self-regulated learning (Umamah & Cahyono, 2022)

METHOD

Narrative Inquiry (Barkuizen, et al., 2013)

PARTICIPANTS

INSTRUMENTS

DATA ANALYSIS
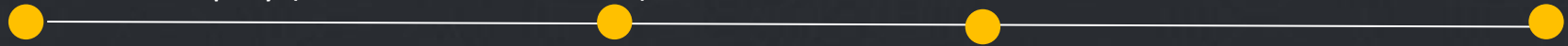
VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

2 English teachers in a Vocational High School

- 5 years of teaching experience
- Amanda and Ratu (*pseudonym*)

- Oral narrative
- Narrative frames

Inductive content analysis

- Data triangulation
- Member checking

FINDINGS

Amanda (female, 5 years of teaching)

- Grammarly is partner

"I ask my students to use Grammarly. It helps me to diagnose my students' ability and problems in writing"

- Self-regulated learning

"I believe Grammarly foster independency. Students can read the suggestions and reflect about their mistakes"

- Re-structuring the lesson

"Grammarly is just a machine. It must have some limitation. I adjust my class to complement the feedback"

Ratu (female, 5 years of teaching)

- Grammarly makes teaching efficient

"I have 45 students in my class. I need lots of time to check my student's writing. Allowing them to use Grammarly, make my time efficient. I could focus on content"

- Re-structuring the lesson

"I worry that the automated feedback will discourage my students in the long run. So, I usually follow up my students' work. I focus on interacting and discussing with my students"

DISCUSSION

- Both teachers perceive AWE **positively**.
1. Grammarly allows students to be self-regulated learners: monitoring their learning (Umamah & Cahyono, 2022)
2. Grammarly might not always accurate, so teachers need to always complement the feedback (Wilson et al., 2021)

- The two teachers have **different pedagogical strategies**.
1. One teacher integrate Grammarly in their teaching as "partner" to help them with diagnose students' ability but doesn't divide the labor (Koltovskaia, 2022)
2. One teacher use Grammarly to help with feedback lower-level writing skills, while she focuses on content, hence her teaching is efficient (Jiang et al., 2020; Li et al., 2015).

CONCLUSION

- Teachers have positive perception toward AWE, but apply different pedagogical strategies
- AWE allows students to instill self-regulated learners and hence classroom integration of AWE seems to continue to remain significant in the current digital era.

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