

EXPLORING STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF GRAMMAR FOCUSING ON DIGITAL TOOLS IN ENHANCING ACCURATE SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS MAJORING ENGLISH AT TADULAKO UNIVERSITY

Oleh :

Indah Mulyana¹⁾, Jamiluddin²⁾, Sukmawati Sadilia³⁾, Mochtar Marhum⁴⁾

^{1,2,3,4} Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Tadulako University

email: indahmulyana.0404@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated undergraduate students' perceptions toward the use of grammar-focused digital tools, particularly ChatGPT and Grammarly, in enhancing accurate English sentence construction. The research employed a qualitative design and involved seventh-semester English major students at Tadulako University. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with participants who had experience using grammar-focused digital tools in academic learning. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke's framework. The findings revealed that students generally had positive perceptions of digital grammar tools. The tools were considered useful in identifying grammatical errors, improving sentence quality, supporting academic writing, increasing confidence, and enhancing grammar understanding through explanations and feedback. Students also used mixed language prompts, combining English and Indonesian, to improve comprehension while interacting with AI-based tools. However, several challenges were identified, including unstable internet connection, slow system performance, and reliability issues where suggested corrections did not always match the intended meaning or sentence context. The study concludes that grammar-focused digital tools can effectively support English language learning, particularly sentence construction, but students still need grammatical knowledge and critical thinking skills to evaluate AI-generated feedback critically.

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Corresponding Author:

Nama: Indah Mulyana

Afiliasi: Tadulako University

Email: indahmulyana.0404@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning English as a foreign language, grammar is an important part that helps students write and speak correctly (Harmer, 2004). It serves as the foundation for constructing clear and meaningful sentences, allowing learners to express their thoughts accurately (Brown, 2007). Without a good understanding of grammar, students may produce sentences that are confusing or incorrect, which can lead to misunderstandings in communication. Mastering grammar also helps learners become more

confident in both spoken and written English, as they can apply the correct structures independently. Therefore, grammar plays a crucial role in developing students' overall language proficiency and ensuring effective communication in English.

However, many students learning English as a foreign language still struggle to construct grammatically accurate sentences. This problem is particularly common among English major students at Tadulako University who are expected to produce clear and correct sentences in both academic and

practical contexts. To cope with the problem, many students now use digital tools like Grammarly or Chat GPT. These tools can give quick feedback and help students correct grammar mistakes, such as tenses, sentence structure, and subject-verb agreement (O'Neill & Russell, 2019). Then, digital grammar tools are becoming more popular among university students, especially for improving their grammatically accurate sentence construction ability.

In using ChatGPT as a digital grammar tool, many students tend to write their prompts in Indonesian when asking questions or requesting help with sentence construction. Using their first language allows students to express their intentions more clearly and reduces misunderstanding when interacting with AI-based tools (Prima dan Hartono, 2025). Through Indonesian prompts, students often ask for explanations, corrections, or examples to help them produce accurate English sentences. This practice indicates that ChatGPT functions as a supportive learning tool that bridges students' native language and their understanding of English grammar.

Accurate sentence construction is an essential aspect of grammar that enables learners to organize words and phrases into coherent structures, allowing them to communicate ideas accurately in both academic and professional contexts (Ellis, 2006). Through grammar instruction, students develop the ability to apply language rules effectively, use appropriate verb forms, and create sentences that reflect logical and linguistic accuracy. The integration of technology has further supported this learning process by offering tools that help students analyze and refine their sentence patterns. At the English department, many students are starting to use these digital tools in their daily learning to strengthen their understanding of grammar and enhance their sentence construction skills.

Previous research shows that digital tools like ChatGPT can help students find and fix common grammar errors and make them more confident in writing (Pane et al., 2023). These tools assist learners by giving instant feedback, helping them notice mistakes and understand how to correct them more effectively. They also encourage students to take a more active role in learning grammar by reviewing their own sentences and making revisions based on the suggestions provided. Moreover, grammar tools can help students save time while improving their sentence accuracy and overall writing quality. Therefore, it is important to understand how students perceive the use of these grammar tools in supporting their sentence construction skills and grammatical accuracy.

Another previous research shows that Grammarly can help students improve their academic writing by giving useful feedback on grammar, spelling, and punctuation (Fitria et al., 2022). This tool allows learners to identify their errors more

easily and make quick corrections, which supports better grammatical accuracy in their writing. In addition, its automatic suggestions guide students to reflect on their writing and understand their common mistakes more effectively. Therefore, knowing students' perceptions of Grammarly is important to understand how this digital grammar tool supports their sentence construction and overall writing improvement.

Previous research also shows that ChatGPT can help EFL students improve their academic writing by providing instant feedback, grammar correction, and useful suggestions for better sentence construction (Khider & Othman, 2025). This AI-based tool allows learners to generate and revise sentences more effectively, helping them organize their ideas and apply correct grammatical structures in writing. ChatGPT also increases students' motivation and engagement in writing tasks by offering interactive and user-friendly features that make the learning process more enjoyable. Moreover, students feel more confident in producing academic texts because ChatGPT supports them in identifying errors and improving sentence clarity. Therefore, it is important to understand students' perceptions of using ChatGPT as a grammar-learning tool to enhance their sentence accuracy and overall writing quality.

Previous studies have investigated students' perceptions of AI-assisted writing tools such as Grammarly and ChatGPT, most of them primarily focused on general writing improvement, academic writing performance, or the overall use of artificial intelligence in language learning and employed a quantitative approach. Studies focused mainly on students' perceptions of Grammarly as a grammar-checking tool. However, these studies paid limited attention to how grammar-focused digital tools contribute specifically to enhancing accurate sentence construction among EFL learners.

To address these gaps, the present study explores English Education students' perceptions and challenges in using grammar-focused digital tools, specifically Grammarly and ChatGPT, in enhancing accurate sentence construction. By employing a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews, this study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of students' experiences, perceived benefits, and challenges. Furthermore, this study contributes to the literature by focusing specifically on sentence-level grammatical accuracy rather than broader writing skills and by providing empirical evidence from the context of Tadulako University, which has received limited attention in previous research. Therefore, this study is different because it focuses on students' perceptions of using grammar-focused digital learning tools, such as Grammarly and ChatGPT, to improve their sentence construction accuracy and grammar understanding in English learning at the university level.

Undoubtedly, it is important to know what is the students' perception on these digital tools in enhancing their accurate sentence construction. Understanding their perceptions helps reveal how these tools actually support learning and what benefits or challenges students experience while using them (Amani & Bisriyah, 2023). Students' perception can show whether they find digital grammar tools helpful for building sentence accuracy, or if they still rely more on traditional learning methods (Lee, 2023). By exploring their perception, teachers and researchers can identify how these technologies contribute to independent learning and how they influence students' confidence in grammar use (Yong-Jik Lee et al., 2024). Therefore, investigating students' perceptions provides valuable insights for improving grammar instruction and integrating digital tools more effectively in English learning, especially at the university level.

This research focuses on exploring the students' perceptions of grammar-focused digital tools and how they believe these tools help them make grammatically correct English sentences. By understanding students' opinions and experiences, this study can give useful ideas for teachers, curriculum designers, and education technology developers. It can also help improve how digital tools are used in grammar teaching and support students in becoming better, more independent English writers.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore undergraduate English major students' perceptions of grammar-focused digital learning tools in improving their English sentence construction. A qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth investigation of students' experiences, opinions, and attitudes. Through this design, the researcher sought to understand how students interpret the use of tools, Grammarly or ChatGPT as grammar checkers in their academic language development, particularly in accurate sentence construction.

Setting and Participant

This research was conducted at the English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP), at Tadulako University, located in Palu, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia. The English Education program served as the setting because it provides structured academic exposure to English language learning, including grammar competence as an essential component of linguistic proficiency. The institution also integrates technology-supported learning practices, which makes it relevant for examining the role of digital grammar tools in language development.

The participants of this study consisted of seventh-semester undergraduate students from the English Education Study Program. The researcher

involved approximately three to five students as interview participants, selected based on their relevance to the research criteria. To gain access to potential participants, the researcher firstly contacted the class leader of one seventh-semester English Education class, who acts as a gatekeeper in assisting the researcher to identify initial students that meet the inclusion criteria. After the initial participants were identified, a snowball sampling technique were applied, in which these participants are asked to recommend other students who have experience using grammar-focused digital tools such as Grammarly or ChatGPT.

The selection criteria required participants to have at least one semester of experience using ChatGPT or Grammarly for grammar learning or sentence construction. In addition, participants are expected to be knowledgeable about the use of these tools and trustworthy, meaning they are willing to share honest, reflective, and reliable information based on their actual learning experiences. These criteria ensured that the data collected are rich, credible, and relevant to the objectives of the study.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedures were conducted in several systematic steps as follows:

1.) Participant Selection

The researcher identified seventh-semester undergraduate English major students at Tadulako University who meet the inclusion criteria. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, focusing on students who actively use digital grammar tools and are willing to participate in the study.

2.) Informed Consent and Participant Briefing

The selected participants were informed about the research objectives, procedures, their rights, and confidentiality of their responses. They asked to sign an informed consent form before participating.

3.) Conducting Individual Interviews

One-on-one interviews were conducted with each participant. Interviews may be held face-to-face or online (via Zoom or Google Meet), depending on participant availability and preference. Each interview was expected to last between 30-45 minutes.

4.) Recording and Transcribing the Data

With participants' permission, the interviews were recorded using digital devices. The recordings transcribed manually or with the help of transcription tools to prepare them for data analysis.

5.) Data Storage

All data, including recordings, transcripts, and any additional documents, were securely stored in password-protected folders. Only the researcher and academic supervisor had access to the data to ensure participants' confidentiality.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis based on the

framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method was considered for qualitative research as it allows the researcher to systematically identify patterns and themes within participants' responses. The analysis began with familiarization, where the researcher reads the interview transcripts several times to gain an overall understanding of the data. The second step involved initial coding, in which meaningful segments of the data were labeled with codes that represent key ideas, such as grammar feedback, sentence accuracy, confidence, and challenges in using digital grammar tools.

In the third step, the codes were grouped into categories and developed into broader themes that address the research objectives. These themes were then reviewed to ensure they accurately represent the data and were clearly distinguished from one another. After that, each theme was defined and named to reflect its core meaning in relation to students' perceptions of grammar-focused digital tools. Finally, the results were reported by presenting the themes along with direct quotations from participants to support the findings and enhance credibility.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings, this study employed member checking and peer review. Member checking was conducted after the interview data had been transcribed and initially analyzed. The researcher returned the interview transcripts and summaries of the preliminary interpretations to the participants for verification. Participants were invited to review the accuracy of the information and confirm whether the interpretations reflected their intended meanings and experiences regarding the use of grammar-focused digital tools. This process helped enhance the credibility of the data by ensuring that the findings accurately represented the participants' perspectives.

In addition, peer review was conducted throughout the data analysis process. The researcher discussed the coding procedures, theme development, and interpretation of the findings with the academic supervisor, who provided critical feedback and methodological guidance. These discussions enabled the researcher to evaluate the consistency of the analysis, identify potential biases, and refine the emerging themes to ensure that they were firmly grounded in the data. The use of member checking and peer review contributed to strengthening the credibility and overall trustworthiness of the study.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of the findings revealed several themes related to students' perceptions and challenges in using grammar-focused digital tools.

Usefulness of Digital Grammar Tools

The findings indicate that digital grammar tools are perceived as highly useful by the participants in assisting them to construct accurate English sentences. Participants explained that tools such as ChatGPT and Grammarly help them identify

grammatical errors, correct sentence structures, and provide explanations that enhance their understanding of grammar. These tools are commonly used when students are unsure about the grammatical accuracy of their sentences.

Participant 1 explained that ChatGPT is particularly useful because it not only corrects sentences but also provides explanations about the grammar rules behind the corrections.

Participant 1: "I usually use ChatGPT rather than Grammarly when constructing English sentences. I prefer ChatGPT because it can correct my sentences and also explain the grammar rules behind the correction."

Participant 1's response indicates that ChatGPT is perceived as a useful learning tool because it provides both grammatical corrections and explanations. The participant values not only the corrected output but also the opportunity to understand the grammatical rules behind the corrections. This suggests that the usefulness of the tool lies in its ability to support learning rather than simply fixing errors. By offering explanations, ChatGPT helps students gain a better understanding of grammar concepts and promotes a more meaningful learning experience. Therefore, the participant perceives ChatGPT as a beneficial resource for supporting English language development.

Learning Support

Another important theme emerging from the interviews is the role of digital grammar tools in supporting students' grammar learning. The findings indicate that these tools are not only used for correcting sentences, but also for helping students understand grammatical rules more deeply. Students rely on these tools because they provide explanations that make grammar concepts clearer and easier to understand. This shows that digital tools function as both corrective and instructional resources in the learning process.

Participant 1 stated that ChatGPT helps explain different aspects of grammar such as verb forms, word order, and prepositions.

Participant 1: "These tools help by correcting my sentences and explaining why the correction is needed. For example, it can explain the correct verb sentence, word order, or the use of preposition."

This response indicates that the student benefits from explicit explanations provided by the tool. By explaining a correction is necessary, the tool helps the student understand the rules behind the language, not just the final answer. This kind of explanation supports deeper learning because students can connect their mistakes with the correct grammatical forms. In addition, learning about specific elements such as verb usage and word order helps students improve their overall sentence construction. As a result, students are more likely to

remember and apply these rules in future writing or speaking tasks.

Furthermore, the use of digital grammar tools allows students to learn more independently. Instead of waiting for teacher feedback, students can immediately check their sentences and receive explanations at the same time. This immediate feedback makes the learning process more efficient and continuous. It also encourages students to explore grammar on their own, which can increase their engagement and motivation in learning English.

In addition, Participant 2 also emphasized that ChatGPT helps identify specific grammatical mistakes in sentences.

Participant 2: "It gives me clear instructions or a clear description of which one that I made a mistake."

This statement shows that the tool provides clear and focused feedback on students' errors. Rather than giving general corrections, the tool points out exactly where the mistake occurs, which makes it easier for students to understand their weaknesses. This targeted feedback is important because it helps students avoid repeating the same mistakes in the future. Moreover, when students clearly understand their errors, they can revise their sentences more accurately and effectively.

Through this process, students gradually develop a better understanding of sentence structure and grammar rules. Repeated exposure to correction and explanation helps reinforce their learning over time. It also builds their confidence, as they become more aware of their progress and improvement. Overall, the findings suggest that digital grammar tools, especially ChatGPT, provide strong learning support by combining correction, explanation, and clear feedback. These features make the tools highly useful in helping students improve their grammatical accuracy and become more independent learners.

Academic Writing Support

The findings also reveal that digital grammar tools play an important role in supporting students' academic writing activities. These tools are frequently used by students when completing assignments, essays, and other academic tasks in English. This indicates that students rely on digital tools not only for learning grammar, but also for improving the quality of their academic writing. In this context, digital grammar tools function as practical writing assistants that support students throughout the writing process.

Participant 1: "I use ChatGPT quite often, especially when I'm writing assignments, essays, or other academic tasks in English."

This response shows that the student integrates the use of digital tools into their regular academic writing practices. The frequent use of ChatGPT suggests that students depend on it to check grammatical accuracy and improve sentence structure. By using the tool during the writing

process, students can identify and correct their mistakes before submitting their work. This helps reduce errors and ensures that their writing meets academic standards. As a result, students are able to produce clearer and more grammatically accurate texts.

Similarly, Participant 3 also reported frequent use of these tools when writing essays or assignments.

Participant 3: "I use these tools quite frequently, especially when I am writing essay or doing assignments in English."

This statement reinforces the idea that digital grammar tools are commonly used among students as part of their writing routine. The consistent use of these tools suggests that students see them as reliable resources for improving their writing. In addition, using such tools allows students to review their work independently, without relying entirely on teacher feedback. This promotes self-editing skills, which are essential in academic writing.

Furthermore, the use of digital grammar tools helps students become more aware of their writing quality. When students check their sentences and receive corrections, they can reflect on their mistakes and learn from them. Over time, this process can improve their ability to write more accurately and effectively. It also increases their confidence, as they feel more assured that their writing is grammatically correct and appropriate for academic purposes.

Overall, the findings suggest that digital grammar tools, especially ChatGPT, play a significant role in supporting academic writing. They help students improve grammatical accuracy, develop better sentence structure, and enhance their ability to revise their own work. Therefore, these tools can be considered valuable resources in helping students succeed in academic writing tasks.

Improving Sentence Quality

Another theme identified from the interview data is the role of digital grammar tools in improving the overall quality of students' sentences. The findings show that these tools are not only useful for correcting grammatical errors, but also for helping students refine and enhance their sentence construction. This suggests that digital tools support students in producing clearer, more accurate, and more effective sentences. In this way, the tools function as both corrective and developmental aids in the writing process.

Participant 1: "It helps me identify grammar mistakes and show me how to improve my sentences."

Participant 1's response demonstrates that digital grammar tools contribute to improving the quality of students' sentences by identifying grammatical errors and providing suggestions for revision. The feedback enables students to recognize weaknesses in their sentence construction and make necessary improvements before finalizing their

writing. Through this process, students can produce sentences that are more accurate, coherent, and appropriate for academic purposes. The ability to revise sentences based on the tool's recommendations also helps students develop greater awareness of effective sentence construction. As a result, digital grammar tools play an important role in enhancing the overall quality of students' written English.

Similarly, Participant 3 stated that the feedback provided by digital tools helps students understand why their sentences are incorrect.

Participant 3: "The most helpful feedback is when the tool explains the reason behind the correction."

This statement highlights the importance of explanation in the learning process. When students understand the reason behind a correction, they are more likely to remember the rule and avoid making the same mistake again. This type of feedback encourages deeper learning, as students are not only correcting their sentences but also developing their grammatical knowledge. In addition, explanations help students build logical connections between rules and usage, which improves their ability to construct accurate sentences independently.

Furthermore, the combination of correction, suggestion, and explanation plays a key role in improving sentence quality. Students are able to see what is wrong, understand why it is wrong, and learn how to fix it. This step-by-step process supports continuous improvement in their writing skills. Over time, repeated exposure to this type of feedback can help students produce sentences that are more grammatically correct, clearer, and more appropriate for academic contexts.

Overall, the findings suggest that digital grammar tools, especially ChatGPT, significantly contribute to improving sentence quality. By providing detailed feedback and explanations, these tools help students develop better sentence construction skills and become more confident in their use of English. Therefore, digital tools can be seen as effective resources for enhancing students' writing quality in both academic and general contexts.

Use of Language in Prompts

Another theme identified in the interview data relates to the language used in prompts when interacting with digital tools. The findings show that students often use a combination of English and Indonesian when asking questions or requesting explanations. This practice indicates that students do not rely solely on English, but instead strategically use their native language to support their understanding. It reflects a flexible approach to learning, where students adjust their language use based on their needs and level of comprehension.

Participant 1: "I usually use a mix of English and Indonesian in my prompts. I write the sentence in

English, but sometimes I ask for the explanation in Indonesian so I can understand the grammar explanation more clearly."

This response shows that the student uses English for practicing sentence construction, while relying on Indonesian to better understand grammar explanations. By doing this, the student can focus on improving their English skills without losing clarity in understanding complex concepts. The use of Indonesian helps reduce confusion, especially when dealing with difficult grammar rules. It also allows the student to fully grasp the explanation, which might be harder to understand if it is given only in English. As a result, this mixed-language strategy supports both learning accuracy and comprehension.

Similarly, Participant 2 and 3 expressed a similar perspective:

Participant 2: "sometimes Mix Because, well, you know, when I need to construct a sentence and I ask chatgpt if it's like gives me on the English like you know English I would be sometimes confused so I need it to be you know translate in Indonesia as well so sometimes it's mixed."

Participant 3: "When using chat GPT, I usually use a mix of Indonesian and English. I do this because sometimes it easier for me to explain my question in Indonesian but I still want the output in English"

This statement highlights that students may feel confused when explanations are provided only in English. The need to switch to Indonesian shows that students require additional support to fully understand the feedback they receive. By translating or mixing languages, students can confirm their understanding and avoid misinterpretation. This also indicates that language flexibility is important in making digital tools more accessible and effective for learners. The ability to use both languages allows students to interact with the tool more comfortably and confidently.

Furthermore, the use of mixed language, or code-switching, plays an important role in supporting students' learning process. It helps bridge the gap between what students already know (their native language) and what they are learning (English). This strategy can reduce cognitive load, as students do not need to process both the question and the explanation entirely in a foreign language. In addition, it encourages more active engagement, as students are more willing to ask questions when they can use a language they are comfortable with.

Overall, the findings suggest that using a mix of English and Indonesian in prompts is an effective learning strategy. It helps students improve their understanding of grammar, reduces confusion, and supports their confidence when interacting with digital tools. Therefore, allowing students to use their native language alongside English can enhance the overall effectiveness of digital-assisted language learning.

Learning Effectiveness

The findings also show that digital grammar tools contribute to effective learning by increasing students' confidence and helping them apply grammar rules in different contexts. These tools provide immediate feedback, which allows students to check and revise their sentences before using them in academic tasks. This process helps students feel more prepared and reduces uncertainty when writing in English. As a result, learning becomes more effective because students are not only practicing, but also verifying their understanding at the same time.

Participant 1 explained that using ChatGPT increases confidence because students can check their sentences before submitting assignments.

Participant 1: "ChatGPT increases my confidence because I can check whether my sentences are correct before using them in assignment."

This response indicates that the ability to review and correct sentences before submission plays an important role in building students' confidence. When students know that their sentences have been checked, they feel more secure about the quality of their work. This reduces anxiety and hesitation, especially when completing academic tasks in English. In addition, this process helps students become more careful and aware of their grammar use. Over time, this repeated practice can improve both their accuracy and confidence in writing.

Participant 2: "ChatGPT very influenced my confidence because like because I'm not really sure about my own grammar skills or knowledge about grammar I need to ask ChatGPT if I do something like my sentence were not grammatically correct, it very helps me with my confidence to make a sentence."

Participant 3: "These tools really increase my confidence. Before using them I often feel unsure about my sentences."

This statement shows that before using digital tools, students may experience doubt and uncertainty when constructing sentences. The presence of feedback and correction helps reduce this feeling by providing clear guidance. As students receive consistent feedback, they begin to trust their ability to use English more effectively. This also encourages them to use English more actively, as they feel less afraid of making mistakes. In this way, digital grammar tools support both emotional and cognitive aspects of learning.

Furthermore, the increase in confidence is closely related to students' ability to apply grammar rules in other contexts. When students understand their mistakes and receive corrections, they can transfer this knowledge to new writing or speaking situations. This shows that learning is not limited to one task, but can be applied more broadly. The combination of feedback, understanding, and practice

makes the learning process more meaningful and long-lasting.

Overall, the findings suggest that digital grammar tools, especially ChatGPT, enhance learning effectiveness by providing immediate feedback, improving students' confidence, and supporting the application of grammar rules. These factors contribute to a more positive and productive learning experience. Therefore, digital tools can be considered valuable resources in helping students achieve better outcomes in learning English.

Technological Challenges

Despite the benefits of digital grammar tools, the findings reveal that students also experience several technological challenges when using these tools. These challenges are mainly related to internet connectivity and system performance, which can directly affect how effectively students interact with AI-based platforms such as ChatGPT. This indicates bahwa penggunaan teknologi dalam pembelajaran tidak hanya bergantung pada fitur tools, tetapi juga pada faktor teknis yang mendukung penggunaannya.

Participant 1 mentioned that internet connection can affect the use of AI-based tools.

Participant 1: "Because this is AI, the internet connection of course becomes one of the limitation."

This response shows that the functionality of AI tools is highly dependent on a stable internet connection. When the connection is unstable, students may experience interruptions while accessing the tool, which can disrupt their learning process. This becomes a significant challenge because students cannot always rely on consistent internet access. As a result, the effectiveness of using digital grammar tools may decrease, especially when students need immediate feedback. This situation highlights that technological infrastructure plays an important role in supporting digital learning.

Similarly, Participant 2 also mentioned technical issues when using ChatGPT.

Participant 2: "Sometimes it's just like probably I use it too much it's kind of loading too long."

This statement indicates that system performance, such as slow loading time, can also become a barrier in using digital tools. When the system takes too long to respond, students may feel frustrated or lose focus during the learning process. In addition, delays in receiving feedback reduce the efficiency of learning, as students cannot immediately revise and understand their mistakes. This may also discourage students from using the tool frequently, even though it is beneficial.

Furthermore, these technological challenges suggest that the effectiveness of digital grammar tools is not only determined by their features, but also by external factors such as internet stability and system responsiveness. Even though the tools are designed to support learning, technical limitations can reduce their usability and impact. This creates a

gap between the potential benefits of digital tools and the actual experience of users.

In addition, these challenges may influence students' motivation and engagement in using digital tools. When students face repeated technical issues, they may become less interested in relying on these tools for learning. This can limit their opportunities to practice and improve their grammar skills using digital assistance.

Reliability Challenges

This finding directly addresses the second research question, which focuses on the challenges faced by students when using grammar-focused digital learning tools in enhancing accurate sentence construction. One major challenge identified is the issue of reliability, where the suggestions provided by digital tools are not always fully accurate or appropriate. This shows that although the tools are helpful, they can sometimes create difficulties for students in constructing sentences that match their intended meaning. As a result, students need to be cautious when using these tools in their learning process.

Participant 1 explained that some corrections may change the intended meaning.

Participant 1: "Sometimes the suggestions are grammatically correct but not exactly what I intended to say."

This response indicates that one key challenge is the mismatch between grammatical correctness and intended meaning. Even though the tool provides a correct structure, it may alter the message that the student wants to express. This can lead to confusion and may affect the clarity of the sentence. In terms of accurate sentence construction, this becomes a problem because accuracy is not only about grammar, but also about conveying the correct meaning. Therefore, students must carefully evaluate whether the suggested correction truly represents their intended idea.

Similarly, Participant 3 also mentioned that digital tools do not always understand sentence context.

Participant 3: "One limitation is that these tools are not always 100% accurate. Sometimes they don't understand the context of my sentence."

This statement highlights another important challenge related to contextual understanding. Digital tools may fail to interpret the context in which a sentence is used, resulting in suggestions that are grammatically correct but contextually inappropriate. This can make it difficult for students to produce accurate and meaningful sentences. As a result, students may struggle to decide whether to accept or reject the suggestions given by the tool. This situation shows that relying fully on digital tools can negatively affect the process of constructing accurate sentences.

Furthermore, these findings suggest that students need to develop critical evaluation skills

when using digital grammar tools. They cannot depend entirely on the tool's suggestions, but must combine them with their own knowledge and understanding of English. This adds an extra layer of difficulty in the learning process, as students are required not only to write sentences, but also to judge the quality of the feedback they receive. While this can support deeper learning, it also presents a challenge, especially for students with lower proficiency levels.

Overall, the findings clearly show that reliability issues and lack of contextual understanding are significant challenges in using digital grammar tools. These challenges directly impact students' ability to construct accurate sentences, as they may produce grammatically correct but contextually inappropriate sentences. Therefore, in relation to the second research question, it can be concluded that students face difficulties in ensuring both grammatical accuracy and meaningful communication when relying on digital tools.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions and challenges in using grammar-focused digital learning tools, particularly ChatGPT, in learning English. These findings address both research questions by explaining how students perceive the usefulness of these tools and what challenges they face when using them to construct accurate sentences.

In relation to the first research question, the findings indicate that students generally have positive perceptions toward digital grammar tools. This is reflected in several themes, including usefulness, learning support, academic writing support, improving sentence quality, use of language in prompts, and learning effectiveness. Students reported that these tools help them identify grammatical errors, understand grammar rules, improve sentence construction, and increase their confidence in using English.

The finding on usefulness of digital grammar tools shows that students prefer tools that provide both correction and explanation. This is consistent with the study by Fitria et al. (2022), which found that Grammarly helps students improve writing accuracy through corrective feedback. However, the present study extends this finding by showing that ChatGPT is perceived as more interactive, as it explains grammar rules and provides examples. This supports the study by Othman (2025), who stated that AI-based tools like ChatGPT function not only as correction tools but also as learning assistants that enhance students' understanding of grammar.

Furthermore, the theme of learning support highlights that digital tools help students understand grammar more deeply through explanations and examples. This finding aligns with Pane et al. (2023), who found that digital grammar tools improve

students' awareness of grammatical errors. Similarly, Syafira et al. (2024) emphasized that feedback from digital tools helps students develop better sentence construction. In this study, students reported that clear explanations allow them to connect their mistakes with the correct grammatical rules, which supports deeper learning.

In terms of academic writing support, the findings reveal that students frequently use digital tools when completing assignments and essays. This is in line with Fitria et al. (2022), who found that digital tools are widely used to support academic writing by reducing grammatical errors. However, this study adds that students use these tools not only for correction but also for self-editing and independent learning. This supports the idea of learner autonomy, which is an important aspect of language learning.

The theme of improving sentence quality further strengthens the positive perception of digital tools. Students reported that correction, suggestions, and explanations help them produce clearer and more accurate sentences. This finding is consistent with O'Neill and Russell (2019), who found that automated writing tools improve students' grammatical accuracy. However, the present study highlights that explanation is the most valuable feature, as it helps students understand why a sentence is incorrect, not just how to fix it.

Another important finding is related to the use of language in prompts, where students use a mix of English and Indonesian. This finding supports the concept of code-switching discussed in Le (2023), who argued that using the first language can support comprehension in second language learning. In this study, students reported that using Indonesian helps them better understand grammar explanations and reduces confusion. This shows that language flexibility is important when interacting with digital tools, especially for learners with lower proficiency.

In addition, the theme of learning effectiveness shows that digital tools increase students' confidence and help them apply grammar rules in different contexts. This finding is consistent with O'Neill and Russell (2019), who reported that students using digital tools feel more confident in their writing. Similarly, Lee, Davis, and Lee (2024) found that AI-based tools improve students' engagement and motivation. In this study, students reported that checking their sentences before submission helps them feel more confident and reduces anxiety.

However, in relation to the second research question, the findings also reveal several challenges. One of the challenges is technological issues, such as unstable internet connection and slow system performance. Although this issue is not the main focus in many previous studies, it is still an important factor that affects the effectiveness of digital tools,

especially in contexts with limited technological resources.

More importantly, the study identifies reliability challenges as a major issue. Students reported that the suggestions provided by digital tools are not always accurate or appropriate to their intended meaning. This finding is consistent with Lee, Davis, and Lee (2024), who found that AI tools may produce suggestions that require careful evaluation. Similarly, O'Neill and Russell (2019) also noted that automated tools may sometimes provide incorrect or misleading feedback.

This issue highlights that grammatical accuracy does not always guarantee meaningful communication. While digital tools may produce correct sentence structures, they may fail to capture the intended meaning due to limitations in understanding context. This supports Le (2023), who emphasized that overreliance on AI tools may lead to misunderstanding if users do not critically evaluate the output.

Therefore, students need to develop critical thinking skills when using digital tools. They cannot rely entirely on the suggestions provided but must evaluate whether the corrections match their intended meaning. This finding adds to previous studies by emphasizing the importance of user awareness and critical evaluation in using AI-based learning tools.

Overall, the discussion shows that digital grammar tools have both strengths and limitations. On one hand, they support grammar learning, improve sentence quality, and increase students' confidence. On the other hand, they present challenges related to technology and reliability, which may affect students' ability to construct accurate and meaningful sentences.

In conclusion, this study confirms that digital grammar tools are effective in supporting students' learning of English, particularly in sentence construction. However, their effectiveness depends on how students use them. Students need to combine the use of digital tools with their own grammatical knowledge and critical thinking skills. Therefore, digital tools should be seen as supportive learning resources rather than complete replacements for traditional learning methods.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study investigated students' perceptions and challenges in using grammar-focused digital learning tools, particularly ChatGPT and Grammarly, in enhancing accurate sentence construction among English major students at Tadulako University. The findings show that students generally have positive perceptions toward these tools because they help identify grammatical errors, improve sentence structure, provide explanations, and support academic writing activities. In addition, the tools contribute to learning effectiveness by increasing students' confidence and helping them understand

grammar rules more clearly through immediate feedback and explanations.

However, the findings also reveal several challenges faced by students when using digital grammar tools. Technological issues such as unstable internet connection and slow system performance can affect the learning process and reduce the effectiveness of the tools. Furthermore, reliability challenges were identified, as the tools sometimes provide suggestions that are grammatically correct but do not match the students' intended meaning or fail to understand sentence context. These findings indicate that students still need critical thinking skills and grammatical understanding when evaluating AI-generated feedback.

This study contributes to addressing the problem identified in the introduction regarding students' difficulties in constructing grammatically accurate English sentences. The findings demonstrate that grammar-focused digital tools can support grammar learning and sentence construction accuracy, while also highlighting their limitations. In addition, this study fills the gap in previous research by providing deeper qualitative insights into students' perceptions and challenges specifically related to sentence-level grammar learning and the use of mixed language prompts in AI interaction. Therefore, this study contributes both theoretically and practically to the integration of AI-based grammar tools in English language learning.

Suggestion

The findings of this study have several implications for English language learning and teaching. For lecturers, the positive perceptions of students toward ChatGPT and Grammarly suggest that these tools can be integrated into grammar and writing sentence instruction as supplementary learning resources. However, lecturers should also encourage students to critically evaluate the feedback generated by AI tools and develop a deeper understanding of grammatical rules rather than relying solely on automated corrections. For students, the findings highlight the importance of using digital grammar tools as learning aids that support independent learning, grammar awareness, and sentence construction skills. Students should actively engage with the explanations provided by these tools to strengthen their grammatical competence and critical thinking abilities. For educational institutions, the findings indicate the need to support the effective integration of AI-based learning technologies by providing adequate technological infrastructure, reliable internet access, and guidance on the ethical and effective use of digital learning tools. Such support may help maximize the educational benefits of AI-assisted learning while minimizing the challenges associated with technological limitations and overreliance on automated feedback.

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