

The Effect of Online Grammatical Error Check on the Improvement of L2 Writing

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

One of the most challenging language skills is the mastery of the target language's academic writing. To perfect academic writings, many English learners have sought help from different online error checkers websites. Yet, little is known about their benefits on improving grammatical errors, in particular and academic writing, in general. This quantitative study was designed to investigate preparatory Saudi English learners' standpoints about their reasons and attitudes towards the use of the different online websites such as Google Translate, Grammarly, Grammar Check, and others to improve English academic writings, in general and the most frequent errors, in particular. The data was collected through an online survey (N=115) composed of 23 items. Results show that students' main aim of using those programs is to get high marks and improve their writing style. It is also found that many students have benefited from online error checkers websites and the most frequent writing errors have been minimized. It is aimed that the finding may equip students with some learning strategies to enhance the quality of their writing efficiency through the use of online error checkers programs. Additionally, the result may set grounds for pedagogues to harness innovative teaching techniques that effectively utilize online error checkers to maximize students' language writing performance.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Based on the globalization inclination that is experienced worldwide, technology has advanced rapidly. This attributed to its popularity in different domains; politically, financially, socially, and educationally. In this era, many individuals worldwide are considered to be proficient users of the different online websites and apps which are used in everyday routine. The education system, like other systems, has implemented technology even before the COVID-19 crisis broke out. Technology has significantly advanced in contemporary teaching and learning methods of almost all subjects, where English courses are no exceptions. Many language learners incorporate technological tools to enhance their language skills and further optimum learning opportunities.

Second language learners (ESL) and foreign language (EFL) learners have benefited from technology in language laboratories to enhance their listening and pronunciation skills. It is documented that proficient English language users are in high demand in the work environment compared to others with poor language skills who may experience great challenges to grow professionally [1]. Therefore, to contribute to international integration, English language learners ought to have mastery not only in listening and speaking skills but in reading and writing as well.

Writing is considered one of the significant tools through which individuals can communicate, express themselves and share ideas. This unique feature does not only apply to the second or foreign language, but to the proficiency of the first language as well. While speaking, negotiation of meaning occurs between speakers, whereas in written forms, discussions between writers and readers seem to be impossible. Therefore, problems of misinterpretation are expected to occur. For second language learners (ESL) and foreign language learners (EFL), the problem is even very crucial and the significant role of writing skills seems to be undeniable. However, in many foreign language teaching and learning settings, writing, amongst the other language skills, usually receives scant attention [2-7].

One of the causes of weak academic writing is attributed to the difference between the first

language (L1) and the learnt one (L2). Many language teachers have experienced the interference of L1 on the acquisition of L2 [8-13]. In most cases, language learners will rely on their first language (L1) as a result of their insufficient knowledge and lack of understanding of the lexical rules of the target language (TL) [14-17]. A better understanding of the effect of L1 on L2 writings will raise the awareness of language teachers about areas of difficulties their students may encounter, and then adapt suitable teaching strategies and techniques to assist L2 learners.

Tracing back the problems of most Saudi students has led to the flawed use of syntactic and grammatical constituents, such as verb to be, tense, articles, word order, etc. [17,11,18]. One of the intervention strategies that English teachers use to correct students' writings is to provide feedback on the first and second drafts, which would improve the quality of the final submission. Teacher feedback could take one of these forms; focused or unfocused. The former type concentrates on specific errors according to particular objectives, whereas the latter provides general comments on the overall quality of student's writing [19-21]. According to teachers' comments, students are required to make the necessary corrections before the final submission.

Nowadays, online error checkers websites provide students with feedback that helps them to submit flawless essays. This could be seen as merit, not to students only but teachers by speeding up the correction period and releasing the grading burdens. Cotos [22] recognized the strength of online feedback in "its individualization, time, and cost-effectiveness"(p. 421). Nevertheless, the question raised here is to what extent English learners benefit from online error checkers. Therefore, the main focus of this paper will be on the use of the various online error checkers tools and their effectiveness in correcting the different errors that frequently occur in the writings of Saudi English learners.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on the results of some studies conducted in different Arabs contexts, errors such as grammatical [23,13] syntactic 10,17] semantic

[16] and lexical errors [24-25] frequently appear in the English writing. In many areas, Arabs English learners seemed to resort to their mother tongue to decide on the appropriateness of using certain lexical, articles, verb tenses, and other grammar aspects [26,16]. It is worth noting that the interference of L1 on the mastery of L2 and causes of these errors or others are not within the scope of this paper. Yet, it can be said that learners' limited awareness as well as the incomplete application of L2 rules may lead to commit different types of errors.

Al-Sulmi [23] carried out his research at one of the universities in Saudi Arabia. The participants were 24 undergraduate male EFL learners. The investigation was based on the use of English articles, where the participants were asked to respond to 70 multiple choice questions and justify their selection of each article. The researcher concluded that the misuse of English articles is attributed to ineffective teaching and learning strategies. It could be said that errors as such tend to be developmental rather than transferable. A similar result was found in Al-Haysony's [9] study who examined 100 written samples of Saudi female students at a university level. The finding revealed that the use or the omission of English articles were the most common errors.

Another study was also undertaken in Saudi Arabia by Khatter [27]. The third year university students were asked to respond to a questionnaire about the writing difficulties. Khatter's findings brought evidence about the errors that occur frequently in Saudi student English writings. These are: wrong verb tense, misuse of prepositions and articles. This result along with others previously discussed proves that English writing constitutes one of the problems that English learners frequently encounter. However, with the existence of online translation and error checks websites, students' writing performance is found to be improving (Alhaisoni & Alhaysony, 2017; [28-30]).

It has been documented that English language learners have benefited from technology in improving their listening, pronunciation, reading proficiency and writing quality. As stated by Kieu et al., [31] "Computer technology and the Internet will use the benefits of studying, enhancing, rehearsing, and developing speaking skills" (p.24). One of the studies that focused on using technology, namely Facebook, in improving EFL writing is a study conducted in Indonesia by

Fithriani et al. [32]. The result of the qualitative research provided evidence that Facebook has improved the writing fluency of university students, enhanced their communication skills, and encouraged them to participate in various written discussions. Similarly, a recent study has investigated the effect of technology on improving the four language skills. Kieu and his fellow researchers [31] carried out a study at one of the universities in Vietnam for four weeks. The surveyed participants confirmed the positive impact of technology on the learning of the English language. Even though the previously mentioned studies have examined the effect of technology on the writing skill, no discussion was made on how the online websites impact the corrections of different grammatical errors and hence improving the writing quality.

In light of the reviewed literature and based on the results of Al-Sulmi [23], Al-Haysony [9] Khatter [27] and others like Grami & Alzughabi, [16] Fareed, [18] Al-Qadi, [13] on the most reported grammatical errors committed by Saudi English learners and on the studies which confirmed the positive impact of technology on students' writing [32,30, 31] this current research was set forth to investigate the effectiveness Saudi English students gain from error checkers such as Google Translate, Grammarly, Grammar Checks, and others available online to correct their most frequently grammatical errors and hence improve their writing quality. Indeed, it is of great significance to inspect this phenomenon from the students' points of view. Additionally, the research concludes by providing valuable recommendations to stakeholders and pedagogies, which may add to our understanding of integrating modern technology and keeping up with its widespread pace in teaching and learning methods.

3. POINTS OF INTEREST

As a language teacher to Arab students, I always wanted to investigate learners' standpoint about the role technology plays in correcting various writing errors and improving their academic writings. With the advancement of technology in almost every life aspect, today's students are considered "digital natives" [33] and therefore ought to benefit from their technological knowledge and effectively utilize it in their learning. However, Facebook, blogs, and other communicative channels on the internet as well as translation websites are not efficiently used as a means of teaching and learning. Even

though some studies have examined the role technology has on the learning and teaching, very few studies investigated students' perceptions as well as the advantages and disadvantages of the different websites on the learning process [34]. Alhaisoni & Alhaysony, 2017.

Nevertheless, the use of technology in Saudi English classes at the university level is limited to listening practices while other language skills, inclusive writing, are taught traditionally. According to my limited knowledge, employing technology in English writing classes is a relatively scarce approach in Saudi universities. Therefore, the uniqueness of this paper lies in its aim to bring forth learners' perspectives of the effectiveness of online websites on the correction of the most frequent writing errors and hence on their academic achievements. By recognizing the impact error checkers programs have on improving learners' writing skills, this research hopes that course designers and language teachers will uptake those programs as one of the beneficial writing strategies.

4. METHODS

4.1 Research Questions

This research investigates the benefit of online error checkers websites on the academic writing of English language students in the context of EFL tertiary education in Saudi Arabia. It aims to enrich the literature on this new area of language teaching and learning. Improving the writing skill for English learners is considered a tedious task for both teachers and learners [31,32]. Utilizing technology, especially online error checkers programs, may enhance the academic writing quality and hence improve student outcomes. Therefore, this study is based on the following research questions:

1. Which reasons do Saudi English students give for using online error checkers websites in their academic writing?
2. What are the attitudes of Saudi English students towards the use of online error checkers websites?
3. To what extent do online error checkers websites improve the most frequent grammatical errors in Saudi English writing?
4. What are the benefits online error checkers programs have on the academic writing of Saudi English students?

4.2 Population and Site

This research has been conducted at one of the English Language Institute (ELI), at one of the leading universities in Saudi Arabia. The participants were foundation year students studying general English. It is worth noting that the only input most Saudi students has to English language is the classroom. Along with the four English courses, foundation year students study other courses such as Maths, Biology, Computer Science, Arabic Language, Islamic Studies, and Social Studies. These courses, where English is no exception, are considered mandatory and therefore students at the foundation year will not specialize at any college unless they successfully pass all these courses. The English language program composed of four levels ranging from 101 beginners to 104 upper intermediate that is equivalent to B1 to B4. The targeted population were students studying at the fourth and the last level (104).

4.3 Instruments

The data was collected through a survey that was designed specifically for this research. The convenience sample encompassed a total of 137 were sent via WhatsApp groups to preparatory year English students with no consent form was provided. However, the questionnaire completion was taken as an agreement of participation. For creating and administering the online survey, Google Docs platform was employed (Blankenship, 2017).

For the participants' convenience, the questionnaire was written in both languages Arabic and English. The questionnaire composed of five categories with 23 close-ended statements on different aspects related to the study's theme. The categories are as follows: 1) Students' preference of online error checkers websites. 2) Students' reasons about the use of online error checkers websites. 3) Students' attitudes towards the use of online error checkers websites. 4) The level of improvement of the most frequent grammatical errors. 5) The benefits of online error checkers websites on students' academic writing. The survey offered values for Likert Scale statements: Agree = 1, Undecided = 2, Disagree =3. The questionnaire has been revised and its contextual relevance was confirmed. Furthermore, an online link was created to gather students' responses. Students were encouraged to respond to all questionnaire

statement and to be fair in their rating. Finally, all completed questionnaires were considered and statistically analyzed.

4.4 Data Analysis

This current study exclusively aimed at examining preparatory year students' rational and attitudes towards online grammatical error check programs and their benefits on the improvement of English academic writing. A total of 137 questionnaires were received.

Out of the total number (N=137), 22 questionnaires were uncompleted, therefore excluded and were not further considered in the analysis. Students' responses to all 23 questionnaire items were analysed statistically by the researcher, and the results are illustrated in percentages (Table 1) and figures (Fig. 1). By evaluating the findings of this quantitative analysis, this study brings evidence on the benefit of utilizing technology, in general, and online grammatical errors check, in particular.

5. FINDINGS

5.1 Student Preference

The first category was set to identify the website that students mostly use to correct the writing errors. As illustrated in Table one, the Google Translate website is touted as the ubiquitous one used by more than 85% of the participants compared to other websites. This could be attributed to its easy access and its free service.

5.2 Student Reasons

The second category was designed to respond to the first research question, which investigated

students' causes using online error check websites. As shown in Table two, seven statements were provided, and students were asked to select their reasons for turning to online error checkers. 111 of the 115 participants (96.52%) confirmed that their main aim was to get high marks which indicate students' concerns about their grades [23]. Another reason for using online errors check was to check the writing accuracy followed by students' tendency to hand in their work with no errors, 95.65%, and 86.08%, respectively, which repeatedly reflects their worry about grades. Additionally, having an opportunity to check errors themselves before receiving teacher's feedback may have encouraged many students to turn to different online programs.

In terms of the writing time, more than 75.00% of the respondents use online error checkers to minimize the time spent in writing. Furthermore, 80 students out of the total participants confirmed the accessibility of those websites. Detecting errors as they are underlined in red or other colors has motivated all students to use online programs. Even though all participants were able to sight all their writing errors, 52 students (45.21%) confirmed their inability to comprehend error justification. So, if no correction is available, they tend to leave the error uncorrected. This could be attributed to students' low level of grasping grammar rules and their limited knowledge of academic writing aspects [13]. Such a result implies that online error checkers may have benefited more able students rather than those with weak writing abilities. In a nutshell, as apparent in Table 2, the two categories that were highly prone to using online error checkers were the advancement of grades and checking writing accuracy.

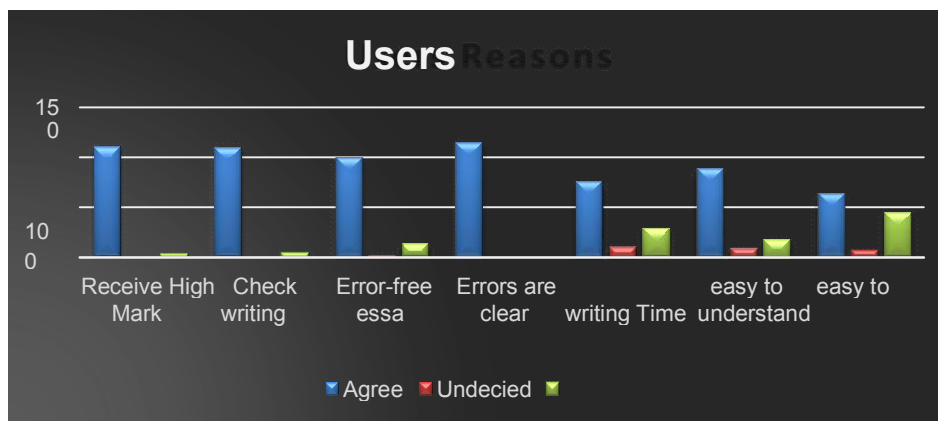


Fig. 1. Reasons for using online grammatical errors check

Table 1. Preferred Website

Category I: Student Preference		
Website	Number of users (N=115)	Percentage of users (%)
Google Translate	88	76.52
Grammarly	17	14.78
Grammar Check	10	8.69
SpellCheckPlus	0	0
Others	0	0

Table 2. Reasons for the use of online grammatical errors check

Category II: Student Reasons			
No.	Statements	Number of users (N=115)	Percentage of users (%)
1	To receive high marks	111	96.52
2	To check the writing accuracy	110	95.65
3	To submit error-free essay	99	86.08
4	Errors can be spotted easily	115	100%
5	To reduce the writing time	88	76.52
6	Easy to understand	63	54.78
7	Easy to be accessed	80	69.56

5.3 Student Attitudes

To respond to the second research inquest, statements 8 to 15 presented in Table 3 affirmed students' attitudes towards using different online error checkers. Evidenced by the existence of 99 out of 115 who agreed that they always use those programs when writing essays, while only 16 confirmed the opposite. The data also presents a change in the students' attitudes when using the online error checkers programs. A high rate of about 85.21% felt confident when checking errors online, and the remaining 14.78% did not experience certainty while checking errors of their writing assignments online. The majority of participants, 90 out of the 115, disagree that they use online error checkers for proofreading only, compared to 25 who agreed that their primary use of online error programs is to revise their writing before submission. Indeed, the high rate confirms the great dependency of students on those programs.

Table 3 also shows that 91 participants had an efficient experience with the different online programs. In contrast, only 11 participants were unsure in their responses, and 16 disagreed that they had a good experience with online error checkers. The great reliance on the online error checkers is apparent in the students' responses to the statement, "I try to understand grammar errors before correcting them." Interestingly, more than half, 62.60% of the respondents

declared that they do not attempt to understand the corrections provided by the online error checkers, which emphasizes their confidence in those programs. On the opposite side of the coin, less than 40.00% of students seek to comprehend errors before correcting them. In addition, the effectiveness of relying on online error checkers websites obtained balanced data that is as much as 42.60% agree and 44.34% disagree, while the rest 13.04% were not able to decide if it is practical to depend on those programs to better their academic writing.

It is further observed that 56.52% of respondents view those programs as self-learning tools, compared to 20.86% and 22.60% who did not decide or disagreed that the online error checkers websites could be considered self-learning tools. Considering feedback, nearly more than 75% of the total participants experienced the difference between the online error checkers' feedback and the one they receive from their teachers. They confirmed that error checkers' feedback outweighs that of their teachers, while 24.34% of respondents did not decide nor disagreed that online feedback is better than their teachers'.

5.4 Improvement Level of the Most Frequent Grammatical Errors

Based on the research findings of some Saudi scholars like Al-Sulmi [13], Al-Aqaad [17] Al-Qadi

[13] and others on English writing errors have led to the flawed use of syntactic and grammatical constituents, such as verb to be, tense, articles, word order, etc. Therefore, category four of this survey investigated the level of improvement on the most frequently occurred errors.

Responding to the third research question, the analysis presented in Table 4 yielded a total of 90 respondents who confirmed a high level of improvement in their use of articles, either definite or indefinite, compared with 18 and 7 students, respectively, who reported moderate improvement or did not notice any improvement in the correct use of articles. The high level of improvement may be ascribed to the clarity of online grammatical error checker and students' awareness of their errors. Accounting students'

responses to the use of the 3rd person singular, it has been found that 81 students and 4, respectively, experienced quite an improvement in the use of this grammatical aspect, while 30 participants mentioned that there was no improvement.

Besides, the use of verbs to be is highly improved as stated by most students, while only 14 students compared to 101 students did not find any improvement in the use of the English verbs to be. The rate variance seems insignificant, which confirms the benefit of online error checks on the level of academic writing. Furthermore, about two-thirds of students noticed an advancement in the use of verb tenses. On the contrary, 12 respondents found slight improvement, while 29 did not notice any betterment in their use of English tenses.

Table 3. Students' attitudes towards online error checkers

Category III: Student Attitudes				
No.	Statements	Agree (N=115)	Undecided (N=115)	Disagree (N=115)
8	I always use online error checker when writing an essay	99	0	16
9	My experience with online error checker is effective	91	11	13
10	I consider it as a self-learning tool	65	24	26
11	I found it better than teacher's feedback	87	10	18
12	It is good to rely on online error checkers	49	15	51
13	I try to understand grammar errors before correcting them	43	0	72
14	I only use online error checkers for proofreading	25	0	90
15	I feel confident when I use online error checkers	98	0	17

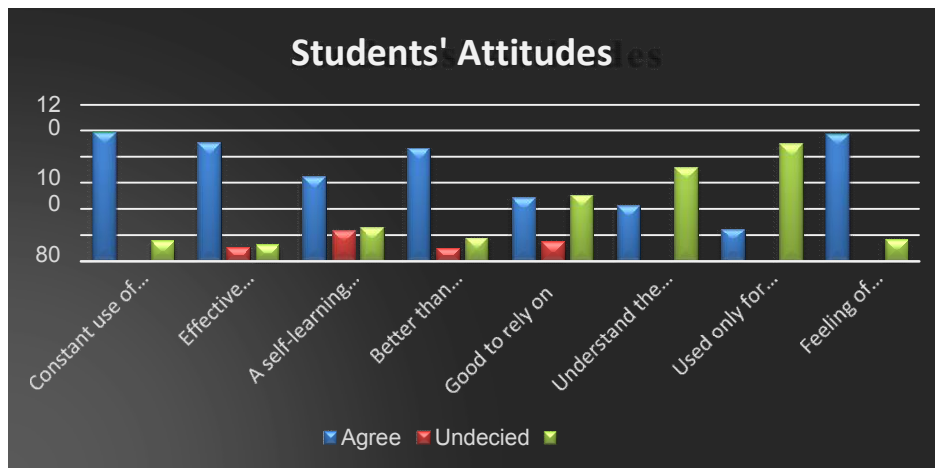


Fig. 2. Students' attitudes of online error checkers

It is seen that online errors check has improved English writings to some extent, though these programs are not technically implemented in Saudi English classes. Even when students can seek online help to improve their English language level in general, and writing skills, in particular, the process should be guided by teachers to avoid messily and unsatisfactory results.

5.5 Benefits of Online Error Checker Websites

Furthermore, the fourth research question helps to investigate the benefits of online error checkers websites. Responses presented in Table 4 illustrate that students have greatly benefited from online error checkers where almost all participants, about 86.95%, confirmed that the assist of those programs has reflected on their academic writing and perfected their submission to a greater level.

The research results support the benefits of online error checkers websites. This is evident in

students' responses where most students (81.73% agree) expressed a positive view on the statement that their grades have increased, compared to only 2.60% and 15.65% who did not decide or disagreed, respectively. Such results showed that many online error checkers users have greatly benefited from checking the different errors they usually commit.

The benefit of online error checker websites has been destined as students' goal is to improve their writing skills. The rationale that the correction those programs provide students with is significant to improving their academic writing and gaining higher grades. However, students should be aware of their writing errors to correct them and, more importantly, not to fall into them again. General literature considers students' awareness of their errors as vital for attaining advancement in writing skills and mastering the target language. It also becomes evident that even language learners with high ability and a good level of awareness would gain success when receiving constant positive feedback and support from teachers [9,32,31].

Table 4. Improvement level of frequent grammatical errors

Category IV: Level of Improvement on the Most frequent Errors				
No.	Statements	Quite Improved (N=115)	Improved (N=115)	Not Improved (N=115)
16	Use of definite and indefinite articles (the – a – an)	90	18	7
17	Use of 3 rd person singular	81	4	30
18	Use of verbs to be i.e. is – are – was – etc.	101	0	14
19	Misuse of verb tense	74	12	29

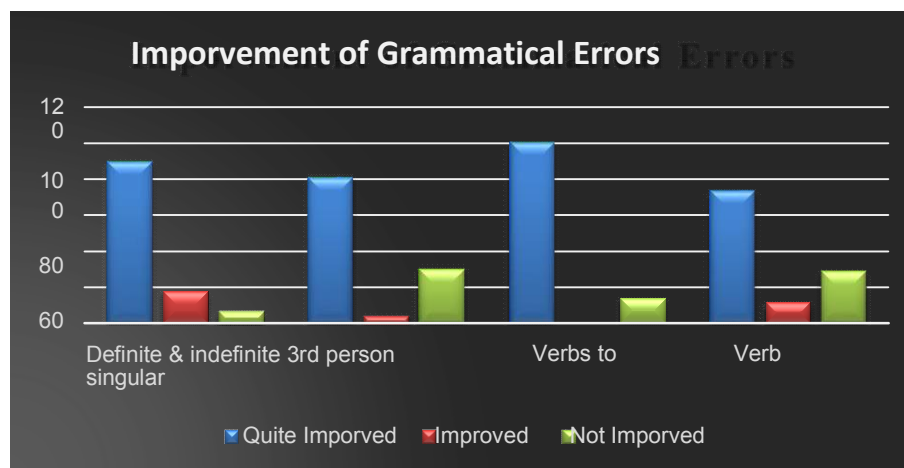


Fig. 3. Improvement level of frequent grammatical errors

In this study, it turns out that 75.65% of students have become more aware of their writing errors due to the continual use of online error checkers, while the rest of the respondents declared otherwise. For the last statement in the students' survey, "Now, I commit fewer errors," information was also obtained that writing errors have decreased, as confirmed by about 66.95% of students. Although a significant benefit was found in the earlier result, some students (3.47%

did not decide and 29%56 disagree) expressed an opposite opinion on the statement that online error checkers websites are helpful to commit fewer writing errors. This still ratifies that online error checkers programs may benefit students with a good level of writing skills. The analysis of responses has brought forth the positive opinions noted by most respondents towards online error checkers websites and their benefits on academic writings.

Table 5. Benefits of online error checkers

Category VI: Benefits of Error Checkers Websites				
No.	Statements	(3) Agree (N=115)	(2) Undecided (N=115)	(1) Disagree (N=115)
20	My academic writing has been improved	100	0	15
21	My marks have been increased	94	3	18
22	Now, I commit fewer errors	77	4	34
23	My errors' awareness has been raised	87	13	15

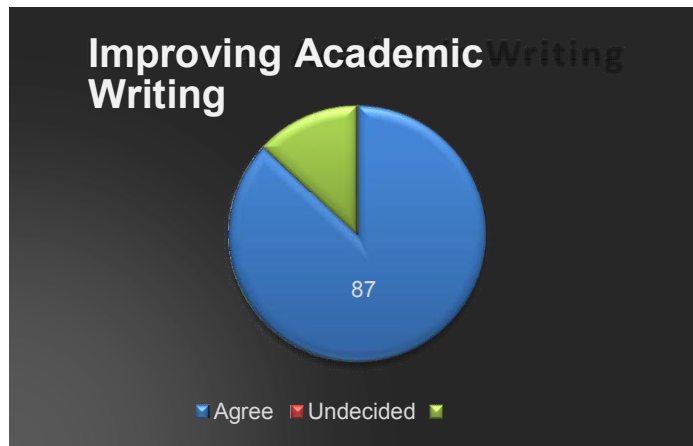


Fig. 4.1. Benefits of online error checkers

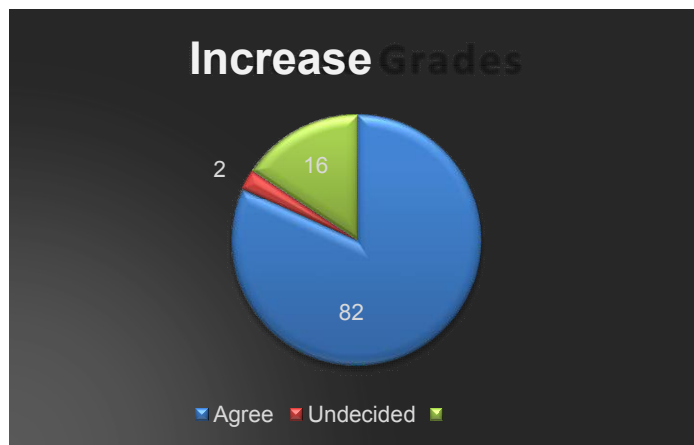


Fig. 4.2. Benefits of online error checkers

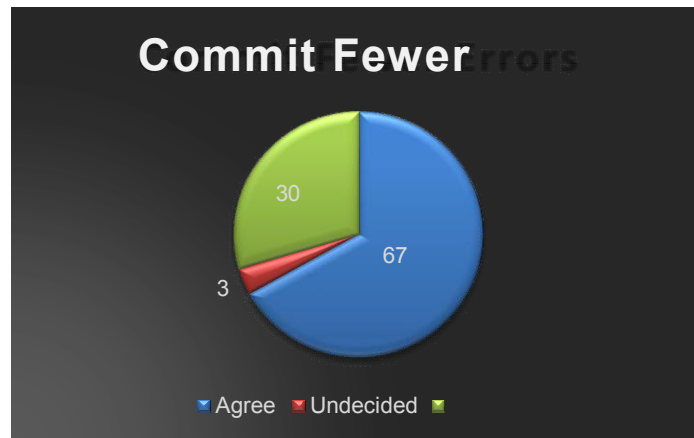


Fig. 4.3. Benefits of online error checkers

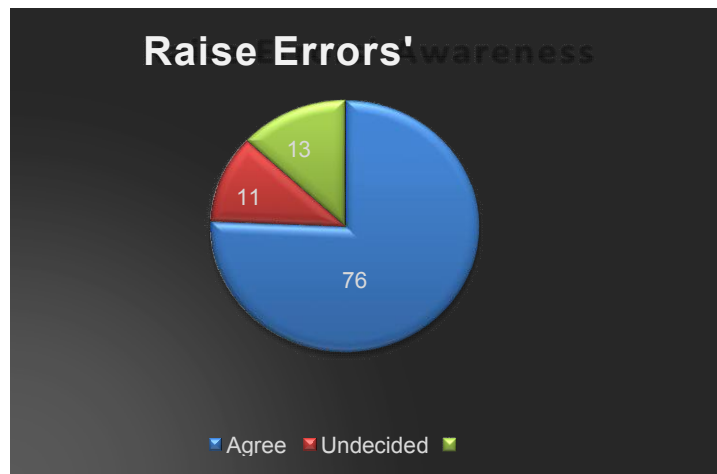


Fig. 4.4. Benefits of online error

6. DISCUSSION

This current research investigates students' reasons and perceptions towards the use of online error checkers websites. It also sought to look at the benefits of the different online programs on improving English academic writing. The research extends on the few earlier research that focuses on using technology to develop students' skills of the English language, in general, and the writing skill, in particular. To this end, preparatory year Saudi English students were queried about their choices to turn to online error checker websites and their perceptions of such programs.

To begin with, the result brought evidence that a favorable Saudi website is Google Translate (GT). This result concurs with Kumar's [35] who revealed that GT is the preferable website by

Arab students. Similar to the result of earlier researchers [36,30,31] the findings of this current research provided evidence that Saudi students extensively use online error checkers programs to increase their writing grades which affect their academic success. The results also reported students' desire to minimize the number of errors to the least and hand in a flawless piece of writing [37]. Additionally, the findings showed that students chose to use those programs to save themselves time writing and checking the essay. This result aligns with that found in researchers like Kumar [35] Clifford et al. [38], Al-Salem [28] Amin [29] and others.

The finding is also in accordance with the research result conducted in the same context of this research. Even though the scope of Alhaisoni & Alhaysony's research (2017) was limited to Google Translation and its use in

reading, writing, and vocabulary choice, their study reported similar findings to this research. The two researchers stated that "The students had very positive attitudes toward GT as it is free and easy to use and translates text quickly; its translation is better than their own, and it is helpful for learning vocabulary" (p.79).

Moreover, the findings presented a tendency to favor the use of online error checkers programs to their accessibility and clarity of the erroneous words which are underlined and can be corrected by a click of a button. Furthermore, the contrast with Kumar [35] whose empirical work with university students showed that students used those programs, particularly GT, to understand some language aspects that help them in their academic writing. In contrast to the attitudes of the participants in this current study, some of Kumar's participants expressed difficulty to comprehend the corrections of some errors.

As reported from the result, Saudi students had a good experience with online programs and considered them effective in correcting the different errors that appear in their writings. They also confirmed their constant use of those programs. The positive attitude of this study's participants is consistent with that of the Taiwanese university students [39] and Saudi university students (Alhaisoni & Alhaysony, 2017) who conveyed their satisfaction with online error checkers websites. Another finding highlighted is the feeling of confidence the participants experienced while using the online error checkers, which they considered as self-learning tools [40] A similar result was found in Bin Dahmash's study [30] as her Saudi university participants confirmed the usefulness of the Google Translation App as a learning source. One of the exciting results that came out from this study is that the high rate of the participants who considered teacher feedback is less helpful than that provided by the online error checkers. Reliance on online error checkers was also reported, which echoes the finding obtained from other research.

In reducing the most frequent grammatical errors and improving students' writing, the finding from this result contradicts that of Alhaisoni & Alhaysony (2017). This study participant confirmed that the most frequent errors were minimized to the least while Alhaisoni & Alhaysony's participants did not experience significant advancement in writing good grammatical sentences. Even though the two

researchers' focus was only on Google Translate, some of their findings are consistent with this study. However, one distinction between the two studies is that Alhaisoni & Alhaysony investigated the improvement of GT on English grammar in general rather than examining the improvement on specific written errors as the case in the study at hand [41].

By knowing that online error checkers programs have minimized the most frequent errors and hence improved the writing quality, English language teachers ought to activate those programs as one teaching strategy to develop English writing and encourage students to employ them for the advantage of their academic success. However, teachers need to caution students from excessive use and reliance on different online websites and consider their knowledge instead.

7. CONCLUSION

Providing Saudi English students with effective strategies to utilizing online error checks, which may lead to the growth of their academic writing, is mainly unexplored. Researching this phenomenon could bring more significant gains towards the advancement of writing skills. The study concluded by bringing out evidence on the positive attitudes Saudi English students have towards using online error checkers websites. It suggested that students have benefited from the different online programs, which helped repair some of the most reported grammatical errors, in particular and improved the quality of their academic writing, in general. However, the study showed that those websites are more likely to benefit those with a high level of writing skills. Therefore, further studies are recommended to search for ways to bring positive effects for students with weak writing proficiency.

The research has some practical implications for teachers, stakeholders, and students alike. The results offer some relevant contributions to the use of technology in the language writing classes in the context of Saudi Arabia or in others where similar characteristics may be found. It is of great significance for language teachers to carefully consider the employment and the values of online error checkers in their teaching practice as they may offer new avenues of language improvement, in general, and writing skills, in particular. Additionally, the research can be a reference to language teachers who teach students with low writing abilities to inspire them

to become skillful English writers. Students are also urged to make use of their digital competence and knowledge and employ it to develop their learning abilities and language proficiency. On the other hand, stakeholders could harness technology as one of the effective strategic plans of language teaching and learning. In a nutshell, the research finding has offered more nuanced benefits and positive attitudes compared to previous research conducted in the same area.

Even though the findings of this study have shed some new light on a scarce issue of the benefits of online error checker websites and their effectiveness in improving the most reported grammatical errors of English students, it has, just like other studies, some shortcomings. One of those is its quantitative approach, which did not justify students' responses to the survey questions. Therefore, studies that employ a qualitative approach could bring more insight into this new dimension in enhancing the quality of academic writing. The target population was only limited to preparatory year students, and perhaps more studies could be conducted with students of a higher level of education to view their perceptions about the use of online error checkers websites and the benefits that could be gained. Another limitation is that language teachers were not part of this study, and therefore their perceptions were not considered. Indeed, examining teachers' perspectives would add to our knowledge about this phenomenon and enrich the related literature.

DISCLAIMER

The products used for this research are commonly and predominantly use products in our area of research and country. There is absolutely no conflict of interest between the authors and producers of the products because we do not intend to use these products as an avenue for any litigation but for the advancement of knowledge. Also, the research was not funded by the producing company rather it was funded by personal efforts of the authors.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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