Grammarly and Paraphraser.io in Supporting Rewriting Skills: A Comparative Study

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Abstract. This study compares Grammarly and Paraphraser.io in supporting students' academic writing and rewriting skills based on Flower and Hayes's (1981) cognitive process theory, which includes the stages of planning, translating, and reviewing. Using a descriptive qualitative method supported by quantitative data, the research involved 32 English Education students who had used both tools in academic writing. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed descriptively to identify students' perceptions of grammatical accuracy, rewriting ability, feedback quality, and overall writing improvement. The results of this study indicate that 54.4% of students use Grammarly and 45.6% use Paraphraser.io, showing that Grammarly is the slightly more dominant and trusted tool for improving grammatical accuracy and clarity, while Paraphraser.io functions as a complementary platform for paraphrasing and generating new sentence structures; together, both tools contribute effectively though through distinct roles to enhancing students' academic writing performance. The comparative analysis revealed that Grammarly was most effective in enhancing analytical skills during the planning and reviewing stages, improving grammar, coherence, and clarity. In contrast, Paraphraser.io was most beneficial for generative skills in the translating stage, directly enhancing originality and sentence variation. Most respondents rated their writing improvement highly, confirming the positive impact of both tools on academic performance. In conclusion, the findings confirm that Grammarly and Paraphraser.io serve distinct, yet complementary roles: the former ensures linguistic precision, while the latter supports structural creativity, ultimately helping students produce highly accurate and original academic texts.

Keywords: Academic Writing; Grammarly; Paraphraser.io; Rewriting Skills; Technology

1. INTRODUTION

Writing is a fundamental academic skill that enables students and researchers to express ideas, construct arguments, and demonstrate critical understanding. According to Hyland (2003), writing is not merely the production of text but a social and cognitive process that involves interaction between writer, reader, and context. In academic settings, especially among ESL learners, writing demands accuracy, coherence, and originality skills that are often difficult to master. Many students struggle with grammatical precision, clarity, and effective paraphrasing, leading to a growing reliance on digital writing tools. To address these challenges, technology- based platforms such as Grammarly and Paraphraser.io have become widely used to support learners in improving writing quality, coherence, and originality within academic communication.

Among these technological aids, Grammarly and Paraphraser.io have emerged as two of the most widely used platforms for improving academic writing performance. Grammarly provides automatic feedback on grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, tone, and clarity, helping users refine their language accuracy. In contrast, Paraphraser.io assists users in rewriting and summarizing text by rephrasing sentences to improve readability and originality. While both tools aim to enhance writing quality, they serve distinct functions: Grammarly focuses on

linguistic correctness and stylistic refinement, whereas Paraphraser.io emphasizes meaning reconstruction and comprehension. Together, they represent the dual dimensions of writing and rewriting that are central to effective academic communication.

Studies on academic writing and digital learning tools have increasingly focused on how technology facilitates paraphrasing, summarizing, and language accuracy. Knight and Schumaker (2007) explained that paraphrasing and summarizing are essential strategies that help learners internalize information and reconstruct it into new expressions, fostering both comprehension and originality. The framework was strengthened by the *Pusat Pengembangan Strategi Pembelajaran Bahasa* (2021), which emphasized that rewriting through paraphrasing and summarizing promotes academic literacy, creativity, and ethical citation. Alharbi (2020) examined the use of Grammarly and found that it enhances grammatical awareness, writing confidence, and students' ability to self-edit. Similarly, Lazic et al. (2020) reported that Grammarly aids in plagiarism detection and language refinement, although the overreliance on automated correction may reduce writers' autonomy. Tran and Nguyen (2022) revealed that paraphrasing tasks significantly contribute to developing comprehension and originality in academic writing, while Ahmad and Ismail (2022) discovered that paraphrasing tools help increase lexical variation but sometimes distort intended meaning. Rahman and Pratiwi (2023) found that Paraphraser.io effectively promotes writing originality and maintains coherence through semantic reformation. Musa and Almarid (2023) compared five AI-assisted writing tools Grammarly, QuillBot, Jasper, ChatGPT, and Copy.ai and observed that Grammarly provides superior grammatical precision, whereas QuillBot and ChatGPT excel in content reconstruction. Abdul Qader Emran et al. (2023) indicated that AI-based writing assistants improve learners' creativity and reflective thinking when integrated into language learning. Lazic et al. (2024) demonstrated that incorporating AI-driven writing platforms into classrooms increases students' engagement and awareness of syntactic patterns. Rahman (2024) highlighted that automated writing tools enhance linguistic accuracy and text coherence but require critical user evaluation to avoid overdependence. Tira Nur Fitria (2025) confirmed that Paraphraser.io and similar tools such as QuillBot maintain sentence meaning while improving grammatical fluency. Finally, recent findings by Ahmad et al. (2025) emphasized that AI-based writing platforms substantially enhance EFL students' academic writing performance, bridging linguistic accuracy and creativity. Collectively, these previous studies indicate that digital writing tools contribute greatly to improving writing, rewriting, and comprehension. However, only a few studies have conducted a direct comparative analysis between Grammarly and Paraphraser.io using a cognitive process framework. Thus, this study aims to address that gap

by examining both tools based on the planning, translating, and reviewing stages of writing as proposed by Flower and Hayes (1981).

Therefore, this study aims to compare Grammarly and Paraphraser.io in terms of their roles in supporting effective writing and rewriting skills within the framework of Flower and Hayes's (1981) cognitive process model. Specifically, it investigates how each tool assists users in improving grammatical accuracy, coherence, paraphrasing ability, and idea reconstruction hroughout the stages of planning, translating, and reviewing. By analyzing users' experiences and perceptions, the study seeks to identify the strengths and limitations of each platform in promoting both linguistic accuracy and cognitive engagement. Furthermore, it aims to provide pedagogical insights into how digital tools can be effectively integrated into writing instruction to enhance students' critical awareness of the writing process. Understanding the comparative impact of Grammarly and Paraphraser.io is expected to contribute to the broader discussion on technology-enhanced learning, particularly how writing and rewriting platforms can foster language precision, creativity, and deeper comprehension in academic contexts.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Writing studies based on cognitive process theory have examined how writers plan, translate, and review their ideas to produce meaningful texts. Researchers in applied linguistics and educational technology have also explored how digital tools support the writing process, particularly in enhancing accuracy, coherence, and originality (Alharbi, 2022; Rahman & Pratiwi, 2023). Crucially, this study employs a comparative analysis as a core strategy to achieve a deeper understanding of the specific functions and complementary roles of Grammarly and Paraphraser.io. As David Collier (1993) argues in *The Comparative Method*: "Comparison is a fundamental tool of analysis. It sharpens our powers of description, and plays a central role in concept formation by bringing into focus suggestive similarities and contrasts among cases." By conducting a direct comparison, this research aims to sharpen the description of each tool's unique role and highlight the significant similarities and contrasts in supporting the cognitive stages of writing and rewriting. According to Flower and Hayes (1981), writing is not a linear product but a recursive and problem-solving process in which writers constantly move between planning, translating, and reviewing stages. Each stage involves cognitive decisions that shape the quality of written output. This framework has become one of the most influential models in writing research and provides a theoretical basis for understanding how

digital platforms such as Grammarly and Paraphraser.io assist learners in managing the complex cognitive activities involved in composing and revising academic texts.

Planning

The planning stage, as described by Flower and Hayes (1981), involves generating ideas, setting writing goals, and organizing thoughts before producing text. This phase requires writers to activate their prior knowledge and consider how their ideas align with communicative purposes. In modern contexts, digital writing tools can assist this process indirectly. For instance, using Grammarly's feedback on clarity or word choice can help writers refine their planning by identifying areas where ideas need elaboration or simplification. Although Paraphraser.io mainly supports rewriting, it can also help in planning by providing alternative ways to express ideas, allowing users to reconsider sentence structure before finalizing their drafts.

Translating

The translating stage refers to transforming planned ideas into linguistic form. Flower and Hayes emphasize that translation requires both linguistic knowledge and conceptual understanding. In this process, Paraphraser.io plays an important role, as it helps students experiment with sentence construction and vocabulary. By reformulating sentences, learners can observe how meaning changes with different syntactic structures, improving their ability to produce original expressions. Paraphrasing activities, as supported by Paraphraser.io, align closely with this stage because they demand deep comprehension and reconstruction of meaning. In contrast, Grammarly contributes by providing real-time corrective feedback as writers convert ideas into text, ensuring that grammatical and stylistic accuracy is maintained during translation.

Reviewing

The reviewing stage in Flower and Hayes' model involves evaluating and revising written work. It requires writers to reread their text, detect problems, and make improvements in structure, grammar, and coherence. Grammarly functions directly within this stage by helping users identify surface-level errors and stylistic inconsistencies. The immediate feedback provided by the tool allows writers to make revisions efficiently, promoting linguistic awareness and self- regulated learning. Paraphraser.io also supports the reviewing process by helping students reconstruct sentences that lack clarity or originality. Both tools enhance the recursive nature of writing, in which reviewing leads back to new planning and translation cycles.

Particularly for students and academic writers in EFL contexts, understanding how digital writing tools reflect the stages of Flower and Hayes' (1981) cognitive process is essential. While Grammarly supports surface-level revision through grammatical correction, it may limit deeper engagement if learners rely solely on automated feedback. In contrast, Paraphraser.io encourages writers to reconstruct meaning and reformulate ideas, yet this process can also present challenges for non-native writers who struggle with maintaining the original intent of the text. These distinctions highlight that the cognitive process of writing requires a balance between linguistic accuracy and conceptual understanding. Furthermore, while Grammarly emphasizes reviewing for correctness, Paraphraser.io focuses more on translating and reinterpreting ideas, showing that each tool serves a unique cognitive function. Although Flower and Hayes' model primarily describes internal writing mechanisms, its application in modern digital contexts reveals how technology mediates the interaction between planning, translating, and reviewing. Therefore, examining how Grammarly and Paraphraser.io complement each other in supporting effective writing and rewriting becomes crucial to enhance both the linguistic and cognitive aspects of academic literacy.

3. METHOD

This study employed a comparative descriptive qualitative approach supported by quantitative data to ensure comprehensive and reliable findings. This methodological choice aligns with the need to systematically analyze the similarities and contrasts between two distinct digital tools.Guided by Flower and Hayes's (1981) cognitive process theory which identifies the recursive stages of planning, translating, and reviewing the research explored how Grammarly and Paraphraser.io assist students in improving writing and rewriting skills. The data were gathered through a Google Form questionnaire distributed to 32 undergraduate students of English Education who had experience using both tools in academic writing between 2023 and 2024. The questionnaire contained eleven items consisting of closed- and open-ended questions. Items 1–4 collected general information on tool usage and writing purposes, items 5–8 used a five-point Likert scale to measure perceptions of grammatical accuracy, rewriting ability, feedback quality, and overall writing improvement, while items 9–11 invited participants to provide descriptive responses about their experiences, opinions, and evaluations of each platform's strengths and weaknesses. This sampling ensured that all participants shared a similar academic background, allowing for consistent and relevant insights into tool effectiveness.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and thematic analysis. Quantitative responses from the Likert-scale items were tabulated to reveal patterns and trends in students' perceptions, whereas qualitative data from open-ended responses were coded thematically to identify recurring ideas related to the cognitive stages of planning, translating, and reviewing. The analysis compared Grammarly and Paraphraser.io in terms of their contributions to grammatical accuracy, idea reconstruction, and overall writing performance. Through this methodological framework, the study provided a clear and systematic understanding of how both tools influence the writing process and offered pedagogical insights into the integration of digital platforms in academic writing to enhance students' linguistic accuracy, critical awareness, and cognitive engagement.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research are presented and discussed below, beginning with a comparative analysis of empirical data to substantiate the theoretical framework established in Chapter 2. To compare the effectiveness of Grammarly and Paraphraser.io in supporting writing and rewriting skills, this section analyzes how each tool aligns with Flower and Hayes's (1981) cognitive process model, which includes the stages of planning, translating, and reviewing. This analysis helps determine which tool performs more effectively in enhancing students' academic writing accuracy, coherence, and idea reconstruction based on the three cognitive stages. The comparison highlights the distinct and complementary roles of each tool in the writing process.

Tabel 1. Comparative Analysis of Student Rewriting Performance Using Grammarly and Paraphraser.io.

Section	Content
1. Original Student Text Paragraph	– Mount Sibayak is a popular and easily accessible mountain located in North Sumatra. It is easy to hike and offers beautiful scenic views. Many visitors come to enjoy the cool air, observe the sulfur smoke rising from the crater, and watch the sunrise from the summit. The trail is not too difficult, making it suitable for beginners who want to experience hiking an active volcano.

Analysis of Original Text	The original paragraph uses simple vocabulary and clear sentence structure to describe Mount Sibayak's accessibility, natural scenery, and suitability for beginners. It communicates ideas effectively but remains informal and general, lacking academic diction and refined transitions. While coherent, it would benefit from more precise vocabulary and stronger clarity to meet academic writing standards.
2. Grammarly Rewriting – Paragraph	Mount Sibayak is described as a well-known peak in North Sumatra that is relatively simple to climb and provides stunning vistas. Numerous travelers visit to savor the refreshing climate, observe the sulfur fumes emanating from the crater, and witness the sunrise from the top. The path is quite manageable, making it ideal for novices looking to hike an active volcano.
Analysis of Grammarly Rewriting	Grammarly improves vocabulary, clarity, and overall academic tone. It replaces basic expressions with more refined alternatives such as "well-known peak" and "stunning vistas." The sentence structure remains close to the original, indicating minimal reconstruction. The meaning stays consistent, showing no semantic drift. Grammarly functions as an editor that polishes the text while maintaining the core message.
3. Paraphrase.io Rewriting – Paragraph	Mount Sibayak is a famous mountain in North Sumatra that is easy to explore and offers breathtaking views. Many visitors come to enjoy the fresh air, see the sulfur smoke billowing from the crater, and watch the sunrise from its peak. The hiking trail is not too difficult, making it suitable for beginners who want to experience climbing an active volcano.
Analysis of Paraphrase.io Rewriting	Paraphrase.io introduces more extensive changes, using expressive vocabulary and altering sentence structures. Words like "breathtaking views," "billowing smoke," and "easy to explore" create a more vivid impression but also introduce slight semantic shifts. Compared to Grammarly, Paraphrase.io performs deeper rewriting and focuses on stylistic variety and creative transformation rather than strict fidelity.
4. Comparative Analysis	Both rewriting tools preserve the main meaning,

(Similarity & Differences)	improve grammar, and produce a more academic tone. However, Grammarly keeps the original structure and focuses on precision, clarity, and coherence. Paraphrase.io applies more creative rewriting, resulting in greater stylistic variation and higher chances of semantic drift. Grammarly acts more like an editor, while Paraphrase.io functions as a transformative paraphraser.
5. Analysis Based on Flower & Hayes (1981)	According to Flower and Hayes' cognitive writing smodel, Grammarly mainly strengthens the reviewing process by enhancing accuracy, clarity, and lexical precision. It also supports controlled translating by preserving meaning while improving expression. Paraphrase.io, in contrast, heavily engages the translating process, producing new structures and vocabulary. However, its lack of feedback weakens monitoring and reviewing. Grammarly therefore enhances analytical revision skills, while Paraphrase.io improves generative paraphrasing skills.

The comparative analysis presented in Table 4.1 reveals clear functional distinctions between the two tools. Grammarly tends to maintain the original syntactic structure (*minimal rewriting*), focusing on accuracy and clarity, and is thus primarily aligned with the Reviewing stage in the Flower & Hayes (1981) model. Conversely, Paraphraser.io generates substantial linguistic restructuring (*substantial restructuring*), emphasizing variation and the formation of new sentence structures, which predominantly activates the Translating stage. While both enhance rewriting quality, Grammarly strengthens analytical revision skills, whereas Paraphraser.io encourages generative paraphrasing ability. This difference confirms the complementary cognitive impacts of the tools, supporting the principle of comparative analysis (Collier, 1993).

Result

Following the empirical evidence provided in Table 4.1, the study synthesizes the thematic findings from the open-ended responses to comprehensively map the functional roles of both tools onto the cognitive framework. Table 4.2 illustrates how Grammarly and Paraphraser.io specifically support each recursive stage of the writing process as defined by Flower and Hayes (1981): Planning, Translating, and Reviewing

Table 2. Comparison of Writing Process Stages Using Grammarly and Paraphraser.io.

Cognitive Stage (Flower & Hayes, 1981)	Grammarly	Paraphraser.io
Planning	Helps users organize ideas and improve clarity before drafting. Grammarly's vocabulary and tone suggestions allow writers to identify weak areas and refine focus in their writing plan.	Assists users in exploring alternative expressions for planned ideas, providing different sentence options that inspire idea generation. However, meaning shifts may occur when overused.
Translating	Ensures grammatical accuracy and stylistic consistency while transforming ideas into written form. The tool helps users maintain sentence structure and coherence during writing.	Plays a major role in reconstructing sentences and paraphrasing ideas. It helps users restate concepts using varied syntax and vocabulary to enhance originality and avoid plagiarism.
Reviewing	Offers detailed feedback on grammar, punctuation, and coherence. Users can detect and revise surface-level errors efficiently, improving final draft quality.	Supports revision by rephrasing unclear or repetitive sentences. However, it is less effective in evaluating overall cohesion and logical flow.

As illustrated in Table 4.2, the thematic findings reveal that Grammarly and Paraphraser.io hold distinct yet complementary functions across the cognitive stages. Grammarly's primary strength lies in the Reviewing stage, where its instant feedback mechanism enables users to actively monitor and correct errors, thereby promoting linguistic accuracy and self-regulated learning. Conversely, Paraphraser.io is predominantly employed in the Translating stage, assisting students in generating new syntactic structures and lexical variations essential for effective paraphrasing. The differential activation across these stages underscores the specialized nature of each tool: Grammarly for analytical editing and Paraphraser.io for generative writing.

Although the thematic findings (Table 4.2) demonstrate the tools' distinct roles across the cognitive stages, a comprehensive understanding also requires a direct comparison of the final output quality produced by each platform. Therefore, Table 4.3 summarizes the functional comparison between Grammarly and Paraphraser.io based on key aspects that affect academic text quality, such as grammatical accuracy, meaning preservation, paraphrasing ability, and feedback quality.

Table 3. Comparative Analysis of Grammarly and Paraphraser.io Output Quality.

Aspects Compared	Grammarly Output	Paraphraser.io Output
Main Function	Provides corrections on grammar, punctuation, word choice, clarity, and style.	Rewrites sentences by changing structure and vocabulary to increase variation.
Grammar Accuracy	Very accurate; offers direct corrections for grammar and punctuation.	Not focused on grammar; sometimes produces sentences that still require correction.
Meaning Preservation	Maintains the original meaning because it only improves language accuracy.	Possible *meaning shift* if the paraphrase changes the structure too far.
Vocabulary Changes	Suggests subtle word improvements to enhance clarity and tone.	Replaces words with new synonyms to increase variety and originality.
Sentence Structure	Improves sentence structure Without significantly changing the original pattern.	Produces new and more varied sentence structures.
Originality / Anti-plagiarism	Does not paraphrase; Therefore does not increase originality.	Highly useful for increasing originality by transforming expressions.
Feedback Quality	Provides detailed explanations of errors and suggestions.	Does not give explanations; only shows the paraphrased version.
Consistency / Coherence	Enhances coherence through clarity and Conciseness suggestions.	Coherence may shift if the paraphrased structure changes too much.
User Control	Users can accept or reject each suggestion manually.	Users receive a final Paraphrased output and must edit it again if needed.
Suitability for Academic Writing	Highly suitable for ensuring academic language accuracy.	Suitable for rewriting and Avoiding plagiarism, but requires careful checking.

Analysis Based on Flower and Hayes's (1981) Theory

The comparison of output results (Table 4.3) reinforces the functional differences between the two tools. Grammarly excels in providing high Grammar Accuracy and maintaining Meaning Preservation because its main function is correction and refinement. Its detailed Feedback Quality also supports critical self-correction. In contrast, Paraphraser.io is highly valued for Originality / Anti-plagiarism as it significantly transforms sentence structures and replaces vocabulary. However, this deep structural change introduces a risk of Meaning Shift and often produces sentences that still require grammatical correction, highlighting its primary focus on generative rephrasing rather than linguistic precision.

Discussion
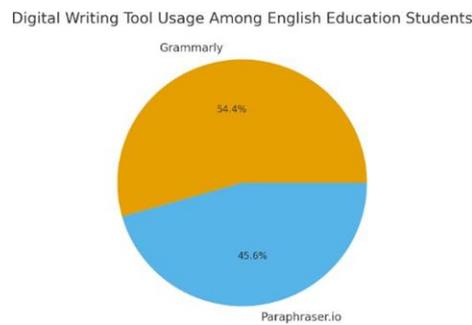
Figure 1. Digial writing tool usage among English education students.

The findings indicate that English Education students rely considerably on digital writing tools, with Grammarly being slightly more dominant, as 54.4% of respondents reported using it, while 45.6% indicated using Paraphraser.io. Grammarly is also used more frequently, with many students reporting regular or consistent use, reflecting its strong role in improving grammatical accuracy, clarity, and overall writing quality. In contrast, Paraphraser.io, though still widely utilized, functions primarily as a complementary tool for paraphrasing and reformulating ideas to support originality in academic writing. Students noted improvements in their writing performance after using both platforms, with many indicating noticeable progress in accuracy and coherence. Additionally, Grammarly received higher accuracy perceptions compared to Paraphraser.io, showing greater user trust in its corrective features, while Paraphraser.io was viewed as effective but more limited in preserving meaning and stylistic consistency. Overall, the results highlight that Grammarly serves as the primary tool for language accuracy, whereas Paraphraser.io plays a supporting role in rewriting and idea transformation, making both platforms beneficial yet functionally distinct within academic writing practices.

5. CONCLUSION

Grammarly and Paraphraser.io are digital writing tools that enhance students' academic writing and rewriting skills through distinct yet complementary functions across the cognitive stages of planning, translating, and reviewing, as outlined in Flower and Hayes's (1981) model. In the planning stage, Grammarly helps users organize ideas and improve clarity through vocabulary and tone suggestions, while Paraphraser.io supports idea generation by offering alternative sentence structures. During the translating stage, Grammarly ensures grammatical accuracy and stylistic consistency when transforming ideas into written form, whereas Paraphraser.io plays a major role in reconstructing sentences and rephrasing ideas to enhance originality and avoid plagiarism. In the reviewing stage, Grammarly provides detailed feedback

on grammar, punctuation, coherence, and meaning preservation, while Paraphraser.io assists in refining clarity by rephrasing unclear or repetitive sentences. Survey results reinforce these functional distinctions, as 54.4% of respondents reported using Grammarly and 45.6% reported using Paraphraser.io, indicating both tools' widespread adoption. Grammarly is perceived as highly accurate, reliable, and effective for correction, while Paraphraser.io is valued for its ability to improve rewriting skills and foster originality. Overall, the combined findings demonstrate that Grammarly and Paraphraser.io play significant but different roles in students' writing development: Grammarly functions primarily as an accuracy-focused tool that strengthens grammatical precision, coherence, and reviewing skills with minimal structural changes, whereas Paraphraser.io serves as a generative rewriting tool that supports the translating process by producing new syntactic structures and varied vocabulary. Together, these tools form a complementary integration of linguistic accuracy and creative reformulation, enabling students to produce clearer, more refined, and more original academic texts.

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