AI-Powered Writing Tools: Does Word-tune Bring Benefits for EFL Learners' Writing Performance?

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Abstract : These days, the use of AI-powered writing tools has been increasingly exploited by some practitioners. These AI tools have brought benefits to learners, especially EFL learners. This facilitates, for example, them with translating, editing and revising stages. However, a technology that understands writers ideas and suggests opinions for rewriting them using different tones and lengths is scarcely used. Thus, the current study attempts to fill this gap. Using a poststructuralist lens, this study attempts to investigate the use of Word-tune as an AI-writing tool by EFL learners. Two EFL learners were recruited to investigate their perception of using Word-tune for writing and invited to join the semi-structured interviews to uncover the benefits of the tool. The results indicate that Word-tune has facilitated them a lot, especially when they need to construct different sentences but still in the original meaning. It also facilitates them with avoiding plagiarism and translation features, making them more easily to understand and improve their writing performance. The suggestions for future studies were offered at the end of this paper.

Key Words : AI-Enhanced Writing Tool; Word-Tune; EFL Learners; Writing Performance

INTODUCTION

Along with the advancement of technology, the situation of pedagogy in English language teaching (ELT) context has encountered diversities from traditional to modern English language teaching. In the traditional language teaching, for example, translation method (Sharma et al, 2024) has been widely used for ages. The process of language teaching and learning also include black or white-board in the classroom and even no technology was used in this language teaching and learning process. As language teachers, we are required to improve our teaching strategy. Sometimes, tools that support our language teaching are indispensable to use. Since science and

technology evolve, teachers should be capable of embracing sophisticated technologies for supporting their language teaching and learning. As such, many teachers are ready to accept and adopt them.

In this era, there have been many tools or technologies developed by practitioners to facilitate the English language teaching situation both offline and online, even today's emerging technologies have evolved such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, conversational robots, virtual worlds, virtual reality, augmented reality, automated assessment, and so forth (Hubbard, 2023). Since this is the case, teachers must be able to adapt to this shift.

Therefore, there have been many studies regarding the use of AI in English language teaching (ELT), for example, the use of Chat GPT in English language teaching (ELT) (Hong, 2023; Pavlik, 2023; Rudholp, 2023), the use of Jenny AI in English language teaching (ELT) (Yang, 2015), and the use of Chatbots in English language learning in higher education (Annamalai et al., 2023; Klimova & Seraj, 2023). These AIs have been utilized extensively within the language teaching context and used for supporting the English teaching context.

Although these AI studies have been extensively carried out in English language teaching, however, there is no study investigating the benefits of using WordTune in English language teaching, especially in the Indonesian context. As such, the current study attempts to fill this gap. This study aims to look into the benefits of using WordTune as one of the AI applications in the English language learning, especially in the higher education. The results may contribute significantly to the improvement of the language teaching and learning process in higher education. In order to cope with this topic, research questions were addressed in the following:

Research Questions:
a. How do students use WordTune to improve their writing performance?
b. What are the benefits received by students in using Word Tune to improve their writing performance?

RESEARCH METHOD

Using a poststructuralist lens, the current study attempts to employ a case study to investigate the pre-service English teachers' perspectives of using word-tune for writing. According to Rashid et al., (2019), a case study is useful to investigate phenomena within a specific context. This study delves into pre-service English teachers' views of the power of using word-tune for writing improvement.

Participation

The visibility for inclusion of participation is important. In this case, students must have been learning English at least, they belong to the second semester. Therefore, only those who signed the research consent will be recruited as the participants of this study. As a result, two EFL learners at the University voluntarily participated in this study. They are Ahmad and Doni, Ahmad is a university student, majoring in English Education Program. He has been in the second semester and has been studying English for almost one year since coming to the University. In the meatime, Doni is also a university student who has been in the fourth semester at the University. He is one of the enthusiastic students at the University to learn English. In the meantime. All of these students shared their experiences of using Word-tune for language learning.

Data collection

In gathering the data, the researcher employed a semi-structured interview and documentation. The interview lasted between 30–40 minutes, revolving around the benefits of using Word-tune as an AI-powered writing tool. The documentation was also done to capture the benefits of word-tune for writing improvement.

Data analysis

In analyzing the data, the researcher used a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), involving familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, looking for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, naming themes, and producing the final report. First of all, the data were read again and again critically until the researcher comprehended the data. This takes five to ten minutes. When it was finished, the researcher started the significant codes coming out of the entire data set, arranging the data relevant to each code. When the coding stage has been finished, the researcher subsequently gathered the data into the potential themes. The step is then continuously done to check whether the themes are in line with the coded extracts, subsequently demonstrating a thematic map of analysis. To be reliable for the codes, the researcher then invited another experienced researcher to look into the data analysis, including checking the codes and themes carefully and thoroughly. At last, the researcher produces the ultimate report. The overarching themes were subsequently produced: grammar improvement, richness of rephrasing, avoidance of plagiarism, and easy translation from native language to English.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Within this section, the researcher portrays learners' perspectives towards the use of Word-Tune as an AI writing tool to improve students' writing performance. In this case, their perspectives involve clarity of writing, correct grammatical form, and avoiding plagiarism in word-tune. These benefits are taken by students when using the Word-Tune.

Table 1. Themes of learners' perspectives of using Word-tune for writing performance

Clarity of writing	Grammar Correction	Avoiding plagiarism	Translation Feature
Helping write more clearly	Fixing grammar mistakes	Abstaining from plagiarism	Translating from Source to Target Language

Based on the interview analysis, three scenarios were found: clarity of writing, correct grammatical form, and avoiding plagiarism.

1. Clarity of writing
   Helping write more clearly

Using Word-tune for language writing has been regarded beneficial for EFL Learners at the University. The students confirmed that Word-tune has made their writing more clearly so that their writing is better than ever. What's more, they can also learn from its writing style.

"*When I used this application for writing skill, I found many solutions to my problems in writing. This app gives me easiness in writing English. I can write more clearly than before. I can learn from it*" (Doni, 2024). (**Excerpt 1**)

This is also confirmed by another student that Word-tune has improved their writing by learning synonym and re-write offers.

"Yea.., I feel that word tune has given many facilities to me, like showing synonyms, re-write suggestion" (Ahmad, 2024). (**Excerpt 2**)

Therefore, it can be concluded that word-tune assist their writing improvement since it belongs to a digital writing assistant.

2. Grammar correction

Fixing grammar mistakes

Using word-tune for writing performance has also given awareness to the students in terms of correct writing and students can learn from this regarding the way the grammar is used, especially in the re-write suggestions.

"With the useful application, word-tune, has provided many opportunities for me to recognize not only re-write recommendation but also correct grammar used in the sentences offered. Indeed, I, sometimes, committed errors in writing, especially grammar" (Doni, 2024). (**Excerpt 1**)

"I believe that word-tune will be the useful application for EFL learners sooner or later. It will improve their writing skill since it provides a feature for fixing grammar mistakes. To be honest, my writing improves gradually. I can learn grammar from the word-tune application" (Ahmad, 2024). (**Excerpt 2**)

3. Avoiding plagiarism

Abstaining from plagiarism

Another feature offered by word-tune is a rephrasing tool. The students, who, would like to avoid plagiarism in writing English, they could use rephrashing tool as an assistance for avoiding such thing. By using this feature, the students confirmed that they could recognize the paraphrased sentences by the word-tune. For sure, this is quite beneficial to them. As they suggest in the following :

"re-writing and rephrashing features available in word-tune have made me much easier to recognize and learn how to paraphrase properly so as to avoid plagiarism in writing" (Doni, 2024). (**Excerpt 1**)

"I feel that it is important to avoid plagiarism even my lecturer suggests that I should avoid plagiarism since it is a bad act. This application is usefull since there is a feature of rephrasing words which is meant to avoid such thing" (Ahmad, 2024). (**Excerpt 2**)

4. Translation Features

Translating from Source to Target Language

In addition to that, the word-tune also provides learners with translation feature. EFL learners exploit this to translate source language to target language. For example, they can translate from Indonesia to English as the target language. Indeed, this feature helps to facilitate them so that they could communicate easily using the target language. As demonstrated in the following:

"One of the most important things I can learn from word-tune is doing translation. I, sometimes, have difficulties translating from Indonesia to English. Anyway, word-tune has made me easier to do that" (Doni, 2024). (**Excerpt 1**)

"When I translate a language from Indonesia to English, I used to commit errors. Therefore, I then used a Google Translate to do that. However, word-turn has brought

some benefits to me, one of which is that I could translate it easily by clicking the re-write feature" (Ahmad, 2024). (**Excerpt 2**)
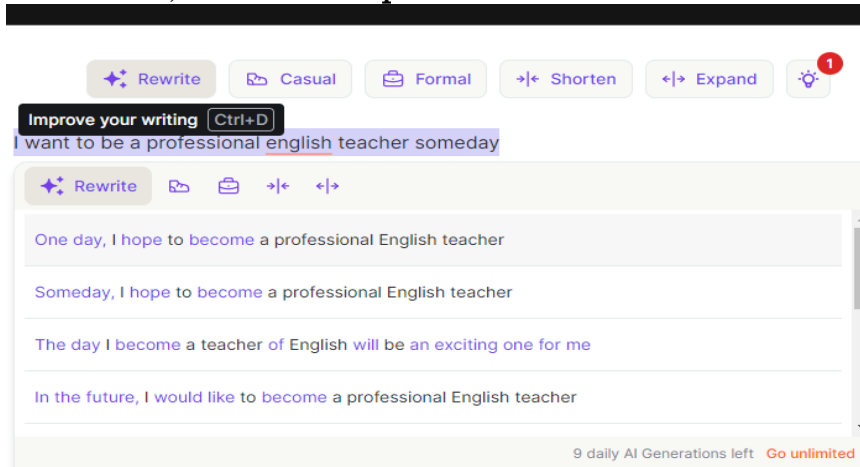

Figure 1. Rewriting and rephrasing feature of Word-tune
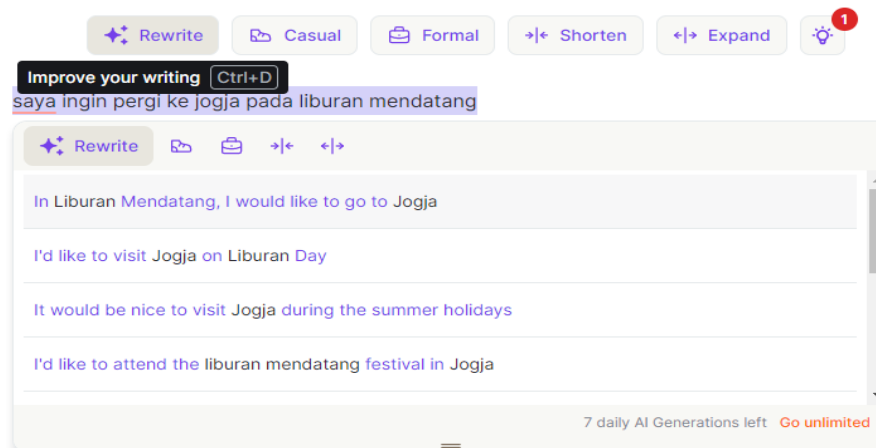

Figure 2. Translation feature of Word-tune

Discussion

Drawing on the postructuralist views, the current study attempts to investigate students' teachers' perspectives towards using Word-Tune for learning to write. The findings have suggested that the EFL students have three perspectives after using word-tune for their writing performance: clarity of writing, correct grammatical form, and avoiding plagiarism. As such, the current study has brought a new insight into the field of English language learning, meaning that word-tune has facilitated students a lot to improve their writing performance.

First and foremost, the learners view that using word-tune has offered clarity of writing. It means that rewrites help him identify and address conflict in their writing, leading to increased meaning and learning (Sommers, 1980). As Barrot (2020) cited in Zhao (2022) explains, by identifying dissonance among their own writing and the more effective re-write options, self-directed learning can help EFL writers improve their English writing ability and interlanguage skills and make their writing better. Apart from that, word-tune has.

Secondly, word-tune has provided EFL students with correct grammatical form. There are a number of students experiencing difficulties in writing English. They, for

the most part, commit errors in writing especially grammar. The results of this study inform that the EFL students feel more facilitated with the word-tune since it can improve their writing performance. They could learn how to write properly and correctly in English by recognizing the re-write options offered by the word-tune. This is for sure that AI has played a pivotal role for improving and developing one's ability. Fitria (2024) states that AI is the act of modelling the human mind and building a computer that behaves like a person, often known as cognitive tasks.

Furthermore, word tune has brought benefits for students since it can avoid students from plagiarism. We know that plagiarism is a bad act and refers to academic dishonesty as well as has been a major concern for the educational system (Winardi et al., 2017). Word-tune is available to facilitate students with a feature to avoid such plagiarism. As EFL students, sometimes, it is difficult to abstain from plagiarism while writing English. It can also happen mostly to those who do not have abilities to paraphrase words. Based on the result of the study above, the students feel that they have opportunities to select some words written differently but have the same meaning. Therefore, the word-time comes to bring benefits to students to paraphrase their text, making it easier to avoid plagiarism while maintaining the original meaning because this app has re-write and rephrase tools that are of advantage (Fitria, 2022).

Lastly, word-tune has facilitated students with translation feature. This feature could be exploited by anyone or writers who would like to translate a language from source to target language. Based on the study above, it reveals that students has tried to translate languages from sources to target language. However, they often commit errors. As a result, word-tune turns out to be a solution to them. They use the application for translation subsequently. As Zhao (2023) affirms that this translation mechanism is particularly beneficial for EFL writers who compose sentences or parts of sentences in another language.

From the explanation above, it implies that word-tune has played a pivotal role in improving students' writing proficiency. By using the word-tune on regular basis, students can improve their writing performance since it offers rephrase and re-write options. For sure, this AI writing tool make them much easier than before. The teachers, can also utilize this and recommend this to their students at school.

The current study was only focused on the students' views of using word-tune for writing ability. This is also conducted at the private university with pre-service English teachers. Other studies can be conducted in other settings to provide a more intensive and extensive results regarding the benefits of Word-tune.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION
Conclusion

Wordtune is an AI-powered writing helper that assists users throughout the writing process by suggesting rewrite or paraphrasing possibilities for their original material. This application can help EFL writers generate or translate concepts into English, so improving the quality of their work. It can also help users stay motivated throughout the writing process and avoid getting stuck on tough words or sentences in English. Wordtune is a potential tool for EFL writers who want to improve their English writing. However, it is not without restrictions. Currently, the utility is only accessible when the user is connected to the internet. Therefore, it is quite valuable to utilize.

Suggestion

As EFL Learners, it is important to always improve their writing to be proficient. Word-tune, therefore, brings one of the best solutions, offering re-write-rephrase tunes which can help learners learn a lot about how to write English correctly and properly. Learners can call the translation and rephrasing features into service. They will for sure be better in their writing performance afterward.

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