L2 writing teachers' use of Grammarly to complement their formative feedback

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Automated writing evaluation (AWE) systems have grown in popularity as a source of feedback that can complement teachers' response to L2 writing. The automated feedback's complementary nature is representative of a system's adept ability to provide feedback on sentence-level issues (Ranalli et al., 2017). Although it has been suggested that AWE can free up teacher's time to focus more on higher-level concerns (Koltovskaia, 2020), the impact of AWE on teachers' feedback practice is underexplored. Knowing this can contribute to the knowledge needed for the appropriate application of AWE systems for formative assessment in L2 writing classrooms. The aim of the study is two-fold: (1) to determine the error correction performance of Grammarly and (2) to understand how Grammarly impacts teachers' feedback provision when they use it to supplement their feedback and their perceptions of Grammarly. To achieve this aim, two studies were conducted. Study 1 was based on fifty-three argumentative essay drafts written by ESL university students. Grammarly feedback's accuracy was measured using precision and recall and compared to teacher feedback. In Study 2, novice and experienced teachers used Grammarly to supplement their feedback when evaluating essays from Study 1. Their feedback was analysed to understand Grammarly's impact on their feedback activity. The teachers then had a semi-structured interview aimed at exploring their perceptions of Grammarly. While findings of Study 1 revealed that Grammarly's precision and recall rates were relatively high, findings of Study 2 showed that teachers gave more attention to higher-level concerns while Grammarly took care of lower-level concerns. However, such division of labour was not always clear cut. Teachers also focused on sentence-level issues, especially if Grammarly feedback was inaccurate. Overall, teachers were positive about Grammarly feedback. The presentation provides implications for how to use Grammarly meaningfully to complement teacher formative feedback in L2 writing classrooms.