

IMPROVING STUDENTS' MASTERY OF SIMPLE PAST TENSE USING GRAMMARLY

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ABSTRACT

This classroom action research aims to improve students' mastery of the simple past tense in Grade X at SMA Taruna Bumi Khatulistiwa through the use of Grammarly in the learning process. The research was conducted in two cycles, each consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection stages, involving 27 Grade X-C students. Data were collected through observation sheets, field notes, student assignments, and portfolios. The results of the research showed a gradual improvement in pupils' command of simple past tense sentences, particularly in the use of verb 2 in positive sentences, verb 1 in negative and interrogative sentences, and the addition of appropriate time adverbs. Grammarly provided immediate feedback that assisted the learners in identifying and correcting the grammatical errors independently. The research results indicate that Grammarly is an interesting tool for improving mastery of the simple past tense.

Keywords: *Mastery of Simple Past Tense, Grammarly, Classroom Action Research*

A. Pendahuluan

English language learning includes four main skills, one of which is writing. Writing is a complex productive skill as it involves grammar, vocabulary, and proper text structure. Gardener (2016) stated that writing is the most difficult skill for second or foreign language learners to master. In the context of English language learning in schools, writing skills are often a significant challenge,

especially in terms of using correct grammar.

SMA Taruna Bumi Khatulistiwa had already implemented the Merdeka curriculum system. In the Merdeka curriculum for the X Grade high school level, it had entered phase E. In this phase, there are learning outcomes in writing and presenting. It is stated that at the end of phase E, students produce more varied written and visual texts, using language features,

vocabulary, and verbs correctly. The Merdeka curriculum places great emphasis on students' skills to write and express ideas through text. According to Zidan and Omariah (2023), the Merdeka curriculum encourages the use of technology and digital media to strengthen students' writing skills. Teachers must master the ability to utilize technology to support teaching and learning activities in the classroom. Students can utilize digital media platforms to explore various types of texts and enhance their interaction with learning materials.

The researcher previously observed and taught students in class XC at SMA Taruna Bumi Khatulistiwa during an internship program from September to December 2024. The results of teaching in class XC showed that students had difficulty writing and mastering sentences in the simple past tense. Students in class XC of SMA Taruna Bumi Khatulistiwa have difficulty understanding how to write simple past-tense sentences. Students' difficulty in mastering the simple past tense is that many students cannot place the verb tense correctly. Simple past is a sentence that uses verb form 2, but students in

class XC still use a lot of verb 1 or verb 3. In addition, the negative form of simple past sentences is to use verb 1, but students still use verb 2 and verb 3. In addition to the incorrect placement of verbs, students have not mastered the structure of writing simple past-tense sentences. From this, the researcher aims to address the students' problems by utilizing Grammarly as a tool to help them master the simple past tense.

The problem experienced by students of class XC SMA Taruna Bumi Khatulistiwa is in mastering grammar. Grammar is the basic rule of language. Grammar is the basis of teaching writing skills. Systems and patterns in grammar are essential for composing understandable sentences. There are many grammar rules, but the one discussed is tenses, because the problem faced by students in class XC at SMA Taruna Bumi Khatulistiwa is in writing tenses, especially the simple past tense. Tenses are verb forms that relate to time. Tenses are divided into various types, but one of these is the simple past. According to Bradley (2015) simple past tense is a tense used to express an action that has started and ended in the past.

Grammar is an important foundation in writing skills because the systems and patterns in grammar determine the clarity and comprehensibility of sentences. Therefore, mastery of the simple past tense is an essential skill that needs to be strengthened. To resolve this problem, the researcher took the initiative to use the Grammarly application as a medium to assist students in learning. Grammarly is an online grammar checking platform that can help students recognize grammar mistakes and provide suggestions for improvement. Hadiat, Tarwan, and Irianti (2022) stated that Grammarly is useful in helping students find and understand grammatical errors in their writing.

Classroom action research is essentially a series of research-action-further actions carried out cyclically, in solving problems, until the problem is solved. By using the classroom action research (CAR) method, the researcher can conduct research directly in the classroom and collaborate with the teacher in developing successful strategies. This research can also observe changes in students' writing skills over time and identify factors that influence the

success of using Grammarly to improve students' mastery of the simple past tense. This research aims to enhance students' mastery of the simple past tense by utilizing Grammarly in class XC at SMA Taruna Bumi Khatulistiwa, employing a classroom action research (CAR) method.

Previous research, such as that conducted by Fitria (2021) and Fahmi and Rachmijati (2021), showed that Grammarly has a positive impact on improving students' writing skills, both in terms of reducing grammatical errors and strengthening students' learning independence. The use of Grammarly also assisted students in writing by highlighting the number of errors and the reasons the word is misused. Additionally, Grammarly provides recommendations and suggestions for correcting it, as well as a description of its usage. However, there isn't any specific research focusing on using Grammarly to improve students' mastery of the simple past tense specifically.

Based on this background, the research aims to conduct classroom action research to overcome the problem of mastering the simple past tense in class XC SMA Taruna Bumi

Khatulistiwa. This research was to be carried out through classroom action research (CAR), which allows collaboration between teachers and the researcher in designing, implementing, observing, and reflecting on actions systematically and sustainably. With the CAR approach, it is expected to improve the mastery of grammar, especially the simple past tense, by using the Grammarly web application.

B. Metode Penelitian.

The researcher in this research chose to use the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method. Action research is a process for improving teaching practices. Ikhsanudin, Sudarsono, and Salam (2019, p.10) state that “each cycle of CAR consists of four steps, such as plan, action, observation, and reflection”. Using an organized process of collecting and analyzing information, the researcher seeks to answer questions, solve problems, or understand phenomena (Efron & Ravid, 2019).

The researcher is a collaborator, along with the teacher, in conducting this research. The researcher conducted the research process in stages and used the model of

Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon (2014). It consists of four steps: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The classroom action research (CAR) design used is as follows:

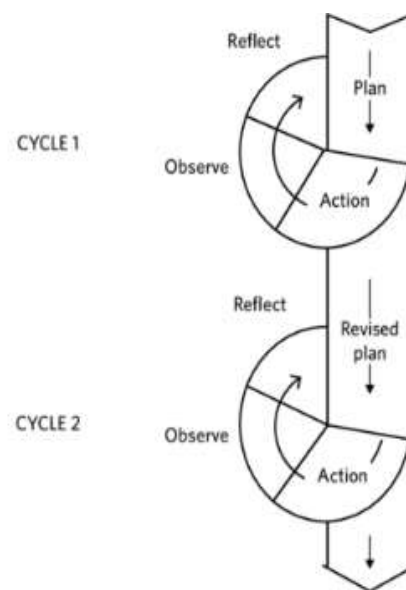


Figure 1. The Classroom Action Research Model, Developed by Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon (2014), in Ratu et al (2024)

The subject of this classroom action research was X-C students at SMA Taruna Bumi Khatulistiwa in the 2024/2025 academic year. This was evident from their frequent grammatical errors in writing assignments, such as incorrect verb tenses and sentence structures when describing past events. Class X-C consists of 27 students, with varying levels of English proficiency.

C. Hasil Penelitian dan Pembahasan

This research was conducted to improve students' mastery of the simple past tense by using Grammarly, especially through the Recount text material. Additionally, the researcher collaborated with the English teacher to implement the use of Grammarly throughout the teaching and learning process, from the beginning to the end of the research.

This research was conducted in two cycles and three meetings, beginning with preliminary observations to identify problems. The results of the observation checklist and field notes showed the development of students' understanding of the use of the Simple Past Tense during the research process. In the preliminary stage, learning still relied on traditional media such as whiteboards and books, which did not support the real-time visualization of grammar concepts. The students had difficulty using the second form of the verb (Verb 2), especially in negative and interrogative sentences. The most common errors included using Verb 1 for past tense contexts and adding the -ed ending despite using "did" or "did not".

In the first cycle, most students started using Grammarly, but still struggled to understand and apply the corrections provided. Many have not added time information in the sentence, so the tense correction is not optimal. Improvements began to be seen in positive sentences, although errors in negative and interrogative sentences were still often found. Students' independence is still low, as students are still dependent on the teacher and researcher.

In the second cycle, there was significant improvement. Students began to use Grammarly independently and understood the benefits of its corrections, especially in the use of Verb 2. The students also began to recognize common error patterns and apply the Simple Past Tense structure correctly, including the use of auxiliary verbs such as did/didn't and was/were. Students' independence in revising their writing increased, and they showed positive responses to the feedback provided. From these results, the gradual use of Grammarly has been proven to assist in improving students' understanding and accuracy of grammar, especially in positive, negative, and interrogative sentences in Simple Past Tense, and

it contributed to reducing grammatical errors in their writing.

The standards score or minimum passing grade (KKM) at SMA Taruna Bumi Khatulistiwa is 70. If these criteria are fulfilled, it means that using Grammarly can assist students in mastering the simple past tense. In analysing students' learning assignments in using Grammarly in cycle 1, the researcher compared students' scores on assignments given without using the assistance of the Dictionary or Grammarly and students' scores on assignments given using Grammarly Assistance.

Then, in cycle 2, the researcher compared students' scores on the assignments given, which were completed after using Grammarly independently. There are five aspects of assessment carried out by the researcher to give scores to students' assignments, which are Spelling and Punctuation, Time Adverbs, Use of Verb 2 in Positive Sentences, Use of Verb 1 in Negative Sentences, and Use of Verb 1 in Interrogative Sentences.

The research and tests conducted resulted in Grammarly being proven useful as a grammar learning assistance tool, particularly in

improving students' understanding and proficiency in the Simple Past Tense structure. The development of scores showed a significant gradual improvement, such as in grammar accuracy. Students who were initially poor in the Simple Past Tense (scores <60) saw a significant increase in their scores to above 80 in Cycle 2. Additionally, the self-correction-based learning process (with digital support) encouraged students to be more active and aware of their own mistakes. In addition, after assessment of students' assignments in each cycle, the researcher assessed the mean of students' assignments in all cycles. The mean results obtained are as follows:

Table 1. The Mean Student Scores

Total Student	Pre	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Mean Score
27 Student				
Total Score	1.240	2.110	2.420	71,22
$S = \frac{f}{n}$	45,92	78,14	89,62	

To show the results from cycle one to cycle two, the researcher provided a chart to show the improvement of students' competence in mastering the simple past tense using Grammarly.

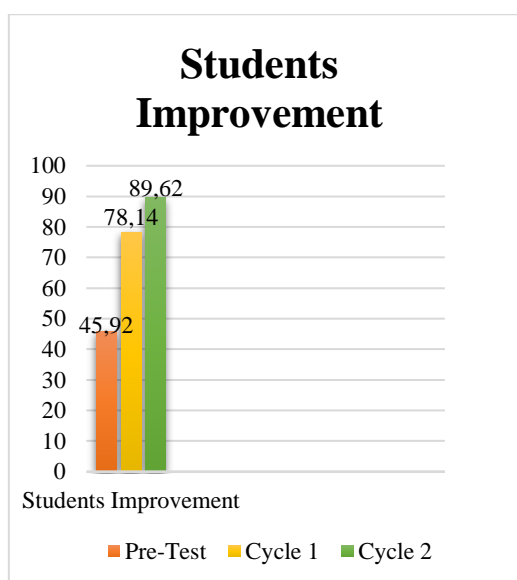


Figure 2. Chart of Students' Improvement

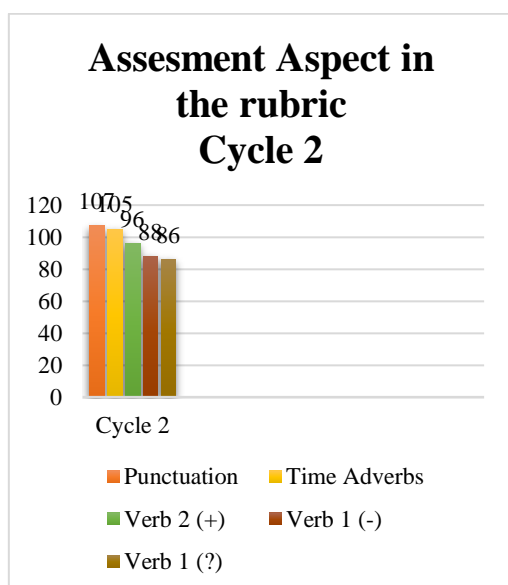


Figure 3. Chart of Assessment aspects in the rubric in Cycle 2

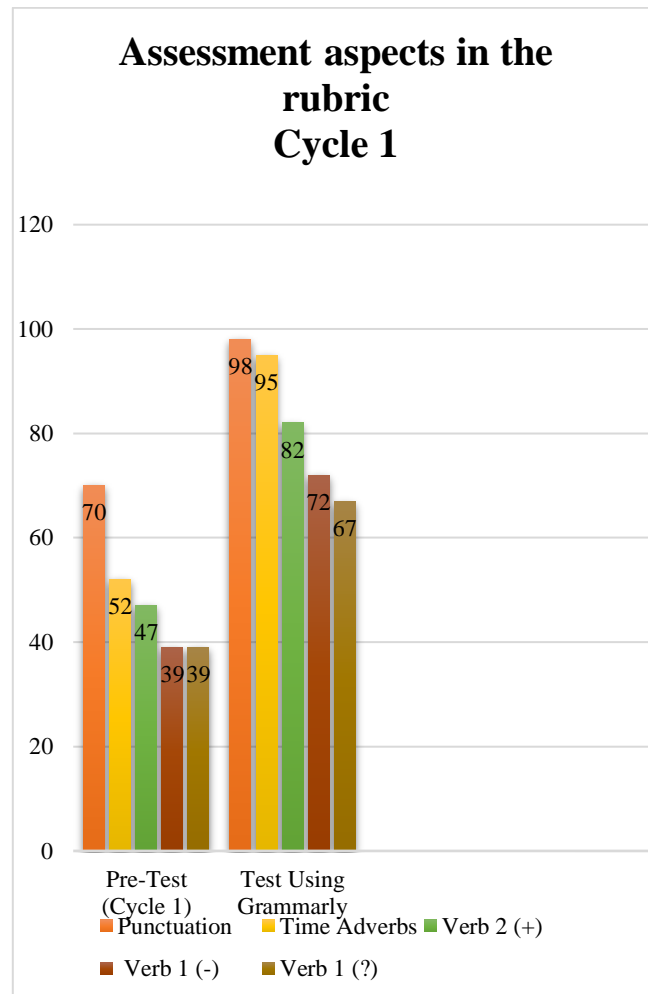


Figure 4. Chart of Assessment aspects in the rubric in Cycle 1

In conducting this research, the researcher held a total of three meetings and two cycles until the researcher was satisfied with the results. The results were that students experienced an increase in mastering the simple past tense using Grammarly. The researcher used classroom action research as a research method, with each cycle consisting of four stages that must be

carried out, including planning, action, observation, and reflection. In this research, the researcher collaborated with the English teacher of class X-C. The researcher acted as a collaborator and observer of the learning process, while the teacher acted as the instructor, explaining and teaching the simple past tense using Grammarly by following the lesson plan prepared by the researcher and approved by the teacher.

The students showed improvement in scores and conduct during the teaching and learning process from the first cycle to the second cycle. It can be said that in this research, students improved in mastering the simple past tense; the students were able to change verbs in the 2 forms to verbs in the 1 form in negative and interrogative simple past tense sentences. In addition, with the assistance of Grammarly in detecting errors, students were also able to explain the errors in the sentences. This is similar to research by Fitria (2021), which stated that the use of Grammarly is an alternative to assist students in checking grammatical errors in the writing. Meanwhile, in the first cycle, many students were unable to access and correct grammar using

Grammarly. Students' scores improved significantly in cycle 1, specifically when using Grammarly and not using Grammarly. In cycle 2, student scores also improved, with the average score in the first cycle at 77,59, increasing to 89.44 in the second cycle.

The improvements observed in this research were the result of a detailed explanation provided by the teacher regarding Grammarly and the simple past tense, as well as the use of the simple past tense in real-life situations during the teaching and learning process in two cycles. This research also showed the same results as previous research conducted by Fitria, Fahmi, and Rachmijati (2021), which indicated that Grammarly can improve students' mastery of grammar. The researchers used Grammarly to improve students' mastery of grammar.

E. Kesimpulan

Based on the analysis and interpretation in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the process of mastering the simple past tense using Grammarly for class X-C at SMA Taruna Bumi Khatulistiwa has improved. Based on the findings and

results of this research, the researcher concluded that using Grammarly can improve students' mastery of the simple past tense. Students find it easiest to understand the use of verb forms in positive, negative, and interrogative sentences (V2 and V1). Students can correct and revise grammar mistakes according to Grammarly's suggestions. In addition, students can explain grammar mistakes. The results can be seen from the improvement process of students in each cycle and can be seen from the increase in the mean score of students between the preliminary research, the first cycle, and the second cycle in Chapter four. There is an improvement in each cycle, which can be seen from the mean score of students in each cycle.

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