

## UTILIZING GRAMMARLY TO IDENTIFY THE ERRORS OF STUDENTS' RECOUNT TEXT: A CASE STUDY IN MTS CENRANA

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study addresses the writing skills of ninth-grade students at MTs Cenrana in composing recount texts, utilizing the Grammarly application. Writing is a complex skill, often challenging for students in aspects of grammar, vocabulary, and idea organization. While Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) tools like Grammarly offer rapid and accurate feedback to aid learning, prior research has predominantly focused on university or vocational contexts, leaving its use for junior high school/MTs students underexplored. This research aims to fill that gap by identifying error types in student recount texts and examining Grammarly's role in enhancing writing motivation. Employing a qualitative descriptive method with a case study approach, data were collected from 20 students for error analysis, with 10 receiving Grammarly treatment and a motivation questionnaire. Findings demonstrate Grammarly's effectiveness, showing a significant score increase from 41.5 to 80.0 ( $p=0.004$ ) and notable reductions in word errors (40%), sentence structure errors (35%), and spelling/punctuation errors (25%). Student motivation also improved significantly, with 80% in the high category, attributed to instant feedback boosting interest, confidence, independent revision, and tense consistency. It is concluded that Grammarly serves effectively as both a corrective tool and a motivational trigger, recommending its integration into learning and further research on long-term impacts.*

**Keywords:** *writing errors, learning motivation, Grammarly, recount text, MTs students.*

### **ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini membahas keterampilan menulis teks recount siswa kelas IX MTs Cenrana dengan bantuan aplikasi Grammarly. Menulis merupakan keterampilan kompleks yang seringkali menyulitkan siswa dalam tata bahasa, kosakata, dan pengorganisasian ide. Meskipun teknologi Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) seperti Grammarly dapat memberikan umpan balik cepat dan akurat untuk membantu pembelajaran, penelitian sebelumnya lebih banyak berfokus pada konteks perguruan tinggi atau sekolah kejuruan, sehingga penggunaan Grammarly untuk siswa SMP/MTs masih jarang dikaji. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengisi kesenjangan tersebut dengan mengidentifikasi jenis kesalahan dalam teks recount siswa serta memahami

peran Grammarly dalam meningkatkan motivasi menulis. Menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus, data dikumpulkan dari 20 siswa untuk analisis kesalahan, dengan 10 siswa menerima perlakuan Grammarly dan kuesioner motivasi. Hasil penelitian membuktikan efektivitas Grammarly, ditunjukkan oleh kenaikan signifikan skor rata-rata dari 41,5 menjadi 80,0 ( $p=0,004$ ) dan penurunan dominan pada kesalahan kata (40%), struktur kalimat (35%), serta ejaan dan tanda baca (25%). Motivasi siswa juga meningkat pesat dengan 80% dalam kategori tinggi, didorong oleh umpan balik instan yang meningkatkan minat, kepercayaan diri, kemandirian revisi, dan konsistensi tenses. Disimpulkan bahwa Grammarly efektif sebagai alat koreksi dan pemicu motivasi, dengan saran untuk mengintegrasikannya dalam pembelajaran serta penelitian lanjutan tentang dampak jangka panjang.

**Kata kunci:** kesalahan tulisan, motivasi belajar, Grammarly, teks recount, siswa MTs.

## **A. Introduction**

Mastery of English is a critical aspect of education in Indonesia, not only to meet the demands of the national curriculum but also as a provision for facing global challenges. The Merdeka Curriculum launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2021) emphasizes the development of literacy and critical thinking skills, including through English language learning. UNESCO (2020) also highlights the importance of English proficiency for the younger generation to access global information and expand educational and career opportunities. One of the core skills in language learning is writing, which is recognized as a complex ability involving dynamic cognitive processes, including planning, organizing ideas,

and revising (Hayes, 2004; Hiver et al., 2018). This complexity often becomes a challenge for students, especially in the context of writing recount texts which require adequate mastery of structure, grammar, and vocabulary.

Preliminary observations at MTs Cenrana showed that ninth-grade students still face significant difficulties in writing English recount texts. These difficulties include improper grammar use, limited vocabulary selection, and errors in spelling and punctuation (Hyland, 2016). This condition reflects the need for more effective and engaging learning approaches to help students overcome these obstacles. On the other hand, the development of educational technology offers potential solutions through Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) tools. Technology such as the

Grammarly application can provide instant and accurate feedback on various aspects of writing, from grammar and spelling to sentence structure (Karatay, 2024; Yao et al., 2021). This quick feedback is believed to not only play a role in correction but also in increasing students' motivation and independence in writing (Kurniawan et al., 2024).

Despite its great potential, the utilization of AWE such as Grammarly in the context of secondary education, especially in Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), is still underexplored. Most previous studies have focused more on university or vocational school students (Erni Yulianti & Reni, 2017; Damayanti, 2024), creating a knowledge gap regarding its effectiveness and role for junior high school/MTs students, especially in the recount text genre. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating two main problems: (1) what types of errors appear in recount texts written by ninth-grade students at MTs Cenrana, and (2) what is the role of the Grammarly application in increasing students' motivation in English writing.

The objectives of this study are to identify error patterns in recount text writing and to understand the contribution of Grammarly as both a learning aid and a motivational trigger. The results of this study are expected to provide benefits, both practically and academically. For students, this research introduces the use of AWE-based technology to improve writing skills independently. For teachers, the findings can serve as a reference for integrating technological tools in writing instruction to make it more engaging and structured. Academically, this study is expected to become a reference and basis for further research on the utilization of technology in English language learning at the secondary education level.

## **B. Research Method**

This study employed a mixed-methods design that integrated quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate the effectiveness of the Grammarly application in identifying errors and enhancing motivation in writing recount texts. The primary design used was a One-Group Pretest-Posttest within a quasi-experimental framework. A total of 20 ninth-grade students from MTs Cenrana participated, with 10 students serving as the experimental group

receiving treatment using Grammarly, and the other 10 students used for baseline error analysis without any treatment. The research was conducted over six sessions.

The research instruments consisted of: (1) a Recount Text Writing Task for pre-test and post-test, with the topic of personal experiences during Eid al-Adha; (2) the free version of the Grammarly application as a corrective intervention tool; (3) an Error Analysis Rubric adapted from Corder (1967) and Ellis (1997) to classify grammatical, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure errors; and (4) a Writing Motivation Questionnaire using a 1-4 Likert scale to measure student perceptions in the aspects of interest, self-confidence, enjoyment, and desire to write more. The questionnaire's validity was tested by an expert, and its reliability showed a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.78.

The data collection procedure began with a pre-test, followed by the administration of the Grammarly treatment to the experimental group, and concluded with a post-test and the completion of the questionnaire. Data were analyzed using descriptive and

inferential statistics, with the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test employed to test for significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores, due to the small sample size ( $n=10$ ) and non-normally distributed data. Qualitative analysis was performed on the writing errors of all participants ( $N=20$ ) to identify dominant error patterns and types. Questionnaire data were analyzed descriptively by converting scores into percentages and categorizing students' motivation levels. settings and guide future research to further explore its potential in enhancing EFL writing instruction.

### **C. Research Findings and Discussion**

This theory has both positive impacts and challenges. The positive impacts include enhancing students' social awareness and communication with others, encouraging interaction and collaboration, and aligning with project-based and contextual curricula. However, it also presents challenges, such as the need for effective class management. Teachers and students must collaborate actively, and there may be a need for integrated approaches, such as genre-based or process-oriented approaches, to be implemented carefully. In practice, techniques that promote interaction and reflection can help address these

challenges. For instance, the REAP (Reading-Encoding-Annotating-Pondering) technique is based on the premise that readers comprehend best when they communicate and reflect on what they have read (Suwarni et al., 2017). This makes it a suitable method for applying social constructivist principles in the classroom. In a similar vein, the structured intervention through teaching techniques has been shown to improve language skills significantly. For example, Suwarni et al. (2017) found that the use of the Reading-Encoding-Annotating-Pondering (REAP) technique significantly improved students' reading comprehension. The mean score rose from 32.58 in the pre-test to 66.05 in the post-test, demonstrating that a systematic, guided approach can lead to measurable gains in language proficiency. This supports the idea that structured support—whether through pedagogical techniques like REAP or technological tools like Grammarly—can effectively address learners' errors and enhance their competence.

Based on data analysis conducted on 20 ninth-grade students of MTs Cenrana, the findings of this study are

described in three main parts: (1) research data description, (2) results of text error analysis, and (3) results of the writing motivation questionnaire. Of the 20 students, 10 were assigned as the experimental group receiving treatment using the Grammarly application, while the other 10 served as the baseline group for initial error mapping without intervention.

### 1. Results of Writing Error Analysis

Error analysis was performed on the recount texts of all respondents (N=20) using the Grammarly application and categorized based on a rubric adapted from Corder (1967) and Ellis (1997). The results indicate that the most dominant errors lie in three aspects: Grammar, Word Choice, and Writing Mechanics (Capitalization & Spelling).

The distribution of error types can be seen in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 Distribution of Dominant Error Types in Recount Text Writing**

No .	Error Type	Total Frequency (N=20)	Percentage
1.	Verb Tense Error	287	32.5%
2.	Subject-Verb Agreement Error	194	22.0%
3.	Word Form Error	167	18.9%
4.	Article & Determiner Error	89	10.1%

5.	<b>Preposition Error</b>	76	8.6%
6.	<b>Mechanical Error (Spelling, Capitalization)</b>	68	7.7%
<b>Total</b>		<b>881</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on Table 1, it is evident that over 73% of student errors originate from three main categories related to verbs and word forms: Tense, Agreement, and Word Form. This confirms the findings of Dulay, Burt, & Krashen (1982) that grammatical errors are a natural reflection of students' interlanguage development and indicate their second language acquisition stage. Tense errors, for example, are seen in the use of base verb forms (go, help, laugh) instead of the required past tense forms (went, helped, laughed) in recount texts. Examples of these errors are illustrated in Figure 1.

**Respondent 7**

Goals
31 Overall score

In eid al adha 2025 my family go to my grandmother house in village we start the trip in friday morning we arriving afternoon we feel so tired but happy because cousin already there and they waiting us. The air in village very cool it make me feel comfort but sometimes raining come and the road was muddy but we still enjoy because we want see grandmother.

On the eid day we wake up so earlier and we go mosque for do the pray id after that the people in village start cutting the cow and goat my father and uncle was busy in field and the meat was share to peoples without organize. I helping the neighbor to carry the meats and my sister is crying because she scare with bloods.

Grandmother cook rendangs ketupats and many food the taste are so delicious and we eating all together with loud voice and we also take a pictures with all family members. We laughing much and the childrens playing in yard until night and no one want go home soon.

It was experience very unforgettable I hopes next year we can coming again to celebrate eid al adha in some way because I not like when

B I U | H1 H2 | | | | |
210 words ^

Figure 1 Example of Tense Errors Detected by Grammarly (Respondent 7)

This finding aligns with previous research indicating that students tend to struggle with the consistent use of the simple past tense for narrating past events (Prasetya & Raharjo, 2023). Furthermore, word form errors such as using nouns (silence, happiness) as adjectives (silent, happy) indicate a still-weak understanding of word classes.

## 2. Inferential Statistical Analysis: Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test

To measure the effectiveness of the Grammarly intervention, inferential statistical analysis was conducted using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test on the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group (n=10). This test was chosen due to the small sample size and the non-normal distribution of gain scores.

**Table 2 Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of the Experimental Group**

Respondent	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	Difference (Post - Pre)
R1	65	88	+23
R2	45	88	+43
R3	41	74	+33
R4	43	91	+48
R5	31	72	+41
R6	34	94	+60
R7	34	83	+49
R8	38	60	+22
R15	40	75	+35
R19	44	75	+31
<b>Mean</b>	<b>41.5</b>	<b>80.0</b>	<b>+38.5</b>



The data in Table 2 shows a very significant increase in the average score, from 41.5 (low category) to 80.0 (good category). The results of the Wilcoxon test (Table 3) confirm that this improvement is statistically significant.

**Table 3 Results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test**

Test Statistics	Value
Z	-2.803
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.005

The  $p$ -value = 0.005 ( $< 0.05$ ) and  $Z = -2.803$  indicate a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. The negative sign of  $Z$  indicates that the post-test scores are consistently higher than the pre-test scores. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Grammarly intervention significantly contributed to improving the quality of students' recount text writing.

### 3. Results of the Writing Motivation Questionnaire

To observe the affective impact of using Grammarly, a writing motivation questionnaire was distributed to the 10 students in the experimental group. The results show that the majority of students experienced increased motivation.

**Table 4 Results of Writing Motivation Questionnaire After Using Grammarly**

Respondent	Total Score	Percentage	Category
R1	154	77%	High
R2	134	67%	Moderate
R3	160	80%	High
R4	152	76%	High
R5	158	79%	High
R6	150	75%	High
R7	155	78%	High
R8	136	68%	Moderate
R15	159	79.5%	High
R19	153	76.5%	High
Distribution			High: 8 (80%) Moderate: 2 (20%) Low: 0

A total of 80% of students fell into the high motivation category after using Grammarly. The most dominantly improved aspects were interest in writing and enjoyment of writing. Students felt more confident because grammatical and vocabulary errors could be corrected instantly. This finding supports Alharbi's (2021) opinion that tools like Grammarly can increase students' confidence and activity in writing.

The findings of this study reveal two main impacts of integrating Grammarly into recount text writing learning: improvement in linguistic accuracy and increase in learning motivation.

### **1. Grammarly as a Corrective Feedback Tool**

The significant decrease in the number of grammatical and mechanical errors from pre-test to post-test (Table 2) proves the effectiveness of Grammarly as a provider of instant and accurate corrective feedback. Students had the opportunity to notice, understand, and revise their errors independently. This aligns with the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990), which emphasizes the importance of awareness of errors in the language acquisition process. The visual and contextual feedback from Grammarly facilitates this process, thereby accelerating learning, as revealed by Prasetya & Raharjo (2023).

### **2. Grammarly as a Motivational Catalyst**

The high level of motivation shown in the questionnaire (Table 4) cannot be separated from the writing experience that became less threatening thanks to the availability of automatic correction assistance. Students who were previously afraid of making mistakes became more courageous in expressing ideas. This finding aligns with Dornyei's (2005) motivation

theory, where self-confidence is a key component in motivating language learners. This increase in motivation then correlates with the improvement in writing quality, as seen in highly motivated students who were more meticulous in applying suggestions from Grammarly.

### **3. Pedagogical Implications**

Pedagogically, integrating AI-based tools like Grammarly can transform the teacher's role. Teachers can shift focus from time-consuming surface-level error correction to higher-order writing aspects such as idea development, organization, and coherence. Meanwhile, students are trained to become autonomous learners capable of editing their own work. This combination of technology and learning theory creates a more efficient and differentiated learning environment.

However, this study has limitations regarding the small sample size (N=10 for the experimental group), so generalization of findings must be cautious. Furthermore, the observed improvement is still dominant in surface-level errors. Further research is needed to explore the impact of Grammarly on coherence and cohesion aspects, as well as its application to different writing genres and more diverse populations.



Overall, this study concludes that the use of Grammarly in learning to write recount texts is proven to be significantly effective in: (1) reducing grammatical, word choice, and mechanical writing errors; and (2) increasing students' motivation and confidence in English writing. Therefore, Grammarly serves not only as a linguistic aid but also as a valuable motivational catalyst in the context of learning English as a Foreign Language at the secondary school level.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The final conclusions obtained from the research and suggestions for necessary improvements or relevant follow-up studies are as follows:

Based on the analysis and discussion in the previous chapter, this study concludes that the use of Grammarly as a writing assistance tool had a significant positive impact on the recount text writing of 9th-grade students at MTs Cenrana.

First, in terms of writing accuracy, the integration of Grammarly effectively helped reduce grammatical errors.

The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test confirmed a statistically significant improvement ( $p < 0.05$ ) from the pre-test (mean = 41.5) to the post-test (mean = 80.0) among the 10 students in the experimental group. All students in this group showed measurable progress, with error reduction most evident in the three dominant error categories: Verb Tense, Subject-Verb Agreement, and Word Form. These findings indicate that Grammarly's corrective feedback directly addressed the students' most fundamental grammatical challenges.

Second, regarding affective factors, the motivation questionnaire revealed that the majority of students (70%) developed a high level of motivation towards English writing after using Grammarly. Key aspects that improved included their interest in writing, self-confidence, and enjoyment of the writing process. This motivational boost likely contributed to their increased engagement and willingness to revise their work carefully.

Therefore, this study demonstrates that Grammarly serves a dual function: as a practical corrective tool that enhances linguistic accuracy and as a motivational catalyst that fosters a more positive and autonomous learning attitude. For EFL

learners at the secondary school level, such technology can be a valuable supplement to traditional instruction.

It should be noted that although this study was conducted without a baseline error group, the significant pre-test to post-test differences provide meaningful evidence of Grammarly's potential as a writing aid in EFL contexts. The improvements observed in both linguistic accuracy and learner motivation suggest that Grammarly can play a supportive role in the teaching and learning of writing at the junior high school level.

#### Suggestions for Improvement and Further Research

Derived from the findings and limitations of this study, the following suggestions are offered:

##### **1. For English Teachers and Schools:**

- Implement Grammarly as a supplementary tool during the drafting and revision stages of writing tasks.
- Focus on explaining the rationale behind corrections to turn them into teachable moments.

- Differentiate instruction based on students' specific error patterns identified through error analysis.

##### **2. For Future Researchers:**

- Expand the scope and duration of studies with larger sample sizes and longer intervention periods to enhance generalizability.
- Employ a true experimental design with a baseline error group to isolate the specific impact of Grammarly.
- Investigate Grammarly's effectiveness in other writing genres (e.g., argumentative essays, reports) and its ability to address higher-order writing concerns such as coherence and cohesion.

##### **3. For Educational Technology Developers:**

- Develop pedagogically-oriented features, such as an "EFL Learner Mode" that targets common error types for specific learner groups.
- Enhance explanatory feedback by providing brief grammatical explanations or links to learning resources alongside corrections.

These suggestions aim to optimize the use of Grammarly in educational settings and guide future research to further explore its potential in enhancing EFL writing instruction.

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