

Junior High School Students' Experiences of Using Features of Grammarly as Automated Writing Feedback

Achmad Akbar Setiawan

achmad.22106@mhs.unesa.ac.id

Ahmad Munir

ahmadmunir@unesa.ac.id

Universitas Negeri Surabaya

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore students' experiences in using Grammarly as automated writing feedback in English writing learning at the junior high school level. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. The research participants consisted of 29 grade VIII students at one of the junior high schools in Surabaya. Data were collected through open questionnaires and participant observation during the learning process of writing. Data analysis is carried out through the stages of data organization, data reduction, coding, and triangulation to ensure the credibility of the findings. The results showed that the most beneficial features for students included grammar checking, spelling correction, and vocabulary suggestions. These features contribute to helping students identify language errors, improve sentence structure accuracy, and enrich vocabulary choices. From a learning experience perspective, students benefit from immediate feedback that allows the process of identifying and correcting errors to be done quickly. The writing revision process also becomes more systematic because students can improve the text gradually based on the suggestions given. However, a variety of strategies in utilizing feedback are still found, ranging from reflective use to instant fixes without deep understanding. Some obstacles remain, including difficulties in understanding the explanation of feedback and the tendency to rely on Grammarly. Overall, Grammarly has the potential to be an effective support tool for learning English writing at the junior high school level, particularly in providing immediate feedback and supporting the revision process. However, the effectiveness of its use is largely determined by the active involvement of students in understanding feedback and the role of teachers in providing adequate assistance.

Keywords: Grammarly; Automated Writing Feedback; Student Experience; Learning Writing

INTRODUCTION

Writing skill is one of the language skills that have a high level of complexity in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). In contrast to listening, speaking, and reading skills, writing activities require students to integrate various aspects of language, such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and the ability to organize ideas

logically and coherently (Harmer, 2007). In the context of EFL, writing skills not only serve as a means of written communication, but also as a medium for students to develop critical thinking skills, creativity, and reflection on the use of Language. Therefore, the mastery of writing skills needs to be developed from the junior high school level as a foundation for students' academic abilities at the next level of education.

Despite this, various studies show that learning English writing is still one of the challenges for EFL students. Difficulties in developing ideas, composing grammatical sentences, choosing appropriate vocabulary, and using spelling correctly are problems that are often found in the writing learning process. This condition causes many students to feel less confident when writing and consider writing activities as a difficult task. On the other hand, limited writing experience and low ability to revise independently also have an impact on the low quality of writing produced by students.

In learning writing, feedback has an important role in helping students recognize mistakes, evaluate the quality of their writing, and make revisions gradually. Feedback not only serves to correct language errors, but also helps students develop an awareness of the writing process so that they are able to produce better writing (Ebyary, 2022). However, manual feedback by teachers often faces various obstacles, such as time constraints, large number of students, and high workload of teachers in providing individual comments. As a result, the feedback students receive is not always provided quickly so that the opportunity to make revisions effectively is reduced.

The development of artificial intelligence-based technology (AI) has presented a new alternative in providing feedback through Automated Writing Feedback (AWF). The AWF system allows students to get direct feedback on the writing they produce through automated analysis of various linguistic aspects, such as grammar, spelling, word choice, and sentence structure (Tambunan et al., 2022). The speed of providing feedback allows students to revise as soon as an error is identified so that the writing process becomes more interactive and reflective. In the context of English language learning, AWF is seen as a complement to teacher feedback, not a substitute, because both have complementary functions in supporting the development of students' writing skills (Koltovskaia, 2023).

One of the most widely used AWF apps in English learning is Grammarly. The app provides a variety of features that can help users identify grammatical, spelling, and vocabulary choices automatically. In addition to providing corrections, Grammarly also provides explanations of several types of errors so that users have the opportunity to understand the reasoning behind each of the suggestions for improvement provided (Dizon & Gayed, 2021). These characteristics make Grammarly one of the potential learning media to support the process of writing revision independently while increasing students' awareness of the use of English more accurately.

Previous studies have reported that the use of Grammarly makes a positive contribution to learning English writing. Grammarly has been proven to help improve grammar accuracy, enrich vocabulary, speed up the revision process, and increase students' motivation and confidence in writing (Dizon & Gayed, 2021). In addition, the automated feedback provided by Grammarly allows students to identify errors independently and encourages them to revise the writing more systematically (Koltovskaia, 2023). However, most of the research was conducted on college students or adult learners, so the results could not fully describe the experiences of junior high school students in using Grammarly as Automated Writing Feedback.

The differences in cognitive developmental characteristics, English proficiency levels, and learning independence between junior high school students and college students allow both to have different experiences in utilizing automated feedback. In addition, previous research has emphasized more on the effectiveness of Grammarly in improving the quality of writing through a quantitative approach, while students' experiences while using Grammarly in the writing process are still relatively little explored, especially in the context of junior high schools in Indonesia. In fact, understanding how students use Grammarly's features, interpreting the feedback received, and acting on suggestions for improvement is essential to explaining how the technology actually supports the learning process of writing in the classroom.

Based on these gaps, this study aims to explore the experiences of junior high school students in using Grammarly as Automated Writing Feedback in learning English writing. Specifically, the study focused on students' experiences in utilizing Grammarly's features during the writing process as well as how they acted on feedback provided during the revision process. The findings of this study are expected to enrich the study on the implementation of Automated Writing Feedback at the junior high school level as well as provide practical implications for teachers in effectively integrating artificial intelligence-based technology into learning English writing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing in EFL Learning

Writing is one of the productive skills that has an important role in learning English, especially at the junior high school level. In EFL learning, writing is not only understood as an activity of pouring ideas in writing, but also as a process of integrating various linguistic aspects, such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and text organization so that the message conveyed can be understood clearly. Harmer (2007) emphasized that writing is a complex process because it involves several stages, ranging from planning, organizing ideas, redrafting, to revising. This process demands a high level of metalinguistic awareness as students must be able

to produce cohesive and coherent texts. In the context of learning English, writing skills are also one of the important indicators to assess overall language mastery. However, many EFL students still have difficulty writing due to limited mastery of sentence structure, proper use of vocabulary, and understanding of grammatical conventions. This condition shows that learning writing needs special attention, including through the support of automatic feedback-based technology so that the learning process becomes more effective and efficient.

Challenges in Teaching English Writing in Junior High School

At the junior high school level, the challenges in learning writing become more and more real because students are still in the early stages of developing foreign language skills. Many students have difficulty understanding the correct sentence structure, using grammar appropriately, and choosing vocabulary that suits the context of the writing. Tambunan et al. (2022) explain that common errors that appear in student writing are related to morphology, grammar, and organization of ideas. This is reinforced by Yousofi (2022), who shows that students in developing countries often do not have adequate access to quality English learning resources, including writing aids. On the other hand, teachers also face obstacles in providing effective written feedback due to time constraints and the large number of students in the classroom. In situations like this, technology integrations like Grammarly can be an alternative to providing direct and automatic corrections to students' writing. Thus, teachers can focus more on the development of ideas and text structure on a macro level, while grammar and spelling aspects can be assisted by automated systems.

The Role of Feedback in Improving Writing Skills

The feedback plays an important role in the writing learning process because it can help students recognize the strengths and weaknesses of their writing and encourage them to make improvements. Fan (2023) emphasized that automated written corrective feedback such as Grammarly can make a significant contribution to the linguistic aspect of student writing. Other research referenced in this research also shows that automatic feedback can increase students' confidence because they get help directly without having to wait for corrections from teachers. Dizon & Gayed (2021) point out that Grammarly is able to quickly identify various errors and provide easy-to-understand suggestions for improvements, while Koltovskaia (2023) asserts that automated feedback is more effectively used as a complement than a substitute for teacher feedback, especially in secondary and college education. However, the success of using automated feedback is highly dependent on students' attitudes and involvement in following up on the suggestions for improvement provided. In other words, good feedback not only helps students find mistakes, but also encourages them to learn from those mistakes through more conscious and reflective revision.

Automated Writing Feedback

Automated Writing Feedback is a computer-based system used to provide automatic feedback on students' writing. In this research, Shi & Aryadoust (2024) explain that automated writing feedback plays an important role in improving writing skills because it is able to provide quick feedback related to grammar, spelling, punctuation, and cohesion. One of the main advantages of this system is its ability to provide feedback directly so that students can immediately revise their mistakes. Sanosi & Mohammed (2024) added that this system is effectively used in classrooms with large numbers of students because it can reduce the burden on teachers in providing corrections one by one. However, automated writing feedback also has limitations because it tends to focus more on the linguistic aspect than the semantic or organizational aspect of the text. Therefore, automated writing feedback should be understood as a tool that complements teacher feedback, not replaces it. In the writing as a process approach, Grammarly is most often used at the editing and revising stages, when students correct surface errors such as grammar, spelling, and language style. However, at the pre-writing and drafting stages, students still need to write independently so that the ideas that emerge are more original. Thus, Grammarly works most effectively when combined with the guidance of teachers in the writing revision process.

Grammarly

Grammarly is described as an artificial intelligence-based device that is able to detect grammar, spelling, and style errors, as well as provide suggestions for improvements to make the writing clearer and more coherent. In this research, Grammarly is categorized as a form of Automated Writing Evaluation as well as Automated Written Corrective Feedback because it provides direct input that students can use to revise their writing. Dizon & Gayed (2021) and Koltovskaia (2023) show that Grammarly is widely used by learners and professionals alike because of its ability to help improve the quality of writing quickly and accurately. Tambunan et al. (2022) also found that Grammarly was effective in helping EFL students identify linguistic problems, especially in the grammar and vocabulary aspects. In the context of learning English in junior high school, the use of Grammarly becomes relevant because students are still in the early stages of mastering writing skills. Grammarly can serve as a scaffolding tool that supports students in developing writing skills, especially on recount texts that demand mastery of past tense grammar, cohesion, and chronological order. Thus, Grammarly not only improves the accuracy of the writing, but also helps build students' metalinguistic awareness of their own mistakes.

Features of Grammarly

Grammarly has a number of features that are relevant to this research, namely grammar checking, spelling, vocabulary suggestion, style and tone, sentence rewriting, and plagiarism detection in the premium version. The grammar checking

feature functions to detect errors such as subject-verb agreement, tense usage, preposition errors, and improper sentence structure. The spelling feature helps detect typos as well as the use of punctuation marks such as commas and periods. The vocabulary suggestion feature provides a more appropriate vocabulary alternative according to the context of the sentence, while the style and tone feature helps users adjust the formality and tone of the writing. Meanwhile, sentence rewriting functions to simplify sentences to make them clearer and easier to understand. In the premium version, Grammarly can also scan for similarities of text with other sources as a form of support for academic integrity. The explanation of these features becomes a theoretical basis in analyzing students' perception of Grammarly's features that are considered to help them in writing English.

Grammarly as Automated Writing Feedback

In addition to these features, this research also explains how Grammarly works as Automated Writing Feedback through several stages, namely pre-writing, writing an initial draft, uploading text to Grammarly, receiving automatic feedback, revision based on feedback, and reflection and evaluation. At the feedback stage, Grammarly displays errors in real-time so students can immediately see which parts need to be fixed. After that, students make revisions based on the suggestions given and compare the results of the initial writing with the writing after the revision to see the changes that occur. Thi & Nikolov (2021) emphasized that this kind of reflection process can increase metalinguistic awareness and encourage independent learning. In this research, it is also emphasized that the use of Grammarly not only helps students recognize mistakes, but also encourages them to revise their writing independently and understand the patterns of mistakes they often make. Therefore, Grammarly is positioned as a supporting medium for writing learning that can improve linguistic accuracy while building students' learning awareness of the revision process.

METHOD

Design and Samples

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the purpose of this study is to explore in depth the experience of students in using Grammarly as automated writing feedback in learning English writing at the junior high school level. Creswell (2018) explained that qualitative research aims to understand the meaning that individuals give to a phenomenon through an open data collection process, inductive analysis, and interpretation of findings based on natural context. The case study design was used because this research focused on an in-depth analysis of one specific case, namely the experiences of a group of students at one school who used Grammarly in learning writing. In this research, case studies are positioned as an instrumental case study to understand a broader issue, namely the role of automatic feedback in supporting junior high school students' writing skills. Thus, the study places the

student's perspective as the main focus without manipulating the variables, while the researcher acts as the primary instrument that collects and interprets the data.

Participants in this study were grade VIII students who had experience using Grammarly in English writing tasks. Participants were selected through purposive sampling techniques because this study requires students who are truly relevant to the research objective, namely students who have used Grammarly as part of their writing activities. The class that was the focus of this research initially consisted of 30 students, but one student was not present at the time of data collection, so the final number of participants involved in this study was 29 students. The Grammarly used in this study is a free version because the focus of the research is indeed directed at the free features that are available and used by students in learning writing. The number of participants is also considered adequate because the data obtained has reached a saturation point, which is when the information that emerges tends to be repetitive and no longer produces new findings. Thus, the 29 students involved in the study were considered sufficient to represent the classroom's experience in using Grammarly as automated writing feedback.

This research was carried out at SMPN 41 Surabaya, precisely in one of the VIII classes, namely class 8F. The class and school were chosen because they have implemented the use of Grammarly as automated writing feedback to support students' writing activities. In addition, the school also makes mobile phones as a learning tool in the classroom and has an adequate internet network, allowing students to access Grammarly effectively during the learning process. In its implementation, students use their mobile phones to open and utilize the Grammarly feature when doing writing assignments, especially to check grammar, spelling, and suggestions for improvement available in the free version. This condition supports this study because the researcher can observe the use of Grammarly in the context of learning that is already familiar with the integration of digital technology.

Instrument and Procedure

Research instruments are tools that researchers use to collect data according to the focus of the research. In this study, the researcher used two main instruments, namely an open questionnaire and participatory observation. The selection of the two instruments was based on the purpose of the research that wanted to explore the experience of students in using the free version of Grammarly as automated writing feedback in learning English writing. The use of Grammarly in this study is indeed focused on the free features that are available and used by students during writing activities, so that all instruments are designed to capture students' experience of the free features, not on the experience of using the premium version. In addition, because schools use mobile phones as a learning tool in the classroom and provide an adequate internet network, observation instruments are also designed to record how students access Grammarly through their mobile phones while doing writing assignments. Open-ended questionnaires are used to dig deep

into students' experiences, perceptions, and opinions regarding the use of Grammarly as automated feedback. According to Creswell (2018), open-ended questions allow participants to answer in their own words so that the data obtained becomes richer and varied. In this study, the questionnaire was prepared in the form of a Google Form or a printed sheet, and the questions were directed to three main focuses, namely the Grammarly feature that is considered to help students write, how the students used the Grammarly feature in English writing assignments, and the students' follow-up to the feedback provided by Grammarly. Since this study only focused on the free version of Grammarly, the questions in the questionnaire were also directed to find out what free features students use most often, how they understand suggestions for improvements, and the obstacles they experience when using Grammarly on their phones in class. The questions are made simple, clear, and use language that is easy for junior high school students to understand so as not to cause confusion or misinterpretation.

The second instrument is participatory observation, which is observation that is carried out directly in the classroom when students use Grammarly in writing activities. This observation was chosen because it allowed researchers to record students' behavior and interactions naturally without being too constrained by rigid guidelines. In this study, the researcher was directly involved in learning activities while observing how students operate Grammarly through their mobile phones. The focus of observation includes how students open the Grammarly application or website, students' responses to suggestions for improvement, students' strategies for following up on feedback, and student interactions with teachers and friends when using Grammarly. Observation sheets and field notes are used to record these aspects, including students' habits of clicking on correction suggestions, reading explanations of errors, ignoring certain recommendations, and revising writing based on the free features available. Thus, the observation instrument not only records the use of Grammarly technically, but also captures the learning process of students when using mobile phones as a medium of access to Grammarly in the classroom.

The use of these two instruments complements each other because the questionnaire provides data on students' subjective experiences, while participatory observation provides a picture of real behavior in the classroom. Through this combination, researchers can obtain more complete data on how students use the free version of Grammarly via mobile phones in the process of writing English. All of the data collected is then used as a basis for understanding the students' experiences, the obstacles they face, and their strategies for following up on the automated feedback provided by Grammarly.

Data Analysis

Data collection in this study was carried out through two main techniques, namely open-ended questionnaire and participant observation. The use of these two techniques aims to obtain complementary data so that students' experience in using

Grammarly as automated writing feedback can be understood more comprehensively. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018)), the use of various data collection techniques in qualitative research allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied while increasing the credibility of findings through data triangulation. In this study, the entire data collection process focused on using the free version of Grammarly, as the study only explored students' experiences of the free features available on the app. In addition, all activities are carried out in a natural learning situation, where students use mobile phones as a learning medium in accordance with school policies that allow the use of mobile phones to support the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The first stage is participatory observation carried out during writing learning activities. At this stage, the researcher plays the role of a participant observer, which is involved in the learning process as well as observing student activities. During observation, students were asked to do the task of writing a recount text using their respective mobile phones to access the free version of Grammarly. The researcher observed how students opened Grammarly, entered their writing, paid attention to the feedback that appeared, and made revisions based on the suggestions given. In addition, the researcher also noted the types of features that are most commonly used, students' responses to automatic correction, students' interactions with teachers and friends, and difficulties that arise when using Grammarly during the learning process. All observation results were recorded using observation sheets and field notes that had been prepared before the research was carried out.

Because the number of students in the class reached 29 people, the researcher applied several observation strategies so that all student activities could still be optimally documented. These strategies include circulating observation, where researchers go around the classroom to observe each student's use of Grammarly; Focused observation, which is giving more in-depth attention to several students in turn to obtain more detailed information; and teacher-assisted monitoring, where the teacher helps ensure that all students participate in learning activities according to the planned procedures. This approach allows researchers to get an overview of the use of Grammarly while also observing individual student behavior during the writing revision process.

The next stage is the distribution of an open questionnaire to all participants after the learning activities are completed. The questionnaire is given through Google Form so that students can fill in the answers independently using their respective mobile phones. The selection of Google Form was made because it is more practical, accessible, and makes it easier for researchers to collect and manage data. The questions in the questionnaire were organized based on three research focuses, namely (1) the features of Grammarly that were considered the most helpful for students in writing English, (2) the students' experience in utilizing the features of Grammarly during the writing process and following up on the feedback provided by Grammarly to improve their writing results. Open-ended questions are chosen so that students can explain their experiences freely without being limited by specific answer choices so that the data obtained becomes richer and more in-depth.

To increase the credibility of the data, the researcher applied a triangulation method by comparing the results of participatory observation and open-ended questionnaire answers. The information obtained from the observations is used to verify the experiences that students convey through the questionnaire, while the questionnaire answers help explain the reasons behind the behaviors observed during the learning process. By combining these two data sources, the researcher obtained a more complete picture of the students' experience in using the free version of Grammarly as automated writing feedback in learning English writing.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on data analysis from open-ended questionnaires and observations, this study produced two main findings that are in accordance with the formulation of the research problem, namely the Grammarly feature which is considered to help students in writing English and students' experience in using Grammarly as Automated Feedback. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis and produced several main subthemes.

1. Features of Grammarly Perceived as Helpful by Students

The first findings show that students identify the three main features of Grammarly that are most helpful during writing learning: grammar checking, spelling correction, and vocabulary suggestion. These three features appear consistently both in questionnaire answers and observation results during the learning process.

In general, students show a positive response to Grammarly's features because they feel the web is able to point out errors that were previously difficult for them to identify independently. Before using Grammarly, many students tend to assume their writing is correct after finishing writing the first draft. But after the text was entered into Grammarly, they discovered a variety of linguistic and mechanical errors that they had not noticed yet.

Grammar Checking

The grammar checking feature is the most dominant feature mentioned by students. Most students state that Grammarly helps them find grammatical errors, specifically errors in the use of verb forms, subject-verb agreement, and tense consistency. In the activity of writing recount text, the most common grammar errors are found in the use of the simple past tense. Some students still mix the present tense and past tense in one paragraph. There are also students who use the first verb form after the subject even though the context of the sentence indicates past events.

a. Detecting Grammar Mistakes Automatically

The first theme is Grammarly's ability to detect grammar errors automatically. A total of 11 students stated that this feature helps them find out grammatical errors

in the sentences they write. Before using Grammarly, some students admitted that they often felt unsure whether the sentences they wrote were grammatically correct or not.

“Grammarly helps me figure out grammar errors in sentences.” (S2)

“I know if my sentence is wrong or not.” (S9)

With the grammar checking feature, students could immediately find out the errors in their sentences because the system automatically marks the wrong part.

b. Providing Grammar Correction Suggestions

The second theme that emerges from the data is that Grammarly provides grammar improvement suggestions. A total of 6 students explained that in addition to pointing out errors, Grammarly also provides suggestions for correct sentences. This helps students to improve their writing more easily without having to look for additional references regarding the correct grammar rules.

“Grammarly suggests improvements if my grammar is wrong.” (S8)

“Grammarly shows you how to fix sentences.” (S12)

With these suggestions, students could immediately see the difference between the wrong sentence and the correct sentence.

The findings of this questionnaire are also strengthened by the results of observations made during the writing learning process. Based on the observations, the results of the study show that during learning activities, grammar checking is the most frequently used feature by students compared to other features. When Grammarly gives an error mark in the form of a red or blue line, most students immediately notice that part and try to make revisions to their writing.

Spelling Correction

The spelling correction feature is also one of the features that students appreciate the most. Students explained that Grammarly makes it easier for them to detect word typing errors that occur due to lack of thoroughness, typos, or ignorance of correct spelling. Before using Grammarly, spelling mistakes often escaped students' attention because they focused more on the content of the writing than the form of the word. After using Grammarly, the error can be detected immediately.

a. Identifying Spelling Mistakes

The first theme that emerges is Grammarly helps detect spelling errors in students' writing. A total of 10 students stated that this feature makes it easier for them to

know words that are written incorrectly. In the process of writing English, students often encounter spelling mistakes due to the difference between the way of pronunciation and the way of writing words.

“Grammarly helps me know if there are wrong words in my writing.” (S3)

“If I miswrite the word, Grammarly immediately marks it.” (S11)

With the spelling correction feature, these errors could be detected immediately because the system would mark words that are considered incorrect spellings.

b. Providing Automatic Spelling Corrections

The second theme that emerged from the data was that Grammarly automatically provided correct spelling suggestions. A total of 7 students mentioned that when they write words with the wrong spelling, Grammarly directly gives them the correct word. This makes it easier for students to correct these mistakes without having to open a dictionary or look for additional references.

“Grammarly immediately provides the correct word.” (S8)

“Grammarly gives you the right choice of words.” (S16)

With these suggestions, the writing revision process could be carried out faster and more efficiently.

c. Encouraging Students to Write more Carefully

In addition, there were 4 students who stated that the use of Grammarly made them more thorough in writing English.

“I became more thorough when writing because there were corrections from Grammarly.” (S9)

When students see spelling mistakes flagged by Grammarly, they become more aware of the importance of writing words correctly. This indirectly encourages students to be more careful in writing.

The findings of this questionnaire are also supported by the results of observations made during writing learning activities in the classroom. Based on the results of the observations, students are quite responsive to the spelling correction feature. When Grammarly marks the wrong word, most students immediately notice the passage and make revisions as per the suggestions given. Some students seem to find it helpful because they do not have to find the correct spelling themselves.

However, field notes from observations show that most students still use the

spelling correction feature instantly. This shows that some students focus more on the final result of the writing than on understanding the revision process that occurs. They tend to want to immediately remove the error marks that appear on the screen without double-checking that the word they chose is appropriate for the context of their writing.

Vocabulary Suggestion

The last feature that is considered helpful is vocabulary suggestion. Grammarly provides alternative words or phrases that are judged to be more appropriate to the context of the sentence. Some students say that this feature helps them when they have difficulty choosing the right vocabulary. When writing in English, some students often use words that are repetitive or too simple. With Grammarly's suggestion, they can look at other alternative words.

a. Suggesting more Appropriate Vocabulary

The first theme that emerged from the data is Grammarly provided more precise word suggestions according to the context of the sentence. A total of 9 students stated that when they write a sentence, Grammarly sometimes suggests other words that are considered more appropriate or more formal.

“Grammarly suggests more precise words.” (S4)

“I can replace words that are not appropriate.” (S13)

These suggestions help students improve their choice of words so that the resulting sentences are better.

b. Helping Students Choose Better Words

The second theme that emerges is that Grammarly helps improve the choice of words in sentences. A total of 7 students explained that they often use words that are actually not appropriate for the context of certain sentences.

“Grammarly helps me choose better words.” (S6)

“I can use more appropriate words in sentences.” (S10)

With the vocabulary suggestion feature, Grammarly could provide more suitable word alternatives so that the meaning of sentences becomes clearer.

c. Learning New Vocabulary

Furthermore, there were 5 students who stated that this feature helped them increase their English vocabulary. When Grammarly suggests new words, students could

learn the word and understand how it is used in a sentence.

“I learned a new word from Grammarly.” (S12)

“Grammarly helped me increase my vocabulary.” (S18)

This shows that the use of Grammarly not only helps improve writing, but could also contribute to enriching students’ vocabulary.

The findings of this questionnaire are also strengthened by the results of observations made during writing learning activities. During the observation, some students were seen paying attention to the word suggestions given by Grammarly when they were revising their writing. Some students try replacing the words in their sentences with words suggested by the system to see if the sentences get better. Some students begin to try to understand the word choices that Grammarly provides and consider the match of the word with the content of their writing.

Nevertheless, not all students always use the vocabulary suggestions provided by Grammarly. In some situations, students choose to stick with the word they wrote earlier because they feel they understand the word better. This shows that students are not completely dependent on the system, but still consider their own understanding of the vocabulary used.

2. Students’ Experiences of Following Up the Feedback Given by Grammarly

The second finding focused on how students utilize the feedback provided, both actively and passively. From the data obtained, there are six main themes that emerge related to how students follow up on the feedback.

a. Fixing Errors Directly from the Feedback

Based on the table above, the first theme that emerges is that some students follow up in the form of correcting mistakes directly. A total of 9 students stated that they immediately justified the wrong word or sentence after receiving feedback from Grammarly.

“After getting feedback, I immediately correct the wrong word or sentence.” (S21)

“Direct application and correction of writing” (S14)

This shows that students are using Grammarly as an instant correction tool in the writing process.

b. Learning from Mistakes (Reflective)

The second theme that emerges is that some students use feedback as a means of

learning from mistakes. A total of 8 students stated that they tried to understand the mistakes and avoid the same mistakes later on. This shows that there is a reflective process in learning.

“Avoid the same mistake in the next writing.” (S9)

“Error analysis and repeated practice.” (S16)

c. Taking Notes and Self-practice

The third theme is that some students follow up by taking notes and doing independent exercises. A total of 7 students stated that they noted the mistakes that often appeared and tried to make new sentences to understand the correct rules.

“Take note of the type of mistake and practice writing a new sentence.” (S12)

“Practice making new sentences with the correct rules” (S13)

d. Discussion with Friends/Teachers

The fourth theme is that some students have discussions with friends or teachers as a form of follow-up. A total of 6 students stated that they asked for help to ensure that the improvements made were correct.

“Ask a teacher or friend to double-check.” (S17)

“Ask a friend to correct” (S18)

e. Passive/Unclear Follow-up

The fifth theme shows that there are students who did not have a clear follow-up. A total of 6 students gave answers that did not indicate any concrete action, such as “Do not know” (S4), “Yes, that is it” (S2), or “Happy” (S6). This shows that not all students make optimal use of feedback.

f. Inconsistent/ Just Accept the Feedback

The last theme is that there are students who are inconsistent or only use Grammarly passively, i.e. just “Immediately click accept without reading the explanation” (S13). A total of 5 students showed this pattern.

These findings are reinforced by observation results that show that most students immediately follow up on the feedback provided by Grammarly by immediately revising the sections that were flagged incorrectly. When Grammarly displays a red or blue line, students instantly click on the section and receive the improvement suggestions that appear. However, the observation results also showed that most

students still followed up on feedback instantly without reading the explanation in depth. Some students are seen directly pressing the "Accept All" button just seconds after the feedback appears. This shows that students are more focused on improving the final result of the writing rather than understanding the reasons for the correction provided by Grammarly.

In addition, the results of observations show that few students try to understand feedback before revising. Some students are seen reading grammar explanations provided by Grammarly, comparing sentences before and after revisions, and trying to improve sentences independently before receiving suggestions from Grammarly. The observation results also showed that some students discussed with friends or asked teachers when they felt confused about certain feedback. In some situations, teachers help explain the meaning of Grammarly feedback and provide additional explanations about grammar and correct sentence usage.

This study shows that students gain a positive learning experience while using Grammarly as automated writing feedback. Most students take advantage of grammar checking, spelling correction, and vocabulary suggestions features to identify errors in their writing before collecting assignments. The experience shows that automated feedback not only helps students find linguistic errors, but also encourages them to pay more attention to the quality of their writing during the revision process. These findings indicate that Grammarly serves as a support tool that facilitates the process of self-monitoring, i.e. the ability of students to evaluate and improve their writing independently. In the context of learning English as a foreign language, this ability is important because it helps students develop an awareness of linguistic aspects that were often overlooked.

The findings of this study are in line with Dizon & Gayed (2021) who reported that the use of Grammarly had a positive impact on the quality of EFL students' writing by providing direct feedback on aspects of grammar, spelling, and word choice. In addition, the results of a systematic review conducted by Dizon & Gayed (2024) also show that Grammarly consistently contributes positively to improving writing skills in various English learning contexts. Thus, the positive experiences reported by students in this study reinforce the evidence that automated writing feedback can be one of the effective strategies to support the writing learning process.

Nonetheless, the study also shows that the benefits of Grammarly lie not only in the app's ability to detect errors, but also in the thought process that occurs when students revisit the suggestions given. The observation results showed that most students reread Grammarly's recommendations before deciding to revise their writing. This shows that students are not completely dependent on the application, but begin to develop the ability to consider the appropriateness of each correction to the context of the sentence they are writing. This condition shows that the use of automated writing feedback can support the development of reflective skills if integrated with learning activities that provide opportunities for students to evaluate each feedback received. These findings are in line with Fan (2023) who explains

that automatic feedback can improve the quality of writing when followed by a revision process that is carried out consciously and reflectively.

The study also found that students had a positive perception of the benefits of Grammarly, especially in helping to correct grammatical, spelling, and vocabulary selection errors. For most students, Grammarly makes the revision process easier because mistakes can be identified quickly without having to wait for corrections from teachers. This condition provides opportunities for students to learn more independently and increase their confidence in producing English writing. The findings support the research of Tran (2025) which shows that the use of Grammarly not only helps improve the quality of writing, but also increases confidence and help-seeking behaviour in English learners.

On the other hand, the study also identified some challenges in using Grammarly. Some students admitted that they had difficulty understanding the reasons behind some of the recommendations given by the application, especially when it came to more complex sentence structures. In addition, the use of the free version of Grammarly causes some advanced features to be inaccessible so that students only take advantage of basic features during the learning process. The findings show that the effectiveness of Grammarly is not only influenced by the capabilities of the technology used, but also by the user's ability to understand and interpret the feedback received (Dodigivig & Tovmasyan, 2021). Therefore, the role of the teacher is still necessary to help students explain the linguistic reasons behind each correction so that the use of Grammarly focuses not only on improving the writing results, but also on improving students' understanding of linguistic concepts.

While Grammarly provides a variety of benefits in helping students identify and correct errors in their writing, the results of this study also show the need to pay attention to students' potential reliance on automated feedback. Some students tend to accept the entire recommendation that Grammarly provides without first evaluating its appropriateness to the context of the sentence they are writing. This condition indicates that the use of automated writing feedback has the potential to reduce student involvement in the critical thinking process if it is not accompanied by adequate assistance. Therefore, the role of teachers remains a very important component in optimizing the use of Grammarly in the classroom. The teacher not only acts as a feedback giver, but also as a facilitator who guides students to understand the linguistic reasons behind each correction that the application provides. One strategy that can be implemented is to have students explain why they accept or reject each Grammarly suggestion before revising the writing. Thus, the revision process is not only oriented towards producing grammatically correct writing, but also encourages students to develop the ability to reflect on the use of language independently.

This approach is in line with the findings of Thi & Nikolov (2021) who show that feedback from Grammarly provides more effective results when combined with teacher guidance during the revision process. In addition, Miranty et al. (2025)

emphasized that automated writing evaluation should be positioned as a complement, not a replacement, to teacher feedback so that students still have the opportunity to develop a conceptual understanding of grammar and academic writing. Furthermore, Shi & Aryadoust (2024) explain that the implementation of AI-based automated written feedback needs to be designed in a pedagogical framework that encourages reflection, evaluation, and decision-making by students. Thus, the results of this study reinforce the view that the effectiveness of Grammarly does not only depend on the quality of the technology used, but also on the learning strategies that teachers apply to maintain a balance between the use of technology and the development of students' critical thinking skills.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to explore students' experiences in using Grammarly as automated writing feedback in learning English writing at the junior high school level. Based on data analysis obtained through an open-ended questionnaire and participatory observation of 29 grade VIII students, this study shows that the use of Grammarly provides a generally positive learning experience in supporting the process of writing and revising English texts. Students use the grammar checking, spelling correction, and vocabulary suggestions features to identify grammatical, spelling, and vocabulary choice errors, so they can revise more systematically. These findings indicate that the automated feedback provided by Grammarly helps increase students' awareness of linguistic errors while encouraging them to evaluate their writing independently. The results of this study are in line with the findings of Dizon and Gayed (2021) which show that Grammarly is able to improve the quality of writing through the provision of direct feedback, and is supported by the results of the systematic review of Dizon and Gayed (2024) which affirm that Grammarly makes a positive contribution to learning English writing in various educational contexts.

In addition to providing a positive experience during the revision process, this study also shows that the use of the free version of Grammarly provides students with the opportunity to learn more independently because they can get feedback directly without having to wait for corrections from the teacher. However, some students still have difficulty understanding the reasoning behind Grammarly's recommendations and show a tendency to automatically accept all suggestions without evaluating the context of the sentence. The findings show that the effectiveness of automated writing feedback is not only influenced by the sophistication of the technology, but also by the user's ability to interpret the feedback received. Therefore, the use of Grammarly needs to be positioned as a learning support tool that complements the role of teachers, not as a substitute for the writing learning process. These findings support the research of Thi & Nikolov (2021) who stated that feedback from Grammarly will provide more optimal results when combined with teacher guidance, and reinforced by Miranty et al. (2025) who emphasize the importance of integrating automated writing evaluation with learning strategies that encourage reflection and development of students' writing skills.

This research contributes to the development of English language learning, especially in the use of Artificial Intelligence technology as a medium for providing automatic feedback at the junior high school level. Unlike most previous studies that focused on college students or adult learners, this study provides an overview of the experiences of junior high school students using the free version of Grammarly as part of the classroom learning process. Thus, the results of this study are expected to be one of the references for English teachers in integrating automated writing feedback technology into writing learning activities that remain centered on the student learning process and teacher mentoring. This contribution is in line with the results of a study by Shi & Aryadoust (2024) which affirms that the use of AI-based automated written feedback has great potential in improving the quality of writing learning if implemented pedagogically and adjusted to the needs of students.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered in interpreting the research results. First, the study only involved one class consisting of 29 students in one of the junior high schools in Surabaya, so the results of the study could not be generalized in a broader context. Second, the study only explored the use of the free version of Grammarly, so students' experience with premium features could not be identified. Third, this study uses a qualitative approach with data sources in the form of open questionnaires and participatory observation so that the results of the study emphasize more on an in-depth understanding of students' experiences than on measuring the effectiveness of using Grammarly on improving writing skills.

Based on these limitations, further research is recommended to involve participants from different educational levels and school contexts, compare the use of free and premium versions of Grammarly, and combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of automated writing feedback in learning English writing. In addition, future research may also explore the integration of Grammarly with teacher feedback strategies to identify the most effective forms of mentoring in improving the quality of writing and student learning independence Wenxun et al. (2025).

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