



Digital Writing Assistants in Business Writing: Students' Perspectives and Writing Improvement Through Grammarly and Microsoft Word Editor

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Abstract: The emergence of AI-based technology as a learning tool presents its challenges for English Foreign Language (EFL) students. Once AI offers convenience, it also affects the quality of students' skills. This study aims to explore students' perspectives on implementing two AI-based tools as writing correctors, Grammarly and Microsoft Word Editor (MWE). A mixed-method approach was employed to examine students' experiences. Pre and post-tests with 19 students were conducted to collect quantitative data, while interviews were used to provide a qualitative in-depth perspective. The results reveal that students show improvements of 60%, 52%, 39% and 122% across four writing aspects: content, organization, appearance, and language used. On average, students achieve a score of 3.8 out of 4. Moreover, it reported that both tools were supporting their writing process. The findings provide valuable insights into understanding how the students can balance the benefits of AI-based tools with academic integrity.

Keywords: AI-based writing tool, Grammarly, Microsoft Word Editor



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INTRODUCTION

In the professional business world, writing proficiency is an essential skill that workers must possess, as it serves as a tool to communicate. Excellent written texts enhance the writer's credibility and positively reflect the company's image. This proficiency requires several sub-skills, including writing structure, tenses, coherence, spelling, grammar and vocabulary (Campbell, 2019; Song & Song, 2023). Moreover, business writing should be practical, purposeful, concise, clear, and persuasive (Ranaut, 2018a). In this context, utilizing Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based technology tools has become one of the most efficient approaches to support and enhance writing competence. Notwithstanding, the inappropriate selection of AI-based tools may lead to serious consequences for students' learning processes. Also, over-reliance on AI reduces critical thinking abilities, data privacy concerns, and leads to academic deception (Vieriu & Petrea, 2025).

In higher education, AI offers both opportunities and challenges. AI has the potential to develop education, yet it may also lead to an impairment in students' performance. This phenomenon occurs among students who enrolled on the *English for Business Correspondence* course at the *State Polytechnic of Malang*. Most students rely heavily on AI,

such as ChatGPT and Gemini, to assist them in the entire process of writing. From generating ideas, creating an outline, and producing the final draft. This dependency arises since they are not accustomed to selecting AI tools that match their learning needs appropriately. Ideally, AI should function merely as a supporting tool rather than replacing the students' active role in the writing process. Instead of improving their writing skills, their abilities tend to deteriorate, as they are often unaware of the mistakes they have made and the necessary corrections to enhance their writing quality. Several researchers have highlighted the complex impacts of misusing AI tools, suggesting that higher education institutions must clearly define and consider the role of AI to address the challenges effectively (Qadir, 2023; Vieriu & Petrea, 2025; Williamson, 2017).

Grammarly and Microsoft Word Editor (MWE) are two popular AI-based tools to assist writers in completing academic, business, fiction, non-fiction, and other types of writing (Alshayban, 2024). It identifies errors in grammar, spelling, clarity, and accuracy in formal English. However, there are slight differences between them. Grammarly provides many features, ranging from grammar identification to sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, and plagiarism checks. In addition, Grammarly provides suggestions for correcting errors made by the writer. By reducing incorrect spelling suggestions by 15%, improving clarity suggestions by 14%, and increasing corrected writing errors by 7% (Grammarly, 2024). Moreover, MWE is also an advanced tool that offers assistance in improving writing quality in terms of grammar, spelling, and style suggestions to become the best writer in more than 20 languages. Still, MWE does not provide a plagiarism check feature (Microsoft, 2024).

Several studies examined the use of Grammarly to enhance students' writing skills. They indicated that Grammarly succeeded in improving students' writing skills, not only in terms of their performance scores but also their metalinguistic awareness of writing (Abdul Halim et al., 2022; Abu Qub'a et al., 2024; Laudy Armanda et al., 2022; Yoga Dwi Pratama, 2021). Moreover, numerous studies mainly discuss the advantages and disadvantages of leveraging MWE to increase writing skills, not how the students view their ethical concerns, challenges, and experiences (Eny Pricilia Yulanda, 2023; Kocaman, 2022; Mu'arofah, 2021; Salehi & Amiri, 2019). Most results revealed that MWE positively helps the students to improve their writing skills, especially for spelling and grammar. Few have examined the use of Grammarly and MWE together as the main tools to enhance writing skills, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the students' perspective on AI-based tools.

Therefore, referring to the case mentioned above, this study aims to explore the students' perspective on the implementation of Grammarly and MWE to enhance their business writing skills. It is expected that the students will recognize the improvement of their business writing skills by applying the two tools simultaneously. They gain a proper understanding of the functions of AI-based writing tools and use them wisely.

Furthermore, educators are also expected to be actively involved in the learning process and provide supervision in the class to ensure that the learning objectives are successfully achieved.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a mixed-method approach. According to (Creswell, 2014), a



mixed-methods design is a research design that combines quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a deeper understanding of a research problem. This study outlined the explanatory sequential design, where the quantitative data are collected first, followed by qualitative data to elaborate on the results.

A total of 19 students in the 5th semester participated in this study. They are from the English department of the State Polytechnic of Malang, who enrolled in the *English for Business Correspondence* subject. The type of business writing task analyzed was a complaint letter.

This study used four instruments: a pre-test, a post-test, a questionnaire, and an interview. The pre-test was collected before the students implemented Grammarly and MWE, while the post-test was conducted by leveraging both tools. The students' perspective on the experience, the features utilized, and their understanding of business writing skills were discussed qualitatively, which were collected through a questionnaire and an interview.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to explore the students' perspective on using Grammarly and MWE as tools to enhance their business writing skills. The results were elaborated both quantitatively and qualitatively. The students wrote a complaint letter as a type of business writing, as a professional letter has complete parts, such as a heading, inside address, salutation, body, complimentary close, signature, and enclosure notations. The students conducted a pre-test without using either tools, nor did they use any other AI-assisted writing tools. The post-test was conducted by using both tools together. The results of pre-test and post-test can be seen in the table below;

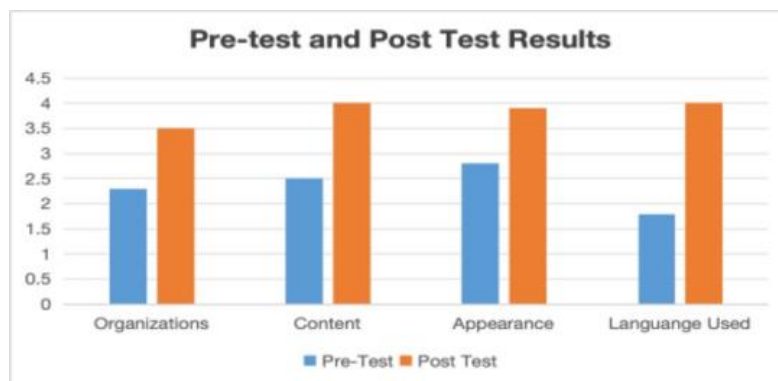


Figure 1: Pre-test and post-test results

It is known that the lowest average score in the post-test was in the aspect of language use. Language use includes punctuation, sentence structure, tenses, and spelling. Business letters are very short and concise texts, yet the results proved that the students required to improve their ability in writing to avoid common mistakes. It concluded that the students' pre-test scores were still under the average. None of the average scores of the post-test reached 3 points. The improvement indicates that learning by leveraging AI-assisted writing tools, Grammarly and MWE, is effective in helping students to enhance their writing skills.

Furthermore, the enhancement in the *Language Used* aspect demonstrates that Grammarly and MWE had the most significant impact in addressing grammatical difficulties and vocabulary use, which had previously been the main challenges for students. Based on the average score graph, this aspect showed an increase of 2.2 points, from 1.8 to 4. Practically, educators can utilize these findings as a reference, suggesting that the use of AI-based technological methods is feasible and beneficial for wider implementation in writing instruction. The *Organization* aspect showed an improvement of 52%, rising from 2.3 to 3.5. The other aspects: *Content*, *Appearance*, and *Language Used* also showed increases of 60%, 39%, and 122%, respectively. These gains can be interpreted as having a significant impact on students' writing performance.

Students' Perspective

The students' perspectives on the implementation of Grammarly and MWE in improving their business writing skills were obtained from questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The questionnaire discussed the prevalence, usefulness, effectiveness, and clarity of both tools based on the students' experiences. The results of the questionnaire are described below:

Table 1. The results of the Questionnaire and Interview

Aspect	Quantitative (Questionnaire)		Qualitative (Interview)
	Grammarly	MWE	
Prevalence (The frequency using the tools for writing business documents)	58%	83%	"MWE is free for basic grammar and spelling" "We need to connect with Internet for Grammarly"
Usefulness (Whether the tools help to improve the quality of writing)	53%	53%	"Both are useful. Grammarly helps us giving corrections for repeated errors" "MWE not details than Grammarly, sometimes the marks do not appear"
Effectiveness (How effective to correct the grammar mistakes, spelling, language use/word choice)	57%	52%	"MWE is easy to use" "Grammarly has more features and able to detect the plagiarism, if we copy from Internet without paraphrase"
Clearness (How clear the tools giving feedback)	37%	15%	"Grammarly giving direct correction, without option" "MWE sometimes just giving mark and option for word choices"

It can be seen from the table above that the MWE is more prevalent than Grammarly. This suggests that MWE is more frequently used among students. Basically, it is because MWE is freely available and already integrated into Microsoft Word, as reflected in the interview comment "MWE is free for basic grammar and spelling." However, Grammarly depends on the Internet connection, and its access is limited in the free version. Also, using features in Grammarly is only available for subscribers. Additionally, the **usefulness** of both Grammarly

and MWE received equal positive responses, approximately 53%, indicating that students perceive both tools as helpful in improving writing quality. The students mentioned that Grammarly provides corrective feedback for repeated errors, while MWE, though useful, offers less detailed suggestions. This implies that learners recognize the complementary roles of the two tools. Grammarly for detailed feedback and MWE for basic editing support.

Moreover, in terms of *effectiveness*, Grammarly (57%) slightly outperformed MWE (52%), suggesting that students perceive Grammarly as more effective in detecting grammar, spelling, and language-use errors. Interviews support this finding, with students highlighting Grammarly's broader features, such as plagiarism detection and more comprehensive feedback. Conversely, MWE's simplicity makes it user-friendly, as indicated by the comment "MWE is easy to use." This suggests a trade-off between functionality and accessibility. Thus, Grammarly provides advanced feedback, while MWE offers convenience and ease of operation. The last aspect, Grammarly, was rated higher (37%) than MWE (15%) in terms of clearness. Students emphasized that Grammarly provides direct corrections without requiring user input, whereas MWE often only highlights potential issues and offers limited suggestions. This finding suggests that Grammarly's automatic feedback mechanism enhances clarity but may limit students' opportunity to engage with their errors critically.

Therefore, it can be concluded that MWE is more widely used due to accessibility. Grammarly is perceived as more effective and clearer in providing detailed corrective feedback. These findings imply that integrating both tools strategically could maximize students' writing improvement, MWE for practicality, and Grammarly for depth and accuracy.

The rapid development of AI-assisted writing tools significantly impacts beginner learners, including improvements in organizations and content in business letter writing (Khalifa & Albadawy, 2024; Marzuki et al., 2023; Nanjiba, 2025). This study aims to implement Grammarly and MWE to improve students' writing skills. This relates to students' challenges in class regarding writing business letters. Students tend to rely on Artificial Intelligence (AI) to complete assignments. This undoubtedly has negative consequences for students, especially beginners. According to Budiyo et al (2025), AI tools significantly reduce cognitive effort and creativity, disregard personal writing styles, and decrease confidence and skill retention. Budiyo's research indicates that, although AI tools improve technical efficiency and accuracy, excessive reliance can hinder the development of critical thinking, creativity, and independent writing skills.

This implication highlights the need for educators to find a balance between leveraging AI for productivity and encouraging active student learning. Therefore, educators play a crucial role in ensuring students use AI tools appropriately and wisely, preventing them from becoming completely dependent on AI.

Grammarly and MWE are two automated proofreading tools frequently used by students from beginners to experts to help correct their writing (Astuti et al., 2023; Yulanda, 2023). The research demonstrates that these two tools can help students improve their writing quality. Each tool offers several advantages, and can be applied simultaneously for optimal results. After applying these two tools, the results showed significant changes in four aspects

of business writing: organization, content, appearance, and language used. Furthermore, the researchers summarized students' experiences when using the two tools together. Nearly all students benefited not only from improved grades but also from improved understanding of their writing skills, particularly from errors. The two tools analyze errors and provide suggestions for correction, enabling students to learn from their mistakes. However, no similar research has utilized these two proofreading tools together. Most studies analyze the two tools separately, while a small number have analyzed other AI-based tools. They examined the impact of using AI-based writing aids, such as Quillbot, ChatGPT, Jenni, WordTun, and Paperpal, from a teacher's perspective. The results showed that AI writing tools positively improved students' writing, particularly in terms of content quality and organization. Therefore, it can be concluded that integrating AI-based writing tools can be beneficial in improving the writing quality of EFL students.

The student experiences discussed above illustrate how implementing these two tools has transformed their perspective on the learning process. Previously, almost all students opted for instant methods to complete their writing assignments. Besides saving time, students focused solely on the final grade, not the process. Therefore, when these tools were removed, important aspects of writing skills appeared significantly lacking. Therefore, educators are advised to be fully present, directly incorporating technology into the student learning process in an appropriate and measurable manner. As a result, students will be fully present and enjoy the process by applying AI-based tools or technology appropriately according to their needs. Inayah & Apoko (2024) provide an interesting conclusion that using Grammarly can increase students' confidence in writing. Students found Grammarly's correction suggestions to be accurate and effective.

The discussion above indicates that utilizing AI-assisted writing tools, particularly Grammarly and MWE, could improve students' writing competency. Students perceive both tools as beneficial, however, their utility is limited by specific features in correction accuracy. Consequently, further research is necessary to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of these AI tools based on students' experiences. This research would be beneficial in developing the guidelines for proper and informed student utilization, thereby optimizing the pedagogical benefits of AI-assisted writing tools.

CONCLUSION

This study explores how Grammarly and Microsoft Word Editor (MWE) can help students improve their business writing skills. The results were analyzed through student experiences. Based on the data analysis, most students experienced significant improvements in several aspects, such as content, organization, appearance, and language use. The average student score in the post-test was 3.84/4, up from the initial 2.8/4, which was accompanied by student reviews of their experiences. Generally, students reported that the correction suggestions related to spelling, punctuation, and word choice were provided appropriately. This indicates that these two tools successfully provided students with benefits not only in understanding the material but also in their writing skills. Furthermore, these tools, intended as writing correctors, provided a different student experience compared to other AI technologies. Based on the students' perspective, despite its

differences in usage and features, students agree that both tools as equally valuable for helping to improve their writing quality. This indicates that even the basic correction provided by MWE answers the fundamental need as writing support. Hopefully, this research can contribute positively to improving students' writing skills. Students will no longer rely entirely on AI devices but instead utilize them as aids to facilitate the learning process. The results of this study can serve as a reference for teachers in integrating the use of Grammarly and Microsoft Word Editor as practical and ethical writing learning tools.

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HALAMAN INI SENGAJA DIKOSONGKAN