

SECONDARY STUDENTS' CYCLICAL SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS MEDIATED BY GRAMMARLY IN RECOUNT TEXT WRITING

Fajriati Astuti

Email: fajritia9@gmail.com

Bambang Widi Pratolo

Magister Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Email: bambang.pratolo@pbi.uad.ac.id

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Abstract: This research examines the cyclical self-assessment process in an English language learning class facilitated by Artificial Intelligence (AI). Guided by the research question, “How did secondary students of writing proficiency participate in a repetitive self-assessment procedure in Writing with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence?” This research uses a narrative inquiry method to collect data from three middle school students with writing proficiency levels at Angkasa Adisucipto Yogyakarta High School. Data was collected through reflective notes and interviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. This research produced two critical findings. Initially, three middle school students with varying levels of writing ability participated in different phases of a self-assessment cycle, which was influenced by two main factors: their drive to learn and their belief in artificial intelligence (AI). The higher a high school student's level of motivation, the more likely they will actively seek outside input. Additionally, their belief in Automated Written Corrective Feedback (AWCF) and Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) motivates them to participate in assessment and revision processes that facilitate a cyclical self-evaluation process to improve their learning outcomes. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to enable highly efficient iterative self-evaluation procedures with diverse functions. These findings imply that integrating AI tools like Grammarly in writing instruction can enhance self-assessment efficacy, but educators must address feedback literacy and the limitations of AI-generated feedback. Future research should explore larger sample sizes and diverse contexts to generalize findings.

Keywords: English learning; Artificial Intelligence; self-assessment; secondary students.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching writing is an essential aspect of language education that must be included in school programs. Writing is an important language skill that should be considered or possessed in education and learning. If the teaching of writing in English fails to include the necessary skills that must be taught, this indicates that the teacher must meet the curriculum requirements. Engaging in writing requires a series of interconnected actions, such as setting goals, brainstorming, creating an initial version, etc. Efficient management of these processes is essential to achieving writing goals. Writing involves strategies to manage production processes, which are essential for progressively constructing a coherent text. This process includes a variety of tasks, including setting goals, brainstorming, creating an initial version, engaging in reading and reviewing, and then modifying and editing. Students must acquire the skills necessary to construct sentences, form coherent paragraphs,

and effectively convey ideas according to the conventions of written English.

Given the multifaceted nature of writing, effective instruction must address the diverse challenges faced by students in acquiring these essential skills. Acquiring the ability to write can be difficult, as it involves many skills. Students are required to have the ability to identify, examine, and develop ideas. Therefore, teachers must combine collaborative writing skills that must be taught during teaching and learning activities. Writing provides an opportunity for those who prefer to communicate without communicating verbally. Through writing activities, individuals will articulate their emotions. According to Chung et al. (2021), writing is a complex cognitive process that allows individuals to convey information and express thoughts, ideas, and feelings to others. Teng et al. (2022) added that writing skills involve deep thinking activities to articulate ideas through language. Meanwhile, Kharisma et al. (2021) state that writing is a form

of self-expression that requires mastery of language structure, vocabulary, and graphology to convey the message clearly and effectively. Before starting the writing process, students should introspect themselves and ascertain whether they have enough time to dedicate to the task and whether they enjoy the activity. More time allocated to writing in the classroom can help students' ability to write effectively.

Despite the recognition of the challenges faced by secondary students in writing, and the importance of providing effective support, traditional methods of feedback can be time-consuming and resource-intensive. Secondary students need help with writing despite its importance. An empirical investigation conducted in Indonesia revealed that secondary school students faced challenges in writing. These difficulties encompassed various aspects such as parts of speech, tenses, spelling, prepositions, vocabulary, punctuation, cohesion, constructing paragraphs with a distinct focus, producing lucid and cohesive academic essays, paraphrasing, and incorporating in-text citations (Bram & Angelina, 2022). The study also found that students need support, such as feedback, to discover areas where they may develop (Chen & Tseng, 2021; Jusslind & Widlund, 2021). Nevertheless, soliciting feedback directly from other people requires a significant amount of time and exertion. Recent studies have focused on addressing these problems by developing new writing tools that streamline Automated Written Corrective Feedback (AWCF) and Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) processes (Nazari et al., 2021; Wilson & Roscoe, 2020; Zhang, 2020). AWCF and AWE provide prompt and precise identification of different writing issues, deliver immediate and comprehensive corrective comments, and offer instant scores that allow students additional time to contemplate and revise their work (Barrot, 2021). Secondary students must develop evaluative abilities to effectively respond to non-dialogic AWCF (Automated Written Corrective Feedback) and AWE (Automated Writing Evaluation) feedback, as well as cultivate internal feedback, supported by research conducted by Jiang and Yu (2022) and Yan and Carless (2022).

Secondary students must participate in self-reflection and self-assessment to optimally utilize the insights derived by Automated Writing Corrective comments (AWCF) and Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) and genuinely benefit from the comments received (Toufaha, 2024; Rejeki, 2023). Self-assessment is essential for

enhancing students' capacity to manage their learning and track their advancement (Karaman & Şahin, 2021). Self-assessment enables students to evaluate their learning preferences, strengths, and areas for enhancement, facilitating modifying their study techniques to suit their requirements. Yan and Carless (2021) assert that self-assessment encompasses personal reflection and the pursuit and application of feedback to improve learning outcomes. Moreover, self-assessment enhances students' self-regulated learning and academic achievement by prompting them to analyze their progress against established norms critically (Bazán-Ramírez et al., 2025). Flournoy and Bauman (2021) assert that integrating self-assessment into the learning process enhances students' metacognitive awareness, enabling them to assume responsibility for their academic growth. Furthermore, Panadero et al. (2020) discovered that students who participate in self-assessment cultivate enhanced self-efficacy and are more inclined to establish attainable learning objectives. Through self-assessment, students can augment their writing proficiency, refine their critical thinking abilities, and cultivate greater independence in their learning. Hence, students must undertake the self-assessment process independently since they possess the capacity for agency and autonomy (Yan et al., 2020). Therefore, self-assessment plays a vital role in fostering students' ability to become self-reliant and continue learning throughout their lives.

To effectively implement self-assessment, Yan (2020) propose a cyclical model that outlines key steps involved in this crucial process. In their 2020 publication, Yan introduced a cycle self-evaluation process which involves establishing assessment criteria or standards, soliciting feedback, engaging in self-reflection, and making necessary adjustments. The initial phase of the self-assessment process involves establishing criteria or standards as the foundation for evaluating students' work. The requirements may have a formal shape, such as the rubric provided by the teacher, or be based on students' aspirations or previous performance. If the students are unable to engage in instant self-reflection on their work, they should move on to the second level, which involves actively seeking feedback. Feedback can be obtained from two sources: external and internal. The external sources can be acquired via the instructor or fellow students.

Having established clear criteria and sought feedback from various sources, the next crucial step in the self-assessment cycle involves a deep

process of self-reflection. Self-reflection is an essential component of self-assessment, allowing students to critically evaluate their work and identify areas for improvement (Rameli et al., 2025; Shane et al., 2025). Conversely, the internal sources originate from the pupils' subjective viewpoints. Upon receiving sufficient input, the students proceed to the third level, which involves self-reflection. They must contemplate the revise of their work by considering the information they have got, and they must assess their work to see if it needs enhancement. Revision occurs when students choose to modify their position. During the revision process, students are required to alter their work to align more closely with the established criteria or standards. Alternatively, they may also make adjustments to the requirements or standards to match their job better.

To investigate the practical application of this cyclical self-assessment model in a real-world setting, this research aims to explore its implementation in writing classes using AI technology (Clayton et al., 2025). This research aims to test the application of cyclical self-assessment, as Yan (2020) proposed in writing classes using AI technology, especially Grammarly, in the Indonesian context. It should be noted that previous studies have yet to examine the application of this approach in a writing context. This research was conducted to understand better whether Grammarly, as an Automated Writing Feedback and Assessment Writing Environment, can facilitate a productive self-evaluation process in writing. Therefore, this research examines the repeated cycle of self-evaluation experienced by three high school students with varying levels of ability to write recount text, facilitated by using Grammarly in the Writing subject at SMA Angkasa Adisucipto Yogyakarta. This study specifically seeks to answer the research question: *How did secondary students of writing proficiency participate in a repetitive self-assessment procedure in Writing with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence?* This research was conducted using narrative inquiry methodology. This research fills a gap in the literature by exploring how this model can be effectively applied in the Indonesian educational context. In addition, this study also provides new insights into how AI can support students' self-assessment process, especially in the context of recount text writing. By involving students from different levels of writing ability, this study provides a comprehensive picture of the potential and challenges in applying the AI-supported self-

assessment cycle model in writing learning practices.

METHOD

This qualitative study aimed to examine the experience of secondary students in the cyclical self-assessment process during a writing course assisted by Grammarly (Ratnawati, 2023; Supiani et al., 2023; Li & Kim, 2024). To this end, we adopted a narrative inquiry approach, a methodology that prioritizes understanding individual experiences through the lens of personal stories (Pino et al., 2022). In this study, student narratives served as primary data, allowing for an in-depth exploration of their lived experiences within the context of the writing course. Data analysis involved a thematic analysis approach, guided by a framework of codes derived from the research questions and emerging themes within the student narratives. NVivo 12 Plus software was utilized to facilitate data management, coding, and thematic analysis (Izza et al., 2021; Allshop et al., 2022).

This research involved three middle school students (*I, A, R*) enrolled at SMA Angkasa Adisucipto Yogyakarta. We assess their writing scores to ascertain their level of writing ability. From a group of students with a level of ability to write in recount text, we deliberately selected three people who represented their writing ability. These students were selected based on their compliance with established inclusion criteria, aiming to obtain meaningful data in a preliminary study on self-assessment. The confidentiality of participants is protected by using pseudonyms.

In order to maintain the ethical requirements of the research, the researchers obtained permission from the class gatekeeper, namely the teacher, as well as the participants, who provided their assent by signing the consent form. Following authorization, the researchers participated in the English class via Zoom meetings to meticulously monitor and document the proceedings. Subsequently, we distributed the hyperlink for the reflective notes, which were structured with a narrative framework that the secondary students are expected to complete upon completing the activity in Grammarly. A narrative frame refers to a pre-designed structure for a written story that includes incomplete sentences and variable durations of blank spaces (Fancourt et al., 2021; Gupta et al., 2022). Hour-long follow-up interviews were conducted with the three secondary students to gather more comprehensive insights into their cyclical self-assessment process

regarding the writing work. All of those interviews were recorded using screen capture technology. Subsequently, the researchers retrieved their spreadsheet in Grammarly as the artifact. Data was collected in Bahasa Indonesia through one reflection note and two interviews and subsequently translated into English to ensure readability for a global audience. A translator-moderator from the study team was assigned to translate the data to guarantee its accuracy. Subsequently, the remaining researchers in the team meticulously examined the translated data to verify its validity.

The gathered data were subsequently examined by theme analysis. The process of thematic analysis involved three primary stages: thoroughly reviewing the transcribed data on many occasions, assigning codes and categories to the data, and restructuring the data based on theme headings (Lochmiller, 2021; Wiltshire & Ronkainen, 2021; Christou, 2022). When analyzing the data from the interview, we initially listened to the recorded interviews multiple times before transcribing the data. Furthermore, we converted the data from Bahasa into written form. Furthermore, we thoroughly examine the transcribed material numerous times to identify the pivotal occurrences, which facilitates the coding process and enables the translation of the chosen data.

Meanwhile, while analyzing the data from the reflective note, we began by reading the note multiple times to identify the critical episode. Prior to the coding procedure, the data remained in Bahasa. Subsequently, upon completing the coding, we translated the data into English. Next, classify the data according to ordinary concepts or facts into sub-themes: establishing benchmarks for performance, soliciting feedback, introspection, calibration procedure, reason for learning, and level of confidence in AI. Furthermore, the sub-themes were rearranged into two main categories: the phases of the cycle self-assessment process that secondary students undergo with the help of AI and the factors that impact the effectiveness of this cyclical self-assessment process.

The data organized into thematic categories were further analyzed to ascertain any resemblances or disparities among each participant. After analyzing the data and identifying the patterns within each sub-theme, we presented the data and offered corresponding interpretations. Next, to formulate a comprehensive study analysis, we examined data by juxtaposing them with pertinent studies that yielded similar or dissimilar results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on this narrative inquiry study, researchers found evidence that every student with writing proficiency is involved in several stages of the self-assessment process in writing mediated through AI. In addition, researchers also found that several factors influenced the various stages of the self-assessment cycle that they took, namely learning motivation and personal belief in automatic feedback and automatic scores provided by AI.

The stages of the cyclical self-assessment process experienced by secondary students facilitated by AI

Developing structure of writing

According to Alfi (2024), students with the same level of writing ability, namely in Recount Text material, agree to apply formal criteria as criteria that have been determined based on teacher instructions and writing rubrics. Before writing the recount text, they were assigned to create an outline based on their determined topic.

"Before writing the recount text, I made a structural framework for the recount text that I would create first. After that, I started writing my writing using a rubric." (R/ Reflective notes)

"I read several examples of recount texts before I started writing. After that, I started trying to outline my writing on blank paper, then I started writing and developing my writing according to the rubric." (A/ Reflective notes)

"I write the points first and then develop them. I did this because it made it easier for me to write while checking the writing rubric for the recount text." (I/ Reflective notes)

The three students showed that they recounted text according to the teacher's instructions regarding its structure. Apart from that, they also pay attention to the writing rubric in Grammarly so that their grammar ensures that their writing is correct.

Seeking feedback

Using Grammarly, the three students used external feedback in a cyclical self-assessment process. All three practically received written feedback from Grammarly. Although they said that the input from Grammarly needed to be 100% correct, it helped them write. Therefore, they also need further feedback from their friends and teachers using reviews.

"When using Grammarly to check the recount text I had created, I felt the feedback from the Grammarly was very helpful in correcting grammar and vocabulary. However, when using this AI I still read it again because the suggestions for improvement in Grammarly are not completely correct." (R/ Interview)

"While writing, I looked at the feedback from Grammarly. However, when I was about to receive all the feedback from Grammarly, my friend stopped me, because there were several proposed revisions from Grammarly whose sentences were not quite right. So I decided not to accept the proposal from Grammarly. In my opinion, peer review is very useful because it can make me aware of mistakes in my writing." (A/ Interview)

"Of course, using Grammarly really helps me in writing, because this AI helps in correcting errors in grammar and vocabulary. Apart from that, using Grammarly also helps shorten the time when correcting my writing." (I/ Interview)

The Interview results above stated that two of them still needed peer review even though they used Grammarly. They argue that Grammarly is artificial intelligence, which still has errors. Meanwhile, "I" revealed that Grammarly helped increase his writing confidence because Grammarly is beneficial in writing.

Revision process

This process is facilitated by Grammarly, making it easier for three students to obtain adequate feedback from external references such as Grammarly, friends, and teachers. This process makes it easier for them to identify which parts need to be repaired quickly. Through a revision process, they must adjust the quality of their writing (Li & Hebert, 2024; Jansen et al., 2024). Then, they try to improve the quality of their writing by improving it in response to the feedback they have received.

"At this stage I started by revising the Orientation section completely based on suggestions from the teacher and Grammarly. Apart from that, I looked again at the existing writing rubric at the time of revision to adjust the writing structure to see whether it was correct or not. Because the structure and order of my writing still do not meet the criteria." (R/ Interview)

"I don't really pay attention to the existing rubrics; mostly, I revise based on input from the teacher and the feedback he provides via Grammarly. Because there are several things that need to be improved based on input from the teacher. Then, I revised using Grammarly, because by using Grammarly I could see the feedback given. After that, I kept double checking so that there were no more mistakes in my writing." (A/ Interview)

"I improve my writing mostly based on input from my teachers and friends. Based on the feedback I received, I changed some parts based on Grammarly. Grammarly focuses on grammatical errors as well as vocabulary. For that reason, I changed it according to suggestions from Grammarly. Only after I revised did I consult my teacher again." (I/ Interview)

Based on the interview results above, the three students should focus more on the rubric in the revision process. Most only revise based on external references they receive.

Factors influencing an effective cyclical self-assessment process

Motivation to learn

In this study, researchers found that learning motivation and the level of trust in AI are two aspects that contribute to the work cycle self-assessment process and influence English learning outcomes in recount texts. The three students revealed that they had good motivation to learn.

"By using Grammarly I become more enthusiastic about writing, because Grammarly really helps me in finding errors in my writing." (R/ Interview)

"Grammarly really helps me in increasing my motivation to study, because I can find out where my mistakes are." (A/ Interview)

"I feel that by using Grammarly, my level of confidence in writing has increased; apart from that, Grammarly also really helps me in writing the recount text that has been assigned. Maybe in the future, it won't just be recount text." (I/ Interview)

Confident in Grammarly

Grammarly provides feedback and accuracy scores to increase user confidence in this AI. This is one of the factors that can impact the success of the cycle self-assessment process. The three of them have the same opinion, namely that they don't believe

100% in Grammarly because they think AI is a robot (artificial intelligence), which can be wrong.

"When I used Grammarly, I got a score of 80%; this shows that by using AI, there are still errors, but not all of them. Even though artificial intelligence already exists, we must remain careful when using it." (R/ Interview)

"I believe in AI, but I don't believe it 100%, because sometimes there are still errors in it," (A/ Interview)

"In my opinion, the recount text that I have created and revised by looking at Grammarly is good. However, I still have to reread the input provided by Grammarly." (I/ Interview)

The cyclical self-assessment process went through various stages for three secondary students with varying degrees of writing proficiency

Apridayani (2024) provide a series of sequential stages that must be followed to successfully complete the self-assessment procedure. Currently, the three students of varying writing proficiency undergo multiple stages in the cyclical self-assessment process, particularly when they are seeking feedback and engaging in the calibrating stage.

Yan and Carless (2022) state that students need to establish and utilise evaluation criteria in order to engage in self-assessment. Three secondary students of varying writing proficiency levels were tasked with creating recount texts based on the teacher's instructions regarding the typical format of such texts. Subsequently, the trio of students meticulously reviewed their written work in Grammarly, utilising the writing rubric furnished by the platform. The researcher determined that the three secondary students employed formal criteria when writing. Despite agreeing to utilise the teacher's predetermined set of criteria, each individual nonetheless independently oversees their own process of self-assessment (Yan et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2024).

Seeking feedback is a crucial component of the self-evaluation process (Villagrán et al., 2024; Sajadi et al., 2024; Bushi & Aliaj., 2024). The research findings indicate that Grammarly facilitated the provision of sufficient external feedback to three students, encompassing input from Grammarly itself, classmates, and teachers. Yan et al. (2021) highlight that self-assessment, when done without receiving external input on problems, is prone to hidden biases that must be effectively corrected. The third student reacted

distinctly to the external feedback they were given. Two out of the three students believed they depended less on comments from Grammarly due to their more significant advantage of receiving constructive input from lecturers. In addition, they have greater confidence in the feedback provided by their peers. Consistent with Zong et al. (2021), it is emphasised that peer input, specifically brief comments, needs to be more beneficial for the recipient. Zhan (2024) discovered that a significant obstacle in peer evaluation is the students' requirement for feedback literacy. Conversely, some students exhibited a favourable disposition while addressing the peer input, they were given. According to Shang (2022), online peer feedback is more advantageous than automated corrective feedback in improving writing performance.

Simultaneously, students concur that receiving written corrected feedback from the teacher is the most dependable method to actively participate in revising their work. According to Safeek and Hock (2024) the teacher's evaluation was well-received by all three pupils, leading to their happiness and subsequent improvement in their work. Similarly, according to Teng (2022), intermediate students reported that feedback from teachers was more professional and focused, hence facilitating their involvement in the revision process. Hence, it is imperative for students to actively engage in responding to and discussing the key points emphasised by the teacher and, after that, edit their work accordingly (Adrefiza & Fortunasari, 2020). In addition, utilising Grammarly enables students to mitigate their adverse feelings when seeking direct instructor feedback.

Feedback and reflection are connected components in the self-assessment process (Yan et al., 2024). Furthermore, Anis and Hasan (2025) stated that feedback is necessary for self-reflection to be balanced due to overconfidence. Hence, when students receive sufficient and insightful feedback from external sources to evaluate the calibre of their work, they can engage in self-reflection with effectiveness. Yan and Carless (2022) students evaluate their performance based on preset criteria and multiple reference data sources. The study unveiled that the three students engaged in introspection to evaluate the calibre of their work and pinpointed their shortcomings through self-reflection. In their study, Yan et al., (2024) showed that feedback promotes self-reflection when students actively pursue it. Nevertheless, the participants in this study disclosed that they engaged in self-reflection in response to the criticism they received, regardless of whether they

received it passively or actively sought it from external sources.

The three students actively participated in the revision phase of the writing process with the assistance of Grammarly. They said they made revisions to their work in response to comments from Grammarly, peers, and teachers. They updated previously set criteria in modifications that were no longer based on formal criteria but based on the feedback they got. This is in line with Panadero et al. (2020), who reported that the use of specified criteria dropped after obtaining feedback. The three students displayed varied revision patterns. Students with exceptional aptitude diligently reviewed their work twice, whereas their counterparts only reviewed it once.

The role of each phase of a cyclical self-assessment in the final result

Grammarly has been proven to be beneficial in promoting an ongoing self-assessment process, as students actively revise their work. However, the differences in the cyclical self-assessment process across individuals can be ascribed to two crucial factors: their inclination to acquire knowledge and their level of assurance in applying Grammarly. These factors impact the final results. Wilson et al., (2024) determined that the varying levels of confidence in Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) can be ascribed to differing levels of writing proficiency. Each individual demonstrated a pronounced desire to obtain knowledge. However, their level of comfort in using Grammarly is not complete, since they are currently striving to incorporate feedback given by academics. Nevertheless, they also exhibit trust in the dependability of the feedback provided by Grammarly. The cessation of the editing process is perceived as a result of feeling satisfied and unconcerned about the effectiveness of Grammarly.

After carefully analysing the students' worksheets, it was concluded that all students who used Grammarly received excellent grades. Furthermore, they also develop the ability to differentiate and analyse ideas offered by Grammarly before integrating them. They have yet to evaluate and revise it.

CONCLUSION

The study examines the self-assessment process of students with writing proficiency using AI tools. The research focuses on three secondary students who used Grammarly to create recount texts and receive feedback from teachers and peers. The

students' motivation to learn and trust in AI were crucial factors in the process. Despite using Grammarly, two students still needed peer review to identify mistakes. The study emphasizes the importance of establishing evaluation criteria for self-assessment and the need for external feedback. Feedback from teachers and peers increased students' confidence in Grammarly. However, some students struggled with feedback literacy, and online peer feedback was more beneficial than automated corrective feedback. Students also found written corrected feedback from teachers the most reliable method for revising their work. The study found that students with exceptional aptitude reviewed their work twice, while others reviewed it once.

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Sincerely,
Fajriati Astuti

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