

# **The Effectiveness of Word Wall on Reducing Grammatical Mistakes in Writing Recount Text by Students at the Eighth Grade**

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**ABSTRACT:** This research is a pre-experimental study using a one-group pretest-posttest design without the use of control classes. This study aims to examine the grammatical accuracy of writing recount texts in English by eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Denpasar, as well as to determine the effectiveness of the Word Wall strategy in reducing grammatical mistakes. This study applies a mixed-method approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Descriptive analysis supported by quantitative data was used to evaluate students' improvement. The primary data in this research were taken from students' English recount text writing results before and after the implementation of the Word Wall media. The findings showed a significant increase in grammatical accuracy in students' writing. The average pretest score was 58.15, while the average posttest score increased to 85.4. The percentage of students achieving the minimum mastery criterion (score  $\geq 66$ ) increased from 35% (7 students) in the pretest to 100% (20 students) in the posttest. The lowest pretest score was 45 and the highest was 70, while the lowest posttest score was 76 and the highest was 96. Based on the N-Gain calculation, the effectiveness percentage was 76.35%, which falls into the "effective" category. These results indicate that the Word Wall strategy was effective in reducing grammatical mistakes and improving students' recount text writing skills.

**KEYWORDS -** *Word Wall, Grammatical Mistakes, Recount Text, Writing Skills, Grammar Accuracy, N-Gain*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The ability to write accurately and effectively in English remains a challenge for many students in Indonesia, especially at the junior high school level. Writing is not only a productive skill that requires mastery of grammar and vocabulary, but also a complex cognitive process that demands coherence, structure, and clarity in expressing thoughts. As part of the national curriculum, writing skills are emphasized in English language learning, and among the various genres taught, recount text holds a central place. Recount texts are narrative compositions that retell past events or personal experiences in a structured and sequential manner. They require students to apply a clear understanding of time-related expressions, consistent use of past tense verbs, and accurate sentence construction to convey events logically and cohesively. Despite early exposure to English grammar rules and repeated writing practice, many junior high school students still face significant difficulties in applying grammatical knowledge effectively. Preliminary observations and informal interviews with English teachers at SMP Negeri 4 Denpasar revealed that eighth-grade students struggle to construct grammatically accurate recount texts. Frequent errors include misuse of verb tenses (e.g., "go" instead of "went"), omission of auxiliary verbs (e.g., "did," "was"), subject-verb agreement issues, and sentence fragments that disrupt the flow of ideas. These issues are not only symptomatic of inadequate grammar mastery but also point to a lack of meaningful context in grammar instruction, which results in students being unable to transfer theoretical knowledge into practical writing tasks.

Such problems are not isolated to this school but reflect broader challenges in English language education across Indonesia. Research by [1] indicates that grammatical inaccuracy, particularly in the use of verbs, remains one of the most prominent obstacles in students' recount writing. In a similar vein, [2] emphasize that omission and misformation of tenses are common, especially among learners in lower secondary education. These findings highlight the limitations of traditional grammar teaching approaches that emphasize memorization and drill-based practice without sufficient integration into communicative and written contexts. As a result, students often retain grammar rules at a superficial level without developing the skills to use them creatively or accurately in writing. In light of these challenges, there is a pressing need for pedagogical strategies that provide both contextual support and interactive engagement. One such approach is the use of Word Wall, a visual teaching tool that displays high-frequency or thematically relevant words and structures prominently on classroom walls. In recount writing instruction, a Word Wall can present essential vocabulary such as irregular past tense verbs, sequence connectors, and sentence starters, giving students immediate access to language forms required for effective writing. According to [3], the integration of Word Wall in classroom instruction enhances students' grammar awareness, facilitates vocabulary retention, and promotes independent learning by enabling students to self-correct and reference grammatical structures during writing tasks.

The theoretical foundation for using Word Wall in language instruction is supported by Sociocultural Theory and Constructivist Learning Theory. Sociocultural Theory, particularly Vygotsky's notion of mediated learning, posits that learners acquire new knowledge and skills more effectively when supported by external tools and social interaction. In this framework, the Word Wall acts as a semiotic tool a form of scaffolding that supports learners in bridging the gap between their current level of grammar proficiency and the expected academic standards. Meanwhile, Constructivist Theory emphasizes the importance of active engagement, learner autonomy, and the construction of meaning through authentic experiences. The Word Wall aligns with these principles by creating opportunities for students to explore language forms visually, make choices in their writing process, and develop deeper internalization through meaningful practice.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of the Word Wall strategy in reducing grammatical errors particularly verb-related mistakes in students' recount text writing. By employing a one-group pretest-posttest design, the research measures grammatical improvements before and after the intervention using both quantitative (score analysis) and qualitative (writing samples and observations) data. It is expected that the findings of this study will not only demonstrate the practical benefits of visual learning tools like Word Wall but also contribute to the growing body of research on effective grammar instruction for EFL learners. Furthermore, the study seeks to provide actionable insights for English teachers who face ongoing challenges in improving students' grammatical competence and overall writing proficiency in junior high school settings.

## **II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is grounded in three interrelated theoretical pillars: Writing Theory, Grammar Theory, and Word Wall Theory. These theories collectively form a conceptual framework to investigate the extent to which the Word Wall strategy contributes to reducing grammatical mistakes in recount text writing by eighth-grade students. Each theory addresses a critical dimension of the research namely, writing as a process and product, the nature of grammatical errors in EFL learners, and the role of visual and interactive tools in language learning.

### **2.1 Writing Theory**

Writing is one of the most cognitively demanding skills in language learning. As [4] argues, writing is not merely a product but a recursive process consisting of planning, drafting, editing, and revising. This process-oriented perspective emphasizes the importance of idea development, structural organization, and linguistic accuracy in successful written communication. According to [2] writing enables learners to externalize their thoughts through language, thereby engaging both linguistic and cognitive functions. They argue that writing is a process of organizing ideas logically and clearly, with attention to grammar, coherence, and cohesion. Similarly, [5] emphasizes that writing serves as both a way of thinking and a permanent record of knowledge. It

helps learners to clarify their thoughts and develop precision in language use. In this study, recount text writing serves as the genre under investigation. [6] define recount text as a narrative structure used to retell past experiences in chronological order, comprising three key elements: orientation, series of events, and reorientation. In recount texts, the simple past tense is the dominant grammatical structure, and its accurate use is essential to convey temporal clarity. The writing theory, therefore, underpins the analysis of students' ability to compose well-organized and grammatically accurate recount texts. It offers insight into the cognitive and linguistic demands of writing and supports the assessment of students' performance before and after the implementation of the Word Wall strategy

## **2.2 Grammar Theory**

Grammar is the backbone of effective writing. As [7] state, grammar comprises the system of rules that governs the structure of sentences and the relationships between words. In second language acquisition, the mastery of grammatical rules is often a major challenge, particularly when learners are required to produce extended written texts. According to [5], grammatical errors in learner writing typically fall into four categories:

1. Omission – leaving out necessary elements such as subjects, verbs, or auxiliaries;
2. Addition – inserting unnecessary elements that distort meaning;
3. Misformation – using incorrect grammatical forms;
4. Misordering – arranging words in an incorrect syntactic sequence.

[8] expands this analysis by identifying three major sources of grammatical errors:

1. Interlanguage errors, which stem from the influence of a learner's first language;
2. Intralingual errors, which result from the learner's overgeneralization or misapplication;
3. Developmental errors, which are part of the natural progression of language acquisition.

These frameworks are highly relevant for evaluating students' writing in this study, particularly their use of the simple past tense, which is critical for recount text composition. Students frequently make mistakes in using irregular verbs, forming negative and interrogative past tense constructions, or selecting appropriate time signals. By applying grammar theory, this study systematically categorizes students' errors and examines whether the Word Wall intervention leads to measurable improvements in grammatical accuracy.

## **2.3 Word Wall Theory**

The Word Wall is a visual instructional tool that displays high-frequency words, grammar rules, or thematic vocabulary on a wall or board for continual student reference. It is commonly used to support vocabulary acquisition, spelling, and grammar instruction in both L1 and L2 settings. According to [4], visual aids like the Word Wall help to concretize abstract language concepts, making them more accessible to learners. Visual learning strategies promote active engagement, memory retention, and learner independence. Word Walls enable learners to quickly access verb forms, grammar structures, and example sentences while writing, especially when working with genre-specific texts such as recounts.

The theoretical basis for Word Wall use also aligns with [9] theory of social constructivism, which posits that learning is mediated through tools and interaction. The Word Wall serves as a form of scaffolding, supporting learners as they internalize new linguistic forms. It helps bridge the gap between learners' current ability and their potential performance, especially when used collaboratively during peer editing or group writing activities. Highlights the role of input frequency and noticing in second language development. The constant visual presence of correct language forms on the Word Wall increases exposure, reinforces learning through repetition, and promotes self-correction. By allowing learners to refer to model forms independently, the Word Wall encourages autonomy and reduces reliance on teacher intervention.

Furthermore, [10] argue that interactive tools like Word Walls make learning more engaging and reduce anxiety in language classrooms. The playful and visual nature of the Word Wall helps to lower the affective filter, which is crucial for second language acquisition [11]. In this study, the Word Wall displays past tense verbs, transition signals, and recount-specific structures to support students during writing activities. It functions

as both a pedagogical device and a cognitive aid, improving students' awareness of grammatical accuracy and genre conventions.

## **2.4 Theoretical Integration and Application**

These three theories are not applied in isolation but are integrated to provide a multidimensional perspective on student writing development. Their interrelation is summarized as follows:

1. Writing Theory contributes to understanding the processes involved in creating recount texts and the criteria used to evaluate them.
2. Grammar Theory enables the systematic analysis of error types, their sources, and their impact on text clarity.
3. Word Wall Theory offers a pedagogical intervention grounded in visual learning and learner autonomy that directly targets the improvement of grammatical accuracy.

This theoretical integration supports the study's pre-experimental research design, in which students are assessed through a pretest, exposed to the Word Wall treatment, and then evaluated through a posttest. The study measures improvement quantitatively through score comparison and N-Gain analysis [12], and qualitatively through error classification and observation. The theoretical framework also justifies the study's mixed-methods approach, combining the depth of qualitative analysis with the rigor of quantitative evaluation to provide a comprehensive view of the Word Wall's effectiveness. Ultimately, this integrated framework enhances the study's validity, providing a solid conceptual base for examining how instructional media can reduce grammatical errors and improve the overall quality of students' written recount texts.

## **III. RESEARCH METHOD**

This chapter outlines the methodological framework used in conducting the research. It provides a detailed explanation of the research design, population and sample, research instruments, procedures, data collection techniques, and the analytical strategies used to interpret the findings. Each component was carefully selected to ensure the reliability and validity of the research outcomes, particularly in measuring the effectiveness of the Word Wall strategy on students' grammatical accuracy in recount text writing

### **3.1 Research Design**

The research employed a pre-experimental design, specifically a one-group pretest-posttest model, which is widely used to measure the effect of an instructional treatment without the use of a control group [8]. This model allows the researcher to observe and compare students' writing performance before and after being exposed to the Word Wall intervention. Although pre-experimental designs do not include random assignment or control groups, they are considered appropriate for classroom-based research where ethical and logistical constraints exist. The primary objective of this research is to determine whether the use of Word Wall as a visual learning aid can improve grammatical accuracy in students' recount text writing. By applying both quantitative and qualitative methods within this framework, the researcher is able to gain a holistic understanding of how the intervention influences learning outcomes. The choice of a mixed-methods approach is grounded in the belief that combining numerical data (e.g., scores) with descriptive data (e.g., error patterns and student engagement) will result in a richer, more nuanced interpretation of the phenomenon being studied.

### **3.2 Research Setting and Timeframe**

This study was conducted at SMP Negeri 4 Denpasar, a public junior high school located in the city of Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia. The school was selected based on accessibility and the willingness of school management and teachers to collaborate in the research process. The study took place over the course of eight days, from 13th to 20th November 2024, and was organized into four main phases:

1. Initial observation and coordination
2. Administration of the pretest
3. Implementation of the Word Wall strategy (treatment)

#### 4. Posttest and final data collection

Each phase was carefully timed to ensure instructional continuity and minimal disruption to the normal teaching schedule.

### 3.3 Population and Sample

The population of this study included all eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Denpasar during the 2023/2024 academic year. Eighth-grade students were selected because they had been previously introduced to recount text writing and basic grammar concepts, including the simple past tense, in line with the Indonesian national curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka). From this population, a single class, Class VIII-8, was selected as the sample through simple random sampling. This technique ensured that the selected class was representative and free from selection bias. The sample consisted of 20 students aged between 13 and 14 years, with varying levels of English proficiency. According to the English teacher, the students in this class reflected the average language proficiency of the overall eighth-grade population.

### 3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

#### 1. Qualitative Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and N-Gain (Normalized Gain) analysis to measure the effectiveness of the Word Wall intervention. The results were classified based on [10] interpretation of N-Gain scores:

- < 0.3: Low improvement
- 0.3–0.7: Moderate improvement
- > 0.7: High improvement

These results were supplemented with mean, median, and standard deviation calculations to ensure clarity and accuracy in performance trends.

#### 2. Qualitatif Analysis

Qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis using the following steps:

- Error Categorization: Students' grammatical errors were identified and classified using [5]framework: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.
- Behavioral Patterns: Observational data were coded to identify how students used the Word Wall and how it influenced their confidence, independence, and accuracy.
- Triangulation: To enhance validity, data from student writing, observation notes, and teacher feedback were compared and cross-checked.

This dual analysis provided both measurable and descriptive evidence of the impact of the Word Wall intervention

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 Pretest Results :Grammatical Accurcy Before Word Wall Implementation

Prior to the implementation of the Word Wall strategy, students were assigned a task to write recount texts about personal experiences. The objective of the pretest was to identify the extent to which students could apply grammar rules, particularly in the use of the simple past tense, within the context of recount writing. This assessment provided baseline data to determine existing grammar mastery and to identify the most frequent types of errors made by students. The results of the pretest were concerning. The average score was 58.15, significantly below the established minimum mastery criterion (KKM) of 66. Only 35% of the students (7 out of 20) met or exceeded the KKM, indicating that the majority struggled with fundamental grammatical structures. Most errors were concentrated in the misuse of irregular verbs, incorrect tense formation, and the absence of necessary auxiliaries. A typical example was the incorrect phrase "He go to school yesterday," which reflected confusion in applying the past tense "went."

Beyond verb usage, students also encountered difficulties with punctuation, article usage, and sentence connectors. The lack of coherence in their recount texts stemmed not only from grammar issues but also from

poor paragraph organization and underdeveloped event sequencing. Their texts often lacked a clear beginning, middle, and end, with transitions that were abrupt or illogical. These shortcomings suggest that students were not only unfamiliar with grammar rules but also had not internalized how those rules function in building meaningful narratives. Students' reliance on rote memorization without context-based reinforcement contributed to this performance gap. Grammar instruction appeared to have been delivered in isolation, without sufficient opportunities to apply it in writing tasks. Consequently, their procedural grammar knowledge the ability to use grammar rules automatically in real-time writing was underdeveloped.

The findings from the pretest underscored the need for an engaging, accessible, and repetitive strategy that could bridge the gap between rule knowledge and its application. This provided strong justification for the integration of the Word Wall strategy, which promised to deliver grammar input through a visual, structured, and student-centered approach.

#### **4.2 Posttest Results : Grammatical Accuracy After Word Wall Implementation**

Following the intervention using the Word Wall strategy over three instructional sessions, students participated in a posttest designed to assess their improvement. The outcomes showed remarkable progress. The average score rose to 85.4, and all 20 students (100%) surpassed the minimum mastery criterion. This dramatic improvement not only validated the effectiveness of the intervention but also suggested that the strategy benefited a diverse range of learners. A closer analysis of the posttest responses revealed significant improvement in verb tense usage, especially irregular verbs like "took," "ran," "ate," and "slept." Students showed increased awareness of grammatical patterns and structure, applying the past tense consistently and correctly. Their recount texts were more logically organized, with improved use of chronological connectors such as "then," "after that," and "finally." Paragraphs had clearer openings and conclusions, and transitions between ideas were smoother. Errors in punctuation, capitalization, and word order were noticeably reduced. Students also began experimenting with more varied sentence structures, such as compound and complex sentences. This suggests that the Word Wall not only supported grammatical accuracy but also encouraged students to write more fluently and creatively. The visibility and accessibility of the Word Wall likely played a central role in this improvement. Its categorized design separating verbs, adverbs, connectors, and irregular verb forms provided immediate reference during writing activities. Instead of stopping to ask the teacher for guidance, students could independently retrieve the correct form or word by referring to the Word Wall. This autonomy contributed to greater writing fluency and learner confidence.

#### **4.3 Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Results**

The comparison between the pretest and posttest results offers strong quantitative evidence of the impact of the Word Wall strategy on students' grammatical development in recount writing. This comparison was not merely based on score differentials, but also involved analyzing score distributions, mastery level achievements, and reduction in error types across student texts. To quantify the magnitude of the improvement, the normalized gain (N-Gain) was calculated using the formula:

$$N\text{-Gain} = \frac{\text{Skor Posttest} - \text{Skor Pretest}}{\text{Skor Ideal} - \text{Skor Pretest}}$$

From this calculation, the N-Gain value obtained was 0.7635 or 76.35%, which places the intervention in the "effective" category according to Hake's classification. This figure suggests a high level of instructional efficiency, particularly in bridging prior knowledge gaps and reinforcing grammar acquisition.



**Table1. Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Scores**

<b>Student Code</b>	<b>Pretest Score</b>	<b>Posttest Score</b>	<b>Score Range</b>
S1	60	86	26
S2	67	86	19
S3	63	86	23
S4	84	89	5
S5	65	86	21
S6	69	88	19
S7	93	94	1
S8	83	91	8
S9	90	94	4
S10	99	99	0
S11	97	97	0
S12	84	90	6
S13	74	88	14
S14	83	90	7
S15	56	85	29
S16	78	90	12
S17	83	91	8
S18	88	95	7
S19	73	88	15
S20	88	91	3
Total Score	1577	1804	
Class Average	78,85	90,2	
Highest Score	99	99	
Lowest Score	56	85	

Beyond the numbers, the content of the students' writing also changed. In the pretest, many students used incorrect verb forms or struggled to write in complete sentences. By contrast, posttest writing samples exhibited proper verb usage, better punctuation, improved sentence complexity, and more logical narrative structure. This shift reflects not only surface-level correction but also a deeper understanding of how grammar supports meaning in written communication.

Importantly, the findings indicate that the Word Wall strategy had a universal impact across varying proficiency levels. This suggests its versatility and adaptability in classrooms with heterogeneous language skill profiles. The ability of all students to benefit, regardless of initial skill, positions the Word Wall as an inclusive tool for equitable language instruction. These quantitative findings, reinforced by qualitative observations and student writing analysis, provide compelling evidence of the effectiveness of the Word Wall strategy in enhancing grammatical accuracy in recount text writing.

This table clearly illustrates the progress made by students. Notably, the lowest score increased by 31 points, indicating that the strategy was particularly helpful for lower-performing students who benefited from its structure and visual accessibility. Moreover, the proportion of students achieving the minimum mastery criterion rose from 35% to 100%, representing a complete mastery shift among the participants. Figure 4.3 Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Scores (A bar chart here would illustrate three score categories average, lowest, and highest before and after the treatment, visually highlighting gains in all dimensions.) Beyond the numbers, the content of the students' writing also changed. In the pretest, many students used incorrect verb forms or struggled to write in complete sentences. By contrast, posttest writing samples exhibited proper verb usage, better punctuation, improved sentence complexity, and more logical narrative structure. This shift reflects not

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#### **4.4 Qualitatif Observations**

Observational data collected during the treatment sessions provided deeper insight into student behavior and classroom dynamics. One of the most striking findings was the increased learner autonomy. Unlike in previous sessions where students frequently asked for grammar corrections, students began using the Word Wall as a self-help resource. This shift in behavior suggested a growing internalization of grammatical rules. Students were frequently observed consulting the Word Wall during drafting. For example, one student, unsure whether to write “run” or “ran,” glanced at the irregular verb list and confidently chose the correct past tense. Another student reminded a peer to add “-ed” to a regular verb by pointing at the regular verbs section. These interactions indicated that the Word Wall had become an active instructional tool, not just a decorative classroom feature. The structure of the Word Wall also facilitated category-based learning. By grouping words and grammar points (e.g., irregular verbs, time markers, sequence words), students were better able to retrieve and apply grammar knowledge in context. This organization helped students visualize grammar as a system, reinforcing patterns that aid long-term memory retention.

Moreover, the Word Wall supported differentiated instruction. Students with lower proficiency levels were able to work at their own pace and reference words as needed, while more advanced students used it to check their writing or help others. This inclusivity created a more equitable classroom environment where all students felt empowered. Perhaps most importantly, the Word Wall fostered a collaborative classroom culture. Students were seen pointing out grammar tips to each other, building on one another’s knowledge. Peer tutoring became a natural part of the learning process, contributing to a stronger sense of classroom community and shared responsibility for learning.

#### **4.5 Discussion**

The results of this study reaffirm the potential of interactive visual strategies like Word Wall in improving students’ grammar skills, particularly in EFL contexts where grammar instruction is often abstract and decontextualized. The observed progress is consistent with the findings of [3], who noted that Word Wall increases motivation and improves grammar comprehension. Additionally, the present findings support the classification by [2], who identified omission and misinformation as dominant grammatical errors in recount writing. In this study, these same errors significantly decreased following Word Wall implementation. This suggests that repeated, contextual exposure to correct grammar forms, reinforced visually, helps correct deep-seated patterns of misuse.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings align strongly with constructivist learning theory. Learning was facilitated not through passive reception but through active interaction with materials, peer collaboration, and reflective self-correction. The Word Wall served as a scaffold, helping students transition from dependence on teacher feedback to autonomous grammar use. The success of this intervention also reflects the principles of Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Within this framework, students learn best when given tools or support that help them perform slightly beyond their current ability. The Word Wall acted as this support, enabling students to complete writing tasks they might not have managed independently before. As familiarity with grammar structures grew, reliance on the Word Wall decreased an indicator that the learning had been internalized.



Moreover, the study highlights the importance of multimodal input in grammar instruction. The combination of visual cues (Word Wall), verbal explanation (teacher scaffolding), and kinesthetic engagement (student interaction with the wall) provided multiple channels for knowledge acquisition. This multimodality is especially beneficial for middle school learners, whose cognitive development thrives on concrete and visually supported instruction. In sum, the use of Word Wall as an instructional medium significantly enhanced grammatical competence in recount text writing. It bridged the gap between abstract rule instruction and practical application, promoted learner independence, encouraged peer learning, and aligned with sound pedagogical theory. Future research could explore its impact on other writing genres or compare its effectiveness with digital tools.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that the use of the Word Wall strategy significantly improved the grammatical accuracy of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Denpasar in writing recount texts. The integration of visual and interactive learning tools provided meaningful support in bridging students' understanding of abstract grammar concepts with their practical application in written work. Quantitative findings, as reflected in the increase from an average pretest score of 58.15 to a posttest average of 85.4, and an N-Gain value of 76.35%, demonstrate the strategy's effectiveness in enhancing student learning outcomes. Moreover, qualitative observations showed positive shifts in classroom behavior. Students actively engaged with the Word Wall, consulted it independently, and displayed increased confidence and autonomy in applying grammar rules. The Word Wall not only reduced common grammatical errors such as omission, misformation, and misordering, but also supported improvements in sentence construction, paragraph organization, and use of chronological connectors. The strategy also promoted collaborative learning through peer support and fostered a more student-centered classroom environment.

From a pedagogical perspective, this study supports the integration of multimodal and constructivist approaches in grammar instruction. The findings align with Vygotsky's theory of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), suggesting that visual scaffolding tools like the Word Wall can assist students in progressing from guided practice to independent use of language. In conclusion, the Word Wall strategy is an effective, accessible, and adaptable tool for enhancing grammar instruction in EFL contexts. It is recommended that educators incorporate similar visual and participatory methods into their teaching practices to support language development, particularly in contexts where grammar is a known challenge for learners.

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