

# The Role of Grammar Awareness in Students' Writing Performance

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<b>Keywords:</b> Academic Writing, Grammar Awareness, Writing Performance  <b>Received:</b> 30 Jul 2025 <b>Revised:</b> 20 Oct 2025 <b>Accepted:</b> 05 Nov 2025	<p>This study investigates the role of grammar awareness in students' writing performance among English Department students. The research aims to explore how students' awareness and understanding of grammatical structures contribute to the accuracy, coherence, and overall quality of their writing. The study employed a quantitative descriptive method with a correlational design. Data were collected from 40 English Department students through a grammar awareness questionnaire and written essay assessments. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis to examine the relationship between grammar awareness and writing performance. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between students' grammar awareness and their writing performance, indicating that students with higher grammatical awareness tend to produce more accurate and cohesive written texts. The results suggest that explicit grammar awareness instruction should be integrated into writing courses to enhance students' linguistic competence and writing quality. This study highlights the importance of raising students' awareness of grammar not only as a set of rules but also as a tool for effective communication in academic writing contexts.</p>

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the most essential skills in language learning, as it reflects students' ability to communicate ideas accurately and coherently. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), writing competence depends not only on vocabulary and organization but also on a solid understanding of grammar. Grammar awareness, which refers to learners' conscious knowledge of grammatical structures and their ability to use them appropriately, plays a critical role in achieving effective written communication (Ellis, 2016; Nation & Macalister, 2020). Without sufficient grammar awareness, students may struggle to convey meaning accurately, resulting in ambiguity or misinterpretation in their writing (Zhang & Lu, 2019).

Developing grammar awareness among EFL learners has become increasingly important in higher education. Recent studies show that explicit instruction that raises students' awareness of grammatical forms and functions contributes significantly to improving writing accuracy (Borg, 2019; Rahman, 2021). In English Department settings, where writing is a major academic skill, students are expected to demonstrate grammatical competence not only for coursework but also for research and professional communication. Therefore, integrating grammar awareness activities into writing courses can strengthen learners' linguistic foundations and enhance their overall writing performance (Nassaji, 2017).



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Furthermore, scholars argue that grammar awareness is not limited to rote memorization of rules but involves learners' metalinguistic understanding, recognizing how grammar operates within meaningful contexts (Thornbury, 2017; Larsen-Freeman, 2020). When students are aware of the grammatical structures they use, they can make more informed linguistic choices that improve textual cohesion and clarity. In this sense, grammar awareness becomes a bridge between linguistic form and communicative function (Alderson & Steel, 2018). Hence, fostering this awareness is essential for developing competent academic writers.

Despite its significance, many EFL learners still exhibit limited awareness of grammar in their writing. Previous research indicates that even students with high vocabulary knowledge often commit grammatical errors that affect the overall quality of their compositions (Nguyen & Boers, 2019; Sukyadi, 2020). This issue may stem from a lack of explicit focus on grammar awareness in writing instruction or from instructional methods that prioritize fluency over accuracy. As a result, students may become fluent but less precise writers, which affects the readability and academic value of their work (Rahimi & Zhang, 2022).

Given these gaps, this study aims to investigate the role of grammar awareness in students' writing performance among English Department students. Specifically, it examines the relationship between students' level of grammatical awareness and their writing accuracy and coherence. The findings are expected to provide insights into how grammar awareness contributes to writing performance and to offer pedagogical implications for improving EFL writing instruction. By exploring this relationship, the research seeks to emphasize that grammar awareness is not merely a linguistic competence but a key cognitive factor in the process of academic writing (Widodo, 2023; Fareed et al., 2016).

In the process of developing grammar awareness and writing performance, the modes of learning—synchronous and asynchronous play an essential role in shaping how students engage with grammatical input and writing tasks. Synchronous learning refers to real-time instruction that allows immediate feedback and interaction between teacher and students, usually through face-to-face meetings or online platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet (Hrastinski, 2019). This mode enables instructors to provide instant clarification on grammar-related issues, which facilitates learners' understanding of grammatical forms within communicative contexts (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). Conversely, asynchronous learning allows students to study materials at their own pace, review grammar explanations repeatedly, and reflect on their writing output before submission (Sun et al., 2022). Both modes are integral in developing students' autonomy and awareness of language forms in modern blended classrooms.

Several recent studies have shown that combining synchronous and asynchronous approaches improves learners' grammatical competence and writing accuracy. For example, (Chien, 2021) found that EFL students who engaged in asynchronous grammar modules before synchronous discussion sessions demonstrated better retention and application of grammar rules in writing tasks. Similarly, (Kohnke & Jarvis, 2022) emphasized that online writing instruction integrating asynchronous feedback increased students' awareness of grammatical accuracy and self-correction ability. The dual approach enhances not only grammatical understanding but also learners' motivation to improve their writing performance (Yamagata-Lynch, 2020).

Moreover, asynchronous learning promotes self-regulated learning strategies that are essential for grammar awareness development. Students can review feedback, analyze their own grammatical errors, and make conscious revisions independently (Khalil & Ebner, 2021). On the other hand, synchronous learning provides immediate social interaction, which fosters confidence and contextualizes grammar practice in communicative exchanges (Martin & Parker, 2019). Hence, a balanced integration of both learning modes may contribute to a deeper grammatical understanding and improved writing competence.



Identifying the problem of limited grammar awareness among English Department students is crucial because it affects the quality of their written communication. Although many learners can produce fluent sentences, they often lack accuracy and coherence due to insufficient reflection on grammar use. Understanding how grammar awareness interacts with synchronous and asynchronous learning contexts helps educators design more effective grammar-focused writing instruction. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the relationship between students' grammar awareness and their writing performance within these learning modes.

Based on the background and literature reviewed above, this research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of grammar awareness among English Department students?
2. How does grammar awareness influence students' writing performance?
3. Is there a significant relationship between grammar awareness and students' writing performance in English Department classes?

## 2. METHODS

This study employed a quantitative descriptive correlational design to investigate the role of grammar awareness in students' writing performance. The design was chosen to determine the degree of relationship between students' level of grammar awareness and their writing ability. This approach allows for the identification of whether an increase in grammar awareness corresponds to better writing performance among English Department students.

### 2.1 Research Design

The study followed a correlational quantitative approach, focusing on the relationship between two main variables: grammar awareness (independent variable) and writing performance (dependent variable). According to (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), correlational studies are suitable when researchers aim to examine associations among variables within a specific population. The research did not involve experimental manipulation but instead analyzed naturally occurring variations in grammar awareness levels among students and their corresponding writing outcomes.

### 2.2 Setting and Participants

The research was conducted at the English Department of a university in Indonesia during the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The participants consisted of 40 undergraduate students from the fourth semester who had taken grammar and writing courses. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, ensuring that they had prior exposure to grammar instruction and academic writing activities. Ethical considerations were observed, and participants provided consent before taking part in the study.

### 2.3 Data Collection Technique

Two instruments were used to collect data: a Grammar Awareness Questionnaire (GAQ) and a Writing Performance Test (WPT). The GAQ was adapted from previous validated studies (Rahman, 2021; Zhang & Lu, 2019) and consisted of 25 items measuring students' awareness of grammatical rules, forms, and functions. The questionnaire was scored using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The WPT required students to compose a 250-word academic essay on a given topic, which was evaluated based on an analytic rubric including grammar accuracy, sentence structure, coherence, and lexical use (Weigle, 2016). The instruments were validated by two language teaching experts, and a pilot test was conducted to ensure reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the GAQ reached 0.86, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

## 2.4 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and percentage) were used to determine the level of students' grammar awareness and their writing performance. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation ( $r$ ) test was applied to identify the relationship between grammar awareness and writing performance. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26. A significance level of 0.05 was used to determine whether the relationship between variables was statistically significant.

## 3. FINDINGS

This study aims to investigate the level of grammar awareness and writing performance among English Department students, as well as to analyze the correlation between these two variables. The data obtained from the Grammar Awareness Questionnaire (GAQ) and the Writing Performance Test (WPT) were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The detailed findings are presented in the following subsections.

### 3.1 Descriptive Analysis of Grammar Awareness and Writing Performance

The descriptive statistics provide an overview of the central tendency and dispersion of the students' scores. As displayed in Table 1, the analysis includes the minimum and maximum scores, mean, and standard deviation for both variables involving 40 participants ( $N=40$ ).

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics of Grammar Awareness and Writing Performance ( $N = 40$ )

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Grammar Awareness (GAQ)	65	95	82,4	7,12
Writing Performance (WPT)	60	94	80,6	8,05

Based on the data in Table 1, the students' Grammar Awareness (GAQ) scores ranged from a minimum of 65 to a maximum of 95. The calculated mean score for this variable was 82.4 with a standard deviation of 7.12. This high mean score indicates that, on average, the students possess a strong level of grammar awareness. The relatively low standard deviation suggests that the level of grammar awareness is fairly consistent across the sample, with most students clustering around the high average.

Regarding Writing Performance (WPT), the scores spanned from a minimum of 60 to a maximum of 94. The mean score for writing performance was recorded at 80.6, which falls into the category of good writing competence. However, it is important to note that the standard deviation for writing performance (8.05) is higher than that of grammar awareness (7.12). This indicates a wider variation in the students' writing abilities compared to their grammatical knowledge; while some students achieved excellent scores (near 94), others still performed at a lower threshold (near 60).

### 3.2 Correlation Analysis Between Variables

To determine the extent of the relationship between students' grammar awareness and their writing performance, a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis was conducted. This analysis tests whether an increase in grammatical awareness is statistically associated with an improvement in writing quality. The results of the analysis are summarized in Table 2.



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**Table 2.** Correlation between Grammar Awareness and Writing Performance

Variables	Pearson's	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Grammar Awareness & Writing Performance	0.724	0.000	Significant Correlation

The statistical calculation yielded a correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.724. According to standard statistical interpretation, this value indicates a strong positive correlation between the two variables. The positive nature of this correlation implies a direct linear relationship: as students' grammar awareness scores increase, their writing performance also tends to increase.

Furthermore, the significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) obtained was 0.000, which is substantially lower than the significance level of 0.05 ( $p$ ). This result confirms that the relationship between grammar awareness and writing performance is statistically significant and not due to chance. Consequently, the data support the premise that students who possess a higher level of conscious grammatical knowledge are significantly more likely to produce accurate and coherent written texts.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this study was to examine the relationship between grammar awareness and writing performance among English Department students. The statistical analysis revealed a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.724$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ) between the two variables. This finding provides empirical evidence that students who possess a heightened conscious knowledge of grammatical structures are significantly better equipped to produce accurate, coherent, and academically appropriate written texts. The following discussion interprets these findings in light of cognitive processing, instructional modes, and pedagogical implications.

The strong correlation observed in this study corroborates previous research by Rahman (2021) and Nguyen & Boers (2019), which suggests that grammatical competence functions as a control mechanism in writing. Writing is not merely a fluent expression of ideas; it requires the writer to constantly monitor output for accuracy. Students with high grammar awareness engage in what Ellis (2016) describes as "monitoring," where they consciously check their language use against internalized rules during the production process.

Unlike implicit knowledge, which allows for spontaneous speech, the "metalinguistic awareness" measured in this study enables students to analyze language as an object. This awareness is critical in academic writing, where precision is paramount. The results suggest that students with higher GAQ scores were able to avoid common pitfalls, such as subject-verb agreement errors or fragmented sentences, because they could "see" the grammar rules operating within their own drafts. This supports Widodo's (2023) assertion that pedagogical grammar serves as a tool for student engagement, transforming grammar from abstract rules into a practical resource for meaning-making.

A significant aspect of this study's context is the integration of synchronous and asynchronous learning modes, which likely contributed to the high levels of grammar awareness observed (Mean = 82.4). The findings align with Chien (2021), who argued that blended learning environments maximize grammar acquisition.

In the asynchronous phases, students had the opportunity to review grammatical explanations and analyze texts at their own pace. This aligns with the "noticing hypothesis," where learners need time to consciously attend to linguistic forms before they can acquire them. As noted by Alderson & Steel (2018), asynchronous environments foster self-regulated learning, allowing students to edit their drafts and reflect on errors without the immediate pressure of real-time communication.





Conversely, the synchronous sessions provided a platform for immediate social negotiation of meaning. As suggested by Thornbury (2017), real-time interaction helps contextualize grammar. When students discussed their writing in live sessions, they received immediate feedback that reinforced the grammatical concepts they had studied asynchronously. This study implies that the strong writing performance observed was not just a result of knowing grammar rules, but of the application of those rules facilitated by the interplay between independent study (asynchronous) and interactive reinforcement (synchronous).

The results challenge the traditional notion that grammar should be taught through isolated mechanical drills. Instead, the strong link between awareness and performance suggests a need for "Focus on Form" instruction, where attention is drawn to linguistic elements within the context of communicative tasks.

Educators should encourage activities that promote "noticing," such as self-editing checklists, peer review sessions focusing on specific grammatical structures, and reflective writing logs. As Kohnke & Jarvis (2022) emphasize, the goal is to develop the learner's capacity to analyze and critique their own language use. The findings indicate that when students are trained to be aware of the gap between their intended meaning and their grammatical output, their writing performance improves significantly.

In conclusion, this study confirms that grammar awareness is a pivotal factor in academic writing success. It bridges the gap between linguistic competence and performance, empowering students to write with greater accuracy and confidence. The integration of technology-mediated learning modes further enhances this awareness, providing a robust framework for modern EFL writing instruction.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The present study investigated the role of grammar awareness in students' writing performance among English Department students. The results demonstrated a strong positive correlation between students' grammar awareness and their writing performance, indicating that learners with higher awareness of grammatical structures tend to produce more accurate and cohesive written texts. This finding highlights that grammar awareness is not merely a cognitive understanding of rules but an essential foundation for effective written communication in academic contexts. The findings of this research suggest that grammar instruction should focus not only on form but also on awareness-building activities that help students consciously notice and reflect on grammatical patterns in their writing. Integrating both synchronous and asynchronous learning environments can further support this goal by allowing students to explore grammar independently and apply it interactively. Teachers are encouraged to employ awareness-based grammar teaching strategies, including self-editing exercises, reflective writing, and peer feedback, to enhance students' linguistic accuracy and writing competence. Despite its positive outcomes, this study had several limitations. The sample size was limited to 40 students from a single English Department, which may not fully represent the broader population of EFL learners. Additionally, the study only examined the correlation between grammar awareness and writing performance without exploring other possible influencing factors, such as motivation, reading exposure, or feedback type. Future studies are recommended to include a larger and more diverse sample, as well as employ mixed methods to explore how grammar awareness develops over time and across different instructional contexts. Further research could also investigate the effectiveness of specific instructional interventions aimed at enhancing grammar awareness in writing courses.



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