

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Academic English mastery was considered an essential skill for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students at the university level. One important aspect of academic English mastery was grammatical ability. Proficiency in grammar was essential for academic writing because it ensured clarity, precision, and credibility in communication. Grammatical errors often resulted in misinterpretations or a lack of coherence, making it difficult for readers to understand the writer's intended ideas. Strong grammar skills enabled students to produce well-structured and coherent texts, which were critical requirements for academic success. According to Biber et al. (1999), grammar played a pivotal role in linking ideas, establishing relationships between concepts, and presenting arguments persuasively, all of which were key elements in academic contexts. Similarly, Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982) emphasized the importance of comprehensible input in language acquisition, suggesting that frequent interaction with well-structured academic texts improved grammatical knowledge and positively influenced writing skills. This perspective highlighted the need for educators to integrate grammar instruction with writing practice in order to foster stronger writing performance and better academic outcomes.

Students in the English Education Department at the State Islamic University of Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung often faced challenges. While many demonstrated a solid theoretical understanding of grammar rules, they frequently struggled to apply this knowledge effectively in academic contexts, such as essay and research writing. This disconnect between theory and practice limited their ability to produce coherent, well-structured academic texts. In the era of academic globalization, proficiency in English grammar was no longer

optional but had become a crucial necessity for non-native English-speaking students, as it served as the backbone of academic writing and scholarly communication. However, persistent struggles with grammar continued to undermine the quality of students' academic work, making it necessary to investigate the relationship between grammatical proficiency and writing performance.

Traditional approaches to grammar instruction, which were still widely practiced in EFL contexts, had proven insufficient to resolve this issue. Research by Al-Jarf (2007) and Ellis (2006) revealed that teaching grammar in isolation did not translate into improved writing quality. These findings underscored the urgency of integrating grammar instruction with writing practice to ensure its effective application. While grammar proficiency was essential for sentence accuracy and coherence, writing performance also required critical thinking, organizational skills, and vocabulary development, reflecting the complex nature of academic writing. The lack of research on the direct impact of grammar proficiency on writing outcomes among university-level EFL learners further complicated the issue. Therefore, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical implementation was essential to improve students' academic writing performance and prepare them for the demands of global academic discourse.

This study aimed to address this gap by investigating the correlation between academic English grammar and academic writing performance among EFL university students. By examining this relationship, the study sought to provide insights into how grammar proficiency influenced writing quality and how grammar instruction could be optimized to enhance academic writing performance. It was also expected that the findings would contribute to developing more effective teaching strategies that integrated grammar and writing instruction, thereby improving students' academic success in EFL contexts.

B. Research Questions

1. To what extent are the students' skills in Academic English Grammar?
2. To what extent is the students' performance in Academic Writing?
3. Is there any significant correlation between Academic English Grammar and Academic Writing Performance?

C. Research Purposes

1. To find out the students' Academic English Grammar skills.
2. To find out the students' academic writing performance.
3. To examine the correlation between Academic English Grammar and Academic Writing Performance.

D. Research Significances

This research is expected to contribute to both theoretical and practical significance:

1. Theoretical Significance

This study enhances existing theories related to academic English grammar and academic writing within EFL contexts. Investigating the correlation between academic English grammar and academic writing performance expands our understanding of how grammatical knowledge interacts with academic writing abilities. Specifically, it addresses the relation between grammatical accuracy, coherence, and overall writing quality, filling a critical gap in current research. The findings will offer deeper insights into the concepts that apply to EFL learners' writing processes.

2. Practical Significance

a. For Teachers

This study helps educators recognize the important role of grammatical competence in shaping students' academic writing performance. It can guide the development of more effective teaching methods that integrate grammar instruction with writing practice, so

students not only learn the rules but also apply them meaningfully in constructing coherent and persuasive texts.

b. For Students

The findings encourage students to understand how their grammar mastery directly supports clarity, cohesion, and precision in their writing. By being aware of this connection, students can improve their writing strategies, strengthen their arguments, and build greater confidence in academic writing.

c. For Researchers

This research provides new insights into the underexplored relationship between grammar mastery and academic writing performance in EFL contexts. It lays the groundwork for future studies to examine additional factors such as vocabulary, critical thinking, or metacognitive strategies that may further influence writing outcomes.

E. Research Scope

This study focuses on the correlation between academic English grammar and academic writing performance among EFL university students in the English Education Department at the State Islamic University of Sunan Gunung Djati. This research examines how academic English grammar, including sentence structure, verb tenses, punctuation, and overall grammatical accuracy, influences the clarity, coherence, and quality of academic writing. It also investigates how integrating grammar instruction with writing practice can enhance students' ability to produce well-structured texts.

F. Conceptual Framework

This study explores the relationship between academic English grammar and academic writing performance among EFL university students. It examines key variables, including academic English grammar, academic writing performance, and the correlation between academic English grammar and

academic writing performance, to analyze the interconnection. Therefore, understanding how academic English grammar contributes to the quality of academic writing is essential for fostering meaningful improvements in students' writing skills.

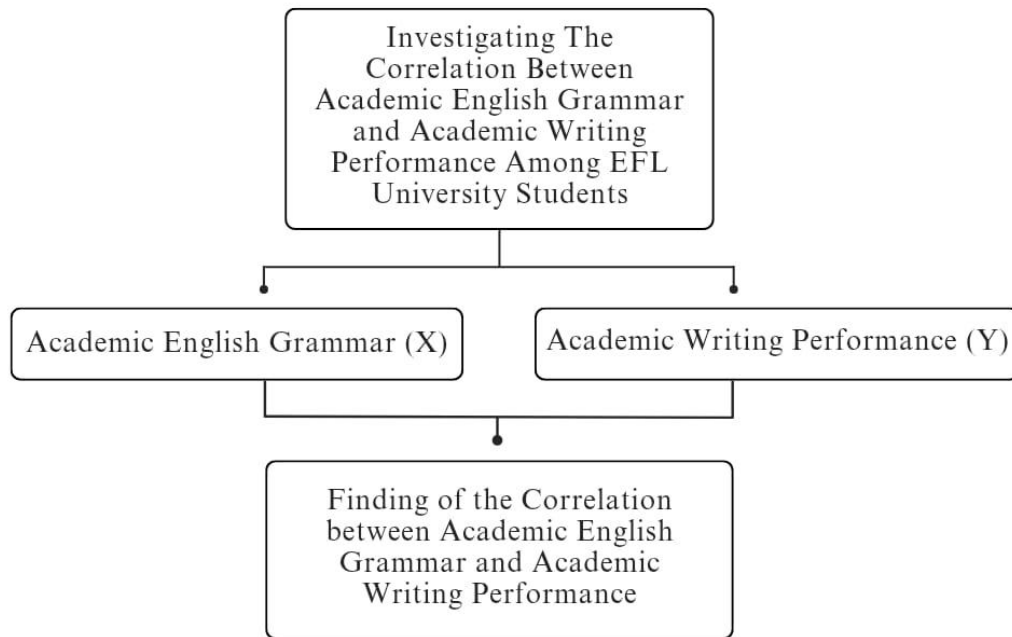


Figure 1. 1 Conceptual Framework

Academic English grammar is the ability to utilize grammatical structures accurately, fluently, and appropriately within academic settings. Academic English grammar involves four key aspects, including accuracy, clarity, formality, and cohesion (Crystal & Hyland, 2004; Swales & Feak, 2012; Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Therefore, mastering academic English grammar is essential for students, particularly English education students, to succeed in effectively building the quality of their academic exposure, especially when it comes to academic writing (Biber et al., 1999; Swales & Feak, 2012). A lack

of proficiency in grammatical structures can hinder students' ability to generate well-coherent and persuasive written content.

Alongside academic English grammar, academic writing is the ability to create written work that adheres to academic standards (Swales & Feak, 2012). In academic writing, it also requires clarity, logical flow, and critical thinking to express the idea (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Thus, to write in an academic context, the writing must be aligned with its intended purpose, which provides a comprehensive summary (Swales & Feak, 2012). Consequently, academic English grammar is regarded as a crucial aspect of developing the quality of academic writing performance.

In this study, the conceptual framework emphasizes the interconnected relation between academic English grammar and academic writing performance. It highlights that academic grammar not only addresses the technical accuracy of language but also supports the logical organization of ideas, the construction of coherent arguments, and the seamless cohesion between paragraphs (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Hence, academic writing highly requires clarity, structure, and formality in writing, minimizing errors that could lead to miscommunication (Crystal, 2004). Therefore, investigating the correlation between academic English grammar and academic writing performance can provide a better insight into the development of academic writing performance among EFL university students. Besides, it can also significantly improve students' grammar proficiency and writing capabilities, ultimately fostering their success in academic endeavors.

G. Previous Study

The following is a summary of a number of relevant research studies from earlier studies that are related to the subject under investigation:

In the first study titled “Grammar Competence and Writing Performance: A Correlational Study in Higher Education,” Belmekki (2024) from Ibn Tofail University, Morocco, investigated the relationship between grammar

competence and writing performance among first-year university students. This study employed a quantitative correlational approach, using a grammar test and a writing performance assessment as instruments. Thirty-seven participants, aged 19-21, were selected based on their similar English proficiency levels. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between grammar competence and writing performance, with a calculated correlation coefficient showing that 14.7% of writing performance variability was linked to grammar proficiency. The study emphasized the importance of teaching grammar to improve students' writing skills and recommended integrating grammar instruction into writing tasks for better outcomes. However, the study acknowledged limitations, including the small sample size and the sole reliance on tests, suggesting that future research should include diverse tools and explore other factors influencing writing performance.

In the second study, "The Correlation Between Grammar and Writing Achievement of EFL Sophomore Students at STKIP PGRI Pasuruan, Indonesia," Setyowati and Hardiastikna (2019) used a quantitative correlational design to investigate the relationship between grammar mastery and writing ability among fourth-semester students in the English Education Study Program. The study employed a grammar test and a writing test, scored using the Jacobs ESL Composition Profile. The findings revealed no significant correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability, with a significance value of 0.876, higher than the alpha value of 0.05. This result contrasts with earlier studies that reported a positive relationship between the two variables. The researchers attributed this discrepancy to factors such as the separation of grammar and writing instruction at the university level, the validity of the grammar test instrument, and the nature of EFL writers, who may focus more on idea generation than linguistic accuracy. Recommendations included integrating grammar and writing instruction and validating the test instruments for future research.

In the third study, “EFL Students’ Grammar Mastery and Writing Skill: A Correlational Study,” Aqsani (2023) from Universitas Islam Malang employed a quantitative method to investigate the relationship between grammar mastery and writing skills among 4th-semester English department students at UNISMA. Utilizing students' score documentation from administrative records and analyzing the data via SPSS 20, the study measured mean scores and Pearson’s correlation coefficient. The findings showed that students had a "good" level of grammar and writing proficiency, with average scores of 74.37 and 75.27. However, some students performed poorly in these areas. A weak positive correlation ($r = .253$) was found between grammar mastery and writing skills, indicating that while grammar helps writing, it is not the main factor. The authors concluded that grammar mastery is just one of many factors influencing writing skills and emphasized the need for improved teaching methods and more engaging learning environments. This study enhances our understanding of the relationship between grammar and writing and suggests that future research could explore different approaches and broader participant groups.

In the fourth study, “The Correlation Between Grammar and Reading Comprehension and EFL Learners’ Writing Performance,” Ilham (2018) from Muhammadiyah University of Mataram conducted a quantitative analysis using multiple regression to examine whether grammar and reading comprehension predict writing performance among 27 second-semester English department students at STKIP Pasundan Cimahi. Data was collected through tests measuring reading, grammar, and writing performance, and analyzed using SPSS. The results showed that grammar and reading comprehension did not significantly predict writing performance, with only 9% of writing score variation explained by these factors. ANOVA results confirmed no significant relationship between them. This suggests that knowledge of grammar and reading alone is not a strong predictor of writing success. The study emphasizes the importance of integrated teaching methods that focus on grammar, reading,

and writing together to improve student performance. It also suggests that more instructional time should be dedicated to these skills in different contexts to better support learners.

In the fifth study, “The Effect of Performance Assessment and Grammar Mastery upon the Writing Ability of the Fourth Semester Students,” Murtini (2013) from Ganesha University of Education employed an experimental research method to analyze the impact of performance assessment and grammar mastery on writing ability among 60 fourth-semester students of FKIP UNMAS Denpasar. The sample was divided into experimental and control groups, with data collected through writing and grammar mastery tests and analyzed using Two-Way ANOVA and Tukey Test. The findings showed that performance assessment significantly improved students' writing skills, and grammar mastery also had a positive effect. There was a stronger combined impact for students with high grammar proficiency, where performance assessment was more effective than traditional methods. However, students with low grammar mastery did not show a significant difference between the two assessment types. The study suggests that performance assessment can be a powerful tool for boosting writing skills, especially for those with good grammar knowledge. It recommends that educators incorporate performance assessments into their teaching and improve grammar instruction to enhance writing outcomes.

In the sixth study, “*Korelasi Antara Tata Bahasa dan Prestasi Menulis*” (A Correlational Study on the Second Semester English Language Education Program Students of Universitas Brawijaya in the Academic Year 2016/2017), Medika Febrianti (2017) employed a correlational research design to examine the relationship between grammar mastery and writing achievement. The participants were second-semester students of the English Language Education Program at Universitas Brawijaya. Data were collected through grammar and writing tests and analyzed statistically. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between students' grammar mastery and their writing

achievement, indicating that those with stronger grammar knowledge tended to achieve better performance in writing tasks. The study highlights the essential role of grammar in supporting students' writing proficiency and suggests that integrating grammar instruction with writing practice can help improve academic writing outcomes.

In the seventh study, *"The Correlation Between Students' Mastery of Simple Present Tense and Their Writing Skill in Descriptive Text"*, Ni Kadek Sukmawati (2022) from Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar conducted a correlational research design to investigate the relationship between grammar mastery and writing skill. The participants were eighth-grade students of SMPN 12 Denpasar in the academic year 2021/2022. Data were collected through a grammar test focusing on the simple present tense and a writing test requiring students to compose descriptive paragraphs. The results of the statistical analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between students' mastery of simple present tense and their writing skill in descriptive text. This finding suggests that students who had stronger control of tense usage were more capable of producing coherent and well-structured descriptive writing. The study emphasized the importance of integrating grammar instruction, particularly tense mastery, into writing practice to improve students' overall writing proficiency at the junior high school level.

In the eighth study, *"The Relationship Between Grammar Mastery and Vocabulary Mastery Toward Writing Ability of the Eleventh Grade Students of SMA Negeri 1 Sukasada in the Academic Year 2018/2019"*, Ni Wayan Sri Sukrayanti (2019) from Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha conducted a correlational research design to analyze the combined influence of grammar mastery and vocabulary mastery on writing ability. The participants were eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Sukasada, and data were gathered through grammar, vocabulary, and writing tests. The results of the statistical analysis indicated that both grammar mastery and vocabulary mastery had a

significant positive relationship with students' writing ability, either individually or simultaneously. This means that students with stronger grammar and richer vocabulary tended to produce more accurate, coherent, and effective written texts. The study emphasized that both grammar and vocabulary should be taught and reinforced together in writing instruction to maximize students' writing proficiency.

The difference between this research and previous studies is that while earlier works have examined the relationship between grammar mastery and writing performance, many of them focused on specific grammatical aspects (such as tense usage), combined grammar with other variables like vocabulary, reading comprehension, or assessment methods, or were conducted in secondary school contexts. Some studies also relied on limited sample sizes or score documentation, which reduces their generalizability.

Unlike these previous studies, the present research concentrates specifically on the correlation between Academic English Grammar and Academic Writing Performance within an EFL university context. It addresses the gap between theoretical grammar competence and its practical application in academic writing. By situating the study within the English Education Department of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, this research provides localized insights and contributes new perspectives by emphasizing the integration of grammar mastery with academic writing performance an approach that has received comparatively limited attention in prior literature.