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RESEARCH ARTICLE

# GRAMMAR PROFICIENCY AND ESSAY WRITING PERFORMANCE AMONG GRADE 11 STUDENTS: BASIS FOR PROJECT GRASP (GRAMMAR REINFORCEMENT AND ACADEMIC SKILLS PROGRAM)

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the grammar proficiency and essay writing performance among Grade 11 students of Nasugbu East Senior High School and how the findings can serve as the basis for developing grammar intervention activities. Specifically, it assessed the level of students' grammar proficiency through a researcher-made Grammar Proficiency Test, evaluated their essay writing performance using a standardized analytic writing rubric, and determined the significant relationship between grammar proficiency and essay writing performance. Findings revealed that the respondents demonstrated a High level of grammar proficiency (Mean = 36.87; SD = 5.48) and a Very Satisfactory level of essay writing performance (Mean = 19.48; SD = 3.26). Furthermore, the study revealed a significant strong positive relationship between grammar proficiency and essay writing performance ($r = 0.742$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that students with higher grammar proficiency tended to produce better-quality essays.

To address the identified needs, the study proposed Project GRASP (Grammar Reinforcement and Academic Skills Program), an intervention program designed to

strengthen students' grammar proficiency while enhancing their essay writing performance. The program emphasizes systematic grammar instruction, guided writing activities, sentence construction exercises, peer editing sessions, individualized feedback, and continuous writing practice. It also encourages teachers to integrate contextualized grammar lessons into classroom instruction and utilize formative assessments to monitor students' writing progress. Key recommendations include the development of grammar intervention modules, writing portfolios, self-editing checklists, and teacher-made instructional materials to improve students' written communication skills.

The findings support the studies of Myhill et al. (2012) and Graham et al. (2023), which emphasized that grammar instruction significantly improves students' writing quality and overall academic performance. The implementation of Project GRASP is expected to enhance students' grammatical competence, improve essay writing performance, and develop greater confidence in academic writing. Future researchers are encouraged to investigate the long-term effectiveness of grammar intervention programs and explore other factors that influence students' writing achievement across different educational contexts.

**Keywords:** *Grammar Proficiency, Essay Writing Performance, Grammar Intervention, Academic Writing, Project GRASP*

## INTRODUCTION

Grammar proficiency is a fundamental component of language learning and an essential foundation for effective written communication. It enables students to construct meaningful sentences, express ideas clearly, and organize information coherently in academic writing. In the Senior High School curriculum, essay writing is one of the most important learning tasks that requires students to demonstrate their knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, organization, and critical thinking. According to the Department of Education (DepEd, 2022), English language instruction aims to develop learners' communicative competence by strengthening their listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing skills. Among these competencies, grammar proficiency plays a crucial role in producing well-written essays that effectively convey students' ideas and arguments.

Writing proficiency remains a significant concern among learners worldwide. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2024) reported that many secondary school students continue to experience difficulties in written communication, particularly in grammar, sentence construction, and organization of ideas. Similarly, Graham (2019) emphasized that grammar knowledge contributes significantly to writing quality because it enables students to communicate ideas accurately and effectively. Students with strong grammatical competence are more likely to produce coherent, organized, and grammatically correct essays than those with limited knowledge of language conventions.

Despite the importance of grammar instruction, many students continue to encounter difficulties in applying grammatical rules during essay writing. Fareed, Ashraf, and Bilal (2016) identified grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and organization as among the most common writing difficulties experienced by learners. Likewise, Hyland (2019) explained that grammatical weaknesses often interfere with students' ability to communicate ideas effectively, resulting in essays that lack clarity, coherence, and academic quality. These challenges indicate that grammar proficiency remains a significant factor influencing students' writing performance.

Essay writing is one of the primary means through which Senior High School students demonstrate their understanding of academic concepts and develop higher-order thinking skills. Effective essays require students to organize ideas logically, provide relevant supporting details, and observe correct grammatical structures and mechanics. According to Graham and Perin (2007), students who possess stronger grammar skills generally perform better in writing tasks because they are able to communicate their ideas with greater accuracy and confidence. Consequently, improving grammar proficiency is expected to contribute positively to students' overall essay writing performance.

As a Grade 11 teacher at Nasugbu East Senior High School, the researcher has observed that many students experience difficulties in writing essays due to frequent grammatical errors involving subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and word choice. Although students often generate meaningful ideas, grammatical inaccuracies affect the clarity, coherence, and overall quality of their written outputs. These classroom observations highlight the importance of determining students' grammar proficiency and examining how it relates to their essay writing performance.

Although several studies have investigated grammar instruction and writing performance, limited local research has specifically examined the relationship between grammar proficiency and essay writing performance among Grade 11 students in public secondary schools, particularly at Nasugbu East Senior High School. Most existing studies focus on college students, English language learners, or general writing competence without specifically determining how grammar proficiency influences essay writing performance among Senior High School learners. This research gap underscores the need to generate empirical evidence that can guide English teachers in designing effective grammar intervention activities to strengthen students' grammatical competence and improve their essay writing performance. The findings of this study are expected to serve as the basis for developing contextualized Grammar Intervention Activities that will help students become more competent, confident, and effective academic writers.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Grammar proficiency is widely recognized as a fundamental component of effective written communication. Studies have shown that students with strong grammatical competence are better able to express ideas clearly, organize sentences logically, and produce coherent academic texts (Graham, 2019). Likewise, Richards (2022) emphasized that grammar instruction enhances learners' understanding of language structures, enabling them to communicate more accurately and effectively in written tasks. Hasan and Marzuki (2024) further reported that students with higher levels of grammar proficiency consistently demonstrate better writing performance than those with limited grammatical knowledge.

Essay writing remains an essential academic skill that requires students to integrate grammar, vocabulary, organization, and critical thinking. Hyland (2019) explained that effective essay writing develops through continuous instruction, writing practice, revision, and constructive feedback. However, Fareed et al. (2016) found that many students continue to experience difficulties in essay writing due to grammatical weaknesses, limited vocabulary, poor sentence construction, and inadequate organization of ideas. Graham and Perin (2007) likewise emphasized that explicit instruction in writing strategies and language conventions significantly improves students' essay writing performance.

Several studies have also established a strong relationship between grammar proficiency and essay writing performance. Myhill et al. (2012) found that contextualized grammar instruction positively influences the quality of students' written compositions by helping learners make appropriate language choices during writing. Similarly, Andrews et al. (2021) explained that grammar knowledge enables students to communicate ideas more accurately while minimizing language errors that affect writing quality. Graham et al. (2023) further concluded that grammar proficiency is one of the strongest predictors of students' success in academic writing because it supports clarity, coherence, and overall writing effectiveness.

To improve students' writing competence, researchers have recommended implementing grammar intervention activities that integrate grammar instruction with authentic writing experiences. Richards (2022) advocated for activities such as guided writing, sentence-combining exercises, peer editing, and collaborative learning to strengthen students' grammatical competence. Likewise, Graham (2019) recommended embedding grammar instruction within the writing process so that students can immediately apply grammatical concepts in meaningful writing tasks. Hyland (2019) also highlighted the importance of writing workshops, teacher feedback, and revision activities in helping students improve both grammar proficiency and essay writing performance.

These findings emphasize the important role of grammar proficiency in developing students' essay writing performance. They underscore the need for continuous grammar instruction, meaningful writing practice, and targeted intervention activities to strengthen learners' grammatical competence and enhance the quality of their written communication.

The present study on grammar proficiency and essay writing performance among Grade 11 students is consistent with previous studies that recognize grammar as a significant factor influencing writing achievement. Similar to the findings of Graham (2019), Richards (2022), and Hasan and Marzuki (2024), the current study acknowledges that grammar proficiency contributes to students' ability to produce clear, coherent, and academically acceptable essays. Likewise, the study supports the findings of Hyland (2019), Fareed et al. (2016), and Graham and Perin (2007), which emphasize that effective essay writing develops through continuous practice, explicit instruction, and constructive feedback.

However, while previous studies have broadly examined grammar instruction and writing performance among various groups of learners, the current research specifically investigates the grammar proficiency and essay writing performance of Grade 11 students within the local educational context. Unlike Myhill et al. (2012), Andrews et al. (2021), and Graham et al. (2023), which primarily focused on the general relationship between grammar instruction and writing achievement, this study seeks to determine the actual grammar

proficiency and essay writing performance of Grade 11 students and utilize the findings as the basis for developing Grammar Intervention Activities. Consequently, this research provides a localized perspective that may assist English teachers and school administrators in designing evidence-based instructional strategies and intervention programs to improve students' grammar proficiency and overall essay writing performance.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aims to determine the grammar proficiency and essay writing performance among Grade 11 students of Nasugbu East Senior High School. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of grammar proficiency among Grade 11 students?

2. What is the level of essay writing performance among Grade 11 students?

3. Is there a significant relationship between grammar proficiency and essay writing performance among Grade 11 students?

4. Based on the findings of the study, what grammar intervention activities may be proposed to improve the grammar proficiency and essay writing performance of Grade 11 students?

## METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted at Nasugbu East Senior High School, located in Barangay Lumbangan, Nasugbu, Batangas, during the School Year 2026–2027. The school was established in 2016 and is headed by a Principal II. It has 53 teaching personnel and 3 non-teaching personnel. The respondents consisted of 788 Grade 11 students enrolled in the different academic strands of the Senior High School Department.

The sample size was determined using the Raosoft Sample Size Calculator with a 95% confidence level, a 5% margin of error, and a 50% response distribution, resulting in a required sample size of 259 respondents. After determining the required sample size, the respondents

were selected through Simple Random Sampling (SRS), which gives every Grade 11 student an equal opportunity to be selected for participation in the study. This sampling technique minimizes selection bias and ensures that the sample adequately represents the target population.

The selected respondents participated in a Grammar Proficiency Test and an Essay Writing Assessment prepared by the researcher. The grammar proficiency test measured students' knowledge and application of English grammar, while the essay writing assessment evaluated students' writing performance using a standardized analytic scoring rubric. The data gathered from these assessments served as the basis for determining the relationship between grammar proficiency and essay writing performance and for developing Grammar Intervention Activities aimed at improving students' grammatical competence and writing skills.

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design using a quantitative research approach to determine the level of grammar proficiency and essay writing performance among Grade 11 students, as well as the significant relationship between these variables. According to McCombes (2023), descriptive research aims to accurately describe the characteristics of a specific population or phenomenon, while correlational research determines the degree of relationship between two or more variables without manipulating them. This research design is appropriate because it enables the researcher to assess students' grammar proficiency and essay writing performance and determine whether grammar proficiency is significantly associated with their writing performance.

The primary research instruments consisted of a researcher-made Grammar Proficiency Test and an Essay Writing Assessment. The Grammar Proficiency Test measured students' knowledge and application of English grammar, including subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, pronouns, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and other essential grammar concepts. Meanwhile, the Essay Writing Assessment required the respondents to compose an essay based on a given writing prompt. Their essays were evaluated using a standardized analytic scoring rubric covering content, organization, vocabulary, language use,

and mechanics. Both research instruments were subjected to validation by English language and research experts to establish their validity and reliability before administration.

Before the conduct of the study, permission to administer the research instruments was secured from the school principal. Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the research process. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from the respondents, and the confidentiality and anonymity of all information gathered were ensured. The Grammar Proficiency Test and Essay Writing Assessment were personally administered to the selected respondents during their scheduled class period. The researcher provided clear instructions regarding the completion of the test and essay writing task, and sufficient time was allotted for the respondents to accomplish both instruments. After administration, the completed test papers and essay outputs were collected, checked, and organized for scoring and data analysis.

The collected data were coded, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level of grammar proficiency and essay writing performance. To determine the significant relationship between grammar proficiency and essay writing performance, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's r) was utilized. The results were presented in tables and supported with narrative interpretations to provide a clear analysis of the respondents' grammar proficiency, essay writing performance, and the relationship between the two variables. The findings served as the basis for developing Grammar Intervention Activities to improve students' grammatical competence and essay writing performance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Level of Grammar Proficiency among Grade 11 Students

***(50-item Researcher-Made Grammar Proficiency Test; n = 259)***

| Score Range | Frequency | Percentage | Descriptive Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| 41–50 | 68 | 26.25 | Very High |
| 31–40 | 137 | 52.90 | High |
| 21–30 | 44 | 16.99 | Moderate |
| 11–20 | 10 | 3.86 | Low |
| 0–10 | 0 | 0.00 | Very Low |
| **Total** | **259** | **100.00** | |
| Mean = **36.87** | | | |
| Standard Deviation = **5.48** | | | |
| Descriptive Level = **High** | | | |

Table 1 Level of Grammar Proficiency among Grade 11 Students

Table 1 presents the level of grammar proficiency among Grade 11 students based on the results of the 50-item researcher-made Grammar Proficiency Test. The respondents obtained a mean score of 36.87 with a standard deviation of 5.48, indicating a High level of grammar proficiency. More than half of the respondents (52.90%) scored within the High proficiency level, while 26.25% achieved the Very High level. Only a small percentage of students fell within the Low proficiency category.

These findings suggest that the respondents possess adequate grammatical knowledge in areas such as subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, sentence structure, punctuation, and capitalization. However, the variability of scores indicates that some students still require additional support in mastering grammatical concepts. The findings support Richards (2022), who emphasized that grammar proficiency serves as the foundation for effective written

communication. Likewise, Hasan and Marzuki (2024) concluded that students with stronger grammar competence generally produce higher-quality academic writing.

**B. Level of Essay Writing Performance among Grade 11 Students**

***(Essay Writing Assessment scored using an Analytic Rubric; Maximum Score = 25; n = 259)***

| **Score Range** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** | **Descriptive Level** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 21–25 | 91 | 35.14 | Excellent |
| 16–20 | 121 | 46.72 | Very Satisfactory |
| 11–15 | 38 | 14.67 | Satisfactory |
| 6–10 | 9 | 3.47 | Fair |
| 0–5 | 0 | 0.00 | Poor |
| **Total** | **259** | **100.00** | |
| Mean = **19.48** | | | |
| Standard Deviation = **3.26** | | | |
| Descriptive Level = **Very Satisfactory** | | | |

Table 2 Level of Essay Writing Performance among Grade 11 Students

Table 2 presents the essay writing performance of the Grade 11 students based on the Essay Writing Assessment. The respondents obtained a mean score of 19.48 with a standard deviation of 3.26, interpreted as Very Satisfactory. Nearly half of the respondents (46.72%) achieved the Very Satisfactory level, while 35.14% demonstrated Excellent essay writing performance.

The findings indicate that the respondents are generally capable of developing organized, coherent, and meaningful essays. However, the variation in scores suggests that some students continue to experience difficulties in language use, grammar, and mechanics. These findings agree with Hyland (2019), who stated that writing proficiency develops through

continuous writing practice and constructive feedback. Similarly, Fareed et al. (2016) emphasized that grammatical competence is one of the major factors influencing students' overall writing quality.

### C. Significant Relationship Between Grammar Proficiency and Essay Writing Performance

| Variables | Pearson's r | p-value | Decision | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grammar Proficiency Test Scores and Essay Writing Performance Scores | **0.742** | **0.000** | Reject Ho | Significant Strong Positive Relationship |
| Level of Significance = 0.05 | | | | |

Table 3 Significant Relationship Between Grammar Proficiency and Essay Writing Performance

Table 3 presents the relationship between grammar proficiency and essay writing performance among Grade 11 students. The computed Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r = 0.742) indicates a strong positive relationship between the respondents' grammar proficiency test scores and their essay writing performance scores. Furthermore, the obtained p-value of 0.000 is lower than the 0.05 level of significance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

The results indicate that students who obtained higher scores in the Grammar Proficiency Test also tended to achieve higher scores in the Essay Writing Assessment. This suggests that grammar proficiency contributes significantly to students' ability to write coherent, grammatically accurate, and well-organized essays. The findings support Myhill et al. (2012), who reported that explicit grammar instruction improves students' writing quality. Likewise, Graham et al. (2023) found that grammatical knowledge is a significant predictor of

writing achievement, as it enables students to express ideas more clearly and effectively in academic writing.

## FINDINGS

Based on the tables, the findings of the study are the following;

1. Students generally demonstrated strong grammar proficiency and very satisfactory essay-writing performance.
2. Score variation shows that not all learners perform at the same level; some still need support in grammar, language use, and mechanics.
3. Because grammar proficiency and essay writing are strongly positively related, targeted grammar support can be integrated with writing practice.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Grade 11 students demonstrated a High level of grammar proficiency and a Very Satisfactory level of essay writing performance.
2. The strong positive, statistically significant relationship ($r = 0.742$, $p = 0.000$) indicates that stronger grammar proficiency is associated with better essay-writing performance.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Implement Project GRASP through:

- Grammar intervention modules
- Guided writing and continuous practice
- Peer editing and self-editing checklists
- Writing portfolios and formative assessment
- Teacher-made contextualized materials

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