

**Grammatical Accuracy and Syntactic Complexity
as Indicators of Proficiency in Second Language
Academic Writing**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the interaction between grammatical accuracy and syntactic complexity in the academic writing of 41 second-language (L2) students taking a Purposive Communication course. The analysis was grounded in established theories of second language acquisition and academic writing, including monitor theory, processability theory, the complexity-accuracy-fluency framework, and sociocognitive perspectives. Analysis of the students' essays for grammatical error and measures of syntactic complexity, using Spearman rank-order correlation, identified a moderate positive relationship between grammatical accuracy and overall syntactic complexity ($\rho = .44$, $p = .004$). Students' proficiency was evident in certain aspects of grammar, though subject-verb agreement and tense consistency remained especially troublesome. The findings underscore the need to incorporate teaching of grammar with the promotion of syntactic complexity in L2 writing instruction. Research could also examine the impact of particular instructional strategies used to promote accuracy as well as complexity.

Keywords: Grammatical Accuracy, Syntactic Complexity, Second Language Writing, Academic Writing Proficiency, Syntactic Structures

