



Journal of Natural Language and Linguistics (JNLL)

ISSN: 2995-9837 (ONLINE)

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 1 (2026)



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PUBLISHED BY
E-PALLI PUBLISHERS, DELAWARE, USA

Writing Difficulties in the Academic Essays of Grade 12 Students in English for Academic and Professional Purposes (EAPP): Basis for Designing a Remedial Writeshop

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Article Information

Received: January 05, 2026

Accepted: March 02, 2026

Published: June 16, 2026

Keywords

*Academic Essays, Eapp,
Grade 12 Students, Remedial
Writeshop, Writing Difficulties*

ABSTRACT

This descriptive study examined writing difficulties in the Grade 12 students' academic essays in English for Academic and Professional Purposes for the school year 2023-2024. Similarly, this study designed a remedial writeshop to address the issues found and strengthen the quality of the respondents' academic essays. Total of 136 students from the Don Juan Flores Avalon National High School's four strands were selected using random sampling and made up the study's samples. The researcher used two written exercises, the first of which contained a predetermined thesis and the second of which had none. Frequency counts, percentages, and rank distributions were used to assess the inventory of the writing difficulties. Findings showed that the most frequent writing difficulty in terms of organization was the incorrect use and absence of connectives. For language use, the most frequent writing difficulty was the incorrect use of grammar and poor sentence structure, while the most frequent writing difficulty along content and ideas was the lack of variety of ideas and arguments. In terms of vocabulary and word choice, the most frequent writing difficulty was the incorrect word choices, while in mechanics was the evident use of misspelled words, incorrect capitalization and punctuations. Thus, a remedial writeshop was designed to enhance the instruction and the performance of the students that would address the five most frequent difficulties in writing academic essays.

INTRODUCTION

In language acquisition, both in learning and teaching, academic writing is one of the most challenging tasks to do. Most of the time, students cover when asked to hand in academic papers. They seem to have a notion that writing academic papers requires skills that very few possess, while teachers handling writing class are challenged in correcting students' compositions, hence, it helps teachers determine their own teaching methodologies based on students' strengths and difficulties in writing and guide them in looking their own strategies and topics that best suit students' needs.

Generally, students find difficulties in writing academic essays for they may have poor knowledge on its mechanics, content and ideas, organization, language use, vocabulary and word choice despite the initiatives of enriching teaching practices used by the teachers.

According to Saqueton & Uychoco (2016), English teachers are frustrated in the Philippines when students repetitively commit the same errors, mostly in word order, subject-verb agreement, tenses, prepositions, articles, punctuations and the like.

Further, Ngangbam (2016) states that the writing difficulties on essays were committed due to mother-tongue interference, sentence fragment, lack of grammatical knowledge, formation, and developmental errors.

Meanwhile, Zaspá (2018) in her local study on written compositions, reveals that the most common

morphological error was spelling where the marked compositions committed errors were on words with silent letter, double letters, words with -ie and -ei. This is due to the fact that in English, the relationship of the sound and writing is not regular. On the other hand, the most common syntactical error was on subject-verb agreement where most compositions committed errors on disagreement of subject and number. In response to these problematic contexts, the SHS curriculum offers a range of subjects that aim to enhance language communication skills, such as academic writing.

The Senior High School (SHS) curriculum of the K to 12 Program requires students to perform well academically. The subjects for SHS demands students to acquire certain standards in order to pass. These content and performance standards are indicated in the curriculum guides given by the DepEd.

However, some of the senior high school students seem to face difficulties in academic writing that result in poor proficiency in essays. As a result, students try to avoid the task for they find it a struggle. In fact, the latest English Proficiency Index (EPI) that includes writing proficiency of the Philippines scored 60.14% which declined sharply from 61.84% in the 2018. Hence, this finding is a cause to worry that the country's education should immediately address.

Despite the academic essay writing opportunities offered to students by their teachers, it has been observed locally by the researcher that students' academic writing

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performance remains to be deficient. SHS teachers continue to complain about students' poor composition of academic essays as reflected in their submitted written outputs.

Likewise, it is the researcher's own experience and observation in handling EAPP that most of the students experienced difficulties in writing academic essays. The students commit writing difficulties along with the statements taken from their submitted essays, "No man is an island everyone needs to mingle with others.", "We didn't went there.", "She sleeping", and "I go play?" This happens in the school where this current study is centered and where the researcher previously worked, the Don Juan Flores Avalon National High School,

Thus, this prompted the researcher to pursue this study to identify SHS students' difficulties with writing academic essays and to design a remedial writeshop based on the identified difficulties in the students' academic essays.

The study centers on writing difficulties in the academic essays of grade 12 students in English for Academic and Professional Purposes. Specifically, it determines the difficulties in academic writing of a position paper with a given thesis statement and without a given thesis along organization, language use, content and ideas, vocabulary and word choice, and mechanics, and designs a writeshop to remediate the identified writing difficulties, and enhance the quality of the academic essays of the students

LITERATURE REVIEW

A significant amount of research has looked into the problems that students have when they write academic essays in terms of language, structure, and rhetoric. Pablo and Lasaten's research with 227 Grade 11 students utilized a standardized rubric derived from Jacobs' criteria, demonstrating enduring deficiencies in organization, language usage, content development, vocabulary, and mechanics. Students often left out connectives, which made their paragraphs less cohesive and less developed. Their findings further emphasized inadequate sentence construction, grammatical inaccuracies including subject-verb disagreement and inconsistent verb tenses, sentence fragmentation, and a restricted lexical range. The study advocated for enhanced writing practice but failed to investigate the disparities in writing performance across various instructional contexts, such as the presence or absence of a thesis statement, nor did it suggest a systematic remedial intervention framework.

In the same way, Ariyanti and Fitriana (2017) found that university students had big problems with grammar, cohesion, and coherence, as well as problems with diction and vocabulary. Their qualitative findings underscored the necessity for continuous feedback and enhanced guidance from lecturers for students. Nonetheless, while the study highlighted pedagogical issues like classroom size and supplementary grammar instruction, it predominantly concentrated on tertiary-level students and did not investigate structured remediation designed for specific

error categories in senior high school settings.

Dalsky and Tajino's study of students moving from high school to college found that they had trouble clearly expressing their thoughts, which led to sentences that were hard to understand or repeated themselves. This is in line with what Yasuda found: grammatical mistakes, using the wrong words, interference from the first language, and unclear task instructions all make sentences weaker. These studies collectively underscore clarity and coherence as pivotal challenges in academic writing; however, they predominantly address the issue descriptively, with insufficient empirical investigation into the impact of instructional scaffolds on writing quality.

Pablo and Lasaten (2018) found that senior high school students lacked sufficient well-defined arguments and thesis statements in content and idea development. Students also had trouble figuring out what they wanted to say in their writing. This was also a problem that Dalsky found when looking at how students adapted to formal academic style. These studies identify deficiencies in argumentative depth and rhetorical focus; however, they fail to conduct a comparative analysis of writing tasks with and without thesis guidance, thereby creating a void in the comprehension of how explicit thesis provision may influence essay quality.

Lexical difficulties are also prevalent in the literature. Studies show that students have a small vocabulary, rely too much on high-frequency words, use the wrong register, and don't know how to use collocations correctly. Pablo and Lasaten noted limited lexical richness and informal word choices in academic essays, whereas other scholars have emphasized the necessity of explicit academic vocabulary instruction. Nonetheless, the majority of studies concentrate on pinpointing lexical constraints rather than formulating context-specific interventions incorporated into writing instruction.

Errors in grammar and mechanics are still a big problem. Ulla's research discovered a prevalent misuse of punctuation and pronoun-antecedent agreement errors among English majors. Concurrently, studies at Hebron University and Shawnee State University indicated a significant occurrence of punctuation and capitalization errors, irrespective of demographic factors. Catabay's research additionally identified structural errors, notably sentence fragments, as the predominant category of mistake. Zaspas's local study utilizing the Syntax Acquisition Index identified spelling and subject-verb agreement as prevalent error types, recommending remediation programs that incorporate both morphological and syntactical emphasis. While these studies systematically classify linguistic and mechanical errors, they primarily utilize frequency counts and descriptive analysis, resulting in a constrained comparative assessment of writing conditions or empirically grounded pedagogical frameworks.

In terms of remediation, Whitaker's writing workshop method stresses structured, process-oriented teaching that is based on teacher modeling and feedback.

Ramoroka’s findings emphasize the necessity of aligning instructional methodologies with students’ perceptions, while scholars like Sharma, Kavaliauskiene, and Yang stress the significance of error analysis in guiding remedial education. Research also endorses integrated reading–writing instruction and explicit academic language instruction to enhance writing proficiency. Despite these pedagogical insights, there is still not enough empirical research that systematically connects the writing problems that senior high school students have in academic essays to the planning and assessment of a targeted remedial writeshop intervention.

In general, the literature consistently shows that students have trouble with organization, grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary, mechanics, and developing ideas in different educational settings. Nonetheless, deficiencies persist in three principal domains: (1) a comparative analysis of essay quality when students compose

with versus without a provided thesis statement; (2) a localized examination of Grade 12 students’ academic writing challenges within the English for Academic and Professional Purposes framework; and (3) the formulation of a structured remedial writeshop directly based on empirically identified error patterns. This study fills these gaps by systematically looking at how students write under two different task conditions and creating an evidence-based writeshop to improve the overall quality of academic essays.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a descriptive research design anchored on the Input–Process–Output (IPO) model to systematically examine the writing difficulties manifested in the academic essays of Grade 12 students and to develop a remedial writeshop based on the findings.

The descriptive design was appropriate because the study

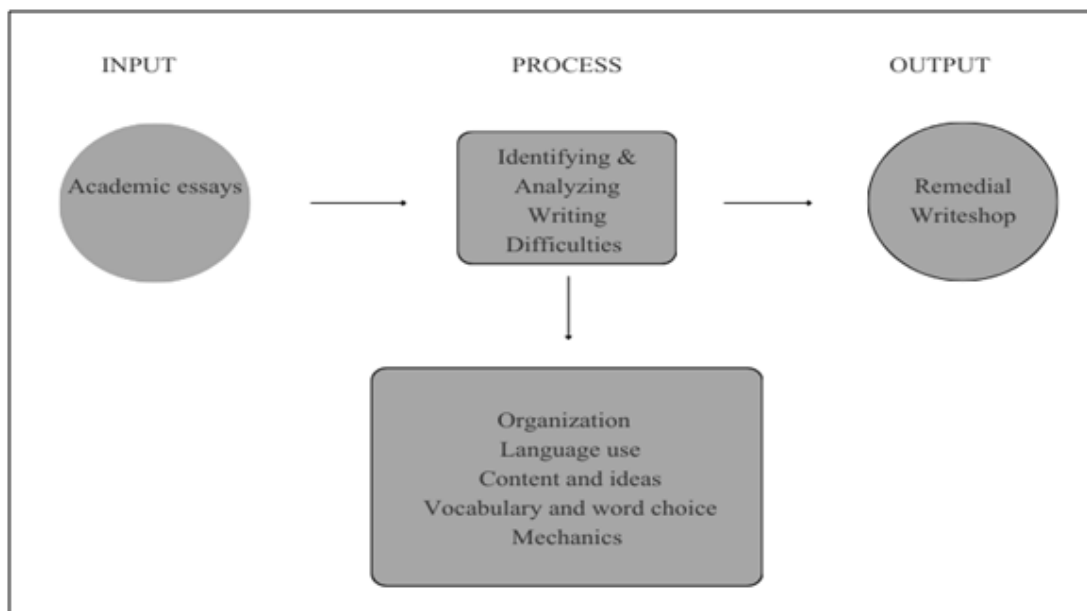


Figure 1: The schematic flow of the study

aimed to identify, classify, quantify, and compare writing difficulties without manipulating variables. The input of the study consisted of two academic writing tasks: a position paper written with a given thesis statement and a position paper written without a given thesis statement. The process involved the administration of the tasks, evaluation of essays and identification and categorization of writing difficulties, computation of frequency and percentage distributions, ranking of errors, and comparative analysis of the two writing conditions. The output of the study was the design of a structured writeshop intended to remediate the identified writing difficulties and enhance students’ academic writing performance.

The study was conducted at Don Juan Flores Avalon National High School located at Barangay Zone-1, Don Licerio Street, San Roque, Northern Samar. Established in 1968, the school currently offers both

Junior High School and Senior High School programs. The Senior High School department provides the Academic Track, including Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM), Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS), and General Academic (GA), as well as the Technical-Vocational Livelihood (TVL-ICT) strand. The respondents were Grade 12 students enrolled in English for Academic and Professional Purposes (EAPP) during the School Year 2023–2024. The total population consisted of 210 students across the four strands. Using Krejcie and Morgan’s table for determining sample size, 136 students were selected through proportionate sampling to ensure representation from each strand: 27 from ABM, 27 from HUMSS, 27 from GA, and 28 from TVL-ICT.

The primary data source of the study was two written academic essays produced by the respondents. The tasks were adapted from English for Academic and

Professional Purposes authored by Marikit Tara A. Uychoco and Grace M. Saqueton. The first task required students to write a minimum 200-word position paper based on the thesis statement, “Smartphones should (not) be allowed during class hours.” The second task required students to write a minimum 200-word position paper on a social phenomenon or current event of their choice without being provided a thesis statement. Both essays were written during regular one-hour EAPP class sessions under controlled classroom conditions without external assistance. The first task was administered on February 10, 2024, and the second task on February 17, 2024. All outputs were collected immediately after the allotted time.

The essays were evaluated along five components: organization, language use, content and ideas, vocabulary and word choice, and mechanics. The writing tasks and evaluation were reviewed and validated by two Master Teachers in English to ensure clarity, appropriateness, and reliability. To strengthen scoring consistency, the researcher evaluated all essays and sought assistance from the two external English experts in revisiting selected samples for cross-checking.

After collection, the essays were carefully examined

to identify specific writing difficulties within each component. Errors were categorized, tallied, and recorded systematically. Frequency counts were computed to determine how often each difficulty occurred, percentages were calculated to establish the extent of each error type, and rank distribution was used to determine the most and least prevalent writing difficulties. A comparative analysis was conducted to determine differences between essays written with a given thesis statement and those written without one.

Based on the results of the descriptive statistical analysis, a remedial writeshop was designed. The writeshop focused on addressing the most frequent and significant writing difficulties identified in the study, particularly in areas of grammar, sentence structure, organization, thesis development, vocabulary use, and mechanics. The intervention was structured to provide guided practice, explicit instruction, modeling, and targeted exercises aligned with the specific needs of the Grade 12 students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 shows the writing difficulties of the academic essays with thesis statement of grade 12 students along organization, language use, content and ideas, vocabulary

Table 1: Writing Difficulties in the Academic Essays of Grade 12 students with Thesis

Writing Component	Most Prevalent Difficulties Identified	Total Frequency (F)	Overall %	Rank
Organization	Incorrect or absent connectives (76%); ineffective introduction, weak support, and poor conclusion (72%); poor paragraphing (58%); little sense of organization (54%); ideas difficult to follow (21%)	382	56%	1
Language Use	Incorrect grammar usage (81%); poor sentence structures (69%); major structural problems (42%); meaning obscured (29%); incomplete/awkward sentences (27%)	336	50%	2
Mechanics	Misspelled words/incorrect capitalization (49%); incorrect or absent punctuation (38%); incorrect or no margins (35%)	166	41%	3
Vocabulary & Word Choice	Incorrect or frequent misuse of words (24%); limited vocabulary range (19%); inappropriate register (15%)	79	19%	4
Content & Ideas	Limited variety of ideas (30%); inadequate topic development (18%); insufficient details (17%); irrelevant content (14%); unclear purpose (10%)	120	18%	5

and word choice, and mechanics.

Organization

Rank 1 was on writing difficulties observed along organization with 382 times (56%) recurrences from the academic essays of the students with given thesis statement. The most frequent errors were the incorrect use and absence of connectives with the highest frequency, as this appeared 103 (76%) times in the students’ writings. This error was made due to incorrect use of connectives, “You would be distracted when you use smartphones during class hours. In result (As a result), you get poor understanding with the lesson of

your teacher.” While some academic essays did not use at all due to student’s lack of knowledge on importance of connectives in writing academic essays. This revealed that the student’s writing had no sense of logical sequence of ideas and details because of incorrect use and lack of connectives. Hence, the essays did not observe cohesion. Such difficulty also appeared in the academic essays from the study of Pablo and Lasaten in which many of the students disregarded and incorrectly used connectives and did not achieve coherence in the academic essays.

It can also be gleaned from the table that the students committed errors with ineffective essay parts in their essays, as these were reflected by 98 (72%) recurrences.

This writing difficulty was observed due to the students' poor knowledge on the parts of the essay and on how to organize each, "It is very important to have a smartphone because it easy to communicate to the whole world." (One-sentence only in the introduction). Thus, the academic essays exhibited the students' difficulty in writing the essay parts —introduction, body, and conclusion. This difficulty experienced by the students affected the organization of the academic essays. This is supported by the findings of the study of Dalky that experienced 112 (18%) recurrences of this difficulty in the submitted written academic essays. It is then implied that in order to make an effective introduction, body, and conclusion of the essay, a writing outline must be prepared.

From the same table, errors on poor paragraphing appeared 79 (58%) times. This error was made due to students' difficulty in structuring paragraphs, specifically on developing one main idea to which all the sentences are connected, stating the main idea in a topic sentence, and redundancy. Indenting the first sentence of the paragraph was also a common mistake manifested in the essays of the students. This also conforms to the findings of the study of Catabay wherein students' compositions manifested 93 (15%) times of this writing difficulty. Further, several essays of the students were weak in paragraphing.

Based on Table 1, little sense of organization manifested also in the academic essays of the students, as this appeared 73 (54%) times. This error was made due to lack of logical structure in the organization of the compositions, "One of the reasons why smartphones (hanging sentence)." Most of the essays consisted of hanging paragraphs and sentences. This affirms the findings of Pablo and Lasaten wherein this difficulty recurred 29 (5%) in the academic essays of Grade 11 students. Thus, it is implied that writing an academic essay must have a logical structure. Sentences that express different ideas and details must have connection with each other. The ideas expressed in sentences must also be related.

Likewise, the students' academic essays manifested poor flow of ideas, as this emerged the least writing difficulty which recurred 29 (21%) times in the students' writings along organization. Further, ideas were very difficult to follow. This result also supports the findings of Pablo and Lasaten that if students feel unconfident in expressing their ideas, it leads to poor flow of ideas for the readers, thus eventually leading to poor comprehension of the written output.

Language Use

Rank 2 was writing errors observed along language use with 336 (50%) recurrences from the academic essays of the students with given thesis statement. The most frequent errors were on grammar shown in the students' academic essays, as this difficulty appeared 110 (81%) times. This error was observed due to grammatical errors, "There is (are) many students who use cellphones to cheat in school." "Technology today helps students do

things more faster." "This (These) smartphones should not be allowed during class hours." "Yes, smartphones should only be allowed for (in) case of emergency." "You will (be) enjoying this." Generally, the grammatical errors committed by the students were on subject-verb agreement, incorrect verb tenses, inconsistent verb tenses, use of the s-form and the base form of the verbs, incorrect use of prepositions, incorrect pronoun antecedent agreement, and use of the possessive forms of nouns. The result affirms the study of Catabay that errors on grammatical category ranked the first in the academic essays of the students. Thus, it is highly recommended that teachers should emphasize lessons in improving mechanics, grammar and sentence structure.

Another writing difficulty was on poor sentence construction, as this recurred 94 (69%) times. This error was observed due to poor sentence construction, "I went at the (to) Manila last year (.)" "When I was school, all the moment that I'll remember that time, although I don't have a perfect moment that time, but I enjoy my life when I was High School." Evidence of poor sentence construction includes congesting ideas in just one sentence, non-usage of conjunctions, non-usage or incorrect use of punctuation marks, and incorrect grouping of words and clauses. The revealed data affirms the findings of Pablo and Lasaten that low language proficiency obstructed the writing of academic essay. Thus, it is implied that students need to work more on sentence construction to enhance in writing academic essays.

Likewise, major problems on sentence structures even the simple ones were also observed in the academic essays with 57 (42%) recurrences. This error was made due to incorrect sentence structures and sentence fragments, "Smarthphones I am using in school (I am using smartphones in school)." Such finding is related to the work of Yasuda where he found that major problems in simple structures were caused by grammatical errors, incorrect verbs, and incorrect punctuation and spelling. Other causes included first language interference, inadequacy of ideas, and unclear instructions of the task. Meanwhile, problems on words and sentences that have obscure meanings recurred 39 (29%) times in the academic essays of the students. This difficulty was made due to words and sentences with unclear ideas, "I am strongly fight (against) on the use of smartphones in school." This difficulty conforms with the findings of Dalsky where he found that the students had trouble in writing ideas clearly because of difficulty in clarifying what the students intended to say to the readers. Thus, this makes the intended meaning obscure. The revealed findings imply that students need to write essays with clear ideas and meaning.

The least difficulty that the students displayed in writing academic essays along language use was the construction of incomplete or awkward sentences with 36 (27%) recurrences. This error was observed due to hanging or incomplete construction of sentences, "In my situation

now I am____” (hanging sentence). The result is similar to the findings of the study of Pablo and Lasaten in which this writing difficulty recurred 88 (18%) times from the 227 essays of Grade 11 students. This mistake in writing academic essays occurred in the fragmentation of sentence structures. Hence, it is implied that the problem of sentence fragmentation arises when there is no verb and or subject present in the same sentence. This in turn causes the sentences to be totally incomplete or awkward.

Mechanics

Based on the table, rank 3 was on errors observed along mechanics with 166 (41%) recurrences from the academic essays of the students with given thesis statement. The most frequent difficulty was on the misspelled words and incorrect capitalizations which appeared 67 (49%) times along mechanics. This error was committed due to misspelled words and incorrect capitalization, “shools” (schools), “lestening” (listening), “procede” (proceed), “recieve” (receive), “disapointmint” (disappointment), “I used to bring my phone in School (school).” Students’ essays manifested errors in spelling in words with ending in -ant and -ent, words with vowels -i, words with double and single consonants, words with vowels -ie and -ei, and words with vowels -ee and -ea, and errors on capitalization with proper nouns. This finding affirms the study of Zaspá (2018) that the most common morphological error was on spelling where the marked compositions committed errors on words with silent letter, double letters, words with -ie and -ei and due to the fact, that in English, the relationship of the sound and writing is not regular. Thus, it is highly recommended that remediation strategies and programs should be applied in language classes to reinforce the writing skills of the students.

Another writing difficulty was on the incorrect or no punctuations used in the student’s essays along mechanics, as this recurred 51 (38%) times. This difficulty was recorded due to errors on punctuations, “Therefore. (.) I conclude that it should not be allowed during class hours (.)” Some of the sentences and paragraphs in the students’ essays did not use punctuations at all. The result affirms the study titled “An Investigation into Punctuation and Capitalization Errors made by Hebron University EFL Students” that revealed frequent errors on punctuation and capitalization among the 157 students in their academic essays.

The least writing difficulty committed by the students was the incorrect margins, as this error appeared 48 (35%) times. Some of the students’ essays did not observe proper margins in their papers. This finding affirms the study of Rambo that essays should have one-inch margin on the top, bottom, left and right. For the indentation, the first line in each paragraph should be indented. Thus, the text of the essay should be lined up evenly at the left margin but not at the right margin.

Content and Ideas

From the same table, rank 4 was errors manifested along

content and ideas shown from the academic essays of the students with 120 (18%) recurrences with given thesis statement. The most frequent error was lack on variety of ideas and arguments observed in the academic essays of the students, as this writing difficulty indicated 41 (30%) recurrences. Thus, students’ essays had poor variety of ideas and arguments. The result affirms the study of Pablo and Lasaten that this writing difficulty recurred 103 (40%) times and caused by the absence of a well-defined thesis statement. Hence, it is implied that students have to write first a thesis statement so that they can further elaborate the topic and provide various ideas in order to produce an effective academic essay.

Meanwhile, inadequate treatment of topic was also observed from the essays of the students, as this difficulty recurred 24 (18%) times. This error was recorded due to the topics assigned to the students which were not fully elaborated in their writings. Such difficulty led to lack of confidence in writing about the topic. The finding is similar to the study of Frank *et al.*, wherein this writing difficulty appeared 81 times (31%) among 227 Grade 11 students in their academic essays. This means that students had to be familiar with the topic first before they write their essays by reading written articles that deal with the same topic.

Another writing difficulty observed from the academic essays of the students was the absence of useful details or lack of details, as this error appeared 23 (17%) in the academic essays of the students. Some of the student’s essays manifested poor elaboration and details of the topic at hand. The result is supported by the findings of Pablo and Lasaten in which this writing difficulty incurred 50 times (18%) in the submitted academic essays of grade 11 students. Further, this indicates that one problem in writing academic essays is knowing what to write and what to elaborate. Hence, lack of details in the academic essay was caused by selection of topic.

Problems on irrelevant content or ideas to the topic were also experienced by the students in their academic essays, as this writing difficulty appeared 19 (14%) times in the students’ academic essays. This difficulty was committed due to students’ poor knowledge of the topic, “Smartphones have intelligence (?).” Such result adheres to the claim of Frank *et al.* that students might be unfamiliar with the topic. Hence, they find it challenging to select the appropriate literature from the wealth of publications available. They tend to just place any pieces of information available without checking the relevance of these details in reference to the topic given.

Furthermore, no clear purpose of writing was the least writing difficulty committed by the students in their essays along content and ideas, as this recurred 13 (10%) times. Some of the students’ essays did not observe its purpose in writing. Such difficulty was also observed by Dalky from the students’ outputs at Kyoto University. Thus, he suggests that teachers have to guide their students in identifying and defining the purpose of the writing activity. The result also adheres the study of Pablo and

Lasaten findings in their study among Grade 11 students in which this writing difficulty incurred 5 (2%) times. It is therefore suggested in this study that students be encouraged to read sample academic essays and to have constant exposure to academic writing through various ways.

Vocabulary and Word Choice

Rank 5 was on writing difficulties manifested along vocabulary and word choice from the academic essays of the students with 79 (19%) recurrences. The most frequent difficulty was the incorrect word or idiom choice usage, as this appeared 33 (24%) times. Many of the students' word choices in their essays were inappropriately used, "We accomplish our research works in lesser (less) time than expected using smartphones." "But sometimes it is hard to assess (access) in the internet using my phone." Hence, academic writing requires correct word choices and wide vocabulary. The result affirms the study of Pablo and Lasaten that one problem in academic writing is lexical difficulties, namely problems with words. Thus, it suggests that words have to be used in their correct form based on how they function in a sentence.

From the same table, the limited range of vocabulary was also manifested from the academic essays of the students, as this writing difficulty appeared 26 (19%) times. This was observed in the overuse of lower-level vocabulary and failure to acquire more advanced level vocabulary, as well as limited awareness of collocational usage required in writing academic essays. Hence, writing academic essay requires appropriate academic vocabulary. This finding conforms to the study of Pablo and Lasaten that the students had difficulty in providing a wide range of vocabulary. Specifically, academic essay writing necessitates lexical richness, or the ability to use an

appropriate proportion of high frequency and academic words.

Further, the least difficulty incurred in the students' essays was the inappropriate or no apparent sense of register, as this error appeared 20 (15%) times in their essays along vocabulary and word choice. The essays contained words that were considered informal in the context of academic writing, "We use smartphones coz (because) we search in the internet for our research studies." "I don't (do not) have self-confidence." This result affirms the study of Pablo and Lasaten in which this writing difficulty recurred 26 (14%) times among grade 11 students in their essays. Hence, it is a challenge for teachers to remind their students of the correct register that they should use in writing their essays, especially that the vocabulary of students nowadays is affected by the social media.

Generally, the result revealed that most of the submitted academic essays did not observe the standards in writing academic essays even though the thesis statement was given to the students. Most of the students' essays committed errors on the incorrect and absence of connectives, incorrect use of grammar, misspelled words, incorrect capitalization and incorrect use of punctuations, poor variety of ideas and arguments, and incorrect word choices. Furthermore, the evaluated academic essays with given thesis statement revealed that students had poor knowledge on the use of connectives, poor proficiency on grammar, experienced spelling difficulties, disregarded the correct capitalization of words and punctuations of sentences, poor variety of ideas and arguments, and poor range in vocabulary.

Meanwhile, Table 2 shows the writing difficulties of the academic essays without given thesis statement of grade 12 students along organization, language use, content and ideas, vocabulary and word choice, and mechanics.

Table 2: Writing Difficulties of the Academic Essays Without Thesis Statement of Grade 12 students

Writing Component	Most Prevalent Difficulties Identified	Total Frequency (F)	Overall %	Rank
Organization	Frequent absence or incorrect use of connectives (71%); weak introduction, body support, and conclusion (63%); poor paragraphing; unclear flow of ideas; little sense of structure	290	43%	1
Language Use	Incorrect grammar usage (77%); poorly constructed sentences (57%); incomplete/awkward sentences; meaning obscured; major structural errors	258	38%	2
Content & Ideas	Limited variety of ideas (47%); inadequate topic development (30%); insufficient or irrelevant details; unclear purpose	161	23%	3
Vocabulary / Word Choice	Incorrect or inappropriate word choice (36%); limited vocabulary range (18%); inappropriate register (12%)	90	22%	4
Mechanics	Misspelled words (25%); incorrect punctuation (24%); incorrect capitalization; improper or missing margins	86	21%	5

Organization

Based on Table 2, rank 1 was the writing difficulties observed along organization from the academic essays

of the students with 290 (43%) recurrences. The most frequent error was the incorrect use and lack of connectives manifested in the students' academic essays,

as this writing difficulty recurred 97 (71%) times in the academic essays of the grade 12 students. This error was reflected due to incorrect use of connectives, “When I went to Manila last summer, I had so much fun. I visited my family and friends there. In addition (addition), I enjoyed exploring at the Mall of Asia.” Most of the students’ essays did not use any connectives at all. As a result, many academic essays did not achieve coherence in writing. The result affirms the findings of Pablo and Lasaten that students disregarded and incorrectly used connectives and did not achieve coherence at all.

Meanwhile, ineffective essay parts were also observed from the students’ academic essays, as this error reflected 86 (63%) times. This difficulty was made due to lack of knowledge in organizing the introduction, body and conclusion of the essays, “One of the memorable event (events) I experienced in my life was when I traveled to Cebu last (last) year.” (One-line introduction). Some of the students’ essays did not observe proper introduction in their papers with no clear thesis. Many academic essays had poor organization in introduction, body, and conclusion. The result confirms the study of Pablo and Lasaten that among 227 students, 112 of them had ineffective introduction, body, and conclusion in their essays. Thus, this suggests that in order to make an effective introduction, body, and conclusion of the essay, outlining before writing each part of an essay must be prepared.

It can be gleaned also from the table that poor paragraphing was experienced by the students, as this happened 66 (49%) times in their academic essays. This writing difficulty was on the structure of paragraphs, “I enjoyed swimming at the beach. We enjoyed swimming with my friends (.)” (We enjoyed swimming at the beach with my friends.) This difficulty includes the development of main idea, topic sentence, redundancy of sentences, and indentions of paragraphs. The result also affirms the findings of Pablo and Lasaten among 227 essays of grade 11 students which appeared weak solely in paragraphing. Likewise, little sense of organization was also manifested, as this was reflected 22 (16%) times from the students’ academic essays. Some essay parts manifested unclear ideas of paragraphs and sentences, “With this, I am ending this story of myself (.)” (One-line conclusion). Thus, this difficulty was due to lack of knowledge on techniques on how to write a conclusion effectively. Likewise, there was poor expression of details and ideas. The finding is also similar also to the study of Dalky wherein this writing difficulty was observed 29 (5%) times among the academic essays of the senior high school students.

“Ideas are difficult to follow” was the least writing difficulty along organization, as this appeared 19 (14%) times along the area of organization. Students’ essays manifested poor flow of ideas. Thus, the result affirms the findings of Pablo and Lasaten that some grade 11 students’ essays showed difficult ideas to follow in their essays due to poor language proficiency.

Language Use

Rank 2 was writing errors observed along language use

with 258 (38%) recurrences from the students’ academic essays. The most frequent error evident from the academic essays was the incorrect use of grammar, as this emerged 104 (77%) recurrences. This error was due to grammatical errors committed by the students, “We attends (attend) the Earthquake drill in school.” “Childrens (children) were afraid when Earthquake came.” “I was not able (to) attend the symposium.” Some of the academic essays manifested errors on subject-verb agreement, incorrect number of nouns, incorrect verb tenses, inconsistent verb tenses, use of the s-form and the base form of the verbs, incorrect use of prepositions, incorrect pronoun antecedent agreement, and use of the possessive forms of nouns. Such findings support the study of Catabay that grammatical errors in the academic essays of the students are evident so teachers should work more on improving grammar of the students.

Poor sentence structures were also observed, as this happened 77 (57%) times from the students’ academic essays. Students’ essays manifested poor structure and construction of sentences due to poor knowledge in writing sentences, “I experienced during typhoon I pray.” Hence, this finding is similar to the study of Pablo and Lasaten in which this error was caused by low language proficiency of the students.

Meanwhile, the incomplete or awkward sentences were also manifested from the academic essays of the students, as this writing difficulty recurred 31 (23%) times. Some of the sentences of the students in their essays were fragments and hanging, “When my name was called during recitation, I didn’t.” Thus, the result affirms the study of Pablo and Lasaten in which this difficulty was due to fragmentation of sentence structures in the academic essays of the grade 11 students.

Likewise, it can be gleaned from the table that obscure meanings of words and sentences were also observed from the students’ academic essays, as this error emerged 26 (19%) times. This difficulty was made due to words and sentences with unclear ideas and meaning, “That experience of mine made me realize that life is too short, so let us seize every moment to the pullest (fullest).” “My unforgettable experience is my elementary days.” The result confirms Dalky’s paper that students need to write academic essays with clear ideas and meaning.

The least writing difficulty was on problems with sentence structures even the simple ones along language use, as this error appeared 17 (13%) times in the academic essays of the grade 12 students. This error was observed due to poor knowledge on sentence structures, “It was a day happiest for me.” Hence, this result conforms Yasuda’s findings that this writing difficulty is due to first language interference, inadequacy of ideas, and poor sentence and language proficiency.

Content and Ideas

It can be gleaned from the table that “writing errors observed along content and ideas” was rank 3 with 161 (23%) recurrences from the students’ academic essays. The most frequent error was on little variety of ideas and arguments committed by the Grade 12 students,

as this writing difficulty emerged 65 (47%) recurrences from their academic essays. This error was made due to poor variety of ideas and arguments in their papers, “We know that there are no easy jobs so I realized that even if the job is simple, we should not underestimate even its simple, it’s (it is) still hard to do.” (One-sentence only in the body) Thus, the result conforms Pablo and Lasaten’s findings that inadequate variety of ideas or arguments in the academic essays of the students is caused by a vague or not well-defined thesis statement.

Inadequate treatment of topic was also experienced by the students from their academic essays, as this writing difficulty appeared 41 (30%) times in the academic essays of the Grade 12 students. This writing difficulty was due to students’ poor knowledge of the topic at hand. This result corroborates Pablo and Lasaten’s findings that the topics assigned to the students were not fully elaborated in their writings.

Likewise, the absence of useful details or lack of details was also manifested from the students’ academic essays, as this happened 30 (22%) times. This error was also due to students’ poor familiarization of the topic. The result supports Pablo and Lasaten’s findings that one problem in writing academic essays is knowing what to write and what to elaborate. Thus, lack of details is caused by selection and familiarization of the topic.

Meanwhile, irrelevant content or ideas to the topic was also observed, as this reflected 14 (10%) recurrences from the academic essays of the students. Some of the students’ essays manifested ideas which were irrelevant from the topic at hand. Such findings support the claim of Frank *et al.* that students tend to just place any pieces of information available without checking the relevance of these details in reference to the topic.

The least writing difficulty in terms of content and ideas in the academic essays of the students was on unclear purpose of writing as this manifested 11 (8%) recurrences. Many essays of the students were written without any clear purpose at all. Such result corroborates Dalky’s findings at Kyoto University that students need to be guided in identifying and defining the purpose of academic writing activities.

Vocabulary and Word Choice

Based on Table 2, rank 4 was writing errors observed along vocabulary and choice with 90 (22%) recurrences from the academic essays of the students. The most frequent difficulty was the incorrect words or idiom choice usage with 49 (36%) recurrences from the students’ academic essays. This error was recorded due to inappropriate word choices and usage in the academic essays of the students, “I was told by my friend that I need to be there asap.” (as soon as possible) “I stayed at my uncle’s house for a couple of days (several days). Such result affirms Pablo and Lasaten’s findings that one problem in academic writing is lexical difficulties.

Another writing difficulty observed was on the limited or no range of vocabulary, as this error appeared 25 (18%)

times from the written academic essays of the students. This writing difficulty was caused by poor vocabulary skills of the students. The result adheres to Pablo and Lasaten’s findings that the grade 11 students had difficulty in providing a wide range of vocabulary in their essays. Hence, academic writing necessitates an appropriate proportion of high frequency and academic words.

The least writing difficulty observed from the academic essays along vocabulary and word choice was on the inappropriate or no apparent sense of register, as this recurred 16 (12%) times in the academic essays of the students. The error was recorded due to words which are informal in academic writing, “I don’t (do not) have to be perfect.” “My mother sent a pm (message) to me when I slept at my classmate’s house.” These errors were on word contractions and informal words from the essays of the students. Hence, academic writing requires formality of words and without contractions. Such result also affirms Pablo and Lasaten’s findings that student’s vocabulary nowadays is affected by the rise of social media so teachers need to remind students on their sense of register in writing academic essays.

Mechanics

Rank 5 was writing errors observed along mechanics with 86 (21%) recurrences from the students’ academic essays. The most frequent difficulty was on the misspelled words and incorrect capitalization in terms of mechanics, as this error appeared 37 (27%) times. The error was observed due to misspelled words such as “excellint” (excellent), “famly” (family), “occassion” (occasion), “beleve” (believe), “appaer” (appear), “commitee” (committee), and incorrect capitalization, “My Brother (brother) and I went to Manila.” “it (It) was the most memorable experience in my entire life.” Thus, the misspelled words from the students’ essays were on words with vowels -i, words with double and single consonants, words with vowels -ie and -ei, and the capitalization errors were on proper nouns and the beginning letters of first word in the sentence of the students. Such result corroborates the study of Zaspas that spelling was the common morphological error of the students so it is highly recommended that remediation programs be applied in language classes to reinforce the writing skills of the students.

Likewise, in terms of mechanics, the incorrect use of punctuations or no punctuations at all was also evidently manifested from the academic essays of the students, as this emerged 32 (24%) times. Some of the students’ essays manifested sentences without punctuations and incorrect use of punctuations, “When I was 15 years old (,) I already started working at Sari-sari store in Pangasinan (.)” The result adheres to the study titled “An Investigation into Punctuation and Capitalization Errors made by Hebron University EFL Students” that punctuation errors are evident in academic essays of 157 students so teachers need to give an intensive program to address this writing difficulty accordingly.

The least writing difficulty along mechanics was the

incorrect margins or no margins, as this error appeared 20 (15%) times in the academic essays of the students. Some of the essays did not observe proper margins, while other essays disregarded the use of margins at all. Such result confirms the study of Rambo that the students disregarded evidently the correct use of margins in writing academic essays.

As a whole, the result shows that most of the essays without given thesis statement did not observe the protocols in academic writing. Most of the students' essays manifested errors on the incorrect use and absence of connectives, incorrect use of grammar, poor variety of ideas and arguments, incorrect/uncomfortably word choices, misspelled words, incorrect capitalization and incorrect use of punctuations. Likewise, the evaluated academic essays revealed that the students had poor knowledge on the use of connectives, poor on grammar competence, poor variety of ideas and arguments, and poor level of vocabulary skills. Furthermore, the students also experienced spelling difficulties, and disregarded the correct capitalization of words and punctuations of sentences.

On the Remedial Writeshop

The researcher designed the remedial writeshop to address and completely fix the writing problems that Grade 12 Senior High School students at Don Juan Flores Avalon National High School showed in their English for Academic and Professional Purposes (EAPP) essays during the School Year 2019–2020. The main goal of the writeshop is to improve both the effectiveness of teaching and the learning outcomes of students in academic writing by using targeted, needs-based instruction based on the study's empirical findings.

The writeshop focuses on the most common writing problems that come up in the essay's students turn in. Students used connectives incorrectly or not at all, which made their writing weak in terms of cohesion and coherence. In language use, common problems were mistakes in grammar, especially with subject-verb agreement, and poorly built sentence structures. Many essays had a limited range of arguments and didn't fully develop their supporting points when it came to content and ideas. Problems with vocabulary and word choice included using the wrong words and using words incorrectly in academic settings. In mechanics, common errors included misspelled words, incorrect capitalization, and improper use of punctuation marks.

Objectives of the Writeshop

The main goal of the writeshop is to fix the writing problems that have been found and make students' academic essays better overall. Specifically, it aims to help students:

- a. Use connectives correctly and well to make their paragraphs more cohesive and organized;
- b. Use the right subject-verb agreement when making sentences;

c. Make sentences that are grammatically correct and sound;

d. Write essays that have a clear thesis and a lot of ideas and arguments that are well-supported; e. Use the right academic words and make your writing better by choosing the right words.

f. Improve spelling skills, especially with word patterns that people often mix up, like words that end in -ant and -ent, vowel combinations with -i, double and single consonants, and vowel patterns like -ee and -ea; and g. Use the right capitalization and punctuation in academic writing.

The teacher will give structured worksheets and guided practice activities that are specifically made to help with each area of difficulty that has been found. Explicit instruction, modeling of correct writing forms, collaborative exercises, sentence-combining tasks, paragraph development activities, vocabulary enrichment drills, and editing exercises will all be part of the writeshop. Each session will include chances for immediate feedback and revision to help students learn and make sure they master the skills.

The writeshop's goal is to improve the quality of students' written work in English for Academic and Professional Purposes by helping them become more skilled and confident in academic writing through regular practice and focused help.

CONCLUSIONS

The study's findings indicate that the Grade 12 students of Don Juan Flores Avalon National High School encounter substantial and persistent challenges in the primary aspects of academic writing in English for Academic and Professional Purposes (EAPP), encompassing organization, language use, content and ideas, vocabulary and word choice, and mechanics. These challenges show that writing for school is still a difficult and complicated skill for high school seniors, and that basic writing skills need to be practiced regularly.

The most obvious organizational problem, whether the essay had a thesis statement or not, was the wrong use of connectives or the lack of them. This showed that the writer did not know how to use cohesive devices well and that the paragraphs weren't very coherent. Repeated grammatical mistakes and poorly put-together sentences show that the writer does not know enough about the language, which greatly affects clarity and academic tone. The lack of variety and the fact that ideas aren't fully developed show that students have trouble with elaboration and making their arguments flow logically. This could be because they do not know enough about the topic or did not prepare enough before writing. Using the wrong words and having a limited vocabulary show that someone has not had enough exposure to academic language. On the other hand, making a lot of spelling, capitalization, and punctuation mistakes shows that they do not know the basic rules of writing.

The results indicated no difference between essays

composed with a provided thesis statement and those without, suggesting that structural support alone does not significantly enhance writing performance. This indicates that students' challenges stem from more extensive and interconnected writing skills rather than the format of the task. The findings corroborate the cognitive writing theory, which posits that writing is a goal-directed and multifaceted process wherein deficiencies in any aspect—organization, language use, content development, vocabulary, or mechanics—detrimentally impact the overall quality of output.

The importance of this study is that it uses real-world data to find specific writing problems in a senior high school setting, which can help teachers improve their lessons. Its ramifications encompass classroom pedagogy, curriculum formulation, and institutional strategizing. There is a clear need for writing instruction that is ongoing, focused, and based on skills. This type of instruction should strengthen cohesion by explicitly teaching connectives, reinforce grammatical competence, enhance vocabulary development, deepen idea generation through guided pre-writing activities, and improve mastery of mechanical conventions. A context-responsive writeshop program should include structured practice, model essays, ongoing feedback, and targeted remediation as part of writing instruction. School administrators should help writing improvement programs by training teachers and making more resources available. Future research could look at other types of academic writing and larger groups of students to confirm and build on these results.

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