



Academic Writing Performance of Grade 11 Senior High School Learners

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to critically analyze the relationship between the level of academic writing performance and writing profile of the Grade 11 Senior High School learners of Bacnotan National High School for the School Year 2022-2023. It involved a sample size of 100 Grade 11 learners as respondents and it utilized the descriptive-correlational research design. Academic Writing Activities (AWA) were administered to assess the level of academic writing performance and the researcher-made survey questionnaire was used to determine the writing profile of the respondents along writing habits, use of study aids, attitudes toward writing, and writing preferences. The findings of the study show that the level of academic writing performance of the respondents along organization, coherence, mechanics, and language use is at 'competent' level. Among the four areas assessed, respondents committed a significant number of errors along mechanics and language use. Further, the writing profile of learners are of 'competent' level. Writing profile and academic writing performance of the respondents have significant relationship. Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn. The respondents struggle in writing academic texts because they have not fully acquired and mastered yet the desired writing habits, use of study aids, attitudes toward writing, and writing preferences. The level of academic writing performance of the respondents along organization, coherence, mechanics, and language use is "competent". Writing profile such as writing habits, use of study aids, attitudes toward writing, and writing preferences influence the academic writing performance of the respondents. The level of academic writing performance of the respondents from seven strands were not significantly different from each other in terms of organization, coherence, mechanics and language use. The researcher offered the following recommendations. Teachers should provide learners with sufficient time and a lot of appropriate academic writing intervention activities for them to acquire, to develop and to master the desired writing habits, use of study aids in writing, attitudes toward writing and writing preferences. Instruction must give emphasis on grammar exercises and drills that would enhance the knowledge and ability of the learners to use proper grammar. Likewise, there should be more relevant activities in writing mechanics. The results of the study may form the bases for the proposed academic writing activities which should fit the writing preferences of learners. Further, teaching practices and techniques should be appropriate to the academic writing performance of learners and should address their needs for better academic writing performance. Furthermore, findings of the study will also be a reference for further research using other variables in academic writing as a basis in proposing an action plan or any relevant instructional materials aimed at improving the academic writing competence of learners.

Keywords: academic writing performance, writing profile, academic writing, academic writing activities

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the important language skills because through this skill, one can inform others, carry out transactions, persuade, stir up, and tell what they feel. However, writing or learning to write especially in the second language is not simply a matter of writing things down. It is one of the four basic skills that are very complex and difficult to learn. As a skill itself, it offers learners the opportunity to simultaneously catch on to the many other vital facilities that can help them succeed in their academics, career, and in other relevant aspects of their lives. As a means of communication, writing is transmitting information, ideas, or feelings from one person to another through written activity.

Teachers need to give learners understandable information about writing so they may be inspired and given the tools they need to improve their writing abilities. The learners' confidence in their writing skills might be greatly increased by words of support and encouragement. It is also considered how ready the learners are to master the skill.

Therefore, it is crucial to give learners adequate opportunities for communication and practice to help them develop their writing abilities to help them communicate better. The act or process of communicating with another person involves expressing ideas, thoughts, and feelings to them using words, noises, signs, or behaviors. Human survival depends critically on communication since it fosters interpersonal connections and the dissemination of knowledge. Furthermore, language is an instrument people use to shape their ideas and to communicate with others.

English teachers should be aware of their learners' strengths and weaknesses to help them write better essays so that they may devise treatment approaches and prepare methods to aid and support them. How may English teachers' enthusiasm and dedication convert into well-developed English writing skills is the question. There is not a quick fix for this. This proficiency cannot be attained in a single swift motion. There will be several procedures and planning for teachers. They must develop plans that might help pupils reach the desired level of competency.

Most learners who entered in the Senior High School cannot express themselves through written English. Furthermore, most of the learners who came from Junior High School lack the necessary writing skills. This finding is also supported by the different writing results during their writing activities in English. Writing results show that most of the learners cannot construct compositions well in English. They have committed grammatical errors, improper use of vocabulary, inappropriate punctuation, and misspelled words. Learners in Senior High School, where they are preparing for college and will soon be looking for employment once they graduate, need to be able to communicate both orally and in writing. The college will place a high premium on writing abilities; thus, it is imperative that Senior High School learners be prepared. Consequently, this study concentrated on describing and analyzing the writing performance in English to get baseline data that may be utilized to improve learners' writing competence. This study tried to find out other underlying causes or factors contributing to the academic writing performance of high school learners such as writing habits, use of writing study aids, writing attitude and writing preferences. Thus, this study is conducted. This study is grounded on the following theories namely the Communicative Competence Theory, Linguistic Composition Theory, Systemic-Functional Theory, Scaffolding Theory, and Krashen's Comprehensible Input Theory. These theories provide the academic substance of this study and serve as the backbone of this research.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to critically analyze the relationship between the level of academic writing performance and writing profile of the Grade 11 Senior High School learners of Bacnotan National High School for the School Year 2022-2023. Specifically, it sought answers to the following problems: 1) what is the profile of the Grade 11 learners Senior High School Learners in terms of; writing habit, use of writing study aid as to; before writing; during writing; and after writing; attitudes toward writing; and writing preferences? 2) What is the level of academic writing performance of the Grade 11 Senior High School learners when grouped according to strand in terms of; organization; coherence; mechanics; and language use? Is there a significant relationship between the learners' level of writing performance and writing profile variables? Is there a significant difference in the level of writing performance of each strand?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses was tested at 0.05 level of significance: There is no significant relationship between the learners' level of writing performance and the profile variables. There is no significant difference in the level of writing performance of each strand.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study aimed to determine the level of academic writing performance and critically analyzed its relationship to the writing profile of 100 Grade 11 Senior High School learners of Bacnotan National High School. This study included the Grade 11 Senior High School learners from the seven (7) strands namely Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Accountancy, and Business Management (ABM), Humanities and Social Science (HUMSS), General Academic Strand (GAS), Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Home Economics (HE), and Agri-Fishery Arts (AFA). The writing profile of the respondents included the following: (a) writing habits; (b) use of writing study aid before writing, during writing; and after writing, (c) attitudes toward writing; and (d) writing preferences. On the other hand, the academic writing performance of the respondents were based on the assessment made by the researcher on their Academic Writing Activities (AWA) using the validated scoring rubric along (a) organization, (b) coherence, (c) mechanics, and (d) language use.

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. Descriptive research is summarized using descriptive statistics while correlational research design measures two or more relevant variables and assesses a relationship between or among them. This study is descriptive since it purposely described the profile of the Grade 11 Senior High School learners along with writing habits, use of study aids, attitudes toward writing and writing preferences, and the level of academic writing performance of Grade 11 Senior High School learners. In the same vein, document analysis was used. The respondents of the study were the Grade 11 Senior High School learners of Bacnotan National High School during the School Year 2022-2023.

Results and Discussions

The writing habits of Grade 11 Senior High School learners of Bacnotan National High School. it is revealed that out of 25 indicators, three (3) were indicators rated "skilled" by the learner-respondents. These were "I can use internet search engines to locate information to support my ideas" with a mean of 3.86; "I can use appropriate spelling, capitalization, and punctuation" with a mean of 3.64; and "I can edit my writing to improve the wording, grammar, punctuation, and spelling" with a mean of 3.49. This implies that learners rely on the help of search engines such as Google every time they are given a writing task. They have a hard time getting started and feel overwhelmed by the writing task. They need to concentrate on forming their ideas, thus, they struggle to organize and use mechanics of writing. On the other hand, learner-respondents perceived themselves "competent" along the other indicators. Meanwhile, the following indicators got the lowest mean. These are "I can write under time constraint" with a mean of 2.77; "I can use accurate in-text citations" with a mean of 2.81, and "I can write a clear thesis statement that identifies the topic and controlling idea of an academic text" with a mean of 2.83. Overall, the writing habits of the respondents were described as "competent" with an over-all mean of 3.09. Findings imply that learner-respondents are still having a hard time in using accurate in-text citations. This is because they rely to what they searched on the internet, likewise,

they cannot distinguish the topic sentence from that of a controlling idea of an academic text, hence, they fail to have clear thesis statement in their academic text and they need more time in writing or accomplishing their academic text. The findings agree with the study of Tutto (2021) who studied the performance and habits towards reading and writing of Grade 12 learners in public schools of Cabagan, Isabela. He found out that the writing habits of Grade 12 learners were favorable, however, respondents have difficulties in writing. Thus, he suggested improving the writing habits of the respondents before giving them more complex writing activities. The use of writing study aids is categorized based on the processes involved in writing academic text namely before, during, and after writing.

Before writing. "I consider the task or assignment and instructions carefully before writing" with a mean of 3.66, "I review my class notes, handouts, and assignment requirements before beginning to write" with a mean of 3.46 were rated "skilled" in terms of the use of writing study aids as revealed in the table. The finding shows that the respondents set their goals first before writing and that they do series of activities and/or routine as preparations before starting to write academic texts such as reviewing their class notes, handouts, and assignment requirements. They also brainstorm and prepare an outline before beginning to write. On the other hand, "I brainstorm and write down ideas before I begin to write" (3.28); "I think of the relationships between what I already know and new things that I learn" (3.27); "I notice vocabulary related to a topic that I will write about and try to remember the words" (3.18); "I use a dictionary to check things I am not sure about before I write" (3.07); "I make an outline or plan in English" (3.05); "I discuss what I am going to write with other learners or my teacher" (3.03); "I make a timetable for when I will do my writing" (2.85), and "I do extra study outside the classroom to improve my writing before writing the first draft" (2.84) were described as "competent". Findings imply that learners are not that good at using study aids before starting to write academic text.

During writing. It could be seen that "I try to write in a comfortable, quiet place where I can concentrate" had a mean rating of 3.78 which ranked first, "I encourage myself by telling myself that I can do well" with a mean of 3.70 which ranked second, and "I use my background knowledge (world) knowledge to help me develop my ideas" had a mean rating of 3.43 which ranked third were rated and perceived by the respondents that they are "skilled". While "I encourage myself by telling myself that I can do well" with a mean of 3.70; "If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing" with a mean of 3.30; "I like to write a draft in my native language first and then translate it into English" with a mean of 3.24; "I edit for content (ideas) as I am writing" with a mean of 3.15; "I use a grammar book to check things I am not sure about before I write" with a mean of 3.12; "I make my writing assignments fun for myself" with a mean of 3.08, and "I edit for organization as I am writing" with a mean of 3.02 were rated as "competent". The sub-mean of 3.34 described use of study aids during writing as "competent". This implies that the Grade 11 learners do not possess yet mastery and skills in using the prescribed study aids during the writing process of academic text.

After writing. In terms of using study aids after writing, five (5) indicators were rated and perceived by the respondents that they are "skilled" of. These were "I give myself a reward when I have finished writing" (3.52); "I ask the person to explain it to me if I do not understand a comment when getting feedback" (3.49); "I use the feedback to help with my other English skills (reading, speaking, and listening)" (3.47); "I make notes or try to remember feedback I get so I can use it the next time I write" (3.46), and "I go back to my writing to edit the grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation" (3.42), respectively. Whereas the other five (5) indicators were rated "competent". "I go back to my writing to revise the content and make my ideas clearer" (3.30); "I go back to my writing to revise and improve my organization" (3.27); "I discuss my work with other learners to get feedback on how I can improve it" (3.07); "I discuss my work with my teacher to get feedback on how I can improve it" (3.06), and "I record the types of errors I have made so I do not keep making the same types of errors" (3.04).

Attitudes Toward Writing

This implies that the respondents regard writing academic text important in their lives and that it gives them the joy and happiness. This is the fact that this is where they express their feelings, emotions, and themselves. On the other hand, "I find writing boring" and "I feel sleepy every time I write" with a rating mean of 2.35 and 2.54, respectively were rated "Developing". This denotes that the respondents were fascinated and feel elated, thus they feel motivated to write an academic text.

The findings are in consonance with that of Graham, et. al (2017) stated that learners with a positive perspective are more pro to writing than learners who have a bad writing mindset. Furthermore, learners with a positive attitude may choose to write even if it is not required. Learners with negative attitudes may avoid writing assignments or write poorly.

Writing Preferences

It can be inferred from the table that one (1) indicator was rated "skilled" by the respondent. This was "I prefer writing with the presence or guidance of my teacher" with a rating mean of 3.44. This implies that learners write academic texts under the instruction and guidance of their teacher. Meanwhile, "I enjoy writing academic text with guidelines (guided)" with a mean of 3.30, "I prefer writing alone" with a mean of 3.18, "I prefer writing with my classmate or colleagues" with a mean of 3.16, "I prefer sharing the text I've written with others" with a mean of 3.13, and "I like writing academic text without guidelines (free style)" with a mean of 2.83, were described as "competent". Findings indicate that the learners prefer to have their teacher guide them in accomplishing their writing activity. They also work with their peers; thus, collaboration is evident.

Academic Preferred Text

Learners ranked the academic text as follows: rank (1) essays (2) reaction paper, (3) book review, (4) Project Proposal, and (5) movie analysis. Essays and reaction papers are consistently in the top rank. This implies that learners prefer to write academic texts which are related to their subjects in school like essays and reaction papers that are associated with their academic subjects. Essay is number 1 in the rank which can be attributed to the practice that there is a lot of essays as requirements in their subjects in the Senior High School.

Writing Performance of Grade 11 Senior High School Learners When Grouped According to Strand Based on their Written Academic-Text Outputs.

The learner-respondents took Academic Writing Activities (AWA) that measured their academic writing performance. These writing activities were writing essays, literature review and critique paper, etc. These activities were rated by the researcher in terms of their organization, coherence, mechanics, and language use through a validated researcher-scoring rubric. The level of academic writing competence of the respondents when they are grouped according to their strand is 2.91 described as “competent”. Specifically, for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) 3.19; Accountancy and Business Management (ABM) 3.10; Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) 3.29; Information and Communication Technology (ICT) 2.79; Home Economics (HE) 2.81; General Academic Strand 2.76, and Agri-Fishery Arts (AFA) 2.62, all were described as “competent”. The first area assessed in terms of the level of academic writing performance of the learners is the organization. Both STEM and ABM were rated the highest with a mean of 3.41 and 3.25, respectively followed by the HUMSS and ICT both having a mean score of 2.85, HE with a mean score of 2.75. On the other hand, AFA had a mean score of 2.60 and GAS had a mean score of 2.60, learners in all strands were described as “competent” in terms of academic writing performance along organization. Finding implies that, though academic writing performance of respondents along organization was assessed as “competent”, Grade 11 Senior High School learners still need more mastery and a lot of drills should be given to them to improve their performance along this area since organization pertains to the oneness of parts of an academic text such as the introduction, body, and conclusion, and that it must be developed critically for the learners to have an organized idea in writing contents. This means that beyond the important elements of spelling, grammar, and punctuation, learners' content is considered “good”, learners use the right choice of signal words with good sentence structure to ensure that sentences and ideas are connected and flow together smoothly. It further implies that learners have been very good at writing style and quality of expression. Moreover, the level of academic writing performance of respondents was also measured along mechanics. ABM had a mean score of 2.89, HUMSS had a mean score of 2.85, STEM had a mean score of 2.84, GAS had a mean score of 2.67, ICT and HE had a mean score of 2.65, and AFA had a mean score of 2.61, respectively. All strands were rated “competent” in terms of mechanics. Writing is a must to be strengthened as learners experience constant practice, they will be more specialized in writing. So, writing must be strengthened to develop the mechanics in writing like punctuation, capitalization, proper indentation, and sentence breaks. It implies that the learners must be given more activities to practice and enhance their writing skills and competence.

Correlation Analysis Between the Level of Academic Writing Competence and Writing Profile Variables of Grade 11 Senior High School Learners

The writing habits and level of academic writing performance have a correlation coefficient of .633** interpreted as “strong relationship” and its p-value of 0.00 which denotes significance at 0.01, thus, writing habits have strong correlation or relation to the academic writing performance level of the Grade 11 Senior High School learners. This implies that writing habits contribute to the level of academic writing performance of learners, conversely.

Analysis on the Difference in the Level of Academic Writing Performance of Each Strand

It can be seen on the table that the significance value is 0.76 (p-value) which is greater than 0.05 level of significance. This prompted the researcher to accept the null hypothesis which states “*There is no significant difference in the level of writing competence of each strand*”, thus, there is no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the seven strands of Grade 11 Senior High School learners. This implies that level of academic writing performance of the Grade 11 Senior High School learners in the seven strands (STEM, ABM, HUMSS, GAS, ICT, HE, and AFA) were not significantly different from each other in terms of organization, coherence, mechanics and language use. Further, it implies that the teacher considers the academic writing performance of the learners in the classroom activities. Most of the writing lessons, activities, and tasks prepared are “one size fits all” strategies because most classes have heterogeneous groupings.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the salient findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: The Grade 11 Senior High School learners have not fully acquired and mastered yet the desired writing habits, use of study aids before, during, and after writing academic texts, attitudes toward writing, and writing preferences. They prefer to write academic texts which are relevant to their experience and background with the guidance and assistance of their teacher. The level of academic writing performance of the Grade 11 Senior High School learners along organization, coherence, mechanics and language use is “competent”. The learners committed more errors in mechanics and language use. Writing habits, use of study aids, attitudes toward writing, and writing preferences contribute to the academic writing performance of the learners, and the level of academic writing performance of the Grade 11 learners in the seven strands (STEM, ABM, HUMSS, GAS, ICT, HE, and AFA) were not significantly different from each other. Academic writing activities and tasks given to them are similar and relevant to their strands. Based on the conclusions, the researcher offered the following recommendations: Teachers should provide learners with sufficient time and a lot of appropriate academic writing intervention activities for them to acquire, develop and master their desired writing habits, use of study aids in writing, and attitudes toward writing and writing preferences; Instruction must give emphasis to grammar exercises and drills that would enhance the knowledge and ability of the learners to use proper grammar in writing academic text. Likewise, there should be more relevant activities in writing mechanics that can enhance learners' ability on spelling, punctuation, and capitalization to write more cohesive and proper compositions. The results of the study may form the bases for the proposed academic writing activities which should fit the writing preferences of learners. Teaching practices and techniques should be appropriate to the academic writing performance of learners and should address their needs for better academic writing performance, and the findings of the study will also be a reference for further research using other variables in academic writing as a basis in proposing an action plan or any relevant instructional materials aimed at improving the academic writing competence of learners.

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