

English Writing Skills and Challenges of Grade 12 HUMSS Students: Basis for an Intervention Program

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ABSTRACT : This study examined the level of English writing skills of Grade 12 Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) students in terms of vocabulary, coherence, and grammar, as well as the challenges they encountered in writing. Using a descriptive quantitative design, data were gathered from 105 HUMSS students through a writing task assessed using rubrics and a survey questionnaire on writing challenges. Results indicated that the students demonstrated a proficient level of writing skills across vocabulary, coherence, and grammar. The most prominent challenges reported were difficulty in presenting strong and convincing arguments, lack of confidence in writing, and challenges in vocabulary and grammar. No significant differences were found in writing skills and challenges when grouped according to sex and age. Moreover, no significant relationship was established between the level of writing skills and the challenges encountered. Based on the findings, an intervention material was proposed to further enhance students' English writing proficiency.

KEYWORDS : *English writing skills, HUMSS students, vocabulary, coherence, grammar, writing challenges*

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing is a crucial component of English proficiency, particularly in academic contexts where students are expected to express ideas clearly, logically, and persuasively. For students in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) strand, writing plays a central role in developing critical thinking, analysis, and communication skills. However, many senior high school students continue to experience difficulties in writing, including limited vocabulary, problems in organizing ideas, and grammatical errors. In the local context, Grade 12 HUMSS students in Lapaz National High School, San Narciso, Zambales, exhibit varying levels of English writing proficiency. Despite the importance of writing in their academic track, students encounter challenges that may hinder their ability to communicate effectively in written form. Addressing these concerns is essential to better prepare students for higher education and future professional demands. This study investigated the level of English writing skills of HUMSS students in terms of vocabulary, coherence, and grammar, identified the challenges they encountered in writing, and examined differences and relationships across selected profile variables. The findings served as the basis for proposing an intervention material to enhance students' writing proficiency.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study was focused on the current approaches to teaching creative writing, helping students become better writers and more creative thinkers? Specifically, the researcher will answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the HUMSS students in terms of:
 - 1.1 age; and,
 - 1.2 sex?
2. What is the level of English Writing Skills in terms of:
 - 2.1 vocabulary;
 - 2.2 coherence; and, 2.3 grammar?
3. What are the challenges encountered by student-respondents in English writing?
4. Is there a significant difference between the level of English writing skills of student-respondents when grouped accordingly to profile variables?
5. Is there a significant difference between the challenges encountered by student - respondents when grouped accordingly to profile variables?

6. Is there a significant relationship between the levels of English Writing Skills and challenges encountered by student – respondents in English writing?
7. What intervention materials can be proposed based on the results of the study?

III. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to determine the level of English writing skills and writing challenges of Grade 12 Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) students of La Paz National High School, San Narciso District, Division of Zambales, during the School Year 2024–2025. Data were gathered from 105 respondents through a researcher-developed survey questionnaire consisting of a demographic profile, three short writing tasks to assess vocabulary, coherence, and grammar, and a checklist of writing challenges measured using a 4-point Likert scale. The instrument was content-validated by experts prior to administration. Data collection was conducted with permission from the Schools Division Office, and ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality were observed. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS and MS Excel through descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, and mean), analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine differences across profile variables, and Pearson's correlation to examine the relationship between English writing skills and writing challenges.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The respondents were mostly aged 16–19 years (93.33%; $M = 17.67$), with a nearly equal distribution of males (51.43%) and females (48.57%), indicating balanced representation. The level of English writing skills was rated **Proficient** across vocabulary ($M = 10.46$), coherence ($M = 10.43$), and grammar ($M = 10.26$), with an overall grand mean of 10.38. Despite this proficiency, students reported notable challenges in writing, particularly in presenting strong and convincing arguments ($M = 2.81$), lack of confidence in writing ($M = 2.72$), and difficulties in vocabulary use and grammar ($M = 2.70$). Analysis of variance revealed **no significant differences** in writing skills and challenges when grouped according to sex and age ($p > 0.05$). Moreover, Pearson correlation showed **no significant relationship** between writing skills and challenges encountered (r values ranging from -0.095 to -0.111 , $p > 0.05$), suggesting that writing difficulties are not solely determined by proficiency levels but may be influenced by affective and instructional factors. These findings support the need for sustained writing instruction that integrates skills development and confidence-building strategies for all learners.

A. Profile of the Respondents ($n = 105$)

Profile Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	16–19 years	98	93.33%
	20 years and above	7	6.67%
Sex	Male	54	51.43%
	Female	51	48.57%
Mean Age			17.67

B. Table 3. Level of English Writing Skills of the Respondents

Writing Component	Mean Score	Descriptive Equivalent	Rank
Vocabulary	10.46	Proficient	1
Coherence	10.43	Proficient	2
Grammar	10.26	Proficient	3
Grand Mean	10.38	Proficient	

C. Table 4. Top Writing Challenges of the Respondents

Writing Challenges	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Difficulty presenting strong and convincing arguments	2.81	Agree	1
Lack of confidence in writing skills	2.72	Agree	2

Writing Challenges	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Difficulty finding appropriate words	2.70	Agree	3
Frequent grammatical errors affecting clarity	2.70	Agree	4
Difficulty organizing ideas logically	2.63	Agree	9
Overall Weighted Mean	2.67	Agree	

D. Table 5. Summary of Inferential Results

Variable Tested	Statistical Test	Result	Interpretation
Writing skills by sex and age	ANOVA	$p > 0.05$	Not significant
Writing challenges by sex and age	ANOVA	$p > 0.05$	Not significant
Writing skills vs. challenges	Pearson r	$r = -0.095$ to -0.111 , $p > 0.05$	Not significant

V. CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that the respondents were predominantly in their late teenage years and were almost equally distributed in terms of sex, providing balanced demographic representation. Overall, the students demonstrated a proficient level of English writing skills in vocabulary, coherence, and grammar. However, the results suggest that students still experience difficulties in higher-level writing skills, particularly in persuasive argumentation, confidence in writing, vocabulary use, and grammatical accuracy, while challenges in drawing conclusions were relatively less pronounced.

Further analysis revealed that sex and age did not significantly influence students' writing proficiency and writing challenges, indicating that writing development occurs similarly across demographic groups. In addition, the negligible correlation between writing skills and writing challenges suggests that students' difficulties in writing are not directly determined by their proficiency levels. These findings imply that writing performance and challenges may be shaped more by external factors such as learning experiences, instructional strategies, opportunities for practice, feedback, and learners' motivation and self-confidence rather than demographic characteristics.

Given the absence of significant differences and relationships, targeted interventions based on age or sex are not necessary. Instead, continuous and inclusive instructional support focusing on regular writing practice, formative feedback, vocabulary enrichment, coherence-building activities, and confidence development is recommended to further enhance students' English writing proficiency.

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