

Writing Errors, Apprehension, And Academic Beliefs Among Senior High School Students: A Foundation for a Targeted Writing Enhancement Program

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Article Detail:	Abstract
Received: 29 May 2026; Received in revised form: 20 Jun 2026; Accepted: 25 Jun 2026; Available online: 30 Jun 2026 ©2026 The Author(s). Published by International Journal of English Language, Education and Literature Studies (IJEEL). This is an open access article under the CC BY license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). Keywords – Academic Rational Beliefs, Error Analysis, Growth Mindset, Senior High School Students, Writing Apprehension, Writing Errors.	<i>This study assessed the common writing errors, the extent of writing apprehension, and the academic rational beliefs of senior high school students at Natonin Stand Alone Senior High School to propose a targeted writing enhancement program. Utilizing a multi-methods research design, descriptive error analysis was performed on authentic academic essays from 73 Grade 12 Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) students, while quantitative surveys measured writing apprehension and academic beliefs. The corpus analysis revealed that grammatical errors were the most prevalent (215 instances), followed by mechanics (179), punctuation (141), spelling (96), and usage (50). Quantitative results indicated a moderate level of writing apprehension (overall mean = 2.51), heavily driven by a fear of negative evaluation (mean = 3.80) and low self-efficacy. Conversely, students maintained highly positive academic rational beliefs, recognizing the long-term utility of writing and possessing a growth mindset. Based on these findings, the study outlines a holistic pedagogical framework combining technical instruction with low-stakes, confidence-building activities through the proposed WRITE TO EXCEL (Writing Refinement and Innovation for Thoughtful Expression) program.</i>

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing proficiency is a foundational competency required for both academic advancement and professional readiness in an increasingly globalized workforce [1, 2]. However, achieving competence in written expression requires a complex orchestration of grammatical mastery, structural organization, and vocabulary acquisition. When these elements are lacking, students frequently commit systematic errors. According to surface strategy taxonomies applied in recent literature, these errors typically manifest as misformation, omission, addition, and misordering,

with misformation and omission consistently identified as the most prevalent issues [3, 4, 5]. In the Philippine context, these grammatical deficiencies are often compounded by mechanical errors in punctuation and spelling, which severely compromise the clarity and credibility of student writing [6, 7].

Beyond these linguistic barriers, the writing process is deeply influenced by affective variables. Writing apprehension—characterized by cognitive anxiety and a fear of negative evaluation—frequently leads to task avoidance and procrastination among senior high school students [8, 9]. This anxiety is intimately linked to students' academic rational beliefs; negative self-

efficacy and the perception that writing is an insurmountable task directly diminish learning motivation [10]. While previous studies have extensively investigated grammatical errors, anxiety, and student beliefs as isolated phenomena, there remains a critical gap in literature regarding how these variables interact within a singular framework. Consequently, this study addresses this gap by examining the intersection of writing errors, apprehension, and academic beliefs among students at Natonin Stand Alone Senior High School.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The structural and psychological dimensions of this study are primarily anchored in Stephen Pit Corder's (1960s) seminal theory of Error Analysis (EA). Moving away from traditional behaviorist perspectives that viewed language errors as mere failures, Corder conceptualized errors as systematic, rule-governed reflections of a learner's developing interlanguage proficiency.

In language education, EA functions as a systematic five-stage diagnostic process: sample collection, error identification, error description, error explanation, and error evaluation [11, 12]. Through this framework, linguistic deviations are classified by surface traits—such as omission, addition, misformation, and misordering—while the explanation phase exposes root causes, including interlingual interference, intralingual difficulties, and pedagogical gaps [13, 14].

To capture the holistic reality of student performance, this linguistic lens is complemented by cognitive-affective theories of writing apprehension and academic rational beliefs. Affective barriers such as cognitive anxiety, low self-efficacy, and a fear of negative evaluation significantly impede productive language skills, frequently resulting in task avoidance and procrastination [8, 15]. These emotional stresses are deeply intertwined with students' rational beliefs regarding their writing capacity and the perceived value of academic tasks. By synthesizing Corder's EA model with cognitive-affective theories, this study establishes an integrated framework. This dual approach allows for a nuanced exploration of how surface-level writing errors intersect with internal psychological anxieties, thereby guiding the

development of balanced instructional interventions that target both technical accuracy and student confidence.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aimed to assess the common writing errors, the extent of writing apprehension, and the academic rational beliefs of senior high school students at Natonin Stand Alone Senior High School to propose a targeted program for enhancing writing skills. Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the common writing errors among senior high school students?
2. What is the extent of the writing apprehension among senior high school students?
3. What is the extent of the academic rational beliefs among senior high school students?
4. What programs may be proposed to develop the writing skills of the respondents?

IV. METHODOLOGY

To address the research questions comprehensively, this study employed a multi-methods research design that sequentially integrated qualitative and quantitative approaches. This dual strategy allowed the researcher to investigate both the structural nature of students' writing difficulties and the underlying psychological mechanisms influencing their writing behaviors.

For the qualitative component, descriptive error analysis was performed on authentic writing samples originally submitted by the students as part of their classroom academic performance tasks. These student outputs were meticulously examined, identified, and categorized following standard linguistic profiles. The analysis focused on classifying systematic errors across six key domains: grammatical syntax, punctuation mechanics, spelling and vocabulary choice, sentence structure, text coherence/cohesion, and stylistic tone. This descriptive phase provided deep qualitative insights into the exact patterns and severity of the structural difficulties within the student corpus.

Simultaneously, the quantitative component utilized a descriptive survey design involving two distinct psychometric instruments. Students' affective barriers were measured using the standardized Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test [16], which quantifies anxiety variables such as fear of evaluation, avoidance tendencies, and writer self-perception. To capture attitudinal traits, a researcher-made questionnaire was administered to measure students' academic rational beliefs, focusing on self-reported confidence, writing motivation, and the perceived utility of writing for future academic and professional success. By blending qualitative textual data with quantitative psychological metrics, the methodology ensured a rigorous, holistic exploration of the interplay between writing performance, anxiety, and mindset.

4.1 Research Environment and Participants

The study was conducted at Natonin Stand Alone Senior High School, located in Poblacion, Natonin, Mountain Province. Established in 2016, this independent institution serves senior high school students from various surrounding areas, including the districts of Barlig and Paracelis. While the school has historically experienced fluctuations in student enrollment, recent local shifts—specifically the opening of a new senior high school in Kadaclan, Barlig—have resulted in a localized decrease in its overall student population.

The target population for this investigation comprised the Grade 12 students enrolled under the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) academic strand during the 2024–2025 school year. Out of the four available academic strands, the HUMSS cohort was chosen using a purposive sampling design, based on the determination that these students would provide the most robust data to fulfill the study's objectives. The sample originally consisted of 75 students (39 males, or 52%, and 36 females, or 48%); however, during the data gathering phase, two participants (one male and one female) declined to participate, resulting in a final active sample size of 73 students.

4.2 Research Instruments and Procedures

To acquire quantitative data, a dual-component survey questionnaire was utilized. The first section measured writing apprehension through an adapted tool modeled after Daly and Miller's [16] Writing Apprehension Scale, designed to evaluate internal

affective responses and fear of evaluation. The second component consisted of a researcher-made questionnaire developed to gauge academic rational beliefs, focusing on self-efficacy, writing motivation, and the perceived value of writing skills. To establish instrument reliability, the researcher-made survey underwent pilot testing among a separate group of non-participating senior high school students. Ambiguous statements were revised based on initial feedback, and a subsequent internal consistency analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.766, confirming that the instrument was highly reliable for academic deployment. Perceptions were captured using a 4-point Likert scale with the following interpretive intervals: 3.26–4.00 as Strongly Agree (SA), 2.51–3.25 as Agree (A), 1.76–2.50 as Disagree (DA), and 1.00–1.75 as Strongly Disagree (SDA).

Data collection commenced during the second quarter of the 2024–2025 academic year after securing formal institutional approval from the school principal. The selected Grade 12 participants were briefed on the study's purpose, scope, and ethical safeguards, and were assured that their identities would remain strictly confidential. Qualitative textual data were derived from authentic essay samples previously submitted by the students as part of their regular performance tasks. These texts underwent descriptive error analysis, where deviations from standard written English were systematically identified, recorded, and categorized into distinct linguistic domains. Concurrently, the quantitative survey instruments were administered to the same group. Descriptive statistics, specifically frequency and percentage distributions, were used to analyze the linguistic error corpus, while means and standard deviations were computed to determine the extent of writing apprehension and academic beliefs.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Common Writing Errors

The corpus analysis revealed that Grammatical Errors constituted the most prevalent obstacle for the participants, registering the highest frequency at 215 instances. This primary ranking underscores a significant deficit in fundamental sentence construction, particularly regarding subject-verb agreement, tense consistency, and preposition usage,

all of which heavily compromise textual clarity [17, 18]. Authentic student excerpts illustrated these systemic vulnerabilities. For instance, a student writing *"Living in 21st century, I am exposed to the digital world and different media platform... technology and media have a significant part in my studies"* demonstrates an underlying confusion regarding number agreement in complex noun phrases.

Furthermore, syntactic and idiomatic confusion was visible in student outputs such as, *"I will start in myself first, so that others will follow..."*, which highlights an unfamiliarity with standard English idiomatic expressions and correct reflexive pronoun forms. Structural gaps were further illustrated by incomplete academic expressions, such as *"I believe I can contribute significantly to my community and country as a media and information literate,"* where the omission of a final head noun (e.g., "individual") demonstrates poor collocational accuracy. These findings align with observations by Brown and Taylor [19], who noted that logical structural flow is frequently undermined by disorganized sentence architecture. This performance pattern is heavily corroborated by contemporary literature, which attributes such structural errors to a combination of limited grammatical exposure, carelessness, and interlingual interference from the students' first language or mother tongue [20, 21].

Mechanics and Formatting Errors emerged as the second most frequent problem area, with 179 documented instances. These errors, characterized by erratic paragraphing and inconsistent capitalization, indicate an unfamiliarity with standard academic conventions. For example, textual evidence showed students routinely writing *"i believe that i contribute..."* or beginning statements with lowercase terms like *"one,"* failing to apply basic structural rules that should be automatic at the senior high school level. Such errors undermine the professionalism and perceived credibility of the text [22]. Literature suggests that while these mechanical oversights are sometimes downplayed by students who prioritize content over form, they are common across various academic tiers due to curriculum imbalances and an overreliance on informal digital communication mediums where formal capitalization rules are dismissed [23, 24, 25].

Punctuation Errors ranked third with 141 occurrences, presenting primary challenges in comma splices, misplaced boundaries, and missing serial commas (e.g., *"access analyze evaluate and create..."*), which severely disrupts readability. These occurrences are frequently linked to student carelessness and an improper grasp of sentence boundaries [26, 27]. Spelling Errors were the fourth most frequent with 96 occurrences, manifesting as typographical mistakes, phonetically driven spelling, and homophone confusion, such as writing *"tolls"* instead of *"tools"* or *"beleive"* for *"believe."* These patterns reflect poor proofreading habits and distract the reader, lowering the overall perceived quality of the text [28]. Finally, Usage Errors were the least frequent, occurring 50 times, which implies that while students have a reasonable baseline vocabulary, they still require pedagogical guidance regarding precise, context-appropriate wording to avoid redundancy and the misapplication of clichés [29].

Rank	Error Domain	Frequency	Percentage
1	Grammatical Errors	215	31.39%
2	Mechanics and Formatting Errors	179	26.13%
3	Punctuation Errors	141	20.58%
4	Spelling Errors	96	14.01%
5	Usage Errors	50	7.30%
	Total Error Corpus	685	100.00%

5.2 Extent of Writing Apprehension

The quantitative assessment of the participants' psychological responses revealed an overall average mean score of 2.51, indicating a moderate level of writing apprehension among the senior high school students. The data indicated that this anxiety is not a constant deterrent but surfaces prominently during evaluative conditions. Specifically, the indicator *"I worry about my writing being judged negatively by others"* generated the highest level of agreement (M=3.80, Strongly Agree). This pronounced fear of negative evaluation aligns with the concept of Second Language Writing Anxiety (SLWA), where apprehensions concerning external criticism and self-

criticism inhibit cognitive processing and reduce motivation [30, 31]. This evaluative stress is mirrored by the moderate agreement found in indicators regarding comparative performance anxiety, such as *"I feel that my writing skills are not as good as others"* (M=2.95, Agree) and *"I feel nervous when my teacher asks me to write an essay"* (M=2.71, Agree), echoing widespread findings that essay development induces distinct cognitive anxiety rooted in linguistic insecurity [32, 33].

Conversely, the lowest recorded score occurred within the indicator *"I feel confident in my ability to express my ideas through writing"* (M=1.75, Strongly Disagree), highlighting a critical lack of baseline writing self-efficacy among the cohort. This deficiency directly corresponds with their heightened fear of judgment. Interestingly, indicators addressing active avoidance behaviors—such as *"Writing activities make me feel anxious"* (M=2.49, Disagree) and *"I avoid writing activities whenever possible"* (M=2.20, Disagree)—received lower mean scores. This divergence suggests that while the students struggle with low confidence and experience anxiety when evaluated, they do not actively evade writing tasks and recognize the value of the skill [31].

The intricate mechanics required for long, complex assignments often exacerbate this apprehension, as maintaining structural coherence across longer text spans is intimidating for ESL learners [34, 35]. Consequently, these findings highlight a clear demand for pedagogical changes in the HUMSS strand. Rather than treating writing as an immediate summative performance, educators should adopt low-stakes, process-oriented writing methodologies, utilize scaffolding techniques to break down complex prompts, and foster a supportive classroom environment that reduces the psychological fear of criticism [36, 37].

VI. CONCLUSION

The empirical findings of this investigation yield several critical conclusions regarding the linguistic performance and psychological disposition of senior high school students. First, the structural analysis of the student text corpus indicates that the most common writing difficulties are deeply rooted in fundamental deficits within grammar, mechanical conventions, and punctuation. The high prevalence of

persistent errors—specifically incorrect subject-verb agreement, inconsistent verb tenses, faulty capitalization, and improper sentence boundaries—points to a significant gap in the mastery of essential written English conventions. Left unaddressed, these foundational vulnerabilities directly hinder students' capacity to articulate complex ideas with the clarity, precision, and professionalism required for academic and future career advancement.

Second, the psychological data demonstrate that the participants generally experience a profound sense of writing anxiety, which is primarily driven by low writing self-efficacy and a pronounced fear of negative evaluation. This affective barrier is characterized by internal self-doubt and heightened sensitivity to external criticism from both peers and educators, causing students to approach expressive language tasks with hesitation out of fear that their work will be judged as inadequate.

Third, an encouraging paradox emerges regarding student attitudes: despite their technical struggles and acute anxieties, the students generally maintain positive, rational beliefs about academic writing. They explicitly recognize its long-term utility for academic and professional success and view writing as a malleable skill that can be developed over time through deliberate practice and effort. This intrinsic growth mindset provides a vital pedagogical foundation upon which effective interventions can be built.

Finally, the convergence of these linguistic and affective data underscores an urgent necessity for a targeted, integrated instructional intervention. To systematically improve student outcomes, remedial measures cannot focus on mechanics alone; instead, technical instruction in grammar and sentence architecture must be intentionally combined with confidence-building strategies to cultivate an educational space that encourages academic risk-taking and skill refinement.

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