

Fluency & Accuracy in Written Works of Junior High School

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Abstract: *The present study determined the written language performance of junior high school students at Bulan National High School S. Y.2023 - 2024. The study utilized a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the students' written language proficiency. Quantitative data were collected using rubrics to evaluate fluency and accuracy, while qualitative data were obtained through content analysis of the students' essays. The findings revealed that the students' performance in terms of fluency and accuracy varied, with areas of improvement identified in both aspects. Difficulties encountered by the participants included challenges in maintaining coherence and organization in their writing, as well as issues related to spelling accuracy and punctuation and capitalization usage. Based on the findings, an action plan titled "Enhancing Written Language Skills Program" was proposed to address these challenges and improve the students' writing abilities. The study's conclusions indicated that while the average performance level of the junior high school students in terms of fluency and accuracy met the set standards, there were variations in individual performance levels. The participants faced difficulties in fluency and accuracy, including challenges related to content fluency, organization of ideas, spelling accuracy, and proper punctuation and capitalization usage. To address these challenges, the study recommended differentiated instruction, explicit instruction on effective writing components, targeted practice activities, self - editing and revision strategies, a comprehensive curriculum integrating explicit instruction and authentic writing tasks, professional development for teachers, formative assessments for progress monitoring, fostering a supportive writing environment, and utilizing technology resources. In addition to the recommendations from the study, further research was recommended to investigate the effectiveness of different instructional strategies in improving students' writing skills. This research could compare explicit instruction with other approaches, such as inquiry - based learning or project - based learning, to determine their impact on fluency, coherence, accuracy, and organization. Conducting such research would provide valuable insights and evidence - based recommendations for educators to enhance their instructional practices and support students' development in writing with fluency and accuracy.*

Keywords: written language proficiency, junior high school students, writing challenges, fluency and accuracy, writing improvement program

1. Introduction

Language proficiency is a fundamental skill that plays a pivotal role in a student's academic and professional success. The ability to express ideas clearly and effectively in writing is particularly important, as it not only influences academic achievement but also prepares students for communication in various real - world contexts. In the context of junior high school education, developing writing skills becomes a crucial educational milestone, as it lays the foundation for advanced coursework and future career prospects.

Junior high school marks a transitional phase in education, where students are expected to exhibit a higher degree of language competency, including the ability to write fluently and accurately. Unlike spoken language, writing offers a tangible record of linguistic proficiency and thought organization, making it a crucial study area for educators and linguists. The ability to communicate effectively in a language, both orally and in writing, is essential, especially for Grade 9 students to succeed in various subjects and their personal and professional lives since this grade level is a critical year that marks the beginning of their transition to higher education or the workforce. Enhancing their language performance, specifically in written ability, is a big challenge to both the learner and the teacher with the underlying factors behind the problem (Ardila, Roselli & Ortega, 2017).

According to Dosi and Douka (2021), writing skills among junior high school students can vary widely depending on various educational settings, teaching methodologies, and individual factors. Chiu, Carreo, and Lusk (2017) add that in public schools, writing skills can vary considerably due to the

diversity of students in terms of backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and prior educational experiences. Adequate resources and support for writing instruction may be limited in some public schools, leading to disparities in writing proficiency. Students often receive a standardized curriculum, which may focus more on foundational skills, such as grammar and spelling, rather than creative or critical thinking in writing.

On the other hand, private schools may have smaller class sizes, allowing for more individualized attention and personalized writing instruction. Writing programs in private schools may emphasize creative and analytical writing, encouraging students to explore their writing potential. Private school students may have more access to extracurricular activities that foster writing skills, such as writing clubs or literary publications. Similarly, writing skills can differ between students in urban and rural schools due to varying access to educational resources, community support, and socioeconomic factors. Urban schools may offer more diverse writing opportunities and access to cultural experiences that can influence students' writing abilities. Rural schools may face challenges related to teacher shortages and limited exposure to writing - related extracurricular activities.

Junior high school marks a transitional phase in education, where students are expected to exhibit a higher degree of language competency, including the ability to write fluently and accurately. At this educational stage, students often struggle with the complexities of written language, balancing the demands of fluency (the ability to write smoothly and expressively) and accuracy (the adherence to grammatical rules and correct usage) (Woodrich & Fan, 2017). Factors

affecting writing proficiency may include limited vocabulary, challenges in grammar and syntax, cognitive development stages, varying levels of exposure to effective writing, and potential anxiety related to academic performance. Kim, Otayba, and Wanzek (2017) explain that fluency in writing is characterized by the ability to express ideas clearly and continuously. It encompasses elements like coherence, the logical flow of ideas, and the rhythm of the text. While striving for fluency, students often overlook grammatical accuracy, leading to a compelling yet linguistically flawed piece of writing. They add that accuracy, however, focuses on the correctness of language use, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling. A common observation is that a strict focus on accuracy can sometimes impede the natural flow of writing, causing the text to appear stilted or overly formal.

While some could easily express their ideas in a second language (English), still others could not find the right word to begin with. The Grade 9 students of Bulan National High School who are the subject of this study are not exempted from this dilemma. The language teacher has been observing that many of the students are having difficulty writing accurately and fluently. The specific context revolves around a writing assignment that was given to the students as part of their English subject. The assignment asked students to write a descriptive essay about their favorite place or a memorable experience. The teacher has noticed several students grapple with grammar and mechanics issues, including problems with subject - verb agreement, tense consistency, punctuation, and spelling errors. These issues can impede the overall readability and accuracy of their essays. Some students have difficulty organizing their thoughts and ideas coherently. They often produce essays that lack a clear structure, making it challenging for readers to follow their narratives or descriptions.

Likewise, several students struggle with vocabulary limitations, leading to repetitive language and a lack of descriptive variety in their writing. This results in less engaging essays that fail to evoke a strong sense of place or experience. The language teacher has been conducting regular writing assessments and has observed common writing difficulties among the students. These difficulties include run - on sentences, awkward phrasing, missing transitions, and a lack of attention to detail. The classroom may have limited access to writing resources, such as reference books, writing guides, or computer - assisted tools, which can hinder students' ability to seek assistance and improve their writing independently.

The language teacher faces the challenge of addressing these writing issues and helping students develop fluency and accuracy. To improve students' writing skills, the teacher may need to implement targeted instruction, provide additional support, and create opportunities for practice and revision. Additionally, addressing the diverse linguistic backgrounds of the students may require differentiated approaches to meet their individual needs. Likewise, understanding the dynamics of fluency and accuracy in writing for Grade 9 students is essential for developing targeted educational strategies. This research aims to bridge the gap in this area, offering insights

that can be instrumental in enhancing the teaching of writing skills.

Statement of the Problem

The present study determined the written language performance of junior high school students at Bulan National High School S. Y.2023 - 2024.

Specifically, it answered the following questions:

- 1) What is the written language performance of the respondents in terms of:
 - a) fluency; and
 - b) accuracy?
- 2) What are the difficulties met by the participants in written activities?
- 3) What learning intervention could be proposed based on the findings of the study?

2. Methodology

Research Design

The present study determined the written language performance of junior high school students at Bulan National High School S. Y.2023 - 2024. It is a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the written language performance of the students. Quantitative data was collected using rubrics, while qualitative data was obtained through content analysis of the essays written by the students.

The participants were the 41 Grade 9 Junior High School students of Bulan National High School. For quantitative data, rubrics were used to gain the level of written language performance in terms of fluency and accuracy. Weighted mean and standard deviation was used to summarize the data gathered. For quantitative data, content analysis was used to gather data on difficulties met by the participants in their written activities. Categorization of themes gathered from the content analysis was done.

The Participants

The study participants were 41 Grade 9 section one junior high school students of Bulan National High School. The researcher observed from their written outputs some difficulties that hindered them from expressing themselves efficiently in writing. The essay they have to write must be composed of more than 200 words, divided into three paragraphs, and each paragraph should have five sentences. The respondents were selected using snowball sampling under purposive sampling or non - parametric sampling. The selection of the respondents was based on the recommendation of their class adviser.

The Instrument

The researcher utilized a writing activity, which is a three - paragraph essay with at least 5 sentences each, and must have more than 200 words. The topic revolved around "It is important to treat others with justice and fairness." Present unreal conditionals, one of the competencies from the first quarter MELC (Most Essential Learning Competencies), showed the participants' arguments in expressing agreement and disagreement on the issue. A schedule was arranged to gather the needed data for this study. The use of the English language should be observed in the students' writing.

Data Collection Procedures

To gather the data needed in this study, the following procedures were done by the researcher:

Primarily, the researcher asked permission from the Schools Division Superintendent in the province of Sorsogon. Upon approval, the researcher proceeded to the School Principal of Bulan National High School to seek approval of the administration of the interview. The letters were duly signed by the researcher's adviser and the Dean of Sorsogon State University Graduate Studies before these were distributed.

Upon approval of the request, the researcher prepared the material, arranged a schedule and conducted data gathering for the participants through writing activity of composing a three - paragraph essay (each paragraph should have at least five sentences) in at least 200 words on the topic, "It is important to treat others with justice and fairness." The participants used present unreal conditionals from the first quarter learning module based on the list of the Kto12 Most Essential Learning competencies (MELC) (Kto12 Curriculum, 2016) to show their arguments in expressing agreement and disagreement on the issue to determine the written language performance of junior high school students.

The participants were restricted to using English in their essay. The researcher checked the outputs through rubrics on fluency (content and organization of ideas) and accuracy (spelling, Punctuation and Capitalization).

Also, rubrics were used (Appendix B) separately for fluency and accuracy. It is composed of a four - point category, 1 being the lowest score or described as Not Standard, and 4 being the highest or described as Exceeding Standard. Each of the essay underwent evaluation using these rubrics.

Data Analysis Procedure

To determine the written language performance of the respondents in terms of fluency and accuracy, evaluation using the rubrics was done. This yielded quantitative data. Weighted mean and SD were computed. The given scale was set to determine the written language performance of the participants:

0.00 - 0.99 – Not at standard

1.00 - 1.99 – Approaching standard

2.00 - 2.99 – Meet Standard

3.00 – 4.00 – Exceeding Standard

To determine the difficulties met by the participants in written activities, content analysis was conducted of the 41 essays made by each of the participant. The purpose of this content analysis was to develop a coding scheme or categorical themes that would allow for the identification and exploration of patterns within the content. Thematic discussion, a qualitative approach within content analysis, was employed to uncover coding schemes specifically related to the challenges encountered by the participants in their written activities. The main objective was to delve deeply into the underlying meanings and concepts present in the data, utilizing in - depth discussions and interpretations to gain a comprehensive understanding of the difficulties faced by the participants.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Findings

The following findings were drawn:

- 1) The junior high school students' written performance level in fluency, including content and organization of ideas, obtained a weighted mean of 2.39 and standard deviation (SD) of 0.49. For accuracy, including spelling and mechanics (punctuation and capitalization), obtained a weighted mean of 2.52 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.58.
- 2) The participants in the written activities faced several difficulties that affected their fluency and accuracy. In terms of fluency and content, they struggled with maintaining a consistent level of fluency and coherence in their writing. Their sentences often lacked completeness and clarity, resulting in ambiguity. Additionally, they exhibited a repetitive sentence structure, which made their writing monotonous. Poor organization of ideas was another challenge, as their thoughts were not effectively structured and conveyed. Furthermore, their arguments were inconsistent and lacked coherence. Transitional phrases were often missing, making it challenging to connect ideas smoothly. Circular arguments and redundancies were also observed, diminishing the effectiveness of their writing. Regarding fluency in organizing ideas, the participants encountered difficulties in creating cohesive narratives. Their narratives appeared disjointed, with disconnected events or ideas. The development of arguments was incoherent, making it difficult for readers to follow their intended points. They struggled with using transitions effectively, resulting in abrupt shifts and a lack of flow in their writing. Repetition and redundancy were common issues, which made their writing less engaging. Abrupt topic introductions were also evident, lacking a seamless transition between topics.
- 3) In terms of accuracy, spelling posed challenges for the participants. They made common spelling mistakes, indicating a lack of attention to detail. Incorrect usage of homophones, such as their/there or its/it's, added to the confusion and compromised the clarity of their writing. Typographical errors, such as misplaced or missing letters, further contributed to misspelled words or non - existent words. Additionally, they used contextually incorrect words, choosing words that were spelled correctly but did not fit the intended meaning or context of the sentence. Punctuation and capitalization also presented accuracy challenges. Punctuation errors, such as misplaced or missing commas, affected the structure and meaning of their sentences. Incorrect use of periods led to run - on sentences or improper sentence endings. Excessive use of conjunctions resulted in fragmented sentences and diminished clarity. Inconsistent punctuation in compound and complex sentences further hindered readability and understanding. Capitalization errors, such as inappropriately capitalizing common nouns, disrupted sentence structure and violated standard conventions.
- 4) An action plan for a classroom - based program is being proposed.

4. Conclusion

Based from the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

- 1) The junior high school student's average performance level in terms of fluency meets the set standard, and there is some variation in individual performance levels. They also have average performance levels in terms of accuracy and meet the set standard, and there is some variation in individual performance levels.
- 2) The participants in the written activities encountered various difficulties in their fluency and accuracy. These challenges encompassed areas such as content fluency, organization of ideas, spelling accuracy, and proper punctuation and capitalization usage. The participants struggled with maintaining coherence and fluency in their writing, often resulting in incomplete and ambiguous sentences, repetitive structures, and poor organization of ideas. Their arguments lacked consistency and coherence, and transitional phrases were frequently absent. In terms of accuracy, common spelling mistakes, incorrect usage of homophones, typographical errors, and contextually incorrect words were prevalent. Punctuation errors and capitalization inconsistencies further impaired the clarity and structure of their writing. Addressing these specific challenges can help the participants enhance their writing skills and produce more polished and effective written work. Educators and instructors can provide targeted support and guidance to improve fluency, coherence, organization, spelling accuracy, punctuation, and capitalization skills, ultimately empowering participants to become more proficient and confident writers.
- 3) An action plan entitled Enhancing Written Language Skills Program is being proposed to improve the written language performance of junior high school students by addressing both fluency and accuracy and targeting the difficulties they face in written activities.

5. Recommendations

The following recommendations were given:

- 1) Teachers may provide differentiated instruction, offering additional support and challenges as necessary, and may offer targeted feedback with specific suggestions for enhancing fluency, coherence, accuracy, and organization in students' writing while encouraging regular reading habits, engaging in various writing activities, and incorporating collaborative writing exercises to foster peer feedback and collaboration for improved fluency and accuracy.
- 2) Teachers may provide explicit instruction on the components of effective writing, model good writing practices by demonstrating examples and analyzing them to help participants understand desired standards, practice targeted exercises that address identified difficulties, and encourage self-editing and revision strategies to emphasize the importance of reviewing and revising for coherence, clarity, and accuracy.
- 3) Educators may develop a comprehensive curriculum that integrates explicit instruction, targeted practice activities, and authentic writing tasks to address difficulties in fluency and accuracy, provide professional development

for teachers to enhance their instructional strategies, implement formative assessments for progress monitoring and timely feedback, foster a supportive writing environment that values peer collaboration and sharing of written work, and utilize technology resources to support students' practice and improve their writing skills.

- 4) A study may be conducted on the effectiveness of different instructional strategies for improving writing skills in students. This research could compare the outcomes of explicit instruction versus other approaches, such as inquiry - based learning or project - based learning, to determine which yields better results regarding fluency, coherence, accuracy, and organization.

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