

Error Analysis on the Reflective Essays of Grade 11 Students in Albay Division

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the grammatical and mechanical errors in the reflective essays of Grade 11 students in the Albay Division and identified the writing challenges that informed the development of self-paced interventional learning materials. A descriptive mixed-method error-analysis design was employed using the reflective compositions of 147 Grade 11 students from Mauraro High School during School Year 2025–2026. Students produced 150–200-word reflective essays within one hour, while a questionnaire-checklist, interviews, observation, and documentary review supported the identification of writing challenges. Errors were identified, described, and explained following the study's error-analysis procedure and were summarized using frequency, percentage, and rank. Subject–verb agreement was the most frequent grammatical error (19%), followed by

run-on sentences (18%), while articles and pronoun usage each accounted for 10%. For mechanical correctness, punctuation was the dominant error (54%), followed by capitalization (28%) and spelling (18%). The leading challenge was limited understanding of reflective essay structure (15%), followed by difficulty expressing ideas clearly and insufficient self-motivation and time for writing practice (14% each). Based on these findings, the study developed Write as You Speak (WAYS), a self-paced package of QR-coded grammar and mechanics lessons with step-by-step explanations, interactive activities, self-assessment, and reflective writing tasks. The findings show that targeted instruction in sentence construction, punctuation, and reflective organization is necessary to strengthen students' written accuracy, confidence, and independent learning.

Keywords: *error analysis, reflective essays, grammatical correctness, mechanical correctness, Grade 11 students, self-paced learning*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a central academic skill because it enables learners to communicate ideas, organize knowledge, and demonstrate understanding. Reflective essays are especially valuable because they require students to connect experience, analysis, and personal insight in a coherent written form. In second-language contexts, however, students often struggle to translate ideas into grammatically accurate and mechanically clear prose. These difficulties can weaken meaning, reduce readability, and limit students' confidence in academic communication (Roxas, 2020; Gildore et al., 2023).

The complexity of English writing is evident in the range of linguistic decisions required in every sentence. Students must control verb tense, subject–verb agreement, articles, pronouns, sentence boundaries, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization while also organizing ideas logically. Research on learner compositions has repeatedly documented errors in sentence construction, tense, agreement, fragments, run-on sentences, and mechanics, indicating that these concerns remain persistent across levels and contexts (Bukit, 2020; Burhanuddin, 2020; Fauzan et al., 2020; Lioni et al., 2022).

In the Philippine senior high school context, writing challenges are intensified by limited vocabulary, writing apprehension, insufficient practice, and difficulty applying grammar rules to extended compositions. These concerns are important because Republic Act No. 10533 places English within the K–12 curriculum and emphasizes the development of globally competitive communication skills. Local studies have likewise shown that Filipino learners encounter difficulties in academic writing and benefit from targeted instruction, corrective feedback, and structured intervention materials (Ochoa, 2025; Oguan & Del Valle, 2022; Amarga & Quirap, 2024).

At Mauraro High School, recurring errors in Grade 11 reflective essays were observed in sentence structure, subject–verb agreement, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and word choice. Although classroom instruction addressed these topics, similar errors continued to appear in students’ outputs. A systematic error analysis was therefore needed to identify the most frequent patterns, determine the challenges experienced by learners, and use the evidence to design instruction responsive to their actual writing needs.

Accordingly, this study examined the common grammatical and mechanical errors in the reflective essays of Grade 11 students in the Albay Division, identified the challenges they experienced in reflective writing, and developed self-paced interventional learning materials based on the findings. The study contributes a localized evidence base for writing instruction and proposes Write As You Speak (WAYS), a structured and accessible package intended to strengthen accuracy, reflection, and independent practice.

Literature Review

Reflective Writing and Academic Literacy

Reflective writing requires learners to move beyond recounting events by interpreting experiences, identifying lessons, and explaining their significance. Effective reflective essays therefore combine personal voice with logical organization, appropriate evidence, and clear language. Guidance on reflective tasks emphasizes the connection between experience, analysis, and future action, making knowledge of genre structure essential to successful performance (QUT Library Web Coordinator, n.d.).

Academic literacy also depends on sustained practice in organizing ideas and controlling language. Roxas (2020) found that senior high school students experienced academic writing difficulties that required an instructional model, while Ernesto and Saysi (2023) linked writing apprehension to students’ ability to complete research-related tasks. These findings suggest that reflective writing competence develops through explicit genre instruction, guided practice, feedback, and opportunities to revise.

Grammatical and Syntactic Errors in Student Writing

Error analysis provides a systematic way to examine learner language by identifying recurring deviations, describing their linguistic form, and explaining patterns that may guide instruction. Studies of student compositions have documented errors in sentence construction, subject–verb agreement, verb tense, articles, pronouns, and word choice, showing that grammatical weaknesses can occur even when students possess relevant ideas (Catabay, 2023; Sari et al., 2022; Setiyorini et al., 2020).

Subject–verb agreement and sentence-boundary errors are particularly important because they affect the basic structure and clarity of sentences. Hasanah and Habibullah (2020), Tampubolon (2020), and Rifiyanti and Dewi (2022) reported recurring agreement errors in learners’ written texts. Similarly, Lioni et al. (2022) found that fragments and run-on sentences were persistent features of learner writing. These patterns support focused instruction that combines rule explanation, authentic examples, sentence editing, and repeated application in meaningful compositions.

Mechanical Accuracy and Written Communication

Mechanical correctness includes punctuation, capitalization, and spelling, all of which contribute to readability and meaning. Punctuation signals sentence boundaries and relationships among ideas; capitalization identifies beginnings and proper nouns; and spelling supports accurate word recognition. When these conventions are inconsistently applied, readers may misinterpret the writer’s intended message. Comparative studies have shown that punctuation errors remain common among university and school learners (Ali et al., 2020; Wati, 2021).

Mechanical development benefits from direct instruction and opportunities for self- and peer-editing. Bahr et al. (2019) demonstrated that spelling errors may reflect phonological, orthographic, and morphological influences, while Tavşanlı and Kara (2021) found that editorial work involving peer and self-assessment improved students' observance of spelling and punctuation rules. Fitria (2022) further showed how digital assessment tools can help identify grammatical and mechanical errors, although teacher guidance remains essential for interpretation and application.

Feedback, Motivation, and Self-Paced Writing Interventions

Writing improvement requires more than identifying mistakes; learners also need understandable feedback, motivation, and structured opportunities to practice. Prawiro (2020) emphasized the role of written corrective feedback in supporting senior high school students' work, while Latifah et al. (2020) showed that collaborative writing strategies can strengthen writing ability. Such approaches position errors as diagnostic information that can guide targeted support rather than as evidence of failure.

Digital and self-paced materials offer additional opportunities for repeated, flexible learning. Sakkir et al. (2021) highlighted the need for interactive writing materials aligned with learners' interests, while Hsiao and Chang (2023) demonstrated the potential of technology-supported instruction for EFL reading and writing. The study's intervention concept therefore combined grammar and mechanics lessons, real-life examples, short instructional media, self-assessment, interactive tasks, and reflective writing activities that students could access online or offline.

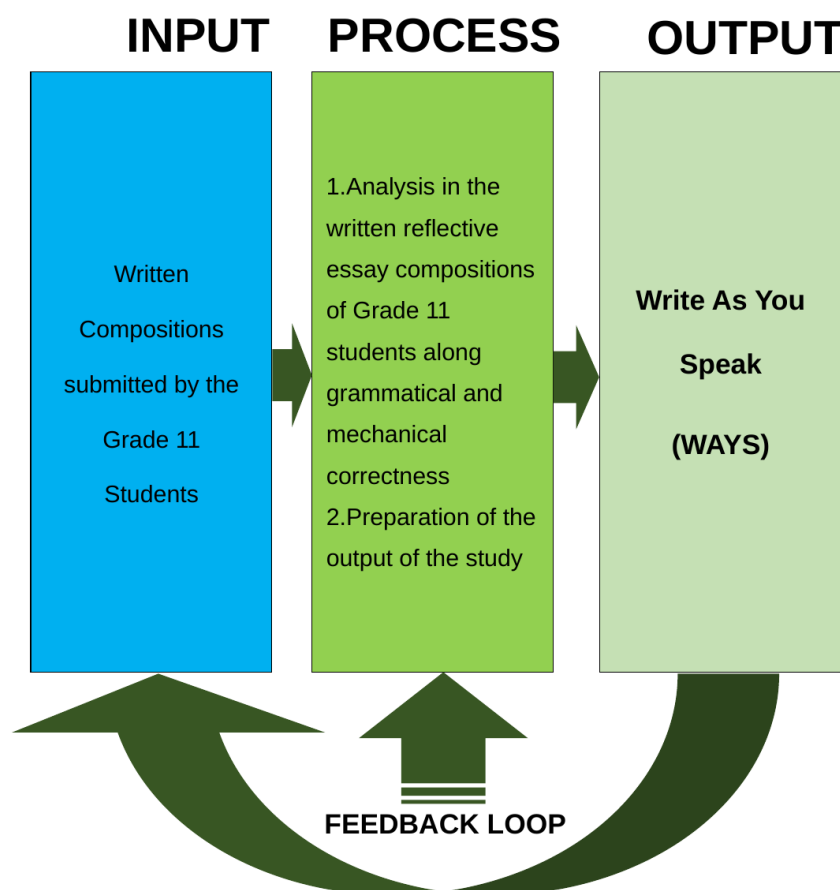


Figure 1. *Conceptual Paradigm of the Study*

METHODS

Research Design

The study used a descriptive mixed-method error-analysis design. The qualitative component involved identifying, classifying, correcting, and explaining the grammatical and mechanical errors found in students' reflective essays. The quantitative component summarized the distribution of error categories and writing challenges through frequency, percentage, and rank. This design was appropriate because the study sought both a numerical description of recurring errors and a contextual interpretation of how those errors appeared in authentic student compositions.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at Mauraro High School in Guinobatan West District, Schools Division of Albay, during School Year 2025–2026. The school was selected because it provided the Grade 11 writing corpus examined in the research and represented the instructional setting in which the recurring difficulties in reflective essay writing had been observed.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The corpus consisted of 147 reflective essays written by Grade 11 students from six strand sections: Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM), Agricultural and Fishery Arts (AFA), Bread and Pastry Production (BPP), Computer Systems Servicing (CSS), and two General Academic Strand sections (GAS A and GAS B). All 147 submitted compositions included in the study were analyzed; the thesis did not report a separate subsampling procedure for the essay corpus.

Research Instrument

The primary instruments were a reflective essay writing task and a questionnaire-checklist on students' writing challenges. Students selected one of ten contemporary topics and wrote a 150–200-word reflective essay within one hour. The analysis checklist covered grammatical correctness—including verb tense, subject–verb agreement, articles, sentence fragments, word choice, run-on sentences, pronoun usage, possessives, nouns, prepositions, linking verbs, parallelism, and infinitives—and mechanical correctness in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Interviews, observation, and library techniques supplemented the written data.

Data Gathering Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was secured from the Schools Division Superintendent, Public Schools District Supervisor, and school principal. Before the writing activity, students received an orientation on the task requirements and writing conditions. They then completed the reflective composition within the prescribed time. The researcher collected the outputs, reviewed each essay, marked recurring errors, and recorded the error categories and corrections. Responses concerning writing challenges were compiled through the questionnaire-checklist and supporting interview information.

Data Analysis

The analysis followed the study's three-stage procedure derived from error-analysis practice: identifying errors, describing and classifying them, and explaining dominant patterns. Each composition was read closely, and errors were marked and entered in an analysis table with corresponding corrections. Frequencies were converted into percentages and ranked to determine the most and least prevalent grammatical and mechanical error categories. The same statistical procedures were applied to the reported writing challenges.

Ethical Consideration

The study observed the permissions required by the Schools Division of Albay and the participating school. Students were informed of the writing activity and its academic purpose. The essays, questionnaire responses, and appraisals were treated confidentially and were used only for research purposes. Results were reported in aggregated form, and individual students were not identified in the presentation of findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participant Composition and Essay Corpus

The 147 essays represented students from six Grade 11 strand sections. The largest group came from AFA (37), followed by GAS B (32), GAS A (30), BPP (23), ABM (13), and CSS (12). The corpus included 64 male and 83 female students. The distribution provided a varied set of reflective compositions across academic and technical-vocational strands.

Table 1. *Distribution of Grade 11 Student-Participants by Strand*

Strand	Male	Female	Total
ABM	3	10	13
AFA	18	19	37
BPP	12	11	23
CSS	6	6	12
GAS A	11	19	30
GAS B	14	13	32
Total	64	83	147

Grammatical Errors in Reflective Essays

Subject–verb agreement was the most frequently identified grammatical error at 19%, followed closely by run-on sentences at 18%. Articles and pronoun usage each accounted for 10%, while verb tense and word choice each represented 9%. Preposition errors accounted for 8%; sentence fragments and plural nouns each accounted for 5%; and parallelism represented 3%. The least frequent categories were singular nouns (2%) and possessives, linking verbs, and infinitives (1% each).

Table 2. *Distribution of Grammatical Error Categories*

Grammatical Error	Percentage	Rank
Verb tense	9%	5.5
Subject–verb agreement	19%	1
Articles	10%	3.5
Sentence fragments	5%	8.5
Word choice	9%	5.5
Run-on sentences	18%	2
Pronoun usage	10%	3.5
Possessives	1%	13
Singular nouns	2%	11
Plural nouns	5%	8.5
Prepositions	8%	7
Linking verbs	1%	13
Parallelism	3%	10
Infinitives	1%	13

The dominance of agreement and run-on errors indicates that sentence construction was the central grammatical difficulty in the corpus. Students frequently struggled to match subjects and verbs and to separate independent ideas using appropriate punctuation or conjunctions. This pattern is consistent with research documenting persistent agreement errors and sentence-boundary problems in learner writing (Hasanah & Habibullah, 2020; Tampubolon, 2020; Lioni et al., 2022). Instruction should therefore integrate short rule reviews with sentence combining, editing, and application in complete reflective paragraphs.

Mechanical Errors in Reflective Essays

Punctuation accounted for more than half of the mechanical errors (54%), making it the most prominent mechanical concern. Capitalization represented 28%, while spelling accounted for 18%. The result shows that the readability of students' essays was affected primarily by missing, misplaced, or overused punctuation marks and by inconsistent capitalization.

Table 3. *Distribution of Mechanical Error Categories*

Mechanical Error	Percentage	Rank
Spelling	18%	3
Punctuation	54%	1
Capitalization	28%	2

The high punctuation percentage reinforces the close relationship between grammar and mechanics because sentence-boundary problems often involve both syntactic organization and punctuation choice. Similar concerns have been observed in comparative studies of learner writing (Ali et al., 2020; Wati, 2021). The findings also support editorial approaches that engage students in checking, explaining, and correcting mechanical errors rather than merely receiving corrected answers (Tavşanlı & Kara, 2021).

Challenges Experienced in Reflective Essay Writing

The highest-ranked challenge was limited understanding of reflective essay structure (15%). Difficulty expressing thoughts and ideas clearly and lack of self-motivation and time to practice writing each accounted for 14%. Limited vocabulary ranked next at 12%, followed by weak grammatical and mechanical skills at 10%. Difficulties in analyzing experiences and connecting them with lessons learned each accounted for 8%, while fear of challenging writing tasks received the lowest percentage at 6%.

Table 4. *Challenges Experienced by Students in Writing Reflective Essays*

Challenge	Percentage	Rank
Difficulty expressing thoughts and ideas clearly	14%	2.5
Limited understanding of reflective essay structure	15%	1
Limited vocabulary	12%	4
Weak grammatical and mechanical skills	10%	5
Difficulty analyzing experiences correctly	8%	6.5
Limited self-motivation and time for practice	14%	2.5
Difficulty writing an original reflection	7%	8.5
Difficulty connecting experiences with lessons learned	8%	6.5
Weak links between experiences and practical implications	7%	8.5
Avoidance of challenging tasks due to fear of errors	6%	10

These results show that students' difficulties were not limited to grammar. The leading concern involved genre knowledge: students needed clearer guidance on how to move from experience to interpretation and lesson. Writing apprehension, limited vocabulary, and insufficient practice further constrained their ability to express ideas. The pattern supports findings that senior high school writing difficulties involve both linguistic competence and affective or instructional barriers (Ochoa, 2025; Roxas, 2020; Ernesto & Saysi, 2023; Amarga & Quirap, 2024).

Write As You Speak (WAYS) Self-Paced Intervention

The findings served as the basis for Write As You Speak (WAYS), described in the thesis as a sixteen-series, QR-coded, self-paced intervention package. The materials address the identified grammar and mechanics areas through online and printable access, step-by-step explanations, short instructional videos, real-life examples, motivational activities, self-assessment, interactive exercises, reflective questions, and essay-writing tasks. The intervention follows a feedback loop in which student outputs are analyzed, targeted lessons are prepared, and subsequent writing provides evidence for continued reinforcement.

Table 5. *Core Components of the WAYS Intervention Package*

Component	Source-Based Content
Targeted language areas	Verb tense, subject–verb agreement, articles, sentence fragments, word choice, run-on sentences, pronoun usage, possessives, singular and plural nouns, prepositions, linking verbs, parallelism, infinitives, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.
Delivery mode	Printable/offline materials and online links accessed through QR codes.
Learning supports	Step-by-step lessons, short instructional videos, real-life examples, discussions, and motivational activities.
Practice and assessment	Interactive exercises, self-assessment, reflective questions, and reflective essay tasks.
Learning principle	Self-paced practice with feedback, reinforcement, and repeated application to authentic writing.

The design responds directly to the dominant error categories and to students’ reported need for structure, motivation, vocabulary support, and practice. Its multimodal and flexible features are consistent with evidence favoring interactive writing materials and technology-supported language learning (Sakkir et al., 2021; Hsiao & Chang, 2023). WAYS therefore represents the practical contribution of the study: a locally grounded intervention derived from observed learner errors rather than from a generic grammar sequence.

CONCLUSION

The analysis showed that Grade 11 students’ reflective essays contained recurring grammatical and mechanical errors that affected sentence accuracy and clarity. Subject–verb agreement and run-on sentences were the dominant grammatical concerns, while punctuation was the most frequent mechanical error. Students also experienced difficulty understanding reflective essay structure, expressing ideas clearly, sustaining motivation and practice, and using adequate vocabulary. These findings demonstrate that reflective writing difficulty is both linguistic and instructional. The study’s main contribution is the development of WAYS, a self-paced and QR-supported intervention that translates the diagnosed error patterns into focused grammar, mechanics, and reflective-writing activities.

Recommendation

English teachers should provide sustained instruction in subject–verb agreement, sentence boundaries, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and reflective essay organization through guided modeling, editing exercises, and frequent short writing tasks. Mauraro High School and the Schools Division of Albay may pilot and refine WAYS through classroom use, monitor students’ subsequent written outputs, and integrate suitable lessons into writing programs and learning action sessions. Students should be given regular opportunities to use the materials independently and to receive timely, specific feedback. Future researchers may evaluate the effectiveness of WAYS through pretest–posttest or mixed-method designs, examine changes in writing accuracy over time, and adapt the intervention for other grade levels and school contexts.

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