

Analyzing English Errors of Industrial Technology Students as a Basis for an Intervention Plan

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Abstract. Writing is one of the most complex skills, requiring significant effort and dedication to achieve proficiency. As students strive to improve their writing, errors inevitably emerge. This study investigates the English writing errors of third-year Industrial Technology students at Cagayan State University-Aparri, focusing on their writing's morphological, syntactic, lexical, and mechanical aspects. The findings reveal that syntactic errors, particularly sentence fragments, were the most common, with 107 occurrences. Mechanical errors followed closely, with capitalization errors being the most prevalent (106 occurrences). Lexical errors were also significant, totaling 70 occurrences, with frequent word choice or form issues. Morphological errors were the least frequent, with 47 occurrences primarily related to subject-verb agreement. Furthermore, mechanical errors show a moderate and significant negative correlation ($r = -0.390$, $p = 0.007$), and lexical errors exhibit a moderate and highly significant negative correlation ($r = -0.424$, $p = 0.003$). The data indicates a higher incidence of mechanical and lexical errors among College of Industrial Technology students. Notably, a significant positive correlation was found between students' religious affiliations and lexical errors, suggesting that religious language practices may influence lexical choices in non-religious writing contexts. The observed influence of religious language on lexical choices underscores the importance of understanding how cultural and linguistic backgrounds shape writing proficiency. It can guide educators, curriculum developers, and language instructors in designing more effective writing programs tailored to diverse student's needs.

Keywords: Error analysis; Lexical, Morphology; Mechanical; Syntax; Types of errors.

1.0 Introduction

Writing is a cornerstone of communication, enabling students to document knowledge, express ideas clearly, and convey information effectively. However, mastering writing skills poses unique challenges, especially in academic and professional contexts where precision and clarity are essential. For students in technical disciplines like Industrial Technology, where emphasis is often placed on practical skills, writing proficiency can be particularly demanding yet equally critical for success. At the College of Industrial Technology at Cagayan State University-Aparri, students struggle with writing tasks, particularly grammar, punctuation, and syntax. While they excel in hands-on applications, their written work often reveals significant gaps in linguistic proficiency, impacting their ability to produce quality documentation and perform well in assessments. This mismatch between practical and written skills underscores a pressing need for interventions to bridge the gap.

Research consistently highlights the prevalence of writing errors among students, particularly in second-language contexts. Common issues include grammar and syntax errors, poor word choice, and mechanical lapses, all

hindering effective communication (Sulistyo et al., 2019; Indrilla & Ciptaningrum, 2018). In global contexts, English serves as the medium of communication across multiple domains, emphasizing the need for strong writing skills (Christiansen, 2015). Despite the Philippines' emphasis on English in education and business, students face challenges that compromise their readiness for academic and professional demands (Lam et al., 2018).

Although studies have explored writing challenges among general student populations, limited research has focused on technical students whose needs may differ significantly due to the nature of their disciplines. The intersection of technical expertise and writing proficiency is often overlooked, leaving a gap in understanding how to effectively address these students' unique challenges. This study aims to analyze the writing errors of third-year students in the College of Industrial Technology at Cagayan State University-Aparri. The research provides insights that inform targeted instructional strategies by systematically identifying and categorizing these errors. Addressing these errors is not merely about improving grades but equipping students with a fundamental skill to enhance their academic performance, professional readiness, and success in a globalized workforce.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a mixed method of research. Qualitatively, it employed content analysis to identify the students' errors in English concerning morphology, syntax, lexical, and mechanical. Quantitatively, it employed a descriptive-correlational method to describe the students' profile in terms of age, sex, religion, major, mother tongue, availability and extent of usage of learning materials, and their performance in the English subject. Further, it determined significant relationships between the aforementioned variables, hence, correlational.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted on selected third-year Industrial students from the College of Industrial Technology of Cagayan State University – Aparri, located in Zone 6, Maura, Aparri, Cagayan. One of the distinguished colleges at Cagayan State University-Aparri is the College of Industrial Technology. This college offers three academic programs: Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology, major in Automotive Technology; Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology, major in Electronics Technology; and Bachelor of Science in Electrical Technology, major in Electrical Technology. In the current school year, 2023-2024, the college caters to a substantial enrollment of 504 students, indicating a significant and promising student population contributing to a brighter future.

2.3 Research Participants

The study employed a total enumeration sampling technique, wherein all members of the target population – third-year students from the College of Industrial Technology at Cagayan State University-Aparri – were included as respondents. This method was chosen to ensure that the data collected was comprehensive and representative of the entire group of students from the three sections: Electronics, Electrical, and Automotive majors. Total enumeration is particularly effective in studies involving small, specific populations, as it minimizes sampling bias and ensures the inclusion of diverse perspectives and experiences within the group. By involving all 47 students, the study maximized the reliability and richness of the data, providing a robust basis for analyzing English writing errors and their potential correlates.

2.4 Research Instrument

The study employed a questionnaire to gather data on the students' profiles. After completing the questionnaire, the students were asked to write an introduction on a topic related to their research subject. Forty-seven research introductions were collected, each supervised by the respective research subject teacher. Errors in the students' writing, defined as linguistic units that deviate from the accepted norms of the target language, were identified and categorized. These errors were classified into four main areas: morphology, syntax, lexical, and mechanical errors. The identified errors were underlined and tabulated for analysis. The frequency of each error type was calculated to determine the percentage of occurrence in each category. Analyzing these frequencies, the most common errors made by the students were identified. The findings of this research were then presented in a clear and organized manner, using tables to showcase the distribution and frequency of errors across the different categories.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher sought permission to disseminate questionnaires through an official communication letter addressed to the administration of Cagayan State University-Aparri, the Graduate School, the dean of the target college, and the respondents' subject adviser. Once permission was granted, the researcher instructed the students to complete the questionnaire. Subsequently, with the guidance of their research teacher, students were tasked with drafting an introduction for their chosen title within three hours. The completed questionnaires and student introductions were collected from the College of Industrial Technology at CSU-Aparri participants. In conclusion, the responses were systematically categorized, organized, analyzed, and evaluated.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process. All data were stored securely and were accessible only to the researcher and authorized personnel, ensuring that personal information was protected. In reporting results, identifying information was omitted to protect participant anonymity further. The study's findings were presented honestly and accurately, reflecting a commitment to ethical academic standards. Additionally, this study followed non-maleficence principles and respect for persons by avoiding any harm or discomfort to participants. Finally, all information and data collected were used solely for this research and will be destroyed by university data retention policies upon completion of the study.

3.0 Results and Discussion

31 Profile of the Students

Table 1 provides a comprehensive profile of the 47 students in the study, highlighting key demographic factors. Most students (34.04%) are 21 years old, with a mean age of 21.77 years, reflecting that most are in their early twenties, typical for third-year college students. The data suggests that most students in their third year of college are in their early twenties, which is typical for students at this stage of education. As per the data provided by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the average age range of undergraduate students falls within the global norms. Approximately 18% of students enroll in college and advance to their third year by the time they are 20 to 22 years old.

Table 1. Profile of the students in terms of their age, sex, major, mother tongue, and religious affiliation

Category	Frequency (n=47)	Percentage
Age		
20	7	14.89%
21	16	34.04%
22	11	23.41%
23	8	17.02%
24	4	8.51%
25	1	2.13%
Sex		
Male	42	89.36%
Female	5	10.64%
Major/Specialization		
Electrical Technology	21	44.68%
Automotive Technology	16	34.04%
Electronic Technology	10	21.28%
Mother Tongue		
Ybanag	11	23.4%
Iloco	34	72.34%
Tagalog	2	4.26%
Religious Affiliation		
Roman Catholic	36	76.6%
Church of Christ	2	4.26%
Iglesia Ni Cristo	3	6.38%
Jehovah's Witness	3	6.38%
Aglipay	1	2.13%
Others	2	4.26%

A large proportion (89.36%) of the students are male, and the most common major is Electrical Technology (44.68%), followed by Automotive (34.04%) and Electronic Technology (21.28%). In terms of language, the majority speak Iloco (72.34%) as their mother tongue, with smaller groups speaking Ybanag (23.4%) and Tagalog (4.26%).

According to the study of Hernandez (2020), he revealed the profound impact of mother tongue proficiency on students' academic performance and literacy development. It also highlights that a child should have a solid grasp of their mother tongue, which can enhance language skills and catalyze overall cognitive growth and socio-economic well-being. Religiously, most students identify as Roman Catholic (76.6%), with smaller representations from other Christian denominations and a few identifying with "Others." This data underscores the student body's predominance in specific age, gender, academic, linguistic, and religious categories.

3.2 Availability and Extent of Usage of Printed Learning Materials at Home

Table 2 outlines the availability and extent of usage of printed learning materials among students at home. The dictionary is the most available resource, with the highest frequency of 38, indicating it is the most commonly found printed material among students. However, despite its availability, it is used only "sometimes" with a usage frequency of 3.32. This could reflect the changing nature of how information is consumed, with digital sources possibly replacing some of the roles traditionally filled by these printed materials. Overall, the extent of usage aligns with availability to some extent. However, certain materials like the Bible and dictionary stand out as both highly available and highly used, whereas others like almanacs and newspapers, despite being available, are not as frequently utilized.

Table 2. Profile of the students in terms of availability and extent of usage of printed learning materials at home

Availability	Frequency*	Rank	Frequency of Use
Dictionary	38	1	3.32 Sometimes
Encyclopedia	25	6	2.88 Sometimes
Almanac	19	8	2.32 Seldom
Magazines	23	7	3.13 Sometimes
Books	32	3	3.09 Sometimes
Bible	37	2	3.43 Often
Newspaper	27	4	2.59 Seldom
Flyers	26	5	2.42 Seldom

*Multiple-response set

3.3 Availability and Extent of Usage of Electronic Learning Materials at Home

Table 3 provides an overview of the availability and usage of electronic learning materials at home. Among these resources, the cellphone is the most widely available, with 45 students reporting its presence, and it is also the most frequently used, with a usage frequency of 4.82, indicating that it is used "always." In contrast, the radio is the least available electronic learning material, with 30 students reporting its presence at home. It is also the least frequently used, with a frequency of 2.34, meaning it is used "seldom." In today's rapid technological advancements, students are increasingly tech-savvy and integrate these innovations into their learning processes. Cellphones and internet access are the most essential electronic learning tools for students at home, demonstrated by their high availability and frequent use, surpassing other devices such as televisions, laptops, and radios.

Table 3. Profile of the students in terms of availability and extent of usage of electronic learning materials at home

Availability	Frequency*	Rank	Frequency of Use
Cellphone	45	1	4.82 Always
Television	43	2	3.86 Often
Internet	40	3	4.58 Always
Laptop	34	4	2.94 Sometimes
Radio	30	5	2.34 Seldom

*Multiple-response set

3.4 Errors Encountered by Students in Learning English Writing

Morphological

Table 4 summarizes the types of morphological errors made by third-year students when learning English writing, along with the frequency and rank of each error. Subject-verb (SV) Agreement was the most common error, occurring 27 times, indicating that students often struggle to match the correct verb form with the subject of their sentences (e.g., "The researchers focuses on improving the reliability, durability, and efficiency of the DC compressor" instead of "The researchers focus on improving the reliability, durability, and efficiency of the DC compressor"). Noun ending errors occurred only once, suggesting that they were relatively rare among the students surveyed. These errors involve issues with pluralization, possessive forms, or using the wrong noun in a sentence.

Table 4. Errors encountered by students in learning English writing concerning morphology

	Frequency*	Rank
Verb Tenses and Forms	19	2
SV Agreement	27	1
Noun ending	1	3

*Multiple-response set

Syntactic

Table 5 outlines the types and frequencies of errors students encounter in learning English writing concerning syntax. The most frequent error was writing fragments, with a frequency of 63, ranking it first. This indicates that students often write incomplete sentences, which lack either a subject or a verb, resulting in fragmented thoughts that hinder clear communication. Word order was the least frequent, with a frequency of 10, indicating that students sometimes struggle with correctly placing words within a sentence to accurately convey the intended meaning.

Table 5. Errors encountered by students in learning English writing concerning syntactic

	Frequency*	Rank
Word order	10	3
Fragment	63	1
Run on sentence	34	2

*Multiple-response set

Lexical

Table 6 provides an overview of the lexical errors encountered by students in learning English writing, along with their frequencies and ranks. The most common lexical error was word choice/form, with a frequency of 40, ranking it first. This indicates that students often struggle to select the appropriate words or forms of words that accurately convey their intended meaning. Errors in prepositions were the least frequent, with a frequency of 10, ranking them third. This implies that while prepositions are less common, they still pose a significant challenge for students. Chuang and Nesi's (2006) research on lexical errors made by Chinese learners of English identified overinclusion as a common mistake. They explained this phenomenon as a result of learners overgeneralizing and including unnecessary words, influenced by the word order patterns and structures of their native language.

Table 6. Errors encountered by students in learning English writing concerning lexical

	Frequency*	Rank
Word choice/form	40	1
Errors in preposition	10	3
Errors in pronoun	14	2
Redundancy	6	4

*Multiple-response set

Mechanical

Table 7 outlines the mechanical errors encountered by students in learning English writing, along with their frequencies and ranks. The most frequent mechanical error was capitalization, with a frequency of 63, ranking it first. This indicates that students often misuse uppercase and lowercase letters, affecting the formal correctness and readability of their writing. Punctuation errors were the least frequent, with a frequency of 5, ranking them third. Although less common, incorrect commas, periods, or other punctuation marks can still lead to run-on sentences, fragments, and unclear sentence structures.

Table 7. Errors encountered by students in learning English writing concerning lexical

	Frequency*	Rank
Spelling	38	2
Capitalization	63	1
Punctuation	5	3

*Multiple-response set

Research conducted by Smith and Jones (2020) highlights the prevalence of mechanical errors in student writing, particularly in capitalization. In their study, titled "Common Writing Errors in ESL Students," they analyzed the written work of 200 high school students learning English as a second language. The study found that capitalization was the most frequent, accounting for 28% of all mechanical errors. The researchers observed that

students often failed to capitalize the first letter of sentences and proper nouns and frequently used capital letters inappropriately within words and sentences.

Summary Table

Table 8 summarizes errors in morphology, syntax, lexical, and mechanical aspects of English writing, highlighting their frequencies and ranks. Syntactic errors were the most frequent, occurring 107 times and ranking first. Morphological errors were the least frequent, occurring 47 times and ranking fourth.

Table 8. Summary table for errors in morphology, syntax, lexical, and mechanical

	Frequency*	Rank
Morphological	47	4
Syntactic	107	1
Lexical	70	3
Mechanical	106	2

*Multiple-response set

This data suggests that students primarily struggle with syntactic and mechanical aspects of writing, highlighting the need for targeted instruction to improve overall writing proficiency. Pusoitasari's (2019) study revealed that mechanical errors, particularly in capitalization, were the most prevalent. A common mistake was students failing to capitalize the first letter of the initial word in a paragraph. This issue was attributed to students' limited knowledge, lack of attention in class, and insufficient explanation and detailed examples from teachers. Similarly, Widari et al. (2000) noted that students frequently make syntactic errors in their writing, often due to a limited understanding of target language rules, which leads to incorrect verb usage in English.

3.5 Performance of the Students in English

Table 9 presents the performance levels of students in English. The highest percentage of students, 29.79% (14 out of 47), achieved a "Very Satisfactory" performance level. This indicates that a significant portion of the students perform well above average in their English studies. Conversely, the lowest performance is marked by 8.51% (4 out of 47) of students who failed. Additionally, no students fell into the "Passing" category, indicating that those who did not meet the required standards either performed well enough to avoid failure or did not meet the minimum threshold.

Table 9. Performance of the students in English

Level of Performance	Frequency (n=47)	Percentage
Very Good	2	4.26
Good	10	21.28
Very Satisfactory	14	29.79
Satisfactory	10	21.28
Fair	7	14.89
Passing	0	0
Failure	4	8.51
Mean = 80.98 Satisfactory		

One of the possible reasons was the pandemic's impact on education, particularly through disruptions in traditional learning environments and increased reliance on remote learning, which may have contributed to the observed performance trends. This aligns with findings from Dacanay (2022), who examined the challenges and opportunities in teaching writing online amidst the pandemic in the Philippines. The study highlights the difficulties teachers and students face in adapting to online learning, which may have affected writing performance. Focusing on targeted support for struggling students, enrichment opportunities for high achievers, and addressing the challenges posed by the pandemic's educational context may be key to enhancing the overall English performance in this group.

3.6 Relationship between Students' Errors in Learning English and their Profile

Table 10 shows the correlation test results between students' errors in learning English and their profiles. The correlation between religion and lexical errors is significant, with an R-value of 0.310 and a p-value of 0.034. This positive correlation suggests a statistically significant relationship between a student's religious background and the frequency of lexical errors in their English writing. In other words, students' religion may influence their choice

and use of words, potentially affecting their lexical accuracy in English. Jeynes (2003) revealed that religiously committed urban children generally outperformed their less religious counterparts in most academic measures. This finding is echoed in Taylor and Francis' (2008) research on Black male students, where religious commitment fostered by the church community and belief in God significantly contributed to their academic achievement.

Table 10. Correlation test results between students' Errors in learning English and their profile

	Morphology		Syntax		Mechanical		Lexical	
	r value	Prob	r value	Prob	r value	Prob	r value	Prob
Age	0.093	0.534	0.192	0.195	-0.122	0.414	0.227	0.124
Sex	-0.054	0.717	0.075	0.619	-0.101	0.501	0.218	0.141
Mother tongue	0.068	0.648	-0.102	0.496	-0.072	0.632	0.103	0.493
Religion	-0.010	0.946	0.160	0.281	-0.105	0.482	0.310*	0.034
Major	0.043	0.774	0.147	0.324	-0.075	0.614	0.216	0.145
No. of available learning materials	-0.062	0.681	0.208	0.162	0.017	0.908	0.014	0.925
Extent of usage of learning materials	0.107	0.475	-0.064	0.668	0.096	0.522	0.067	0.654

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Furthermore, the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth data confirms a positive correlation between religious practice and academic success. Students who attended religious services weekly or more often had higher average GPAs than those who attended less frequently. Religious practice also correlated with higher educational aspirations, with those attending church weekly during their upbringing having significantly more years of total schooling by their early thirties than those who did not attend church. These studies collectively suggest that religious commitment and practice can positively influence academic achievement, potentially through the cultivation of cultural and social capital and the instillation of values that promote educational attainment.

3.7 Relationship between the Student's Performances in English and the Other Variables

Table 11 shows the correlation test results between students' performance in English and various variables. Two variables were found to have a highly significant correlation with students' performance. The correlation between mechanical errors and students' performance in English is highly significant, with an r-value of -0.390 and a p-value of 0.007. This negative correlation indicates that as mechanical errors (such as spelling, punctuation, and capitalization errors) increase, students' performance in English becomes poorer. Similarly, the correlation between lexical errors and students' performance in English is highly significant, with an r-value of -0.424 and a p-value of 0.003. This also suggests a negative relationship, meaning that a higher frequency of lexical errors (related to word choice and vocabulary) is associated with lower performance in English. These findings suggest that while errors in morphology and syntax do not substantially affect performance, mechanical (spelling or punctuation mistakes) and lexical (such as incorrect word choice) are significantly associated with poorer English performance. This indicates that low-performing students tend to commit more mechanical type, and high-performing students tend to commit fewer lexical types of errors.

Table 11. Correlation test results between students' performance in English and the other variables

	Value of r	Probability	Statistical Inference
Profile variables			
Age	0.126	0.399	Not Significant
Sex	0.260	0.078	Not Significant
Mother tongue	0.145	0.331	Not Significant
Religion	0.268	0.069	Not Significant
Major	0.188	0.205	Not Significant
Availability and extent of usage of learning materials	-0.135	0.365	Not Significant
Extent of usage of learning materials	0.082	0.583	Not Significant
Difficulties in learning English			
Morphology	-0.034	0.818	Not Significant
Syntax	-0.084	0.573	Not Significant
Mechanical	-0.390**	0.007	Highly Significant
Lexical	-0.424**	0.003	Highly Significant

Dana Ferris, in her book "Treatment of Error in Second Language Student Writing," discusses that mechanical errors (like spelling and punctuation mistakes) can hinder readability and cause misunderstandings, while lexical errors (such as incorrect word choices) can lead to confusion and misinterpretation of ideas. Both negatively

impact communication effectiveness and reflect broader issues in language proficiency, underscoring the need for targeted instruction to improve students' writing performance.

4.0 Conclusion

This study highlights the prevalent writing challenges among third-year students in the College of Industrial Technology, focusing on syntactic, mechanical, lexical, and morphological errors, with sentence structure and capitalization identified as critical areas for improvement. The correlation between religious affiliation and lexical errors emphasizes the role of cultural and contextual influences on language use, suggesting a need for culturally responsive teaching practices. Language teachers should conduct regular assessments, provide targeted supplementary materials, and teach effective error correction strategies through self-editing and peer review to address these challenges. Writing activities should include diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. At the same time, university administrators and policymakers are urged to develop programs that systematically address these errors and prepare students for academic and professional success. Combined with engaging drills and focused instruction, these measures can foster students' writing proficiency and confidence, ensuring their readiness for future opportunities.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

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7.0 Conflicts Of Interest

This study was conducted as a requirement for completing a master's degree program. The author declares no conflict of interest related to the research.

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