

## **Common Errors Committed in Written English Composition by the First Year College Students of Cagayan State University**

**Norma M. Soriano**

Cagayan State University, College of Business, Entrepreneurship and Accountancy, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan 3500, Philippines

### **\*Corresponding Author:**

Norma M. Soriano

Email: [meladariel@yahoo.com](mailto:meladariel@yahoo.com)

---

**Abstract:** Writing like reading is a fundamental ability that conditions one's success in school. Yet, it has been found that teaching writing has traditionally been one of the most troublesome and difficult areas in the curriculum. This difficulty exists in part because writing is a complex task. Writing is one of the most important ways to ensure that all students master the basic literacy skill, allowing them freedom to express their own concerns and build upon their special interest. Reading experts convinced that full development of literacy skills can occur only when students do a lot of writing as well as a lot of reading. Student should reflect in this compositions as a part of themselves and that part need not always be holistically and completely formed. However, the composition must be able to convey the student's thoughts in order to communicate. The students must be able to write not because they are compelled to, but because they themselves want to communicate with their readers. This attitude is a crucial issue towards a more genuine approach to composition writing.

**Keywords:** writing, basic literacy skills, literary skills, complex task, composition, composition writing, reading.

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

History points out that English has been use as the medium of instruction since the American Regime. In the Philippines and this can be said of all other countries in the world, English is the International language. It is the language of diplomacy, of world trades and finance, of science and technology. As for the Philippines, Benesa [1] said: English has been the Philippines International language for the last half century and will remain so...

To a Filipino student, the ability to speak and write English correctly, simply and meaningfully is an asset. Proficiency in English does not only bring distinction in school to the student but also recognition in the professions like law, medicine and teaching. On the other hand, bad grammar, wrong idioms and tenses, faulty sentences and similar errors are a handicap.

The languages men have developed are primarily oral and writing are only secondary. A writer makes marks on a page, these marks represent speech sounds, and these sound represent ideas and emotions.

Composition, as understood in language study, is the art of putting words together properly in sentences to express one's thoughts. The pupil can learn to put his simple thoughts on paper in correct language through good teaching [2]. Through well-planned techniques or exercises the pupils are guided so

carefully that they will leave the composition classroom with a "sense of achievement rather than a feeling of frustration. This sense of achievement is the goal toward which all composition teachers work." [3]

Writing is universally recognized as one of the most important activities in the school program. It has an intellectualizing effect on the individual and the society in general. Its increasing importance in today's social order demands more rapid, efficient and wider learning both in and out of school to keep pace with the times.

Writing has become a serious problem interruption to the progress of English as a second language. It has been found out that the students cannot even construct short compositions. If ever they do, their compositions are full of errors. The ideas they express are not clear, neither are they well-organized. Although, we can change our outlook towards students' writing. Knowing that writing is more difficult to teach and takes longer to learn than the other language skills, The students can train themselves to look at their correction as an opportunity to mark the little successes too difficult to come by, in learning how to write instead of a chance to penalize failure. If we think of the evaluation of themes as opportunities for stimulating improvement rather than destroying our students' confidence in themselves, we might not only make them try harder, but our own share of the work would

become rewarding. As the saying goes, "Nothing succeeds like success and nothing fails like failure."

Educators like Bernardino [4] believes that something must be done to remedy this serious language problem. English teachers should not close their eyes to such a situation. It is necessary for them to have a thorough and careful study of the conditions and factors that contribute to the problem of students on composition writing. They should know what remedial measures to give. By knowing all these things, the English teachers can have better teaching techniques specially in composition writing. Thus they can help the students minimize or avoid committing the same errors and they can achieve satisfactory results from their students' themes.

Along this line, the researcher was prompted to take courage in undergoing a study of the common errors in written English composition of the first year college students to find out the basic causes of students' error in written English composition all common and what errors so that these maybe remedied or minimized. Realizing the tremendous responsibility placed on the shoulders of composition writing teachers, the researcher has attempted to launch this investigation.

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Language is one of the many media of communication because the world of art can lay claim to a variety of tools like music, painting, dance and many others.

To see the English language also as an art form is to acknowledge only one of the powers of writing. Language can be used to say things about someone, to report about something or some situations. The contents of many newspaper reports exploit this expressive purpose of language - certainly a skill that students should be taught.

In view of those statements, English as a subject in the tertiary school should emphasize the development of competencies and skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening competency includes such skills as auditory discrimination and comprehension. Speaking competency includes the skills in handwriting, composition and mechanics.

The language that a child hears is the language that he learns to speak and write. By listening, he requires a sizeable vocabulary, and he gradually learns to assemble his words into sentences. After several years of experience with oral language, he develops a readiness for learning to read and eventually to write. Thus, speaking is basic to both reading and writing.

In addition, the student should be able to "express ideas orally and in writing, in a clear and logical manner, with little or no help when sharing, in expressions, with family and community."

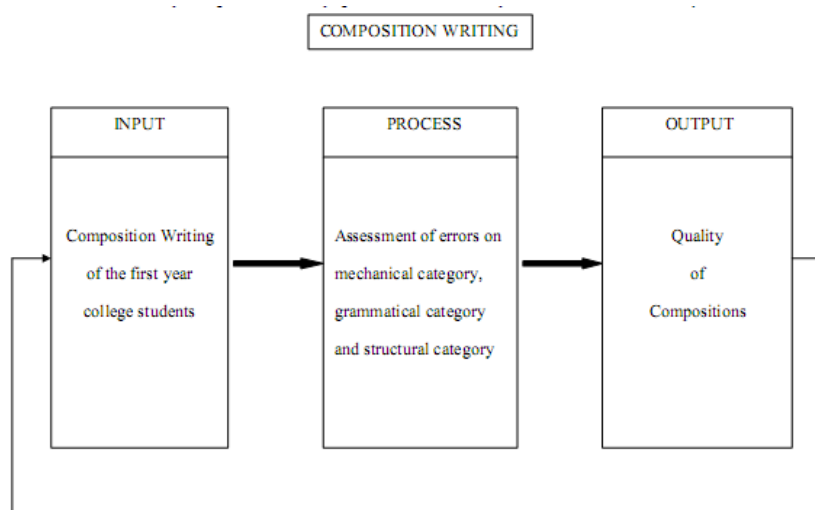
Written compositions or themes of students or pupils must be evaluated or corrected immediately on the basics of content or thought or form. By so doing, the English teacher must be careful, just and fair in making necessary correction or evaluation.

The ability to read and to write is developed after a learner has required a fair knowledge of listening and speaking skills. Reading and writing serve to reinforce and fix the habits and abilities learned in the first two activities.

A student can learn how to express his thoughts in a sentence or in a paragraph in a clear logical way, so that listeners or readers can grasp his thought or understand his feelings. In learning to express his thoughts in a second language, the pupil or student begins composition writing with the controlled composition. The purpose of giving controlled composition to the student is to reduce the number of errors he makes to a minimum, not to limit him, but to give him all the help he needs. Accuracy and correctness should be stressed first because these contribute to fluency.

As the student becomes more proficient, the controls are removed one by one. In this way, the student is prevented from making errors. As the student acquires sufficient automatic control of the language he can concentrate on ideas rather than on how to say what he has in mind, fluency will develop. If the student has not reached this level of fluency and mastery, something must be done to help students write better compositions or themes.

The paradigm on the next page illustrates the conceptual framework of the study.



**Fig-1: Paradigm showing how the study is anchored**

The Model illustrates that the composition writing of the first year college students of the College of Business Entrepreneurship and Accountancy of Cagayan State University are to be assessed in order to identify the common errors on the mechanical category, grammatical category and structural category so that, appropriate solutions or measures will be instituted to correct the errors and to attain the quality of writing compositions as a step to develop the skills of the students in composition writing.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

This study attempted to identify the common errors committed by the first year college students in written English Composition in the College of Business, Entrepreneurship and Accountancy of Cagayan State University.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the common errors committed by the first year college students in their written English Composition as regards to:
  - a) Mechanics in spelling, punctuation marks, capitalization and indentation.
  - b) Grammar
  - c) Sentence structure which includes arrangements of words, choice of words, parts of the sentence.
2. What remedial measures can be adopted to minimize the errors?

**METHODOLOGY**

**Method Used in the Study**

Error analysis was used in this study where the researcher identified and analyzed the errors in their composition for the school year 2014 – 2015, Second Semester.

**Respondents of the Study**

The respondents of the study were the forty-seven (47) first year college students of the College of Business, Entrepreneurship and Accountancy of Cagayan State University, Andrews Campus who were enrolled in the school year 2014 - 2015 , Second semester.

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents**

Section	Male	Female	Total
A	16	31	47
Total	16	31	47

**Data Gathering Instrument**

The Composition Writing was used to analyze errors in composition writing. The first and second compositions were the documents that were analyzed and identified as to what phase of category, grammatical and structural category.

Part I was an inventory of items under Mechanics which includes the following:

1. Forms of paragraphs (Indentions, Margin, General format)
2. Spelling
3. Capitalization
4. Syllabication
5. Punctuation

Part II was an inventory of items under grammatical category which includes the following:

1. Nouns - forms, uses, types, kinds, genders, numbers.
2. Pronouns - antecedents, person, gender, numbers.
3. Prepositions and prepositional phrases.
4. Conjunctions - appropriateness.
5. Adjectives - uses, types, appropriateness.
6. Adverbs - types, uses, appropriateness.
7. Verbs - tenses, agreement.

Part III was the structural category which includes the organization and the arrangements of ideas, sentence unity and paragraph structure.

### Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher had followed the following procedures to gather the data needed in her research study from the respondents:

1. The researcher asked the students to develop a composition from the title given based from the lesson taken in the class. The students were asked to develop three compositions for the final term in the second semester of school year 2014 - 2015.
2. The draft of each composition was corrected.
3. When the compositions were corrected, the researcher identified and categorized the committed errors as to mechanical category, grammatical category and structural category.
4. The re-writing of the corrected compositions was done in the class for improvement and better results.
5. Remedial teaching followed with emphasis on the most frequent errors committed.

6. For the research work, the researcher used the inventory as an instrument, tabulated the errors committed by the students and assessed to what phases in the three categories the errors fall.

### Statistical Analysis

The frequency count, ranking and error analysis were used to determine the common errors committed in the student's written composition.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data are presented, analyzed and interpreted. Using the documentary analysis, the data were gathered from the compositions written by the first year college students of the College of Business, Entrepreneurship and Accountancy, School Year 2014 - 2015, Second Semester.

The data gathered included common errors in mechanics, grammar and organization of thoughts and contents from the compositions of the first year college students together with the proposed remedial measures to be undertaken to minimize such errors.

**Table 2: Frequency and Rank Distribution of Errors Committed in the Different Phases of Mechanical Category**

Mechanical Errors	Frequency of Errors	Rank
Misspelling	78	1
Lack of Punctuation Marks	52	2
Errors in Capitalization	28	3
Wrong Syllabication	24	4
Wrong Indention	14	5
Wrong Margin	12	6

Table 2 presents the frequency and rank of the mechanical errors committed by the students in their compositions. Misspelling has the highest number of errors of 78 and this ranked first. This is followed by Incorrect Punctuation Marks with a frequency error of 52 and this ranked second. Misuse of capital letter had 33 number of errors ranked third. Errors in capitalization had 28 number of errors ranked fourth. Wrong syllabication had 24 errors ranked fifth. Wrong indention had 14 errors ranked sixth. Wrong margin had 12 errors ranked seventh and lack of punctuation marks had 10 errors ranked eight.

Misspelling rank first. The students are generally weak in spelling as shown in the frequency tabulation wherein 78 errors were committed by the first year college students.

The students as found in their compositions misspelled even simple words. It has been noted further

that these errors committed by the students have been traced to the influence of the dialect that they speak. Students were found to have limited vocabularies and were unable to write simple words and phrases. Another cause of these words were the students' carelessness, lack of confidence, lack of concentration and weakness in getting and understanding the thought from any reading materials and poor recognition of words.

Spelling is very important in any form of writing because a misspelled word degrades the written composition and misleads the readers. The errors could be minimized by having formal spelling lessons in all the subjects. From the compositions written by the students are found may misspelled words. Examples of words misspelled are listed below grouped according to difficulty as revealed in the analysis of the written compositions of students.

### Sample of Errors

#### Group 1 - A Interchanging of letters

##### Wrong (Spelling)

recieve  
 queit  
 thier  
 beuaty  
 desiasas

##### Correct (Spelling)

receive  
 quiet  
 their  
 beauty  
 diseases

#### Group 1 - B Double Consonants

hopped  
 deffect  
 buggles  
 baranggay  
 loossers

hoped  
 defect  
 bugle  
 barangay  
 losers

#### Group II - Words with silent letters

coug  
 socity  
 your  
 I'am

caught  
 society  
 you're  
 I'm

### Analysis of Errors

Words with ei/ie, ea/ae, ou/uo are confusing to the students. They are confused on what letter comes first of the other. Students wrote the wrong spelling of the words despite repeated explanations and drills. However, relearning, continues and regular drills can help minimize these errors.

The next difficulty is writing the correct spelling of words having silent letters. These words are commonly used in the daily lessons yet they are often missed in spelling. Students do not care at all whether they have written the correct spelling of the word or not. Usually they spell the words as they pronounce them. They are even lazy to consult the dictionary or ask others for the correct spelling of the word they write. Meaning, that as soon as a misspelled word occurs it should be corrected right away.

Another error is mechanics is Lack of Punctuation Marks. As reflected in the table it is the second in rank where in 52 errors were committed by the first year college students.

Students do not know when, how and where to use comma, semi-colon, question marks, apostrophe and colon. The students in their compositions have been using only the period (.), neglecting the other punctuation marks. As was counted by the researcher, the comma has in the highest errors committed more than question marks. The reason why they failed in this item was their inadequate learning about their uses and their non-uses.

### Sample Errors

Wrong - Our Mother Earth today has many problems these are on air water forest denudation and extinction of wildlife.

Right - Our Mother Earth today has many problems. These are on air, water, forest denudation and extinction of wildlife.

Wrong - Yesterdays natural resources were so bountiful.

Right - Yesterday's natural resources were bountiful.

Wrong - What can I Do to Help Save Mother Earth

Right - What can I Do to Help Save Mother Earth?

Wrong - Thus we should take good care of it.

Right - Thus, we should take care of it.

Wrong - We the juniors team had accepted whole heartedly the decision of the judges because we believed in the saying In every competition there is always a winner and a loser.

Right - We, the juniors team had accepted whole heartedly the decision of the judges because we believed in the saying, "In every competition there is always a winner and a loser".

### Analysis of Errors

Commas should be place after the words problems, air, water, to separate words in a series. An Apostrophe should be place between letters y and s in Yesterday's to show or take the place of a missing letter.

A question mark should be place after a statement that ask a question.

What can I Do to Help Save Mother Earth?

Comma should be placed after the word

Thus, a concluding statement. Open and Close quotation marks must be placed to enclose important statement.

"In very competition there is always a winner and a loser".

The errors committed by the students in punctuation marks show their inadequate knowledge regarding their uses. Sometimes students are lazy to go over their drafts to determine their errors for revision. It is, therefore necessary to strengthen the teaching of punctuation marks by giving the students enough exercises in their lesson in punctuation marks.

Errors in Capitalization ranked third with 28 errors committed by the third year students. Some starts the beginning of sentences in small letters, and some do not capitalize the first letter of proper nouns. It is also noted that some capitalized words at the middle of their sentences even they are not proper nouns.

#### Sample Errors

Wrong - you can see many trees around us.

Right - You can see many trees around us.

Wrong - Those people who are cutting trees and dynamiting the bodies of water do not value the natures on earth.

Right - Those people who are cutting trees and dynamiting the bodies of water do not value the natures on Earth.

Wrong - Mother Earth needs my help to maintain the Naturalness and beauty of our Earth.

Right - Mother Earth need my help to maintain the naturalness and beauty of our Earth.

#### Sample Errors

Wrong

pray-ed

bec-ause

bask-etball

catc-hing

hea-lth

#### Analysis of Errors

The letter y from the word You should be capitalized because it is the first word in the sentence. Every letter of any word in the beginning of a sentence should be capitalized.

Earth is a proper noun that names a particular name of a planet. Therefore, it should be started with a capital letter, naturalness is not a proper noun, neither it is a beginning of a sentence, therefore, it should not be capitalized.

Since many errors were committed in capitalization, more emphasis and adequate writing exercises should be given to students for mastery on its use.

Errors in Syllabication ranked fourth with the total of 24 errors. This is dividing the word at the right side of the paper by putting a hyphen (-) to show the division of word. Some students divide words incorrectly in their themes. Even a one syllable word was divided. The reason why students divide words incorrectly it is because of lack of practice. Not using and consulting the dictionary also accounts for their failure to syllabicate correctly. Another reason is over emphasis on art as they want to maintain straight margining on both sides.

Right

prayed

because

basketball

catching

health

#### Analysis of Errors

From the above examples of errors on the left column, it is very apparent that students divide words incorrectly. They divided even one syllable word which is not supposed to be done. These words should be minimized by constant drill on syllabication and frequent use of the vocabulary.

Wrong Indention ranked fifth. The year students committed the errors with the total of 14.

Many students in their written compositions failed to indent their paragraphs. Again, they are either careless to indent or to rewrite their work once they missed to indent or they do not know where to start a new paragraph.

#### Sample of Errors - An Excerpts Taken from a Student's Composition Reads

As a student, there are so many things that I want to give as a help in order to save the Mother Earth.

I must not throw garbage anywhere else and not to throw dead animals in the river. It is better that I should make a dumping pit to throw all dirt and garbage because there will be a tendency that the air we breathe can be polluted so with the bodies of water.

#### Correct Form

As a student, there are so many things that I want to give as a help in order to save the Mother Earth. I must not throw garbage anywhere else and not to throw dead animals in the river. It is better that I should make a dumping pit to throw all dirt and garbage because there will be a tendency that the air we breathe be polluted so with the bodies of water.

#### Analysis of Errors

I must know throw . . . should be a new paragraph because it deals with a topic different from the first.

So, it should be intended to show that it is a new paragraph. A paragraph maybe a sentence but most paragraphs are composed of related sentences developing a single idea. The sentences in a well-written paragraphs are closely related and unified in meaning and held together by a topic sentence.

Wrong Margining is the sixth rank. A total of 12 errors were committed. It is an important as the other phases of mechanics in composition writing. Emphasis of this is often times repeated when students do composition Writing as a reminder. The correct margin at the left of the formal theme notebook is one inch and one-half inch at the right side.

In the themes of students some wrote with narrow margins before starting a new paragraph. Others

with reversed margining meaning wider margins at the right side. These errors committed by the students have been caused by their carelessness and lack of concentration to go over their work.

Teachers should always remind to their students the rules in all phases of mechanics before and during any writing activity. She should go around to see if the students are doing the writing of the formal themes according to rules.

To summarize the errors in mechanics ranked from highest to lowest frequency are: misspelling, lack of punctuation marks, errors in capitalization, wrong syllabication, wrong indention and wrong margin.

**Table 3: Grammatical Errors in Composition Writing Committed by the Student-Respondents**

Grammatical Error	Number of Error	Rank
Wrong use of helping verb	18	1
Wrong use of plural nouns	15	2
Wrong tense of verb	14	3
Wrong form of verb	13	4
Wrong form of pronoun	12	5
Wrong use of preposition	10	6
Wrong use of singular noun	9	7
Wrong use of conjunction	5	8
Wrong use of adverb	4	9
Wrong use of adjective	3	10

Table 3 presents the ten grammatical errors in composition writing committed by the student-respondents. Among the ten grammatical errors, wrong helping verbs had the highest number of errors of 18 and ranked first. Use of plural nouns with the number of errors of 15 and ranked second. This is followed by wrong tense of verb with a number of errors of 14. Wrong form of verb ranked fourth with the numbers of errors of 13. Wrong form of pronoun ranked fifth with the number of errors of 12. Wrong use of preposition had a number of errors of 10 which is ranked sixth. Wrong use of singular noun had a number of errors of 9 and ranked seventh, wrong use of conjunction ranked eighth with the numbers of errors of 5. Wrong use of adverb ranked ninth with the number of 4 errors and Wrong use of adjective ranked tenth with the number of errors of 3.

Wrong use of helping verbs has the highest number of errors in grammar which means that students lack the proper knowledge on how to use helping verbs.

**Example**

The two-day celebration activity are so enjoyable moment of events to all winners as well as the losers. Wrong use of plural nouns followed and was

rank second. This is an indication that Third year students simply fail to apply the rules in the forming of plural nouns and how to use plural nouns in grammar construction.

**Example**

Many mining place were eroded because there were only few trees now, that can hold the soil in place. Wrong tense of verb ranked third and wrong form of verb ranked fourth too. These imply that the students have a poor foundation of tenses and details calling for immediate remediation of tenses are vital in grammar construction.

**Example**

After the long parade, we proceed to the field demonstration contest. Wrong form of pronoun ranked fifth, this implies that students are so careless and poor in forming nouns to pronouns and its antecedents.

**Example**

Our bodies of water were polluted because men dumped his waste on this bodies of water. Wrong use of preposition ranked sixth. It shows that students simply fail to use correct prepositions in grammar.

Example

As an educated person, I must not imitate those bad factors affecting our Mother Earth but rather involved myself in solving those problems and give recommendations of my fellowmen on how to solve and I will stand as a model in saving our Mother Earth.

Wrong use of singular noun rank seventh. Simply shows that Third year students found difficulties in the use of singular noun.

Example

This events helps us to develop our skills and talents in sports, athletics and literary skills. Wrong use of conjunction ranked eighth. This is an indication that students attest to their lack of foundation on the use of conjunction in grammar.

Example

Everyone has exerted his or her effort to win the game. Wrong use of adverb ranked ninth which means that students get confused as to what kind of adverb is to be used in the grammar.

Example

Intramurals in Gosi National High School is a year celebration. Wrong use of adjective ranked tenth which means that students are weak and poor to use the correct and appropriate adjective in grammar.

Example

As a human being, I have something to do to help our natural resources.

**Table 4: Frequency and Rank Distribution of Respondents According to Errors Committed in the Different Phases of Structural Category**

Structural Category	Number of Errors	Rank
Faulty sentence construction	52	1
Omission of articles	18	2
Lack of unity in paragraph	17	3
Wrong word use	12	4
Coherence	8	5
Poor Content	7	6
Wrong word order	5	7
Lack of unity in composition	4	8

Table 4 presents the structural errors in composition writing committed by the first year college students. The highest number of errors is faulty sentence construction of 52 number of errors. This is followed by omission of 18 number of errors. Lack of unity in paragraph followed with 17 number of errors. Wrong word used with 12 number of errors. Coherence followed with 18 number of errors. Poor content with 7 numbers of errors. Wrong word order with 5 number of errors and lack of unity of composition with 4 number of errors.

To rank those structural errors committed by the first year college students in composition writing, faulty sentence construction ranked first a very strong indication that the third year students are poor in sentence construction and lack of knowledge on the rules and on the different basic patterns in sentence construction.

Example

As a youth I should participate to the programs of our government like the clean and green program, tree planning. This one way to help save our Mother Earth from destroying our nature's people who are illegal loggers, people gifts on Earth who are catching fish in illegal manner, those throwing their

garbage in any bodies of water and those industries that throwing their toxic waste and other chemical that is dangerous to fish and many others.

The omission of articles was ranked second means that the students lack knowledge on the used and importance of articles.

Example

This celebration we are talking for is ( ) meaningful celebration and very exciting for all of us, as students and teachers.

Lack of unity in paragraph was ranked third an indication that the students are careless and poor in developing a correct paragraph in composition writing.

Example

We the students, we have big tasks for the restoration of a clean environment and to bring back the pictures view of nature that is fading away. We must have active participation in government program like "clean up drive" operation with the vicinity and to remove the non giobradable waste.

Wrong word used ranked fourth means that Third year students have less vocabulary words to



express their ideas and careless as to what word is appropriate and correct for the sentence.

**Example**

Long ago, a man who lived in this world had really lived with full of enjoyment because of enough natural resources used.

Lack of Coherence in paragraph writing ranked fifth shows that third year students are not aware of the consistency of their ideas in composition writing.

**Example**

But at this present, people are innovators and industrious. They created and invented different methods on how to improve life status. Some improvements make a big advantage to those industries, science, agricultural and other technologies. Scientist discover new method in increasing life span.

Poor content ranked sixth is a strong indication that third year students are poor in sentence construction in developing a composition.

**Example**

This is one way to help save our Mother Earth from destroying our natures people who are illegal loggers, people gifts on Earth, who are catching fish in illegal manner, those their garbage in any bodies of water. Those industries that throwing their toxic waste and other chemical that is dangerous to fish and many others.

Wrong word order ranked seventh and lack of unity in composition ranked eight, this implies that Third year students have less vocabulary words to express their ideas and too careless to hurry and finish their compositions.

**Example**

Pollution is common and very important in our Mother Earth. But how can we take good care of our Mother Earth? We can take good care of our Mother Earth by not abusing it. We should cooperate with one another in order to maintain the natural and everlasting beauty of our World, Earth.

**Table 5: Summary of Frequency Number of Errors and Rank of Common Errors Committed by the First Year College Students of the College of Business, Entrepreneurship and Accountancy Mechanical Category, Structural Category and Grammatical Category**

Category	Frequency No. of Errors	Rank
Mechanical	218	1
Structural	123	2
Grammatical	103	3
Total	444	

Table 5 shows the summary of common errors committed by the first year college students in their two compositions in English 12, the ranking of errors by category. The three categories in composition writing are mechanical, grammatical, and structural.

Under the Mechanical Category of errors these were 218 number of errors and was ranked first. In Structural category there were 123 number of errors and was ranked second. In Grammatical category there were 103 number of errors and was ranked third.

In terms of over- all ranking, numbers of errors in mechanical category, ranked 1, numbers of errors in structural category ranked 2 and number of errors in grammatical category ranked 3.

All of these may imply that the first year college students are very weak in mechanics, the important unit in composition writing. It implies further that students cannot write good paragraphs and they cannot construct longer compositions as they cannot even express their thoughts and ideas in grammatically correct sentences.

From the results of the study, it is suggested that the following remedial measures can be adopted to minimized the student’s errors in theme writing as to mechanical category, grammatical category, and structural category.

**A. Mechanical Category**

1. Drill rigidly in pronunciation, spelling and usage.  
Learning activity in pronunciation, spelling and usage:  
Here are pairs or groups of words often used.

**SUMMARY**

**Summary of Findings**

1. Errors on mechanical category were the most errors committed by the First Year College Students. Errors in mechanical category were the following: Misspelling, Lack of punctuation marks, Errors in Capitalization, Wrong syllabication, Wrong Indention and Wrong Margin.
2. Along the areas of grammatical category, the students committed the following errors: Wrong use of plural nouns, Wrong tense of verb, Wrong form of verb, Wrong form of Pronoun, Wrong use

of preposition, Wrong use of singular noun, Wrong use conjunction, Wrong use of adverb, and Wrong use of adjective.

3. In the areas of Structural category, the students committed the following errors: Faulty sentence construction, Omission of articles, Lack of unity in paragraph, Wrong word used, Coherence, Poor content, Wrong word order and Lack of unity in composition.

By way of synthesizing, the common errors committed by the Third year students by areas are ranked, thus: Errors in Mechanical Category totaled to 218 number of errors, hence rank 1. Errors in Structural Category totaled to 123 errors or ranked 2, and Errors in Grammatical Category totaled to 103 and ranked 3.

This means that the first year college students are weak in Mechanical category. This implies that they have not mastered the skills in the previous years in high school. The respondents had great error in Spelling, this is due to unfamiliarity with the words and their pronunciation as well as the dialects and language interference. It is also a cause of student's carelessness in spelling and negligence of some teachers in not correcting spelling of words committed by students. Students do not know when, how and when to use the different punctuation marks like comma, semi-colon, question marks, apostrophe and colon. The students in their themes have been using only the period ( . ), neglecting the other punctuation marks.

Under structural category, the First Year College Students had the most common error in faulty sentence construction. This is due to student's inadequate vocabularies and carelessness in choosing words to mean something.

It can also be due to lack of knowledge on the rules and on the different basic patterns in sentence construction.

The findings call for more drills and exercises in the acquisition of unfamiliar and new words and vocabularies in organizing a well-structured sentence.

Under grammatical category, the First Year College Students had the error in the wrong use of helping verbs. This is due to the lack of knowledge on how to use helping verbs correctly. Wrong use of plural nouns, tenses of verbs, and all other components of grammar.

This revealed that the three major categories and the sub-phases of each category were the common errors that the first year college students encounter in their English composition writing. There is a need therefore, for a well-planned student in composition writing as early as in the first year college. English teacher should establish to their students to English language in oral and in written form.

## CONCLUSIONS

### A. Mechanical Category

1. Most of the first year college students are generally weak in spelling. The students misspelled even simple words as found and reflected in their first and second formal themes. That the errors committed in Spelling was traced to the influence of the dialects that the students speak. Students have limited vocabularies to use in expressing ideas.
2. Most of the students have inadequate knowledge or practice on the correct uses of the different punctuation marks.

### B. Structural Category

1. Most students are weak in sentence construction.
2. Students have poor comprehension of words.
3. That the student's common errors are due to their inadequate training in the different aspects of English.

### C. Grammatical Category

1. Most students lack the proper knowledge on how to use helping verbs and all other components of grammar.
2. That the students lack knowledge and application of the principles governing the use of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions and idiomatic expression.

That teaching students how to write is not an easy task as it used to be, for the deterioration of English locally has become widespread that English teachers find difficulty in teaching. The students' world has become such bigger and more complex that the search for remedies to this problem must be done in order to realize the felt need of producing students who are good in written work.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve the implementation of the Composition Writing and the Writing Skills of the students, the first year college students of the College of Business, Entrepreneurship and Accountancy at Cagayan State University, Andrews Campus in particular.

The following recommendations are offered:

1. English teachers in First Year College should emphasize lessons in improving mechanical, structural, and grammatical.
2. English teachers should teach and train students the four components of English, ie., listening, speaking, reading and writing.
3. English teachers should stress on the teaching of subject-verb-agreement, pronoun and its antecedents and tenses of verbs.
4. English teachers should train students to answer questions in complete sentence.

5. English teachers should launch periodic essay writing contest and search for a writer and other similar programs which will develop further the communication skills of the students.
6. English teachers should patiently undertake remedial teaching focused on serious problems of structure and grammar.

#### **REFERENCES**

1. Benesa LV; Exchange News Book, Manila, 3rd Quarter, 1983.
2. Theobald HC; The Filipino Teacher's Manual, New York: World Book Company, 1907.
3. Slager W; Classroom Techniques for Controlling Composition. *English Teaching Forum*, 1967; 5(3).
4. Bernardino V, Abella B; *Teaching The Language Arts*, Manila: Abiva Publishing House, 1951; 22.