

## Linguistic features of the writing competence of the alternative learning system students

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### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received Jul 25, 2024

Revised Nov 21, 2024

Accepted Mar 18, 2025

#### Keywords:

Alternative learning system

Errors in writing

Linguistic competence

Linguistic development

Writing competence

### ABSTRACT

This study examines the linguistic proficiency of the Philippines alternative learning system (ALS) learners, focusing on their writing skills. ALS offers flexible education through school-based and community-based modalities, using standard modules across various subjects. An assessment titled “The students’ greatest responsibility” showed that the linguistic development level (LDL) for two schools was “developing,” with a weighted mean score of 79%, indicating that basic writing skills are still being developed. Two additional schools had students at the “approaching proficiency” level, with mean scores of 81% and 82%, reflecting basic discourse competence. Identified errors reveal implications for the ALS curriculum: cognitive problems, such as difficulties in generating ideas and organizing thoughts, suggest a need for activities that enhance critical thinking and creativity. Graphomotor issues, including writing short sentences and slow writing, indicate potential motor skill difficulties affecting written expression. Problems with paragraph unity, including cohesion and coherence, highlight a need for better writing structure and organization. Addressing these issues through targeted curriculum interventions could improve students’ academic performance and confidence, enhancing their readiness for further education and employment.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is addressing the global challenge of delivering educational services to its citizens. In 1990, the international community launched the education for all (EFA) 2015 program, which guides the alternative learning system (ALS) [1]. The Philippine government committed to EFA at assemblies in Jomtien, Thailand (1990), and Dakar, Bangladesh (2000). Additionally, the country adopted the millennium development goals (MDG) in 2001 and the decade for literacy in 2003. Despite these efforts, the country continues to face a high dropout rate, with 62% of students, or around 11 million, leaving school [2].

The ALS program has provided marginalized groups-including children, women, people with special needs, indigenous communities, and out-of-school youth (OSY)-with the opportunity to assert their right to education [3]–[5]. Many studies have shown that globalization benefits educated and mobile workers [6], [7], while those lacking access to education are left behind. To address this, the Bureau of Alternative Learning System (BALS) within the Department of Education (DepEd) developed a curriculum that integrates formal and non-formal education to help OSY and other underprivileged learners adapt to the modern workplace [8]. ALS is a parallel approach to learning that enables out-of-school youth and adults

(OSYA) to improve their literacy skills while still completing their basic education. It is a ladder, modular non-formal education program intended for dropouts, non-readers, working Filipinos, and even senior persons. Unlike the traditional educational system, ALS allows students to choose their own timetables. The curriculum is implemented in two ways: school-based, in which training takes place on school campuses, and community-based, in which learning takes place in community halls or private settings [9].

ALS follows standardized lesson modules covering subjects such as science, math, English, Filipino, and social studies. Instruction is delivered by government-paid instructors or private non-government organizations. English is an integral part of the ALS program, facilitating the development of English language skills. Despite the widespread implementation of ALS, a significant gap remains in understanding the linguistic challenges faced by ALS learners, particularly in writing proficiency [10]. While research has focused on general education outcomes and literacy, there is a lack of detailed analysis of how ALS students develop critical language skills, especially in English writing. Additionally, existing interventions do not fully address the unique needs of ALS students in mastering pragmatics, syntax, vocabulary, and semantics. The transition to the 'new normal' in education, driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, has further complicated this issue, as students face additional barriers in accessing quality instruction [11].

The ALS in the Philippines aims to provide nonformal education for marginalized learners. Its implementation in the Schools Division of Isabela is commendable, with strengths in instructional materials, facilities, and stakeholder participation, though ongoing monitoring and collaboration with local partners are necessary for continuous improvement [3]. However, challenges persist, particularly in equipping learners with 21st-century skills; studies in Northern Philippines reveal low levels of skill acquisition influenced by factors such as sex, age, and employment status [6]. Despite these obstacles, ALS graduates from Nagcarlan, Laguna, demonstrate success through their determination, overcoming financial and emotional pressures, providing important insights for enhancing the program's future impact [12].

Understanding the factors that motivate students to continue the ALS program despite challenges is essential. This includes examining their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, their level of academic engagement, and the relationship between motivation and academic performance [13]. As higher education becomes more globalized, English as a medium of instruction (EMI) has grown rapidly [14]. EMI refers to the use of English to teach academic subjects in regions where English is not the first language [15]. The rise of English as the international language of research, science, and academia [16] has led many non-English-speaking universities to offer programs in English, enhancing their global visibility [17]. Talukder and Barner-Rasmussen [18] note that economic advantages make English the dominant language of literacy. Recent pedagogical approaches emphasize genre-based teaching, which provides systematic instruction tailored to students' needs. Genre approaches have been widely accepted for their ability to bridge the gap between home and school writing, preparing students for future demands. Unlike traditional methods focused on cognitive psychology or grammar, genre approaches offer explicit learning objectives and language-context analysis, which are more effective in addressing the writing needs of second-language learners. Acar explores how current genre theory informs L2 writing pedagogy, highlighting the potential of genre-based pedagogy (GBP) to enhance writing assessment literacy and feedback literacy among L2 writing instructors [19].

Gu developed the cognitive academic language learning approach (CALLA) for limited English-speaking students transitioning to mainstream content instruction. CALLA integrates learning strategies that enhance comprehension and retention of both language skills and subject content [20]. A study by Mahmoodi-Shahreabaki and Nejad [21] investigates the effects of metacognitive strategy instruction on the reading comprehension of English language learners through the CALL. Their research highlights how structured metacognitive strategies, guided by CALLA, significantly improve comprehension skills and lead to greater learner confidence and autonomy. These findings underscore the positive impact of integrating metacognitive approaches in language education to enhance both academic performance and student engagement.

These discourses provide valuable insights into the infrastructural needs for non-formal education in crisis-affected regions. Mashwani *et al.* [7] highlights the urgent requirement for establishing non-formal schools in Afghanistan, where approximately four million school-age children remain out of school due to challenges such as civil wars, political tensions, and poverty. This underscores the vital role non-formal education plays in bridging educational gaps in such contexts [7]. The challenge for the Philippine government is to strengthen institutional support for ALS [7], [22]. The success of ALS students in learning English depends largely on teacher competence and the quality of instruction. This study aims to identify the linguistic features of writing proficiency among ALS students, focusing on pragmatics, syntax, vocabulary, spelling, and semantics. It also seeks to understand the factors that affect their learning of English during the new normal. An intervention framework, "easy guide to writing in English," will be developed for ALS students. Additionally, a training course workshop will be conducted for students and teachers in their local communities to support the study's findings.

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1. Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework that strengthens this study is illustrated in Figure 1. This figure provides the idea on the procedures to capture the idea that the development and structure of writing assessments are dwell on the assumptions to be influenced on the measurement's theory and writing theory. These theories interact with each other in their impact on what is ultimately labeled a writing assessment. One way to think about a writing assessment is to view it as an operational definition of a latent variable or construct-writing [23].

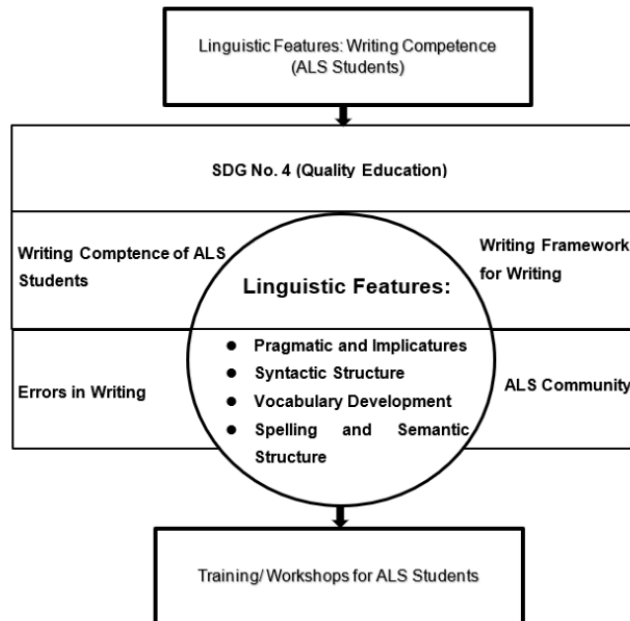


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

### 2.2. Research design

This research study used a descriptive survey method. The descriptive technique was a type of quantitative research that involved arriving at a careful description of educational phenomena [24]. This research design had limited control over extraneous variables, the independent variable was not manipulated, and was susceptible to threats and internal validity [25]. Quantitative research was a standard, objective, systematic process in which numerical data were used to obtain information about the world. According to Burns and Grove [26], the quantitative research method was used to describe variables, to examine relationships among variables, and to determine cause-and-effect interactions between variables [26]. The research design of this study was descriptive quantitative [27]. The conduct of the survey of this study were in the Municipality of Carmen, Catmon, Sogod, and Borbon situated in the northern part of Cebu. Respondents of this study were the ALS students in low land, middle land and upland of the different national high schools that held classes for the ALS students.

### 2.3. Sampling technique

The learning materials managers (LMMs) and the mobile teachers who were teaching in the different schools were included in this research study. The Table 1 showed the total population of the ALS students in the Municipality of Carmen, Catmon, and Sogod. The respondents must be a bonafide students in the ALS in the school year 2023-2024. These learners were also given a small-scale livelihood as hog raiser while they are studying. The learners are residing in the three categories of their respective places, namely: lowland, middle land and high land.

### 2.4. Research instrument

This study used a structured writing assessment tool, adapted to incorporate various educational standards, to evaluate participants' narrative writing skills. The writing assessment tool is shown in Table 2. Based on prompts, the framework allows for a systematic analysis of writing features essential to effective written expression which adapts writing assessment measure (WAM) [25], [27], [28].

Table 1. Sampling

Municipality	Name of school	Number of respondents
Carmen	Carmen NHS	10
Catmon	Catmon IS	9
Sogod	Sogod Central	11
Tabogon	Ilihan IS	8
Total		38

Table 2. Writing assessment

WAM	Description
Time guidelines	Prompt 1: 15 minutes Prompt 2: 15 minutes
Discontinuation rule	Stop after 15 minutes of writing

## 2.5. Elements and scoring overview

Each element is rated on a scale from 1 to 4, with 4 indicating strong proficiency and 1 showing areas for improvement. The first element is handwriting, which evaluates legibility, consistency, and fluency, with higher scores for clear, neat writing that demonstrates developing consistency or cursive style. The second element is spelling; which assesses correctness in spelling complex and common words. Higher scores reflect accuracy in spelling more challenging words and a range of high-frequency vocabulary. The third element is punctuation, which considers the range and accuracy of punctuation usage, from basic sentence-ending marks to more complex punctuation that enhances clarity and effect. The fourth element is sentence structure and grammar, which examines control over complex sentences and grammatical accuracy. Top scores are for consistent sentence structure, appropriate tense use, and varied clauses. The fifth element is vocabulary, which rates the variety and effectiveness of word choice, with higher scores for vivid, precise vocabulary that enhances the writing's impact. The sixth element is organization and structure, which looks at text cohesion, paragraph use, and thematic organization. Scores reflect progression from basic thematic linking to cohesive, well-structured paragraphs. The seventh element is ideas, which evaluates creativity and engagement in content, with top scores for imaginative, detailed, and engaging ideas that develop themes, characters, or settings.

## 2.6. Data-gathering procedure

The researcher presented a letter of transmittal to the ALS students coordinator in the identified research locale. Afterward, a letter was submitted to respective coordinators requesting assistance in data collection. The respondents in this study were ALS students. The researcher then collected the profile data of the respondents. The significance, purpose, effects, and confidentiality of the study were explained to the participants. Students were given a text on "the impact of students' responsibility on contemporary society" to read. Following this, the participants were closely supervised while writing a response to the article. They were instructed to write a composition of 150-200 words on the topic "The quality of education in the Philippines," inspired by sustainable development goals (SDG) No. 4 (quality education) of the 17 goals in education for sustainable development by 2030 [28]. The respondents were encouraged to focus on ideas related to the quality of education in the Philippines.

### 2.6.1. Writing strategy scale

A seven-item scale based on the WAM with categorical points ranging from 1 to 4 was designed to assess the ALS students' writing competence. The scale categorized seven writing elements: handwriting, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure and grammar, vocabulary, organization and overall structure, and ideas.

### 2.6.2. Writing proficiency test

The respondents were carefully monitored throughout the writing process to ensure they remained focused and adhered to the given instructions. They were specifically tasked with composing 150-200 words essay on the topic "The students' greatest responsibility," aligning their responses with SDG No. 4: quality education. This goal, part of the broader 17 goals for education for sustainable development by 2030 [27], emphasizes inclusive and equitable education, encouraging students to reflect on their role in promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

In alignment with the taxonomy of experiential learning cycle, the writing concepts were derived from this framework to ensure a concrete output. The learners' written products were evaluated by the English language facilitator at their respective schools using the adapted WAM tool. The written outputs were assessed based on proficiency levels in the K-12 curriculum, with the corresponding assessment levels presented in the Table 3.

This study will involve conducting a kick-off workshop/training specifically designed for ALS students, which serves as the primary outcome of the research. The workshop aims to support learners by

providing interventions that enhance their competence and understanding of linguistic aspects, thereby contributing to the development of their higher order thinking skills (HOTS). Regarding the data collection procedure, the writing tasks were carried out in the classroom setting. Once the purpose was clarified, the researcher distributed the WAM criteria to the English language teacher and mobile ALS system teachers for assessing the students' written outputs.

Table 3. Rubrics

Categories	Description
B (beginning) 74 % below	Struggling or have not acquired
D (developing) 75-79 %	Minimum and needs help
AP (approaching proficiency) 80-84 %	Fundamental with little guidance from the teacher
A (advanced) 90 % and higher	Exceeding automatic and flexible

## 2.7. Statistical treatment

For data interpretation and analysis, the SPSS was utilized, while manual statistical computations were also performed to ensure accuracy in the results. The narrative writing outputs of the ALS students were assessed using the adapted rubrics from the WAM [27]. The criteria for evaluation include: handwriting, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure and grammar, vocabulary, and organization and overall structure. Each element was rated on a scale from 4 to 1, which was used to evaluate the students' writing competence.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Data analysis

Table 4 shows the writing competency of the ALS students in relation to the given intellectual composition entitled "The students' greatest responsibility". The result revealed that in the two schools the weighted mean computed as 79% with the corresponding level of D-developing which the linguistic competence is approximately on the level that the learners have the basic skills and this needs further nurturance and tutelage or intervention from the English language facilitator. In addition, two schools out from the respondents, the weighted mean computed as 81 % and 82% with the corresponding level of AP-approaching. This implied that the learners have the skills that meet the basic level in the discourse competence. The other two schools that the level of competence was D-developing (79%), the data has an academic warm up that to enhance this skill, the language facilitators drive and motivate the interest of the learners in order to achieve a concrete output.

The result implied that the language competence of the ALS that the existing level of competence of the two schools are submissive for the development of the language competence of the learners. Language learning strategies have been shown to be highly influential in the success of basic writing skills. The language strategies are conscious techniques which develop the writing competence of the learners that use to solve problems in their language learning process through writing enhancement [29]. Further, successful language learners utilize multidimensional types of strategies for different language tasks specifically in the context of writing; they prefer appropriate strategies for a task-based on task specifications [30]. In identifying methods, efforts have also been made in research to be skill-based such as that of focusing on the writing competencies. With the result of the survey, the common errors in writing are listed in the Table 5.

Table 4. Scores and level of competence

Intellectual composition: the student's greatest responsibility		
School	Scores	Level of competence
Carmen	79	D-developing
Catmon	81	AP-approaching
Sogod	82	AP-approaching
Ilihan	79	D-developing/continuing

Table 5 shows the statements of the ALS students from the intellectual composition in the task given. There are 23 statements that have been taken out. The other side of the table shows the types of error from the writing tasks performed by the learners. The following are the implications of the writing output of the ALS students. On the errors above, it is observable that ALS students have the difficulty in writing. This evidence sparks up that the competencies that shall be dealt must have a proper template for the tasks in order

to arrive a clear and standard output. However, it is within the capability of the teachers to accommodate and give adequate skills in the writing development.

The writing strategy scale by Petrić and CzárI [30], Oxford’s [31] strategy inventory for language learning, and Pintrich *et al.* [32] motivated strategies for the categorical aspects of the writing competence of the learners. According to Oxford’s [31] and Pintrich *et al.* [32] writing criteria can help the learners to consider L2 writing strategies when responding rather than be constrained by general language learning strategies or general learning strategies. The questionnaire was presented to the participants in English language medium of instructions. Based on the students’ writing errors, teacher feedback was gathered. Table 6 shows the comments from teachers regarding the schools being studied and the types of errors identified [30], [32].

Table 5. Notable writing statements and error categories among ALS students

Frequent writing challenges	Types of sentence structure errors
1. Our responsibility in the country <b>are</b> to avoid <b>throw</b> garbage	1. are: verb: throw: gerund
2. The Philippines <b>have</b> a good teaching style	2. have: has
3. I learn many things in the school	3. learn: S-V-A; period (punctuation)
4. No internet the mountain I did not understand my lesson	4. No period after the word mountain and lesson
5. The students <b>is</b> busy in working	5. Verb: is
6. In my country the education is lacking a teacher	6. is to has
7. We are poor I did not answer my assignment	7. No period after the word “poor” (overloaded sentences)
8. The quality of education in my country are in progress	8. are to is; no punctuation after the word “progress”
9. The students should <b>written</b> their assignments.	9. Spelling: write
10. i have my own understanding	10. Capitalization: i to I
11. Our school have slow internet	11. have to has: subject verb-agreement
12. all teacher teaching the lesson	12. teaching to teaches: subject verb-agreement
13. In my school, my teacher always telling me learning is our <i>tasks</i> .	13. No demonstrative pronoun after the word “that”
14. We are in the school that wrote our assignments.	14. Period after “school”; add pronoun “we” after “school”; wrote to write
15. <i>Quality education can gives good knowledge</i>	15. gives to give
16. Teachers should accomodate the questions of the students	16. Spelling: accomodate to accommodate and punctuation: period at the end of the sentence
17. The nature in the quality of education is to provides concrete examples.	17. Grammar: provides to provide
18. The nature on the quality of education shall be deal with a good teaching strategy.	18. Verb: deal to dealt
19. Many students went the library yesterday of our school, where important notes are placed only from 11:00 A.M to 12:00 noon.	19. Misplaced and dangling modifiers (syntax and semantic trouble)
20. When teachers deal to the presentation of the students on environment they have their own style in embracing responsibility.	20. omitted comma
21. If the teachers does not have knowledge, students could not learn.	21. Subject verb-agreement: does not to do not
22. My teacher give me a test in English she wanted me to have a high score.	22. Subject verb-agreement: give to gives; overloaded sentences: punctuation after the word “English”
23. <i>Coz</i> my classmates did not study, this is the cause of the failing grades	23. Informality: coz and punctuation: period after the word “grades”

Table 6. Teacher’s comments

Teacher’s comment	Types of error
1. Students had difficulties in generating ideas	Cognitive problem
2. Students had difficulties in organizing thoughts	Cognitive problem
3. Students had lacked a sense of audience	Cognitive problem
4. Students wrote very short sentences	Graphomotor problem
5. Students wrote slowly with great effort	Graphomotor problem
6. There are cohesion and coherence problems in their output and it lacks a sense of unity	Paragraph unity

The identified errors in students’ performance may highlight gaps in the ALS of the Philippines DepEd, suggesting areas that require curriculum enhancement. These errors could indicate the need for improved instructional strategies, better teacher training, or the integration of more targeted learning materials to address specific weaknesses in literacy and writing skills. Additionally, analyzing these errors can help policymakers and educators refine the ALS framework to ensure it effectively supports learners in developing the necessary competencies for academic and professional success.

### 3.2. Key findings and implications for the ALS curriculum

ALS learners face a range of writing challenges rooted in cognitive, linguistic, motivational, and environmental factors. Difficulties in idea generation, grammar, coherence, and motor skills are compounded by negative perceptions of English, limited topic knowledge, and unsupportive classroom conditions. These

interconnected issues highlight the need for targeted curriculum enhancements to foster critical thinking, language proficiency, and learner engagement. The following are the key findings of the study:

- a. Cognitive problems: the difficulties identified in idea generation, thought organization, and audience awareness indicate that ALS students may struggle with higher-order thinking skills, which are crucial for critical thinking, creativity, and effective communication. Such cognitive challenges may leave students ill-equipped for real-world problem-solving and adaptability. To mitigate these issues, the ALS curriculum should integrate activities that promote critical thinking and idea generation, such as problem-based learning and interactive discussions.
- b. Graphomotor problems: challenges in composing short sentences and the physical effort required for writing suggest potential motor skill issues that hinder students' ability to express themselves effectively in writing. This could adversely affect their overall academic performance, especially in subjects that demand extensive written work. To assist these students, the curriculum could incorporate exercises aimed at enhancing fine motor skills and explore alternative assessment methods that do not rely exclusively on traditional writing tasks.
- c. Paragraph coherence: problems related to cohesion, coherence, and unity in writing indicate that students find it challenging to present their ideas in a structured and logical manner. This lack of clarity can obstruct their ability to communicate their thoughts persuasively. The ALS curriculum could benefit from a greater emphasis on enhancing writing skills, focusing on structure, organization, and logical progression through targeted exercises and constructive feedback.
- d. Negative perceptions of English: ALS students frequently display negative attitudes towards English, which often arise from a perceived lack of progress in mastering the language. The cultural and psychological distance from English-speaking environments, combined with insufficient integrative and instrumental motivation, exacerbates their writing challenges. Implementing motivational strategies and incorporating cultural elements into lessons could enhance student engagement and language proficiency.
- e. Linguistic obstacles: significant linguistic challenges include issues with grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. Common mistakes involve the use of prepositions, verb tenses, singular/plural forms, sentence structure, and informal language. Vocabulary gaps, particularly concerning collocational and connotational meanings, hinder students' ability to convey ideas accurately. Additionally, spelling and punctuation errors, often resulting from phonetic spelling practices, complicate writing proficiency. These challenges underscore the necessity for targeted instruction in grammar and vocabulary.
- f. Insufficient topic knowledge: many ALS students lack adequate knowledge related to writing topics, which negatively impacts their writing effectiveness. The prevalent exam-oriented approach, which emphasizes memorizing essays for common topics rather than fostering original writing skills, exacerbates this issue. This observation aligns with Ahmed's [33] findings regarding the adverse effects of exam practices on English as a second language (ESL) writing proficiency.
- g. Classroom conditions: factors such as overcrowded classrooms, noisy environments, large class sizes, and inadequate facilities contribute to an ineffective learning atmosphere. These conditions hinder the implementation of effective writing strategies and diminish student motivation. Enhancing classroom environments and providing better resources could significantly improve learning conditions.
- h. First language interference: students often resort to their first language when they encounter difficulties in writing in English, leading to syntactic interference. This reliance, as noted by Al Farisi and Malihah's [34], results in diminished writing quality and highlights the need for strategies to reduce first language interference.
- i. Ineffective feedback: the feedback process within ALS often focuses solely on identifying errors without addressing the specific needs or proficiency levels of individual learners. For feedback to be truly effective, it must be constructive and delivered by trained educators who can guide students in enhancing their writing skills.

The academic success of students enrolled in the ALS is influenced by various factors that impede their writing skills, which subsequently affects their prospects for further education or employment opportunities. To enhance their educational outcomes, it is crucial to implement specific interventions within the ALS curriculum that address these challenges. A significant factor contributing to the writing difficulties faced by ALS students is their unfavorable attitude towards learning English, often resulting from perceived stagnation in their language acquisition. Furthermore, the considerable social and psychological gap between these students and the English-speaking culture, along with insufficient integrative and instrumental motivation, exacerbates their writing challenges. These social dynamics are critical in understanding the ongoing errors in their written work.

The linguistic hurdles that ALS students encounter primarily include issues related to grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. Common errors manifest in areas such as preposition usage, verb tense consistency, singular/plural forms, sentence construction, and an excessive reliance on informal language. Vocabulary limitations are particularly concerning, as students frequently struggle with the nuances of word meanings, which impedes their ability to express ideas clearly. Research by Haider [35] and corroborated by

Megaia [36] indicates that spelling and punctuation mistakes are also widespread, often attributed to phonetic spelling, where words are transcribed based on their sounds.

Additionally, the research reveals that many ALS learners lack adequate knowledge of the topics they are required to write about, which hampers their writing effectiveness. This issue is further intensified by a focus on exam-oriented learning, where students tend to memorize pre-written essays for frequently encountered subjects instead of cultivating their own writing abilities. Ahmed's [33], findings support this view, highlighting the negative impact of such exam-centric practices on the writing skills of ESL learners.

The classroom environment also plays a pivotal role in these challenges. Overcrowded classrooms in noisy settings, large student populations, and insufficient basic facilities create an atmosphere that is not conducive to effective learning. Teachers often find it difficult to teach effective writing strategies under these conditions. Moreover, the lack of motivation among ESL learners, as noted by Nik *et al.* [37], significantly affects their engagement. Many students prioritize passing exams over genuinely improving their writing skills through practice and reading.

Furthermore, students often revert to their first language when they encounter difficulties in writing in English, leading to syntactic interference. This results in the adoption of sentence structures from their native language, which adversely affects the quality of their writing, a phenomenon observed by Al Farisi and Malihah's [34]. Lastly, the feedback mechanism within the ALS framework is not effectively utilized. Feedback tends to focus solely on identifying errors without considering the individual needs, proficiency levels, or specific contexts of the learners. For feedback to be truly beneficial, it must be delivered by trained educators who can guide students in enhancing their writing skills.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This research identified several shortcomings in the writing tasks of students enrolled in the ALS. An examination of the participants' written outputs, both through observation and self-reporting, highlighted recurring errors in grammar, syntax, word choice, and overall coherence. These issues suggest that learners face challenges in generating and organizing ideas, as well as in understanding their audience. The identified deficiencies are linked to cognitive impairments and difficulties with graphic motor functions, alongside a lack of coherence within paragraphs.

The findings indicate that ALS students often struggle due to negative perceptions of the target language, limited success in mastering it, social and psychological detachment from the associated culture, and a general lack of motivation. These factors contribute to persistent errors and inconsistencies in their writing, hindering their progress in the four key components of language communication. Additionally, cognitive challenges, such as generating and structuring ideas and recognizing the intended audience, underscore the necessity for strategies that promote critical thinking and creativity. Graphomotor difficulties, which include challenges in composing longer sentences and the physical act of writing, suggest that students could benefit from support in developing motor skills and alternative assessment approaches. Problems with paragraph unity, cohesion, and coherence further highlight the need for structured writing exercises.

Moreover, the study stresses the importance of fostering learning environments that support optimal student development. Many classrooms are overcrowded and noisy, lacking adequate resources, which negatively affects the enhancement of writing skills. It is increasingly essential to provide each instructor and class with a well-equipped and conducive learning space. In summary, the findings reveal that effective teaching and learning of writing in ALS necessitate a complex interplay of factors, including improved pedagogical methodologies, a communicative classroom environment, and a positive attitude towards the target language. This comprehensive approach can significantly enhance ALS students' cognitive learning and communication processes, particularly in writing proficiency. Addressing the identified cognitive, graphomotor, and paragraph unity challenges through targeted curriculum modifications will be vital in improving the overall writing abilities and academic success of ALS students.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We sincerely thank Cebu Technological University for its invaluable support in making this study possible. Your commitment to academic excellence and research advancement has been instrumental in completing this work.

#### FUNDING INFORMATION

This research was funded by Cebu Technological University. The support provided by the institution was instrumental in facilitating the study, but it had no influence on the research design, data collection, analysis, or interpretation of results. The findings and conclusions presented in this paper are solely those of the authors.



### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

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C : **C**onceptualization

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Fo : **F**ormal analysis

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R : **R**esources

D : **D**ata Curation

O : Writing - **O**riginal Draft

E : Writing - Review & **E**ditng

Vi : **V**isualization

Su : **S**upervision

P : **P**roject administration

Fu : **F**unding acquisition

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this research paper. No financial, professional, or personal interests have influenced the design, execution, or interpretation of the findings in this study. Additionally, no external funding sources have had an impact on the objectivity and integrity of this research. All efforts have been made to ensure transparency and impartiality in conducting and reporting the study.

### INFORMED CONSENT

All participants involved in this study were informed about the research objectives, methodologies, and potential implications of their participation. Written consent was obtained from each participant before data collection, ensuring that they voluntarily agreed to contribute to the study. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, and all data collected were used solely for academic and research purposes. Furthermore, participants retained the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any consequences. The research adheres to ethical guidelines and principles set forth by relevant institutional and regulatory bodies.

### ETHICAL APPROVAL

This study, "Linguistic features of the writing competence of ALS students," was conducted in accordance with ethical research standards to ensure the rights and well-being of all participants. Ethical approval was granted by Cebu Technological University, following a review of the study's objectives, methodology, and data collection procedures.

Since no experiments were conducted, the study focused solely on analyzing written responses, ensuring minimal risk to participants. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents, who were briefed on the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and confidentiality measures. Data anonymity was strictly upheld, and all information collected was used solely for academic and research purposes. This research adheres to ethical guidelines outlined by the Philippines DepEd and relevant institutional policies.

### DATA AVAILABILITY

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in <https://github.com/kgorro/Datasets>.




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