

# Pre-Admission Skills Assessment of BA English Language Aspirants in a Public University

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## Abstract

Specific requirements for entry are required by higher education institutions (HEIs) to choose the best prospective students for a particular degree, and aspirants for university enrollment must first complete pre-admission assessments. The commonly used processes to assess their pre-admission skills are through interviewing and composition writing. This paper determines the English language aspirants through their interviewing and composition writing competence to be admitted to the university. This study employed a quantitative approach that utilizes a descriptive-correlational design, and Pearson R to analyze the data. It was conducted at Cebu Technological University-Moalboal Campus, a state university in the southwest of Cebu Province, with 86 applicants who underwent panel interviews and composition writing assessments scored by the selected college instructors of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) department using modified Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC) criteria. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between the aspirants' competence in the panel interview and composition writing with a correlation coefficient ( $r_{xy}$ ) of 0.411, an alpha value of 0.05, and a p-value of 0.000. Hence, it is concluded that panel interviews and composition writing can affect one another. Furthermore, it is deduced that aspirants were not competent in their pre-admission skills: panel interview and composition writing. Moreover, it is recommended that teachers must implement an enhancement plan to provide adequate support and improve the aspirants' interviewing and composition writing competence to ensure high success rates in university entry.

**Keywords:** pre-admission skills, panel interview, composition writing, significant relationship, competence

## 1. Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) require specific requirements for entry to choose the best prospective students for a particular degree (Barroso, 2022), and aspirants for university enrollment must first

complete an admission assessment. Technically, the two productive skills are primarily involved in the pre-admission processes. The relationship between speaking and writing, two productive language abilities, must be explored to comprehend how language skills are related. Not only do they play essential functions as a means of communication, but they are also instrumental. In the classroom context or real-world scenarios, skills are still frequently and sensibly acknowledged as the indicator of learners' ESL/EFL competence. Examining the relationship between the two skills is crucial because it can help educators create the most effective writing curriculum, which could enhance their ability to speak (Hadah et al., 2020).

In the Philippine context, the Philippine Constitution, Article XIV, Section 5 states that “every citizen has a right to select a profession or course of study, subject to fair, reasonable, and equitable admission and academic requirements.” In other terms, every citizen's choice is equated with the university's standard in their admission process by assessing the discourse competence skills (oral and written). This basis has been the challenge for a university to set high standards in their selection of first-year students wherein the discourse competence (both oral and written) of the degree aspirants should be manifested for a successful program entry into the university.

In post-pandemic learning, the two productive skills are affected. Students' speaking skills have decreased after the pandemic era, which is reflected in restricted vocabulary, pronunciation accuracy, and self-confidence, and is caused by a variety of factors (ALFAINI & Sulistyarini, 2022). Similarly, it has been claimed that learners in the Philippines have poor writing skills (Magsambol, 2020). Some senior high school students in the Philippines cannot even construct an acceptable English sentence (Ramos & Rodriguez, 2021). Additionally, more students pursuing post-secondary institutions must have remedial classes to augment areas of weakness, such as writing (Fulton, 2010, as cited in Sellers, 2020). These recent studies prove a huge problem that needs immediate action in the discourse communication skills of college aspirants, both in speaking and writing.

Moreover, the Bachelor of Arts in English Language (BAEL) program is a board course that requires a high level of proficiency in speaking and writing. The future career path includes teaching in educational institutions. According to Estrada et al. (2016), students with a bachelor's degree in English plan to pursue a profession as English instructors. They believe that the Bachelor of Arts program will assist them to advance in their teaching careers, and they will be able to earn a good living by earning their degree. Basically, they believe they will be advantageous after accomplishing their degree. Hence, the aspirants in this program must possess good discourse communication skills. Practical communication skills are another essential characteristic. They must attain particular goals, such as learning to listen, speak, write, and communicate nonverbally (Klein, 2009, as cited in Vez-López & Jiménez-Velásquez, 2019).

Furthermore, the association between pre-admission writing and speaking skills is less explored and readily apparent social sciences programs and more explored in medical and allied sciences programs. A few universities require interviews for undergraduate applications, even though they seem crucial and required to the admissions process. At graduate and doctoral programs, particularly at medical schools, and with particular admissions procedures, interviews are becoming more prevalent (Betts, 2011). Additionally, Yusoff (2019) asserts that interviews for student selection have become more significant in recent years as higher education institutions seek suitable applicants to enroll in their courses, particularly ones linked to health and medical sciences. The study of medicine is well acknowledged to be highly esteemed by society and is frequently seen as a rigorous and demanding degree, as enrolling slots are restricted.

College admission essays, on the other hand, are an integral aspect of a student's college application. Essays are used in the undergraduate admissions process to assess writing abilities and traits (Ishop, 2008). Timer and Clauson (2011) added that the personal essay on motivation is a good predictor of clinical success. A study by Dong et al. (2013) on the correlations between essay scores and indicators of student performance in medical school and internship reveals that the findings call into question the value of matriculation essays, a time-consuming entry requirement.

Thus, this study determines the English language aspirants' pre-admission skills through their interviewing and composition writing competence as a basis for an enhancement plan.

This concludes the BAEL aspirants' proficiency level in their discourse communication skills in speaking and writing, which are correlated in this study.

## 2. Theoretical Background

There are two competing theories regarding how speaking and writing discourse are related (Stotsky, 1987): the unidirectional theory and the multidirectional theory, also known as the “recording model” and “interactive model,” respectively (Moran, 1987). Although, the multidirectional theory is one of the theories that this study is grounded on, it is imperative to explain first the unidirectional theory to provide a more comprehensive explanation as to how it technically is just one aspect of the broader Multidirectional Theory.

The unidirectional theory interprets the speaking-writing link as a one-way sequence in which speech influences the development of writing (Akki & Larouz, 2021). Written language is a representation of spoken language; it is simply a method of maintaining speech and can be described metaphorically as “frozen speech” (Moxley, 1990, p. 127). Basically, this theory suggests that written language is dependent on spoken language, and the emphasis is on similarities between speaking and writing, so learning to encode and decode was enough for students to become literate (Akki & Larouz, 2021).

However, this theory had been the subject to criticisms due to its inadequacies that were highlighted by Moxley (1990). First, language is reduced to discrete sounds and words, which is insufficient for it to be regarded at the discourse level. Second, it leans more toward prior behavioristic ideas that emphasize the stimulus and response theory, making it subject to the same criticisms as behaviorist theories. Third, it assumes that learning spoken language must come before learning written language, which is in conflict with the fact that many deaf-mutes can learn to write another language without having the ability to speak or understand the spoken language. In a nutshell, this idea held that speaking and writing have a one-way relationship in which speaking serves as the stimulus and writing as the response.

The multidirectional theory, as an alternative, takes into account the one-way influence of speaking on writing (unidirectional) but also the fact that writing has influence on speaking. Furthermore, it is considered that multiple factors influence the development of writing. (e.g., reading). While the unidirectional model is more interested in the similarities between speaking and writing, the multidirectional model places more emphasis on the distinctions between speaking and writing (Akki & Larouz, 2021).

In the paper of Akki and Larouz (2021), Stotsky (1987) explained the distinctions of the two theories. The unidirectional theory suggests that oral language influences writing, as well as reading, and that reading and writing cannot separately influence each other. The multidirectional theory, on the other hand, works in multiple directions, such that it takes into account both the similarities and distinctions between spoken

and written language, as well as the unidirectional influence of speaking on writing, the directional influence of writing on speaking, and the influence of reading and writing on one another.

The multidirectional theory is thought to be more credible because it suggests that a multidirectional relationship exists between speaking and writing (Akki & Larouz, 2021). Nevertheless, it does not in any way disregard the proposition of the unidirectional theory, because as mentioned, the multidirectional theory also regards the unidirectional relationship of speaking and writing as under its extent. Thus, the unidirectional theory, in this sense, should be considered a part of a larger, more comprehensive theory that is the multidirectional theory.

The implication of the relationship between speaking and writing is also described in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. At the very early stages of development, thought and language are independent (Vygotsky, 1962). Speech manifests itself in two ways throughout a year: egocentric or private speech and social or communicative speech. Private speech is a type of self-directed dialogue in which a kid teaches himself how to solve issues or develop goals. Young children initially vocalize their private speech, but when they are already 7 or 8 years old, it has been internalized into mental processes and has taken on the form of inner speech—a type of speech that is internalized as thought (as cited in Gauvain, 2019).

The idea that speaking and thinking are interchangeable is rejected by sociocultural theory (Lantolf, 2000). It also rejects what was referred to as the communicative view of language, which maintained that speech was merely a vehicle for the transmission of preexisting thoughts and that thinking and speaking were independent phenomena. Instead, speaking and thinking are distinct processes, but they are closely linked in a dialectic unity where speech that is produced publicly completes thought that is began privately. The prospect of understanding human mental capacities is lost when speech and thought are broken, just as when Vygotsky noted that water's ability to put out fire cannot be explained by independent analysis of hydrogen and oxygen.

It can then be inferred that spoken and written language are interconnected because even though the explanation above does not directly state the term “written language,” it is already understood from the fact that words altogether written on the paper come from the thought. Language is therefore both a mode of communication and a tool for helping to regulate cognition. The learning sciences have benefited from Vygotsky's emphasis on the use of speech to establish concepts and formulate understanding (Sawyer, 2014). Interaction with peers in the classroom and outside of it facilitates externalization and articulation of the subjects being studied (Gauvain, 2019).

In terms of university admission, interviews are held regularly to get to know applicants and how they present themselves. Admission interviews can be classified as either informational or evaluative. Informational interviews are utilized to provide information to potential students about the institution, whereas evaluative interviews are utilized to gauge the student, the results of which are subsequently included in the student's application file (College Board, 2023). According to Betts (2011), while interviews appear to be a crucial part of the admissions process, only few colleges actually need them for undergraduate applications. Interviews are more common in graduate and doctoral programs, particularly medical institutions, and in special admissions programs.

Aside from interviews, a significant number of universities require admission essays to get to know more of their applicants (Atkinson, 2001; Walker et al., 2012, as cited in Pennebaker et al., 2014). Basically, the objective is to have potential students write about their own experiences, passions, and aspirations. This will disclose something about the students themselves, including their thought processes, emotional states, and overall writing skills. However, there is not much uniformity in the way these measurements

are coded. Developing a uniform grading system is complicated by the fact that applicants write about highly varied subjects in vastly divergent styles.

Globally well-known universities, such as Harvard College, Stanford University, and Cambridge University, also require college essays for admission (see Harvard College, n.d.; Stanford University, n.d.; University of Cambridge, n.d.).

However, in the Philippines, it is not common that universities would require the applicants to submit writing compositions as opposed to interviews. In addition, only certain programs would require the applicant to submit an essay. Several prestigious universities in the Philippines, such as Asian Center, University of the Philippines Diliman, Ateneo de Manila University, and University of San Carlos, require college admission essays (see Asian Center, University of the Philippines, n.d.; Ateneo de Manila University, n.d.; University of San Carlos, 2021).

### 3. Legal Bases

The Section 5 (3) of the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, Article X states that “every citizen has a right to select a profession or course of study, subject to fair, reasonable, and equitable admission and academic requirements.” With regard to admission to a higher education institution taking part in any program approved by the Commission on Higher Education, this law prohibits discrimination and preferential treatment based on sex, ethnicity, physical characteristics, religious beliefs, or political affiliation. It gives the right to each individual to choose a career path or study program, provided the admission and academic requirements do not involve any type of discrimination such as any of the ones aforementioned. This legal basis supports the impartial process of the data gathering procedure of this research, wherein the assigned faculties utilized a set of criteria for scoring on the selection of applicants. The Section 8 of the Republic Act No. 7722 (“Higher Education Act of 1994”). This section provides the Power and Functions of the Commission. It provides a set of responsibilities for the continuous improvement of the higher education sector. In this aspect, this research is primarily anchored on the first two responsibilities, which are to “formulate and recommend development plans, policies, priorities, and programs on higher education,” and “formulate and recommend development plans, policies, priorities, and programs on research.” The initiation of a development program serves one of the purposes of this research. This is in consonance to the quoted statements above and as a contribution to each of their significant purposes. This specifically entails the development of the enhancement plan. This legal basis concretizes the idea that the output of this research would not be a counterproductive effort of both the researchers and the institution.

### 4. Statement of the Problem

This research determines the English language aspirants' pre-admission skills through their interviewing and composition writing competence at Cebu Technological University Moalboal Campus, Cebu for the school year 2023-2024 as basis for enhancement plan.

Specifically, it aims to answer the following questions:

#### 1. What is the respondents' profile in terms of:

- 1.1 age and gender;
- 1.2 English subject grade;
- 1.3 socio-economic status;
- 1.4 parents' educational attainment;



1.5 type of school; and

1.6 SHS strand?

**2. What is the respondents' level of pre-admission skills as to:**

2.1 panel interview; and

2.2 composition writing?

**3. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' level of competence in the panel interview and composition writing?**

**4. Based on the findings, what enhancement plan can be developed?**

**5. Hypothesis**

The hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance.

$H_o$  : There is no significant relationship between speaking and writing skills.

**6. Methods**

This research used a quantitative type of research. A descriptive-correlational design is utilized as it determines the extent of the relationship between speaking and writing skills. To achieve such, the study utilized panel interviews and composition writing assessments with modified PASUC criteria. In addition, conducting an interview and composing an essay will help determine the significant relationship between the two variables of the aspirants in their pre-admission skills to draw out an enhancement plan to improve their discourse competence.

The respondents of the study were eighty-six (86) incoming freshmen students from different schools. Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents.

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	10	11.63
Female	76	88.37
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents**

As shown in Table 1, seventy-six (76) female and ten (10) male aspirants from different schools wanted to be accepted into the university, specifically the Bachelor of Arts in English Language Program. The main instrument used is the modified Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC) Criteria utilized by the selected College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) department professors during the process in panel interviews and composition writing. These scoring rubrics possessed high validity and reliability since the source of this instrument was the PASUC.

<b>Panel Interview</b>	
<b>Rubric</b>	<b>Rubric Score (%)</b>
1. Language Proficiency	40
1.1. Grammar	15
1.2. Punctuation	15
1.3. Fluency	10

2. Content	40
2.1. Presentation of Ideas	15
2.2. Clarity	25
3. Preparedness and Professionalism	15
3.1. Body Language/Non-Verbal Cues	10
3.2. Attire	5
4. Overall Impression	5

**Table 2: Panel Interview Criteria**

Composition Writing	
Rubric	Rubric Score (%)
1. Content	50
1.1. Relevance to the Theme	20
1.2. Comprehensiveness	10
1.3. Originality	10
1.4. Insights	10
2. Organization	30
2.1. Clarity of Thoughts	10
2.2. Creativity	10
2.3. Unity and Consistency	10
3. Mechanics	20
3.1. Punctuation, Spelling, Capitalization, Grammar	20

**Table 3: Composition Writing Criteria**

Rating	Descriptive Equivalent
A. 90%-100%	Outstanding Performance
B. 86%-89%	Very Good Performance
C. 80%-85%	Good Performance
D. 79% and Below	Poor Performance

**Table 4: Scoring Scale of Panel Interview and Composition Writing**

The researchers asked receipt of permission from the office of the Campus Director. Once approved, a transmittal letter was sent to the College of Arts and Sciences Department. A transmittal letter was also given to the aspirants for their approval to gather their educational information from their school credentials given with utmost confidentiality.

The processing of data derived from the research instrument is treated as follows:

The relation between the two variables, panel interviewing, and composition writing skills was analyzed by Pearson R correlation and the p-value (0.000) at the significant level of 0.05. The data were analyzed with SPSS Statistics. Furthermore, the respondents' profiles, including age, gender, parent's combined

monthly income, English-subject grade, type of school, and SHS strands were quantitatively assessed and computed using percentage, frequency count, and average.

**7. Results and Discussion**

The findings for the applicants’ profile show that all 86 applicants are 17-20 years old. The majority or 77 applicants are females with 89.53 percent. In terms of their English subject grade, the majority or 75 applicants with 87.21 percent had grades belonging to the 90-100 range. About the socio-economic status, the majority or 77 applicants with 89.53 percent belong to Poor Income (less than Php 9,100.00). With respect of their parents’ educational attainment, the majority or 50 of the applicants’ mothers with 58.14 percent belong to the Elementary Level, while the majority or 43 applicants’ fathers with 50 percent belong to the High School Level. Furthermore, the majority or 79 applicants with 91.86 percent graduated from Public Schools. Lastly, the majority or 40 applicants with 46.51 percent took up HUMMS as their SHS Strand.

For the applicants’ level of competence in Language Proficiency under Panel Interview, majority of the aspirants fall under poor performance with a percentage of 55.81.

<b>Language Proficiency</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Outstanding Performance	<b>15</b>	<b>17.44</b>
Very Good Performance	<b>8</b>	<b>9.30</b>
Good Performance	<b>15</b>	<b>17.44</b>
Poor Performance	<b>48</b>	<b>55.81</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 5: Language Proficiency Result in Panel Interview**

There can be several reasons why students may need help with language proficiency in speaking. Aspirants not proficient in grammar, pronunciation and fluency can be due to their learning environment and internal barriers when they speak in front of group of people. A recent research shows the possible factors that hampered the language proficiency of the student which include lack of exposure to the language, limited opportunities for practice and interaction, low self-confidence, learners' motivation, parental involvement, learning skills environment, teaching strategies, comprehensive input, learners' socio-economic status, and learners' age (Santos et al., 2022). However, professors feel students' skills are adequate but could be improved (Andrade, 2006; Shapiro et al., 2014), which means that students who lack language proficiency can still improve. It will be achieved through consistent practice and exposure to language.

For the applicants’ level of competence in Content under Panel Interview, majority of the aspirants fall under poor performance with a percentage of 52.33.

<b>Content</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Outstanding Performance	<b>14</b>	<b>16.28</b>
Very Good Performance	<b>7</b>	<b>8.14</b>
Good Performance	<b>20</b>	<b>23.36</b>
Poor Performance	<b>45</b>	<b>52.33</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6: Content Result in Panel Interview**



The factors that influence this result may include out of self-focus and racing thoughts resulting to unorganized and unclear ideas when speaking that made these aspirants performed poorly in this area. Leviten (2014) supported this claim that students might feel nervous that the content needs to be organized. The human brain is busier than ever; individuals are assaulted by facts, jibber-jobbers, and rumors, all posing as information. Trying to figure out what they want to say, it has been rumbled due to all the information that is quickly passing.

Another factor affecting the low performance in terms of content is racing thoughts. The blank mind is probably the result of being sidetracked. Every aspirant probably try to remember everything at once because of several things on mind (Graduate Coach, 2015). In an interview situation, the additional pressure of wanting to come across favorably to others can cause to become distracted and forget the thoughts in their minds. Thus, the chance of losing consciousness of content during the interview increases if too much worry about how to end a conversation during interviews.

For the applicants’ level of competence in Preparedness and Professionalism under Panel Interview, majority of the aspirants fall under outstanding performance with a percentage of 30.23.

<b>Preparedness and Professionalism</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Outstanding Performance	<b>26</b>	<b>30.23</b>
Very Good Performance	<b>10</b>	<b>11.63</b>
Good Performance	<b>25</b>	<b>29.07</b>
Poor Performance	<b>25</b>	<b>29.07</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 7: Preparedness and Professionalism Result in Panel Interview**

These findings suggest that aspirants performed well in this area with an appropriate attire, prepared posture, strong and professional conviction, and effective use of body language and non-verbal cues. When making a recommendation for a candidate for an academic position, these people consider a number of factors, such as the candidate's looks, enthusiasm, passion, and communication abilities (Onwuegbuzie & Hwang, 2014). The critical factor in some of the aspirants' high performance is the ability to prepare before an interview, which is an advantage in showing that personal skills will come from thorough preparation (Hardavella et al., 2016). Mock interviews are created to closely mirror actual interviews to provide participants with a sense of security and comfort while improving their interviewing abilities (Buckley et al., 2018; Hansen et al., 2009), which means mock interviews are in preparation for the final interview. Doing well with interviewers is about more than just knowing how to showcase skills, education, and experience. While this information is essential, knowing as much as possible about the company or school a person is interviewing with is just as important. Thus, preparation before the interview mentioned above is essential. The gathered information about the school before an interview provides significant benefits, especially in facing a lot of competition or slots in a school or position.

For the applicants’ level of competence in Overall Impression under Panel Interview, majority of the aspirants fall under poor performance with a percentage of 41.86.

<b>Overall Impression</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Outstanding Performance	<b>33</b>	<b>38.37</b>
Very Good Performance	<b>1</b>	<b>1.16</b>

Good Performance	<b>17</b>	<b>18.60</b>
Poor Performance	<b>36</b>	<b>41.86</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 8: Overall Impression Result in Panel Interview**

The results infer that the aspirants failed to project an adequate physical and emotional presence towards panel interviewers to sustain the entire, continual speaking session. One aspect to consider is the inability to create a strong social presence when facing the panel interviewers. The social presence theory (Short et al., 1976, as cited in Basch et al., 2020) contends that perceived social presence may alter depending on the interview medium. Per Short et al. (p. 65), social presence is defined as "the other person's degree of salience in the interaction and the consequent salience of the interpersonal relationships." Also, social presence is a person's "mental set" (Short et al., 1976, p. 66) for a particular communication scenario. This includes an overview of the other person's knowledge of gaze, nonverbal cues, facial expressions, and gestures.

The absence of excitement or motivation is another factor contributing to students' poor performance regarding their overall impression of their interviewing skills. One of the most important internal factors affecting pupils' success is motivation. In the words of (Mauliya et al., 2020), motivation is the mental stimulus that propels and guides human behavior. Motivation has a direct effects on how students learn. Motivation has a wide range of positive impacts on learners since it increases their energy level, affects whether they will persevere in accomplishing a goal, and alters the kinds of learning practices they use. Additionally, Carnegie Mellon University (2023) made the case that students need more motivation to learn because they do not think their efforts will improve their performance and because other responsibilities are taking up more of their time.

For the applicants' level of competence in Content under Composition Writing, majority of the aspirants fall under poor performance with a percentage of 60.47.

<b>Content</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Outstanding Performance	<b>7</b>	<b>8.14</b>
Very Good Performance	<b>7</b>	<b>8.14</b>
Good Performance	<b>20</b>	<b>23.26</b>
Poor Performance	<b>52</b>	<b>60.47</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 9: Content Result in Composition Writing**

This indicates that the majority of the aspirants failed to meet the standards in terms of the content of their composition. The problem may lie in the difficulty of generating ideas. The respondents might have understood the theme, but generating ideas to justify and support their understanding would be another challenge. Understanding the theme is already a challenge in itself as one can have a different interpretation of the theme from the other. This is where looking for ideas that are relevant to the theme can be a more difficult challenge as these ideas depend on one's understanding of the theme. In a relevant study, Mahudin et al. (2018) conducted an initial test to assess the participants initial abilities in generating ideas: it revealed that the students struggled in doing so because the participants had no initial planning what to write, resulting in inconsistency of ideas in their essay.

Another factor that adds to this difficulty is having only limited vocabulary. When a person speaks a second language, it is common for them to have limited vocabulary in that language, especially when they do not use it in practice. Evidently, the study of Chabbi and Boukezzoula (2023) on the usage of academic vocabulary in essay-based exams found that multiple challenges were faced by students in their essays in which they demonstrated low competence in academic lexical usage. Another example is the study of Bulqiyah et al. (2021) on the perspectives of tertiary students on essay writing difficulties, which found that the majority of the participants encountered problems both in generating ideas and vocabulary. Such problems undeniably influence the content of the essay.

For the applicants’ level of competence in Organization under Composition Writing, majority of the aspirants fall under poor performance with a percentage of 53.49.

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Outstanding Performance	<b>9</b>	<b>10.47</b>
Very Good Performance	<b>1</b>	<b>1.16</b>
Good Performance	<b>30</b>	<b>34.89</b>
Poor Performance	<b>46</b>	<b>53.49</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 10: Organization Result in Composition Writing**

This indicates that the majority of the aspirants struggled with forming an organized thought in their work. One factor that influenced this is their difficulties in diction. The aspirants had difficulty in choosing the appropriate words for their composition writing. This led them to use incorrect words to express certain points, which affected the thought clarity of their essays. In the relevant study of Pablo and Lasaten (2018) on Filipino Senior High School learners writing difficulties and academic essay quality, the findings revealed that the students encountered difficulties in vocabulary and word choice in their essays. In their study, it was found that the most prevalent problem in this area was the improper word choice and usage. The study of Ariyanti and Fitriana (2017) on the difficulties and needs of English language students in essay writing also found that diction was one of their problems in which a number of students had difficulties in choosing correct word for certain sentence context.

Another factor that influenced their poor performance is the aspirants’ difficulties in achieving coherence and cohesion. Students might have encountered minimal difficulty in generating ideas, but organizing those ideas to form a syntactically and semantically logical whole would yet be another challenge. For instance, the study of Al Badi (2015) on the writing difficulties of ESL students found that language use, coherence, and cohesion were the most common problems that the students encountered even though they were aware of the importance of those elements. Moreover, in the study of Jat et al. (2019), it was found that ESL student participants generally struggled in organizing their essays, specifically, in forming thesis statement, achieving unity, coherence, and cohesion.

For the applicants’ level of competence in Mechanics under Composition Writing, majority of the aspirants fall under poor performance with a percentage of 44.19.

<b>Mechanics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Outstanding Performance	<b>15</b>	<b>17.44</b>
Very Good Performance	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Good Performance	33	38.37
Poor Performance	38	44.19
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 11: Mechanics Result in Composition Writing**

This indicates that a significant percentage of the aspirants needed help in the mechanics aspect of their writing. Errors were observed in their punctuation errors. Punctuation errors can be attributed to having limited knowledge of the punctuation rules or forgetting to place punctuation in text (Nenotek et al., 2022). Punctuation errors are common in foreign- or second-language speakers of English. This is evident in the study of Arquiola et al. (2022) on the punctuations used by Filipino (ESL) and Thai (EFL) students in their essays in which both group of students committed most errors in commas, followed by periods, question marks, and apostrophes.

The grammatical errors of the students were mostly in verbs. This can be attributed to the respondents being second-language speakers of English. Li et al. (2016) noted that grammatical mistakes are often found when using verbs. For example, the study of Gagalang (2020) revealed that most grammatical errors committed by Filipino freshmen college participants were subject-verb disagreement, wrong verb form, and poor verb use. This resulted from the verbal conjugations and tenses in the students' native language and English differing from one other.

For the applicants' level of competence in the Panel Interview, it is revealed that the applicants demonstrated poor performance in Language Proficiency, Content, and Overall Impression with average scores of 31.14 (77.86 percent), 31.39 (78.47 percent), and 3.92 (78.45 percent), respectively. On a positive note, the applicants, however, exhibited good performance in Preparedness and Professionalism with an average score of 12.40 (82.69 percent).

<b>Panel Interview</b>			
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Average (Raw Score)</b>	<b>Average (%) Score)</b>	<b>Description</b>
Language Proficiency	31.14	77.86	Poor Performance
Content	31.39	78.47	Poor Performance
Preparedness and Professionalism	12.40	82.69	Good Performance
Overall Impression	3.92	78.45	Poor Performance
<b>Average</b>	<b>19.71</b>	<b>78.37</b>	<b>Poor Performance</b>
<b>Composition Writing</b>			
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Average (Raw Score)</b>	<b>Average (%) Score)</b>	<b>Description</b>
Content	37.83	75.65	Poor Performance
Organization	22.57	75.23	Poor Performance
Mechanics	15.23	76.16	Poor Performance
<b>Average</b>	<b>25.21</b>	<b>75.68</b>	<b>Poor Performance</b>

**Table 12: Scores in the Panel Interview and Composition Writing**

Meanwhile, it is found that the applicants demonstrated poor performance in all of the criteria under the Composition Writing, namely, Content, Organization, and Mechanics with average scores of 37.83 (75.65 percent), 22.57 (75.23 percent), and 15.23 (76.16 percent), respectively.

For the overall result, it is revealed that applicants exhibited poor performance both in the Panel Interview and in the Composition Writing with average scores of 19.71 (78.37 percent) and 25.21 (75.68 percent), respectively.

As observed in the table, the respondents garnered an overall average score in the panel interview that fell under poor performance. This indicates that most aspirants could have performed better. Some factors can contribute to their low performance. One of them is interview anxiety. McCarthy and Goffin (2004) conceptualized interview anxiety as a situation-specific, multidimensional trait. They specifically describe interview anxiety as a symptom of uneasiness that can impact each students performance. However, nervousness depends on the student, and they must build a rapport to convey competence and well-organized thoughts. This shows that people with social anxiety may focus excessively on themselves, which makes them seem less kind, likable, and forceful. It is related to lower self-disclosure (Clark & Wells, 1995, as cited in Schneider et al., 2019). Thus, there may be many mechanisms to cope with it, but the result appears negative.

In composition writing, the applicants altogether got an average score that also belongs to poor performance. This indicates that aspirants' writing performance in the English language could have been better. Aspirants' failure to understand composition writing becomes a challenge in academic achievement. This suggests that writing calls for a command of the target language's grammatical rules in addition to some stylistic components. The way the student arranged his ideas in his composition writing demonstrates his capacity for idea elaboration. Wilson and Glazier (2013) suggest that learning to write well is essential and one of the most significant things one will do in their education. Constant writing practice will help the student become a proficient writer.

Upon correlating the applicants' level of competence in the Panel Interview and Composition Writing, it is figured that the r-value is 0.411, which indicates that there is a Moderate Positive Correlation between the two variables. There is also a significant relationship between both variables as the Alpha of 0.05 is greater than the P-value of 0.000. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Areas	r-value	Description	P-value	Alpha	Decision	Interpretation
Panel Interview Composition Writing	0.411	Moderate Positive Correlation	0.000	0.05	Reject $H_0$	Significant

**Table 13: Correlation between Respondents' Level of Competence in the Panel Interview and Composition Writing**

The table shows that, with an r-value of 0.411, the Alpha of 0.05 is greater than the P-value of 0.000. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a strong relationship between the respondents' composition writing proficiency and their panel interview competency.

Therefore, it can be said that students who perform better in panel interviews also have higher composition writing proficiency, and vice versa; conversely, students who score lower on panel interviews are also less proficient in composition writing, and vice versa. This implies that the aspirant's competence in panel interviews and composition writing are critical elements that influence one another. The hypothesis that

there is no meaningful relationship between the respondents' composition writing and panel interview competency was thus rejected.

These findings have a bearing on Cahyono's (2017) study, which states that writing and speaking skills are interconnected. Writing exercises usually lead to an improvement in speaking abilities across the competency spectrum and vice versa. Another review suggests that writing exercises can increase speaking tasks in a second or foreign language and vice versa. In this instance, teaching speaking in addition to writing would help students transfer their writing skills to speaking (Akki & Larouz, 2021).

The findings emphasized that the aspirants' speaking ability affects their written skills, and their ability to write influences their speaking skills. This is supported by Elvita et al. (2017), who proved a relationship between students' speaking and writing skills, particularly in high school students, by using descriptive text to demonstrate the connection between the two.

## 8. Conclusion

Based on the study's findings, it is deduced that the aspirants need to be more competent in their pre-admission skills: panel interview and composition writing. As a result, it can be concluded that students who score higher in panel interviews are also more proficient in composition writing, and vice versa; conversely, students who score lower on panel interviews are also less proficient in composition writing, and vice versa. This suggests that the aspirant's competence in panel interviews and composition writing are critical elements that influence one another.

## 9. Recommendation

In concurrence with the findings and conclusion of the study, it is determined that the applicants need more assistance and support to improve their pre-admission skills. Hence, it is recommended that teachers implement an enhancement plan to provide adequate support and improve the aspirants' interviewing and composition writing competence to ensure high success rates in university entry.

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