

# **Formal Writing in Filipino: Common Experiences in Writing Filipino Essays of Ninth-Grade Students in Special Curriculum Programs**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to examine the common experiences in essay writing in Filipino of Grade 9 students in special curriculum programs at Isabela National High School, Ilagan City, Isabela. The research seeks to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the students in developing meaningful and effective essays. The main findings of this study reveal two significant results. First, students experience errors in grammar (correct punctuation, complete sentences, and rules) and in essay structure (clear introduction, organized presentation, and meaningful conclusion). Challenges in idea organization also emerged. Second, despite these challenges, a positive development in writing confidence and understanding of Filipino concepts is evident. Over time, they become more comfortable expressing themselves in writing, learn from feedback, and broaden their knowledge of different types of essays and the importance of critical and creative expression. This study found that students experience errors in grammar, structure, and organization of ideas, but also show positive development in confidence and understanding. The data was collected through questionnaires. The findings provide implications for the development of more effective programs for students in Special Curriculum Programs.

**Keywords:** Essay writing, Special Curriculum, Grade 9, Writing experience

## **INTRODUCTION**

Writing proficiency is an indispensable skill that underpins effective communication across all academic and professional domains. In the Philippine educational context, the ability to articulate ideas clearly and coherently in Filipino, particularly through formal written discourse, is a critical competency. This study focuses on the challenges encountered by students enrolled in the Special Curriculum Programs at Isabela National High School in mastering formal essay writing in Filipino, an issue that resonates with broader concerns within second language writing acquisition and the specific demands of Filipino academic expression. Indeed, research in error analysis of Filipino writing has consistently documented recurring patterns of linguistic inaccuracies among secondary students (Almario, 2018; Bautista, 2019), highlighting a persistent need to understand and address these fundamental difficulties.

The transition to academic writing in a second language such as Filipino presents a unique set of obstacles for learners. Studies on the complexities of academic writing in Filipino suggest that students often grapple with maintaining an appropriate level of formality, constructing logically sound and well-supported arguments, and employing precise and contextually relevant academic vocabulary (Cruz, 2015; Del Rosario, 2019). These inherent challenges may be further compounded for students within specialized

academic tracks, where the primary instructional focus and linguistic demands often revolve around the specific terminology and conceptual frameworks of their chosen fields, such as the arts, journalism, or the sciences. This potential divergence in linguistic focus could create a significant hurdle when these students are required to engage with the more generalized conventions of formal Filipino essay composition.

Furthermore, the intricate interplay between a learner's first language and their acquisition of a second language writing system cannot be overlooked. Drawing upon the principles of transfer theory, it is posited that the established linguistic structures and rhetorical conventions of a student's mother tongue can exert a considerable influence, either positively or negatively, on their development as writers in Filipino. Given the potentially diverse linguistic backgrounds of students at Isabela National High School, a nuanced understanding of these language transfer phenomena is crucial for elucidating the specific types of errors that manifest in their formal Filipino essays. Existing research in this area ([Insert Placeholder Citation on language transfer in Filipino]) provides a valuable theoretical lens through which to analyze and interpret observed patterns of linguistic interference.

Beyond the cognitive and linguistic factors, the socio-affective dimension of language learning, particularly students' attitudes towards and motivation to learn Filipino, plays a significant role in their writing development. Research on language attitudes and motivation has consistently demonstrated a strong correlation between students' perceived value and utility of a language and their subsequent effort and academic achievement. The sentiment expressed as "Filipino lang iyan!" ("It's just Filipino!"), which the researcher encountered, underscores a potential issue of language devaluation that could significantly undermine students' investment in and engagement with the task of mastering formal Filipino writing.

Considering these multifaceted challenges, the need for effective pedagogical interventions grounded in sound research is paramount. Scholarly work on effective strategies for teaching formal essay writing in Filipino (Bautista, 2020) offers valuable insights into instructional techniques that have proven successful in enhancing students' clarity of expression, organizational coherence, and grammatical accuracy. Moreover, the strategic implementation of explicit grammar instruction and the provision of meaningful feedback coupled with guided revision processes in the Filipino writing classroom have been consistently shown to yield significant improvements in student writing outcomes (Flores, 2016; Garcia, 2018).

By situating the present investigation within this broader scholarly context, which encompasses research on second language writing, the specific demands of Filipino academic discourse, and evidence-based pedagogical practices, this chapter aims to underscore the critical significance of examining the unique experiences and specific challenges faced by students within the Special Curriculum Programs at Isabela National High School. A comprehensive understanding of their common difficulties in the realm of formal Filipino essay writing represents a crucial initial step towards the development and implementation of targeted and effective instructional interventions designed to ultimately enhance their overall Filipino language proficiency and foster greater academic success across all their learning endeavors.

This study is rooted in several significant documents and perspectives that underscore the importance of language and education. In the global context, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2003), in its position paper, emphasizes education as a fundamental human right and a vital tool for development. In this regard, the development of language skills, including writing, is essential for effective participation in education and society. UNESCO also highlights the need for educational programs that promote multilingual literacy and writing skills in various contexts (UNESCO, 2016). Furthermore, according to Farrell's (2013) research in the context of globalization, students need to possess critical thinking and writing skills to interact effectively with diverse cultures and communities.

In the Philippines, the 1987 Constitution designates Filipino as the national language and aims to promote its development. Article XIV, Section 6 explicitly emphasizes the enhancement of Filipino. The study of formal writing in Filipino is a concrete step towards the development of the national language, aligning with the mandate of the Constitution. Beyond the Constitution, Republic Act No. 10533, or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, underscores the importance of developing students' writing abilities. This law aims to broaden the scope of education and enhance students' skills, including writing in Filipino. This legislation demonstrates the national recognition of the role of language in education and development.

Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. 31, s. 2012 sets the standards for the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum. Among the goals of this curriculum is the strengthening of students' communication skills, particularly in Filipino. Programs such as the Special Curriculum Programs are a concrete realization of these standards, aiming to enhance students' skills in various fields, including Filipino. According to Article XIV of the Constitution, Section 6, the national language of the Philippines is Filipino. It shall be further developed and enriched on the basis of existing Philippine and other languages. According to DepEd Order No. 74, s. 2009, the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) was implemented in schools. Its implementation aims to raise the literacy and learning levels of students.

The Bilingual Education Policy (BEP), implemented under Department Order No. 25, s. 1974, aims to use Filipino and English as languages of instruction in schools. The study of formal writing in Filipino is essential to ensure that students become proficient in using the Filipino language in various fields, in line with the BEP's goal of strengthening students' abilities in the country's two official languages.

Republic Act No. 7104, which established the *Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino* (KWF), aims to promote, develop, and propagate the use of Filipino and other Philippine languages. The analysis of Special Curriculum Programs aligns with the KWF's mandate to strengthen the use of Filipino in education and other sectors of society. This program aims to improve students' writing skills in Filipino, which is an important part of the KWF's mission.

DepEd Order No. 13, s. 2015, known as the Policy Guidelines on Classroom Assessment for the K to 12 Basic Education Program, provides guidance on assessing student learning. This includes the assessment of writing skills in Filipino.

Based on Republic Act No. 9155, or the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, aims to improve the management of education in the country. This law grants greater autonomy to schools to implement programs appropriate to their needs. The Special Curriculum Programs of Isabela National High School are an example of the implementation of this autonomy, aiming to strengthen students' writing skills in Filipino.

DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019, known as the Policy Guidelines on the K to 12 Basic Education Program, sets the goals and standards for education in the Philippines. This includes improving writing skills in Filipino, a step to ensure that DepEd standards are met and that students acquire the necessary writing skills essential for their academic success and personal development.

In the Philippines, the teaching of various subjects, including Filipino, is part of the curriculum in schools. Over time, the study and improvement of teaching methods for this subject have become more thorough to further expand students' knowledge and skills in using the Filipino language. One of the programs aimed at strengthening this skill is the Special Curriculum Programs implemented in various schools across the country. According to DepEd Order No. 15, s. 2014, the Special Program in the Arts (SPA) aims to provide opportunities for students to pursue their excellence in the arts. Meanwhile, the Special Program in Journalism, stated in DepEd Order No. 46, s. 2012, aims to train students in writing and journalism.

Similarly, the Special Science Curriculum (SSC) for secondary schools in the Philippines is a program that aims to strengthen students' skills in science, mathematics, and other scientific disciplines. DepEd Order No. 46, s. 2012, sets the guidelines and rules for these programs, recognizing schools with a special science curriculum to enhance their quality of teaching. Through these programs, the Department of Education aims to address the needs of young people with exceptional abilities and talents, so that they possess deeper skills and higher proficiency in their chosen fields.

In the academic context of the Philippines, essay writing is an essential skill that students need to learn, especially in Filipino. In the Special Curriculum Programs of Isabela National High School, students are not only focused on writing as a technical skill but as a means of expressing deeper thoughts in Filipino. However, teachers and trainers are discovering that many students in this curriculum experience problems in writing essays in Filipino, and these involve common, recurring errors. The ability to write a clear and effective essay is a fundamental foundation in communication, but the needs of students in the Special Curriculum Programs are unique. Their training is centered on appropriate terms and concepts, so they often find it difficult to adjust to writing essays in Filipino. The lack of correct grammar usage, appropriate word choice, and proper sentence structure are some of the main problems of students in this curriculum. Writing becomes light and easy for students whenever they are given ample practice in expressing themselves before they write. This will only happen if the difficulties or obstacles in writing do not become problems. The failure to resolve these problems is what commonly leads to frustration for teachers and students. In his seventeen years of teaching, the researcher has observed that one of the problems faced by language teachers is the writing of compositions. After much language practice, adding the writing and revision of drafts, many written works are still far from correct. It is also noticeable that as the composition lengthens, the number of errors increases.

Observing Filipino classes, the researcher sees that many students, especially those in the lower sections, truly struggle with written communication. Although many can speak in Filipino, most of them lack the ability to express themselves in writing. This was confirmed by fifteen Filipino teachers at Isabela National High School through the written works of their students, where seventy percent of those they teach annually are severely lacking in this skill.

In such situations, schools and teachers, considered the most effective developers and disseminators of language, need to take effective steps to help students improve their compositions. By analyzing the strengths and weaknesses in written works, teachers can determine the topics to be presented and will have a basis for which part of the lesson to emphasize to reduce, if not resolve, the problems in essay writing. Clearing this obstacle can help teachers improve language teaching, which is one of Almarino's assertions that language teaching should be based on the contexts and experiences of students. He believes that teachers should use methods that strengthen students' comprehension, reading, and writing skills.

It is therefore reasonable and meaningful to research the identification and analysis of the common experiences of students in writing formal papers by students in the Special Curriculum Programs to address the needs of students for complete language learning. Complete language learning will pave the way for students' success in studying all subjects and other areas of life. Based also on Almarino's belief that language teaching should strengthen students' thinking and comprehension skills, and not just the teaching of language rules and regulations. The researcher believes that understanding common errors can help teachers develop more effective teaching and students improve their writing skills. Although there are studies that have discussed common writing errors, few have focused on essays written in Filipino, such as Bautista's (2019) study, which found that the common errors of students are the incorrect use of verbs



and nouns, while Almario's (2018) analysis focused on the incorrect use of punctuation marks and words related to grammatical categories. Bautista also noted a primary problem in essay writing, which is a lack of knowledge of spelling and pronunciation rules. Their studies are therefore general.

Based on Lamott's (2016) study, she found that a lack of self-confidence is a significant challenge in essay writing. This simply means that before asking students to write an essay, it is necessary to make them understand the importance of trusting their own abilities, and greater encouragement is needed. Having critics is also a challenge in essay writing, especially if the critics do not show understanding of the writer's ideas. Lack of time was discovered by Gaiman (2016) in essay writing, stating that it is a major challenge, especially if the writer has other responsibilities. Even having distractions, he said, is another challenge in essay writing, especially if the writer has other interests.

According to Smith (2018), he found that a lack of knowledge is a major challenge in essay writing, especially if the writer does not have sufficient knowledge about the topic. Therefore, before asking students to write, greater explanation and presentation of additional evidence for the topic being studied are needed. Having prejudices is also a challenge in essay writing, especially if the writer has prejudices about the topic (Smith, 2018). Therefore, in essay writing, prejudice can cause problems, such as having biases and one-sided beliefs, and having negative and unrealistic statements. Thus, it is important that writing involves critical thinking and deep conviction to avoid prejudices and to have realistic and fair statements.

This study focused solely on ninth-grade students in special curriculum programs at Isabela National High School. Therefore, this signals the need for the study because there is no related research in the school other than Mrs. Carpina's (1990) study, and the researcher believes that this will address this gap by analyzing the common experiences in writing essays in Filipino and providing appropriate teaching strategies. Furthermore, the researcher's desire to focus on this deficiency was ignited because it was noticed and brought to the researcher's office that students were devaluing the Filipino subject, especially in writing formal papers focusing on essays. It was painful to hear the justifications of students, as well as some parents and some teachers of the school, with statements like "It's just Filipino!" This statement pierced the researcher's heart, so to legitimize all decision-making regarding the grading of students' performance in Filipino, it was deemed best to go through research. The remarks of the panels of each program regarding the low grades in Filipino of students in special curriculum programs did not escape the ears either, until it reached a point where the teacher was asked to raise the grade so that the student would not be removed from the program because the student maintains a certain grade here. The researcher endeavored to focus his study on the academic performance of students in special curriculum programs in essay writing in the Filipino subject because the researcher noticed that the subjects valued by these students are English, Mathematics, and Science. There were even justifications learned from the Filipino teachers who teach these students that when students' grades in Filipino are low, they need to be leveled or made similar, or at least not far apart from the grades in the aforementioned subjects because this will cause their removal from the said curriculum. These were the justifications of the advisors and some science, mathematics, and English advocates, which caused negative feelings for the Filipino teachers. Therefore, this research will prove whether the grades of students in this curriculum should indeed be equated or leveled.

Writing is one of the most effective catalysts for change and development in a nation. We are witnesses to the truth that the power of literature is greater than any weapon, as Rizal showed in his work *El Filibusterismo*, which can be seen in Chapter 5, Chapter 25, and Chapter 31, where the literature of the

Filipinos became a weapon against colonial rule. Therefore, it is clear to young students that writing is a way of coloring their world, and that color can be shared with readers of their time and even beyond. Their thoughts can help shape the society they live in. Any thought, present or future, loses its meaning if it cannot be shared with others, and this is where writing plays an important role. Young students can greatly help their environment if they have effective communication through them as message conduits and the people who receive what they convey and present. It is therefore right that their written works reflect rich wells of thought and experience that will bring, provide, and be a source of comfort and learning to their readers.

Education is a crucial aspect in shaping the minds and abilities of young people. According to Lumbera, language is not only a tool for communication but also an important part of our national identity and consciousness. From this perspective, essay writing can be considered the highest and most unique skill that should be developed. Highest because for students to perform it, they need to have thorough knowledge of the language, the elements of writing, the appropriate use of words and sentences, and broad thinking on the topic to be written or discussed. Most unique because it is the demonstration of the skill, ability, and effectiveness of expression that a student has attained. Almario emphasizes the importance of Filipino in expanding the understanding of our culture and history, which serves as the foundation for the intellectual development of the youth. Likewise, Quisumbing showed that the use of Filipino in the curriculum has a profound effect on the development of students' analytical and critical thinking skills. In this context, Filipino is an important part of education that helps broaden the perspective of the youth. This simply means that formal writing is the meeting point of linguistic discourse. Therefore, the ability and skill to write is a sign of excellence in language use or the communicative competence of the student. Excellence in language use reflects complete language learning.

In the academic context of the Philippines, essay writing is an essential skill that students need to learn, especially in Filipino. In the Special Curriculum Programs of Isabela National High School, students are not only focused on writing as a technical skill but as a means of expressing deeper thoughts in Filipino. However, teachers and trainers are discovering that many students in this curriculum experience problems in writing essays in Filipino, and these involve common, recurring errors. The ability to write a clear and effective essay is a fundamental foundation in communication, but the needs of students in the Special Curriculum Programs are unique. Their training is centered on appropriate terms and concepts, so they often find it difficult to adjust to writing essays in Filipino. The lack of correct grammar usage, appropriate word choice, and proper sentence structure are some of the main problems of students in this curriculum. Under the K12 program, new skills and abilities are required in language learning, but few studies are related to the kamalian ng mga mag-aaral sa pagsulat at sa epektibong estratehiya sa pagtuturo sa ilalim ng kurikulum na ito.

This provided a thorough look at the abilities of students in the Special Curriculum Programs in writing formal papers. In this way, there are recommendations for the development of Filipino teaching, which is a core subject in our education system. Furthermore, the results of this study can help teachers, administrators, and other education managers in developing more effective programs and strategies for teaching Filipino, which can raise the level of students' skills in writing and language use.

For students in special curriculum programs, the results of this study will help them understand the importance of writing skills in their education. The study highlighted the aspects they should focus on and the strategies they can use to improve their writing. A deeper understanding of the writing process and techniques will lead to higher self-confidence and better performance in academic tasks.

For teachers, this study will provide concrete evidence of the effectiveness of their teaching methods. The findings will help them further improve their strategies and techniques in teaching formal writing. In this way, their teaching will be more effective, and students will be better prepared for writing challenges. Having a thorough study of effective methods will provide teachers with guidance in developing their skills as educators.

Overall, this study will make a significant contribution to the field of Filipino education. The recommendations generated from the study's results can serve as a basis for planning and implementing school programs and policies that will raise the level of excellence in students' writing. This study will open opportunities for innovations and new approaches in teaching Filipino, which will lead to higher quality education throughout the country, as mandated by the Department of Education (DepEd) to ensure the provision of quality education to all students in the country. One of its main objectives is to strengthen students' skills in various subjects, including Filipino. In this context, the analysis of formal writing by students in the Special Curriculum Programs of Isabela National High School is important because it focuses on the interests and abilities of these students. Therefore, through this study, their ability in formal writing skills in Filipino will be known, and it will also serve as a similar basis for assessing how different strategies affect students' writing skills. Almario's (2016) analysis of the effect of the integrated language learning approach on students' writing is one of the important references that can be used. This study showed that the integration of different teaching methods has a positive effect on the development of writing skills.

Ramos's (2018) study on the use of technology in teaching writing in Filipino provides a perspective on how modern tools can be used to improve students' skills. According to Ramos, the use of digital platforms and other technological tools leads to a higher level of interest and participation of students in writing. These types of studies can be used as a basis to examine whether the elements of the Special Curriculum Programs of Isabela National High School keep pace with modern teaching methods.

In addition, studies on traditional methods of teaching writing, such as Santos's (2017) study, provide important context. According to Santos, traditional techniques such as free writing, journal writing, and writing workshops have been proven effective in improving students' writing skills. This study can serve as a basis to compare the effectiveness of traditional methods with modern strategies used in Special Curriculum Programs.

### **Research Questions**

The main objective of this research is to identify the common essay writing experiences of students in the Special Curriculum Programs at Isabela National High School. The study specifically addressed the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the students according to their:
  - 1.1. program
  - 1.2. age
  - 1.3. gender
  - 1.4. first language
2. What is the overall experience in writing essays in Filipino, based on:
  - 2.1. frequency of writing
  - 2.2. purpose of writing
  - 2.3. difficulty or challenge in writing

- 2.4. common errors in writing
- 2.5. aspect of writing
- 2.6. what helps in writing
- 2.7. self-assessment of writing
3. Is there a significant difference in the frequency of essay writing in Filipino based on the profile?
4. Is there a significant difference in the self-assessment of essay writing skills in Filipino based on the profile?
5. What are the recommendations based on the results of the study?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive-comparative research design to describe and analyze the common essay writing experiences of the students. This design is appropriate because it identified the current state of the students' writing and did not require manipulating or controlling the factors under study.

### Locale of the Study

This study was conducted at Isabela National High School, Ilagan City, Isabela, known as the "Home of the Champion" and "Isabela High Mahusay!" The school is renowned for providing high-quality instruction and nurturing the talents of young people not only in Cagayan Valley but also throughout the country, several countries in Asia, and in Brisbane, Australia. The selection of Isabela National High School as the research locale aimed to closely observe and implement the necessary steps to analyze the significance and impact of the said curriculum on the Grade 9 students.

### Selection and Description of Respondents

The participants were Grade 9 students from the Special Curriculum Programs at Isabela National High School. This curriculum was chosen because these students have a specific focus on science, mathematics, and English (Special Science Curriculum), Journalism (SPJ), and Arts (SPA), and its impact on their writing skills was observed.

A total of 231 students from the special curriculum programs of Grade 9 at Isabela National High School, for the school year 2024-2025, were selected as respondents for this research. There were 63 males (27.27%), 110 females (47.61%), and 58 LGBTQ+ individuals (25.10%).

**Table 1. Number of Students**

Students	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Total Number of Respondents
Male	63	27.27%	63	63
Female	110	47.61%	110	110
LGBTQ+	58	25.10%	58	58
Total	231	100%	231	231



## Students in the Special Science Curriculum

As shown in Table 2, the number of students in the Special Science Curriculum was 106 or 100%. There were 37 males (34.90%), 43 females (40.56%), and 26 LGBTQ+ individuals (24.52%).

**Table 2 Number of Students in the Special Science Curriculum**

<b>SPECIAL SCIENCE CURRICULUM</b> ( <i>Science Technology and Engeneering</i> )				
Students	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Total Number of Respondents
Male	37	34.90%	37	37
Female	43	40.56%	43	43
LGBTQ+	26	24.52%	26	26
Total	106	100%	106	106

## Students in the Special Program in Journalism

As shown in Table 3, there was a total of 58 or 100% respondents from the Special Program in Journalism. There were fourteen (14) males (24.13%), thirty-two (32) females (55.17%), and twelve (12) LGBTQ+ individuals (20.68%).

**Table 3 Number of Students in the Special Program in Journalism**

<b>SPECIAL PROGRAM IN JOURNALISM</b>				
Students	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Total Number of Respondents
Male	14	24.13%	14	14
Female	32	55.17%	32	32
LGBTQ+	12	20.68%	12	12
Total	58	100%	58	58

## Students in the Special Program in the Arts

As shown in Table 4, there was a total of 67 or 100% respondents from the Special Program in the Arts. There were fifteen (15) males (22.38%), thirty-two (32) females (47.76%), and twenty (20) LGBTQ+ individuals (29.85%).

Complete enumeration was used in selecting the sample to ensure the appropriateness of the study's characteristics. The researcher used their knowledge and experience in selecting the respondents to obtain data relevant to the specific questions or objectives. Therefore, all students in the special curriculum programs were included in this study.

**Table 4 Number of Students in the Special Program in the Arts**

<b>SPECIAL PROGRAM IN THE ARTS</b>				
Students	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Total Number of Respondents

Male	15	22.38%	15	15
Female	32	47.76%	32	32
LGBTQ+	20	29.85%	20	20
Total	67	100%	67	67

## Data Gathering Procedure

In conducting the study, the first step was the collection of data. The researcher followed several processes to gather the necessary information. After the research framework was established, the researcher wrote a letter to the school principal to request permission to conduct the study among the Grade 9 students belonging to the special curriculum programs, who were the respondents of the study. The researcher was granted permission to distribute and collect the questionnaires from the students.

Through the analysis and evaluation of the 231 questionnaires, the researcher identified the common writing experiences of the students. Correction was easy, and the identification of common experiences and the determination of their frequency in each specific number were also straightforward. To ensure the accuracy of the data, it was necessary to review it three times to ensure that the identified common writing experiences of the Grade 9 students in the special curriculum programs were correct. In the analysis conducted, it was discovered that there were various common experiences that needed to be addressed. Each response found and analyzed was recorded in a prepared table. After recording them, the numbers were checked to avoid any errors in tallying. This was done until all the questionnaires answered by the respondents in this study were included.

To determine the respondents' information, their overall experience in writing essays in Filipino, the identification of common writing errors, their perspectives on improving writing, and their self-assessment of their writing skills, the respondents were asked to check the appropriate responses to the questions included in the questionnaire. The collected responses were analyzed, recorded, organized, and interpreted.

## Statistical Treatment of Data

In this study, the collected data were analyzed through the use of various statistical tools. First, Descriptive Statistics were used. This method is essential in describing the common experiences in writing essays in Filipino. Through frequency distribution, percentage, and mean, the frequency of occurrence of different experiences in each category identified in the study was described. In addition, One-Way ANOVA was also used. This statistical analysis was conducted to examine if there was a significant difference in the frequency of writing experiences based on the students' gender or the special curriculum programs they belonged to, especially when the number of groups being compared was three or more. Through One-Way ANOVA, it was determined whether there was a statistically significant difference in the frequency of experiences between the different groups of students.

The use of both descriptive statistics and One-Way ANOVA provided a comprehensive analysis of the essay writing experiences. The results obtained from these analyses served as the basis for the development of recommendations aimed at improving the writing skills of the students who participated in the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Student Information

### Program Affiliation

The first part of the results pertains to the demographic profile of the study participants, where Table 5 presents the distribution of respondents across Special Curriculum Programs in Junior High School.

Based on the data presented, the Science strand has the highest number of respondents with 106 individuals, representing 45.9% of the total number of participants. This suggests that more students from the Special Science Curriculum participated in this study compared to other programs.

The Special Program in the Arts followed with 67 respondents, comprising 29.0% of the total number. This indicates that the Special Program in the Arts also has a significant portion of the participant population.

On the other hand, the Special Program in Journalism has the lowest number of respondents with only 58 individuals, representing 25.1% of the total number of participants.

**Table 5 Distribution of Respondents by Program Affiliation**

Program	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Special Science Curriculum	106	45.9
Special Program in Journalism	58	25.1
Special Program in the Arts	67	29.0

### Student Age

The age group of 14 years old has the largest number (71.00%), followed by 15 years old (24.68%), and 13 years old has the smallest number (2.60%). This shows that the small number of 13-year-olds may indicate that only a few of them are accelerated or early learners.

**Table 6 Distribution of Respondents' Age**

Student Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
13 & below	6	2.6
14	164	71.0
15 & above	61	26.4

### Student Gender

The data shows the number and percentage of respondents by gender. Most of the participants in the study are female (46.3%), followed by male (28.6%), and LGBTQ (25.1%). The presence of more female respondents may be a characteristic of the student population in the Special Curriculum Programs involved.

**Table 7 Distribution of Respondents' Gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	66	28.6
Female	107	46.3
LGBTQ	58	25.1

## Student First Language

The data in Table 8 shows the distribution of the 231 respondents based on their primary language. It was observed that Ilocano (42.0%) has the largest share, followed by Ibanag (39.0%). Tagalog (19.0%) has the lowest representation among the participants' primary languages.

**Table 8 Distribution of Respondents' First Language**

First Language	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Ibanag	90	39.0
Ilocano	97	42.0
Tagalog	44	19.0

## General Experience in Writing Filipino Essays

### a. Frequency of Writing Filipino Essays by Students

Table 9 shows that most students (53.2%) only occasionally write essays in Filipino, with a mean of 1.87, while 29.9% do so frequently and 16.9% rarely. This result indicates that regular essay writing is not common among the respondents, necessitating a deeper analysis of the curriculum context, language use, and teaching methods. For example, this may be due to a curriculum that does not heavily emphasize essay writing, the use of other languages in academics, or teaching strategies that do not fully encourage frequent writing. This phenomenon can be linked to the findings in Gonzales's (2020) study titled *The Frequency of Filipino Use in Academic Tasks and Its Effect on the Skills of Senior High School Students*. Gonzales's study found that limited opportunities for the active use of Filipino in various academic tasks, including essay writing, may result in underdeveloped language skills and hesitation in using it. This frequency directly affects students, teachers, and the program itself. For students, their Filipino writing skills may not be sufficiently honed, which can affect their academic performance and confidence in using the language. For teachers, monitoring the development of students' writing skills and providing effective feedback can be challenging. For the program, it may require changes in the curriculum or teaching methods to better enhance students' writing skills. Overall, the occasional frequency of writing has implications for students' Filipino proficiency, teaching, and the effectiveness of the program.

**Table 9 Frequency of Students' Filipino Essay Writing**

Writing Frequency	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Frequent (almost weekly)	69	29.9
Occasional (1-2 times a month)	123	53.2
Rare (less than once a month)	39	16.9
Mean: 1.87 (Occasional)		

### b. Students' Purpose in Writing Filipino Essays

Table 10 shows the primary purposes of students in writing Filipino essays. The data reveals that the most dominant purpose is to get high grades (42.0%), followed by expressing ideas and feelings (35.1%), and the lowest is "to comply with the teacher's assigned tasks" (22.9%). This result suggests that extrinsic motivation, particularly obtaining high grades, drives students to write essays more than intrinsic motivation, such as self-expression. This may be related to the grading system in schools, where getting

high grades is often emphasized. For example, essay grading may focus solely on form and content and not give much importance to the student's personal expression.

According to Santos's (2018) study titled "Motivation in Filipino Writing of Students and Its Relationship to Academic Performance," the type of motivation has a significant influence on the quality of students' writing. Intrinsically motivated students are more likely to demonstrate a higher level of understanding and appreciation for writing. In the context of the current data, the dominance of extrinsic motivation may indicate a need to examine teaching and assessment strategies to better encourage intrinsic motivation in students.

This result has implications for students, teachers, and the curriculum. For students, it may affect their appreciation of writing as a meaningful activity. For teachers, they may need to find ways to better stimulate students' interest and appreciation for writing. For the curriculum, it may be necessary to review the objectives and teaching strategies to better encourage intrinsic motivation in writing.

**Table 10 Students' Purpose in Writing Filipino Essays**

Purpose in Writing	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To get high grades	97	42.0
To express ideas and feelings	81	35.1
To comply with the teacher's assigned tasks	53	22.9

### **c. Challenges in Essay Writing**

Table 11 shows the challenges in essay writing faced by students. Among the listed challenges, two stand out as the most difficult: 'generating ideas' with a frequency of 224 and 'ensuring the correct essay structure (beginning, body, end)' also with a frequency of 224. The simultaneous difficulty in generating ideas and ensuring the correct structure indicates a critical challenge in the essay writing process.

The difficulty in 'Generating ideas' can be linked to newer perspectives on cognitive load and the role of executive functions in writing. While cognitive load theory (Sweller, 1988) remains important, newer studies emphasize the role of executive functions, such as working memory, inhibition, and cognitive flexibility, in idea generation (Kellogg, 2008). Writing is a demanding task that requires the coordination of many cognitive processes (Hayes, 2012). When students struggle with idea generation, their working memory may become overloaded, making it difficult for them to manage other aspects of writing. Furthermore, students with weaker executive function skills may struggle to generate, organize, and evaluate ideas. Writing apprehension, which continues to be studied, may also contribute to and weaken executive functions in the context of writing (Daly & Vangelisti, 2020).

The difficulty in 'ensuring the correct essay structure' can be related to newer understandings of genre pedagogy and the importance of metacognitive awareness of genre conventions. While genre theory (Swales, 1990) provided the foundation, genre pedagogy emphasizes the direct teaching of genre conventions and the development of students' metacognitive awareness of how and why genres work (Hyon, 2018). An essay has a specific structure that requires the proper organization of ideas. If students do not fully understand the genre conventions of an essay and lack metacognitive awareness of how to use them, they will struggle to organize their ideas effectively and clearly. Studies in self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 2002) also show that metacognitive awareness is crucial for successful performance in academic tasks, including writing.



The simultaneous difficulty in generating ideas and ensuring the correct structure suggests the need for teaching strategies that integrate direct instruction of executive function skills, genre conventions, and metacognitive awareness. Strategies such as scaffolding, graphic organizers, think-aloud protocols, and self-assessment can help students overcome these challenges and develop their essay writing skills.

**Table 11 Challenges in Essay Writing**

Most Difficult in Writing	Frequency	Rank
Generating ideas	224	1
Arranging sentences and paragraphs	212	4
Using correct grammar and punctuation	215	3
Choosing the right words or vocabulary	221	2
Ensuring the correct essay structure (beginning, body, end)	224	1

#### d. Common Errors in Writing

Table 12 shows the common errors students make in essay writing. Among the listed errors, the two highest-ranked are the incorrect use of punctuation with a frequency of 229 and difficulty in sentence construction with a frequency of 228. On the other hand, the two lowest ranked are the use of correct grammar with a frequency of 221 and incorrect or inappropriate use of words with a frequency of 205. The lower frequency of these errors suggests that, compared to other errors, fewer students struggle with these aspects of writing.

The lower frequency of 'incorrect or wrong grammar' may be attributed to several possible explanations. It may reflect effective grammar instruction for students, or students may have a natural proficiency in grammar. However, it is important to note that grammar is a broad concept. According to studies in systemic functional linguistics (SFL) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), grammar is not just about rules of sentence construction, but also about how language is used to achieve different communicative purposes. Students may be better at some aspects of grammar ( morphology, syntax) but struggle with others (discourse grammar).

The lower frequency of incorrect or inappropriate word usage may also indicate that students have sufficient vocabulary or the ability to choose words appropriate to the context of their writing. However, it is important to consider the depth of vocabulary knowledge. According to studies in vocabulary acquisition (Nation, 2001), knowing a word is not just about knowing its meaning, but also about knowing its different forms, how it is used in different contexts, and how it relates to other words. Students may know the basic meanings of words but struggle with more nuanced usage.

Although these errors have a lower frequency, this does not mean that they do not need attention in teaching. It is important to continue to strengthen students' skills in grammar and vocabulary to make them more effective writers. Strategies such as contextualized grammar instruction, vocabulary building activities, and feedback on language use can help students improve their skills in these areas.

**Table 12 Common Errors Made by Students in Essay Writing**

Common Errors	Frequency	Rank
Incorrect or wrong grammar	211	4
Incorrect or inappropriate word usage	205	5

Illogical sequencing of ideas	224	3
Incorrect use of punctuation	229	1
Difficulty in sentence construction	228	2

## e. Aspects of Writing

Table 13 shows the aspects of writing that students want to learn or improve. Among the listed aspects, the two highest-ranked are developing a logical sequence of ideas with a frequency of 216 and expanding vocabulary with a frequency of 213. On the other hand, the two lowest-ranked are 'using correct grammar' with a frequency of 7 and 'constructing clearer sentences' with a frequency of 9. This difference in students' preferences indicates their recognition of different levels of writing skills.

The high interest in 'Developing a logical sequence of ideas' shows students' appreciation for higher-level writing skills. According to studies in rhetoric and composition (Connor, 1990), logical organization is essential for effective communication. Well-organized ideas help the reader understand the writer's message and see the connections between different parts of the text. Students may aspire to improve this skill to be more effective in their academic writing.

The high interest in 'Expanding vocabulary' also shows students' recognition of the importance of language in writing. According to studies in vocabulary acquisition (Nation, 2001), a wide vocabulary is essential for expressing ideas more accurately, artistically, and with nuance. Students may aspire to improve their vocabulary to be better at choosing words appropriate to their purpose and audience.

On the other hand, the low interest in 'Using correct grammar' and 'Constructing clearer sentences' may suggest several possible interpretations. Students may think they already have sufficient skills in these areas, or they may not fully understand their importance in effective writing. However, it is important to note that grammar and sentence construction are the foundation of good writing. According to studies in linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), grammar is not just about rules, but also about how language is used to achieve different communicative purposes. Clear sentence construction is essential for the comprehensibility and effectiveness of the text.

The difference in students' interest indicates the need for a balanced approach in teaching writing. It is important to emphasize both higher and lower levels of writing skills to help students become proficient writers.

**Table 13 Aspects of Writing Students Want to Learn or Improve**

Aspect of Writing	Frequency	Rank
Using correct grammar	7	5
Constructing clearer sentences	9	4
Expanding vocabulary	213	2
Developing a logical sequence of ideas	216	1
Using correct punctuation	13	3

## f. What Helps in Essay Writing

Table 14 shows that various supports for learning essay writing are equally important for students, where teacher guidance, additional practice materials, Filipino writing exercises, reading examples, and collaboration all have the same frequency and rank.

This result supports current perspectives in writing pedagogy, which emphasize the multifaceted nature of effective writing instruction. The teacher's role in providing process-focused formative feedback (Graham et al., 2016; Winstone & Carless, 2010), the importance of scaffolding through practice materials (Vygotsky, 1978), the need for deliberate practice in writing (Ericsson & Pool, 2016), the effectiveness of modeling through reading examples (Bandura, 1986), and the benefits of collaborative learning through peer work (Johnson & Johnson, 2009) are all recognized as essential elements.

The result showing equal importance of various supports indicates the need for a holistic and multifaceted approach to writing instruction, where teachers use a variety of strategies to address the diverse needs of students.

**Table 14 What Helps Students with Essay Writing**

What Helps in Writing	Frequency	Rank
Guidance from the teacher (e.g., explanation, feedback)	231	1
Additional practice materials (e.g., guides, worksheets)	231	1
Filipino writing exercises	231	1
Reading essay examples	231	1
Collaboration with classmates or group	231	1

## g. Self-Perception of Proficiency in Writing Filipino Essays

Table 15 presents the students' self-perception of their ability to write Filipino essays. Most students describe themselves as "Good" (52.1%) and "Very Good" (16.5%), while 31.4% describe themselves as "Average." Notably, no one reported "Needs Improvement" or "Struggling." This positive self-perception may be linked to self-efficacy, which is important for academic performance and motivation (Honicke & Broadbent, 2015). However, it is important to consider that self-efficacy does not always perfectly match actual skill, and metacognitive accuracy in self-assessment is critical (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). The absence of students in the lower categories may be due to social desirability bias, instrument sensitivity, or genuinely high skills. The result suggests the need for balanced instruction, which strengthens self-efficacy but also develops metacognitive awareness and accuracy through feedback and self-assessment (Andrade & Heritage, 2013; Boud & Falchikov, 2007).

**Table 15 Self-Perception of Proficiency in Writing Filipino Essays**

Self-Perceived Proficiency	Frequency	Percentage
Very Good	31	16.5
Good	98	52.1
Average	59	31.4
Needs Improvement	0	-
Struggling	0	-
Mean: 1.87 (Occasional)		

## Differences in the Frequency of Writing Filipino Essays When Students are Grouped by Profile

### a. Program Affiliation

Table 16 shows that there is a significant difference in the frequency of writing Filipino essays between the different programs ( $F(2, 228) = 20.188, p < .001$ ). However, the result shows an unexpected pattern,

where students in the Arts program have a higher writing frequency (Mean = 2.27) than students in the Journalism program (Mean = 1.62), which contradicts the expectation that writing would be higher in Journalism due to their focus on writing and communication. This may be due to various factors. First, the understanding of 'essay' may differ across programs; in Journalism, other forms like news articles (which may not be considered essays) might be more frequent, while in Arts, creative writing might be closer to essays. According to genre theory, genre is dynamic and varies by context (Hyon, 2018). Second, there may be differences in disciplinary literacy, where the teaching and use of writing vary across disciplines (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012). Third, the curriculum and teaching in Filipino may differ across programs, with varying assignments and methods. Finally, sampling bias cannot be ruled out. This result indicates the need for further research, such as mixed-methods studies, to better understand the factors influencing the frequency of Filipino essay writing in different programs.

**Table 16. Program Affiliation**

Program	Mean	F(df)	p	Comment/Remark
Science	1.75	20.188(228)	<.001	Reject H0
Journalism	1.62			
Arts	2.27			

## b. Student Age

Table 17 shows the result of the ANOVA on the frequency of writing Filipino essays based on the age of Grade 9 students in Special Curriculum Programs. Although the ANOVA showed no significant difference in writing frequency based on age ( $F(2, 228) = .041, p = .960$ ), it is notable that 14-year-old students showed a slightly higher mean in writing frequency (1.8780) compared to students aged 15 and above (1.8525). This result may contradict the expectation that older students would write more frequently due to their higher level of cognitive development (Garcia, 2018). However, this could be explained by several factors in the context of Special Curriculum Programs. For example, the structured curriculum of these programs may minimize the effect of age on writing frequency, or there may be variability in the curriculum within the programs that is not captured by age. Furthermore, the possibility that the slight difference is a sampling artifact cannot be ruled out. Overall, while the result supports Santos's (2015) study suggesting equal writing opportunities, it adds the nuance that the effect of age on writing frequency may vary depending on the educational context.

**Table 17. Student Age**

Age	Mean	F(df)	p	Comment/Remark
13 & below	1.8333	.041(228)	.960	Accept H0
14	1.8780			
15 & above	1.8525			

## c. Student Gender

Table 18 shows the ANOVA result for the dependent variable, frequency of writing Filipino essays based on gender. Although there was no significant difference in the [dependent variable] between the groups ( $F(2, 228) = 1.904, p = .151$ ), it is notable that the LGBTQ group has the highest mean (2.0172), followed by the female (1.8318) and male (1.8030) groups. This is slightly contrary to the expectation that the

dependent variable might be higher in the female group, which could be linked to studies on verbal ability and writing engagement. For example, although the meta-analysis by Hyde and Linn (1988) shows small differences in overall verbal ability, there are some aspects of language where females show higher proficiency. Furthermore, females may have higher intrinsic motivation and positive attitudes towards writing (Pajares & Valiante, 2001). However, the result suggests that in the context of the study, gender is not a primary predictor of the [dependent variable]. The higher mean of the LGBTQ group may suggest the importance of writing as a means of self-expression and identity formation, supported by Erikson's (1968) theories of identity development and Queen's (2007) queer narratives. Writing may also be a tool for building community and a sense of belonging, consistent with Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). However, due to the limitation in sample size and the lack of qualitative data, this interpretation is preliminary. Further research, especially qualitative, is needed to better understand the role of gender and LGBTQ+ identity in students' writing experiences.

**Table 18. Student Gender**

Gender	Mean	F(df)	p	Comment/Remark
Male	1.8030	1.904(228)	.151	Accept H0
Female	1.8318			
LGBTQ	2.0172			

#### d. Student First Language

The ANOVA shows no significant difference in the frequency of writing Filipino essays based on the students' primary language ( $F(2, 228) = 1.753, p = .066$ ). Although the mean for Tagalog speakers is slightly higher, it is not statistically significant. The researcher initially expected Tagalog speakers to have a higher mean because of the significant influence of the first language used inside and outside the home. Although there is no significant difference, this supports the idea that writing opportunities in Special Curriculum Programs may be consistent, regardless of the first language, as indicated in Tan's (2012) study on language exposure. While Bautista (2005) suggested the influence of the first language, it did not appear as a significant factor in the frequency of writing in this context. The teaching strategies for writing Filipino essays may be effective across different primary language groups in these programs. However, examining the types of errors based on the first language may provide additional information for instruction.

**Table 19. Student First Language**

First Language	Mean	F(df)	p	Comment/Remark
Ibanag	1.8667	1.753(228)	.066	Accept H0
Ilocano	1.7835			
Tagalog	2.0682			

## IV. Differences in Self-Perception of Proficiency in Writing Filipino Essays When Students are Grouped by Profile

### a. Program Affiliation

The ANOVA result ( $F(2, 185) = 15.763, p < .001$ ) shows that there is a significant difference in how students assess their own proficiency in writing Filipino essays based on their program affiliation. It can



be observed that the percentage in self-assessed proficiency is higher for students in the Special Program in the Arts with a mean of 2.5714 and the Special Program in Journalism with a mean of 2.3448 compared to students in the Special Science curriculum with a mean of 1.9216. This suggests that the academic strand may be related to students' confidence in their Filipino writing skills. Programs that may have a greater emphasis on communication and creative expression (such as Arts and Journalism) may result in a higher self-perception or understanding of writing proficiency. This difference in self-perception or understanding of proficiency can be linked to the concept of self-efficacy. While Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory continues to provide a strong foundation, newer research expands our understanding of self-efficacy in the context of academic writing. For example, studies show that writing self-efficacy is a multidimensional construct, including beliefs about ability in various aspects of writing (Bruning & Kauffman, 2016). High writing self-efficacy is associated with greater engagement in writing, better performance, and stronger motivation to persist in facing writing challenges (Graham et al., 2019). Students in Arts and Journalism may have higher self-efficacy due to more frequent exposure to writing tasks and a greater emphasis on self-expression. Furthermore, identity formation may play a role. While Erikson's (1968) work provided a valuable theoretical framework, newer research emphasizes the role of academic identity. Academic identity refers to how students see themselves as learners within a specific academic context. Students in Arts and Journalism may have a stronger academic identity as writers or communicators, which may contribute to a higher self-perception of writing proficiency. Students in Science, on the other hand, may develop a stronger academic identity in other fields, which may result in a lower self-perception in writing. (For academic identity, studies by Stryker may be consulted). It is also important to consider genre awareness. According to studies in genre pedagogy, which expands on genre theory (Hyon, 2018), explicit teaching of the conventions and expectations of different genres is essential for effective writing. Students in Arts and Journalism may be more familiar with various forms of writing, including creative forms and forms of self-expression, which may contribute to their confidence in writing. Genre pedagogy emphasizes the active role of students in learning genres and the importance of metacognitive awareness of genre conventions. This difference in self-perception or understanding of proficiency may affect how students approach Filipino writing tasks. It is important to examine whether this self-assessment reflects their actual writing proficiency and how this can be considered in teaching. Teachers can use strategies to strengthen the self-efficacy of all students, regardless of their program, and to help them develop an accurate assessment of their own skills through explicit genre instruction, constructive feedback, and self-assessment.

**Table 20. Program Affiliation**

Program	Mean	F(df)	p	Comment/Remark
Science	1.9216	15.763(185)	<.001	Reject H0
Journalism	2.3448			
Arts	2.5714			

## b. Student Age

The ANOVA result ( $F(2, 185) = 3.409$ ,  $p = .035$ ) shows that there is a significant difference in how students assess their own proficiency in writing Filipino essays based on their age. The data shows that 14-year-old students (Mean = 2.2246) have the highest percentage of self-assessed writing proficiency compared to younger (13 and below, Mean = 1.8333) and older (15 and above, Mean = 1.9545) students.

This result may support the idea of a mid-adolescence peak in some aspects of self-efficacy, as mentioned in Alonzo and Schutz's (2017) study on Developmental Trends in Writing Self-Efficacy. They suggested that students in the middle of their adolescence may show higher confidence in their abilities before a possible decline in higher secondary levels due to increased academic demands. This difference in self-perception or understanding of proficiency based on age may have implications for how students accept writing challenges and their motivation to improve their skills. It is important to consider the developmental factors that may affect confidence in writing at different ages and how this can be adapted to teaching strategies.

**Table 21. Student Age**

Age	Mean	F(df)	p	Comment/Remark
13 & below	1.8333	3.409(185)	.035	Reject H0
14	2.2246			
15 & above	1.9545			

### c. Student Gender

The ANOVA result ( $F(2, 185) = 1.595$ ,  $p = .206$ ) shows that there is no significant difference in how students assess their own proficiency in writing Filipino essays based on their gender. Although there is a slight difference in the mean scores (Male = 2.0303, Female = 2.2045, LGBTQ = 2.2353), the ANOVA shows that this is not statistically significant. This result may support some studies, such as Hyde and Linn's (2007) meta-analysis on gender similarities in cognitive abilities, which suggests that gender differences in many academic skills, including writing, may be small or non-existent. However, it is important to note that self-perception can be influenced by cultural and social gender expectations, as discussed by Bem (1981) in her Gender Schema Theory. The lack of a significant difference in self-perceived writing proficiency based on gender may indicate that confidence in Filipino writing skills is not primarily shaped by gender in the context of your study. However, it is important to continue to examine whether there are differences in actual writing proficiency and how social constructions of gender may affect students' views of their abilities.

**Table 22. Student Gender**

Gender	Mean	F(df)	p	Comment/Remark
Male	2.0303	1.595(185)	.206	Accept H0
Female	2.2045			
LGBTQ	2.2353			

### d. Student First Language

The ANOVA result ( $F(2, 185) = 1.140$ ,  $p = .322$ ) shows that there is no significant difference in how students assess their own proficiency in writing Filipino essays based on their primary language (Ibanag, Ilocano, Tagalog). Although there is a slight difference in the mean scores (Ibanag = 2.2346, Ilocano = 2.0824, Tagalog = 2.0909), the ANOVA shows that this is not statistically significant. This result may support the idea that exposure to Filipino in the school context, especially in Special Curriculum Programs, may be sufficient to reduce any large differences in self-perceived proficiency that may be caused by

differences in the first language. This can be linked to the concept of "additive bilingualism" discussed by Cummins (1979), where learning a second language does not hinder the development of the first language and may result in similar levels of confidence across different language groups in specific skills. The lack of a significant difference in self-perception or understanding of writing proficiency based on the primary language suggests that confidence in Filipino writing skills may not be significantly influenced by the first language in the study population. However, it is still important to examine whether there are differences in actual writing proficiency and how the first language may affect the types of errors they make.

**Table 23. Student First Language**

First Language	Mean	F(df)	p	Comment/Remark
Ibanag	2.2346	1.140(185)	.322	Accept H0
Ilocano	2.0824			
Tagalog	2.0909			

## Recommendations Based on the Study Results

Based on the results of the study, here is a matrix containing proposed interventions/innovative activities that will develop students' ability to write Filipino essays. This matrix presents a systematic plan for improving Filipino essay writing skills. Based on the possible research findings, it identifies specific problems

## Matrix of Intervention/Innovation for Essay Writing in Filipino

Result of Learning	Challenges in Student Learning	Intervention/Innovation	Objective	Strategies/Activities/Duration	Learning Resources/Materials	Assessment of Learning Effectiveness
Developing Skills in Essay Writing	Difficulty in Practicing Different Types of Essays	Exposure to a Variety of Essays	To broaden students' understanding and experience with different types of essays	* Use of Modules, Session 2 for practicing different types of essays (informative, persuasive, argumentative, etc.) * Guided writing activities (1-8 meetings/sessions)	* Different Modules * Rubric for evaluating essays (can be modified) * Writing prompts (as needed)	Pre-test and post-test of essay quality, observation of student writing, survey of student learning
Difficulty in	Weak pre-writing	Teaching of Pre-	To develop students'	* Use of Modules,	* Different Modules *	Assessment of essay

Forming Ideas for Essay Structure	skills related to essay structure	Writing for Essay Structure	ability to generate and organize ideas for essay structure	Session 1 for the following activities: * Brainstorming * Concept mapping * Outlining * Explicit instruction on essay structure (introduction, body, conclusion) * Graphic organizers	Various graphic organizers as examples (if available) * Video/presentation about essay structure	outlines using graphic organizers, observation of essay structure, self-assessment of learning
Positive Self-Perception	Development of Metacognitive Skills and Self-Assessment	Teaching of Metacognitive and Self-Assessment	To increase the metacognitive awareness and self-assessment skills of the students."	Use the Module, the Reflection section for the following activities: *Reflective writing journals (activities within the module with a set frequency) *Self-assessment checklists (if available in the module) *Setting personal writing goals (if available in the module) <i>Peer assessment with a rubric</i>	Three Module Sessions * Additional self-assessment checklists, rubric for peer assessment, or guide for the portfolio (if needed)	Analysis of the reflective journals, Assessment of the accuracy of self-assessment, Analysis of the portfolio

				<i>(if used in the module)</i> <i>Portfolio assessment</i> <i>(if part of the module)</i> <i>(Weeks 1-9)"</i>		
Enjoyment in Exploring Different Programs	Difficulty in Understanding the Expectations for Writing in Different Disciplines	Integration of Examples from Different Disciplinary Writing	To understand and meet the writing expectations in different disciplines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Use of Modules (Weeks 2-6):</li> <li>* Analysis of reflective journals</li> <li>* Reflective writing journals (submitted per module frequently)</li> <li>* Self-assessment checklists (per module)</li> <li>* Peer-assessment checklists (per module)</li> <li>* Portfolio development (collection of outputs per module)</li> <li>* Focused assessment (based on the activity within the module, Weeks 1-9)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Different Modules</li> <li>* Self-assessment checklists</li> <li>* Peer-assessment checklists</li> <li>* Rubric for self-assessment (per module)</li> <li>* Rubric for peer assessment (per module)</li> <li>* Portfolio assessment guide (per module)</li> </ul>	Observation of reflective journals, accuracy of self-assessment, peer assessment, assessment of portfolio
Ease in Understanding the	Difficulty in Meeting the Writing	Interdisciplinary Approach to Writing	To meet the writing standards and	* Use of Modules (entire module):	* Different Modules * Examples of	Analysis of interdisciplinary writing outputs,



Different Programs	Standards Expected in Different Disciplines		expectations in different disciplines	Presenting and discussing information on the writing conventions of different disciplines * Providing examples of academic writing from different disciplines * Collaborative work among teachers from different departments (planning and teaching writing across disciplines, Weeks 4-6, if possible, guest speakers) * Writing activities that integrate content and writing styles from different subject areas (integrated writing time, Weeks 7-8)	academic writing from different disciplines * Rubric specific to the discipline (if available) * Guest speaker materials (if available)	observation of students' ability to apply knowledge from different disciplines in their writing, assessment of academic writing based on the standards of different genres
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## Conclusions

1. The majority of students in the ninth grade Special Curriculum Programs only occasionally write essays in Filipino, despite the expected higher level of academic performance in these programs. This suggests that even in programs with a special curriculum, opportunities for regular practice in Filipino essay writing may be insufficient.
2. **Motivation and Academic Performance in Special Programs:** Obtaining high grades is the primary motivation for essay writing, even among students in Special Curriculum Programs who are expected to have a deeper intrinsic motivation for learning. This may be due to the high competition in these programs and the pressure to maintain high academic standing.
3. **Cognitive Challenges in Writing in Special Programs:** Even among students in Special Curriculum Programs with higher thinking skills, generating and organizing ideas remains the most difficult aspect of Filipino essay writing. This implies that these skills require special attention and instruction, regardless of the students' academic ability level.
4. **Errors in Writing in Special Programs:** Errors in Punctuation/Mechanics and Sentence Construction are still common among students in Special Curriculum Programs, indicating that fundamental writing skills should not be assumed to be mastered.
5. **Aspiration for Improvement in Special Programs:** Students in Special Curriculum Programs aspire to improve their idea organization and vocabulary, demonstrating their recognition of the importance of higher-level writing skills for their academic journey.
6. **Effect of Guidance and Materials in Special Programs:** Teacher guidance and instructional materials remain essential in helping students in Special Curriculum Programs write essays, affirming the critical role of teacher support in developing writing skills.
7. **Belief in Writing Self-Efficacy in Special Programs:** The majority of students in Special Curriculum Programs have a positive perception of their Filipino essay writing skills, which may contribute to their academic confidence. However, it is necessary to ensure that this is balanced with a realistic assessment of their own skills.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended to further develop the formal Filipino essay writing skills of students in the Special Curriculum Programs of Isabela National High School:

For Students in Special Curriculum Programs:

1. Embrace the challenge of writing in Filipino as an opportunity to expand your language skills and enhance your academic expression abilities.
2. Seek opportunities to write in Filipino, not only for Filipino assignments but also in other subjects.
3. Allocate time to reflect on your writing process, identify your strengths and weaknesses, and set goals for improvement.
4. Make good use of the resources provided by your teachers, such as books, dictionaries, online writing guides, and writing centers (if available).
5. Participate in discussions and debates in Filipino to expand your vocabulary, improve your idea organization skills, and become more comfortable using Filipino in intellectual conversations.

For Teachers in Special Curriculum Programs:

1. Provide differentiated instruction in essay writing that addresses the diverse skill levels and needs of students in the Special Curriculum Programs.
2. Integrate Filipino with Program-Specific Subjects: Include the teaching of Filipino and essay writing in the specific content areas of the Special Curriculum Program.
3. Emphasize the development of Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in Filipino, such as critical analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, through essay writing activities.
4. Encourage Student Collaboration and Feedback in writing to help students learn from each other and develop their self-assessment skills.
5. Utilize technology to support essay writing instruction, such as online writing tools, collaborative platforms, and digital resources.

For the Curriculum/Special Curriculums Programs:

1. Align the Filipino curriculum with the specific goals and outcomes of the Special Curriculum Programs.
2. Emphasize the provision of authentic writing tasks in Filipino that are relevant to the real world and the interests of the students.
3. Provide continuous professional development for Filipino teachers to enhance their skills in teaching writing within the context of Special Curriculum Programs.
4. Use assessment for learning in writing to provide regular feedback to students and to guide instruction.
5. Encourage research and innovation in the teaching of Filipino within the context of Special Curriculum Programs to continuously improve the quality of Filipino education.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards to ensure the protection of the participants and the integrity of the research. Before data collection began, the students and their parents or guardians were given a proper explanation regarding the purpose and significance of the study, as well as their right to decide whether they wanted to participate. Parental consent was obtained through a written consent form before the study was conducted. The researcher also wrote to the Filipino teachers before conducting the study and sought permission from the school principal.

All personal information of the students will be treated as confidential and will not be disclosed under any circumstances. Only the data related to the essay analysis were used, and the results were presented in a way that did not single out any individual student. No personal details will be released in the publications associated with the research.

The students had the right to withdraw their consent and stop their participation at any time without any effect on their academic standing. All steps were taken to ensure that there was no harm to the participants, and their welfare and privacy were the primary considerations throughout the research process.

Finally, the results of the research were used solely for the purpose of improving the writing skills of the students and not for any other purpose.

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