



English Writing Problems and Remedies of Bangladeshi Undergraduate Learners

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Abstract

English writing proficiency is the most commonly used metric for assessing student performance across nearly all educational levels. In Bangladesh, university students encounter significant challenges with English composition. The study was conducted with a sample of 100 participants. These learners engaged in writing practice at various stages of collegiate preparation; however, this extended practice did not yield substantial improvements in their writing skills. **Although** grammatically accurate, their compositions exhibit repetition, inadequate organization, parallelism, brevity, lack of variety, imprecise language, and insufficient information, resulting in incoherent writing. This research aimed to investigate the English writing difficulties of Bangladeshi students. For this purpose, first-year students from two universities, one public and one private, were evaluated. To identify the barriers, data were collected using open-ended questionnaires and written samples. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten instructors to reflect their perspectives on students' English writing issues. The analysis revealed that many of the students' challenges were attributable to inappropriate writing approaches. Furthermore, recommendations were formulated based on these findings. This study can assist educators and curriculum developers in addressing problems and devising strategies to enhance students' English writing proficiency. **Keywords:** English Writing; Undergraduate Learners; Writing Difficulties; Educational Remedies; Bangladesh

INTRODUCTION

In Bangladesh, the students get familiar with English language skills at the very outset of their academic journey. Their ABC knowledge starts with writing from pre-schooling. The education system of Bangladesh comprises four levels for example: primary level including nursery and kindergarten, secondary, higher secondary and the tertiary level education. Before their entrance to tertiary level education, the students have to cross at least twelve grades successfully. At the tertiary level, students are required to complete a substantial number of writing assignments, encompassing academic paragraphs, essays, and various types of scholarly papers and reports. Consequently, it is generally anticipated that students will demonstrate proficiency in writing at this advanced level, exhibiting coherence in their compositions and presenting well-organized thoughts and ideas.

As a foreign language, the first year at university level, the students are engaged in practicing the basic skills of English language emphasizing on English writing skill. In a typical classroom of EFL (English as a Foreign Language), teachers motivate learners free-hand writing with huge concentration on grammatically correct sentences. To improve grammatically correct sentences, students involve in writing independently formal and informal letters, emails, paragraph, essays, summarizing literary texts and so on. Actually, the students are evaluated through different writing tasks. Conventional writing instruction methods fail to improve grammatical precision or fluency. They propose that focusing on the substance of students' writing can enhance their skills. In contrast, students learning to write often try to convert their thoughts from their mother tongue, rigidly following grammar rules. They grapple with word choice, lack strategic planning abilities, rarely edit or restructure their ideas, and typically submit their initial draft as the final work. In a study at tertiary level EFL learners (Md. et al., 2023) examined that the learners writing proficiency is poor especially in language and vocabulary. To address poor writing performance, it is essential to correctly identify the root problems and their origins, and then tackle them effectively.

Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the common writing problems among Bangladeshi tertiary level students. The challenges inherent in developing proficient writing skills are not confined to native English speakers, but extend globally to a diverse cohort of students learning English as a second or foreign language. Despite the widespread availability of English composition courses, many learners exhibit suboptimal writing abilities, resulting in lower academic performance, increased errors in assignments, construction of run-on sentences, and creation of incoherent paragraphs (Bex, 2020)

Moreover, students often adeptly mask their deficiencies in reading and writing during high school and college, making it difficult for educators to identify their weaknesses until assessments are submitted or exams taken (Norrish, 2021). This concealment perpetuates a cycle of inadequate writing skills that becomes apparent only in later academic stages. Academic writing imposes numerous demands on students, necessitating the incorporation of specific practices to mitigate the difficulties and complications in various writing tasks (Kroll, 2020; Silva, 2021). Additionally, the effectiveness of English composition courses is influenced not only by individual strategies, but also by the methods and techniques employed by instructors, with certain approaches proving more effective for some students than others (Truscott, 2021). This diversity in learning styles underscores the need for alternative strategies tailored to students' varied needs.

Despite the significance of these challenges, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding of the specific writing difficulties encountered by students learning English as a second or foreign language, particularly within the context of foreign language departments. The existing literature highlights the need for empirical research to investigate the nature and extent of these challenges, identify effective teaching methods, and explore collaborative approaches between students and teachers to enhance writing skills (Hamid, 2022; Nada, 2021; Zamel, 2022).

Therefore, this study aims to address these gaps by conducting a detailed investigation of the challenges faced by English language learners, with a focus on their impact on academic performance and potential strategies for improvement. Understanding these challenges is essential for educators and institutions to tailor effective interventions and support mechanisms to ultimately foster enhanced writing proficiency among students. The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. What are the writing problems that university students face when writing in English language?

2. What techniques or procedures can be used to help students overcome these writing problems?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Jaramillo and Medina (2011) targeted their motion studies on the development of writing quick descriptive texts in English. The consequences indicated that most of the limitations faced by inexperienced persons were related to the development of sentences, grammatical errors, and boundaries in reading comprehension. The researchers stated that inexperienced persons ought to gift a simple essay when they have a clean idea about the topic, they have been specializing in it. Furthermore, the investigators recommended that the nice manner to enhance writing talent change into an exercise.

Jokhio (2020) pointed out that a much less interesting and inappropriate writing topic is an early barrier to proper writing. He also mentioned that poor study dependency affects the loss of thought. Msanjila (2005) referred to the extraordinary subject in which students face writing difficulties in expressing themselves systematically and logically. In addition, students mix English systems and expressions with those of L1. Afrin (2016) stated that scholars' overly dependency on teachers and their chronic use of first language inside the school room prevent their great writing. She also pointed out that personalities between college students clash, students' tardiness, terrible guidance, robust dominance, inattentiveness, and demotivation make writing terrible.

At BA levels, students are expected that they should have been able to produce creative writing whereas their writing shows degradation conditions even after much practices. Uddin (2014) stated that writing is the most emphasized but the least developed English language skill among novice learners in Bangladesh. At the tertiary level, this situation is not unique. It is noteworthy that the importance of writing is not limited to liberal arts or social sciences, but is also applicable in technology and scientific disciplines. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) assert that success within relevant fields depends on how effectively students manage various writing genres such as summaries, essays, reviews, and others. This is applicable to students of all disciplines, including both English-major and non-major students. University students may encounter numerous challenges in their English writing as L2 writers. In this context, Alam (2023) observed that it's far regularly discovered that scholars may also have information about vocabulary and grammatical elements (e.g. the use of the proper tenses, collocation, and prepositions) however face issues in writing coherently and re-structuring thoughts after comparing them.

Various studies have focused on the writing error analysis of ESL novices in distinct language and lifestyle contexts. Seyabi and Tuzlukova (2014) examined the gaps in English language teaching and learning that exist between public primary schools and universities within the Sultanate of Oman. They also identify that "the majority of students, representing each instructional context, warfare with lexical and content material factors of writing; however, university students' perceptions of the sort of issues they stumble upon and of the strategies to address them are more assertive." Hossain (2021; 2024) studied that proper corrective feedback heals their errors in English writing.

In different languages and cultural contexts, rookies make many errors. Nada (2021) empirically examined blunders' evaluation of ESL newcomers of Arabic L1 history that includes a large total situation of Arabic novices' tendencies, classes, and frequency of error-making in ESL mastering. Hamid (2007) and Aktar et al. (2022) identifies extraordinary tiers of scholar mistakes, arguing that teachers' comments aren't always workable with the inexperienced people meant, which means. He indicated that there ought to be effective methods of correcting student writing with workable feedback.

After conducting study on Ethiopian students, Seyoum, et al. (2022) showed that Inadequate writing proficiency stems from a combination of factors: ineffective pedagogical approaches, insufficient allocated time, and excessively large student groups. Research conducted by Javed and Umer (2013) indicated that students face significant challenges in their academic writing due to deficiencies in vocabulary usage, idea expression, and grammatical accuracy. Additional areas of weakness included the use of prepositions, correct spelling, irregular verbs, articles, punctuation, and affixes. As a result, numerous researchers have noted that writing in a second language presents considerable difficulties for most learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). In Bangladesh specifically, undergraduate students exhibit a concerning tendency to make errors at both syntactic and lexical levels. Various researchers have contributed valuable insights into effective methods for teaching writing skills.

Aktar et al. (2022) observed that in the main demanding situations, ESL students stumble upon differentiating between written and spoken phrases and phrases, reviewing grammar, including problem-verb agreement, and becoming a member of sentences collectively to make a coherent paragraph. Producing thoughts on their topics can also hinder college students from moving on with their writing (Al Murshidi, 2014). Another problem is examining and writing in their own phrases. This can lead to grammatical errors, which can also make students reluctant to paraphrase and summarize others' paintings (Alam 2023; Aktar et al., 2022) as substitutes; they only copied and pasted. Consistent with writing ability in an overseas language is complicated and difficult to study; it no longer has the potential to apply structures but also conceptual of assorted talents inclusive of stylistic and mechanical ability. (Taye and Mengesha, 2024) found that undergraduate students writing problems lay in backwardness to modern techniques and technologies. The ability to produce sentences and use language effectively is known as stylistic skill, while mechanical proficiency refers to the correct utilization of writing conventions such as punctuation and spelling. An expanding field of research has shed light on the significance of skill in academic success.

To mark sentence level constraints, Khan and Akter (2011) identified word and sentence level mistakes in English writing among undergraduate college students in this regard, they advised, "in the training curriculum, aims and goals should be as it should be designed and utilized to make sure it's far efficiently linking the praxis of writing that's unavoidably vital in today's English teaching and mastering context." In a study Hossain (2020) found that college students' collaborative learning in the classroom increases learners' capacity of creative skills. Ahmed (2023) found that Bangladeshi college students are liable to make mistakes in English articles. He pointed out that errors occurred because of variations between Bangla and English. In her study, Mustaque (2014) revealed that undergraduate college students' writing samples show innumerable mistakes, lexicosemantic mistakes, mistakes with verbs, prepositions, and articles. She illustrates that contributors write without any planning or purposelessness. In another observation, Fahmida (2010) identified Bangladeshi tertiary stage students, non-unusual errors in their academic essays. Distinctive types of errors are spelling, punctuation, and organizational problems. She recommends that more extensive English guides be there before they take the essential direction of their respective location.

(Grabe and Kaplan (2014) introduced the concept of the rhetorical triangle as a framework for understanding the writing process. This model comprises four essential components: the reader, who consumes the final written work; the writer, who creates the message; the contextual circumstances; and the text itself. These elements interact to form the foundation of effective written communication. Each author and reader must recollect these types of factors while writing and studying, respectively, for each to perform a widespread role in the adventure

towards that means. Writing is a complicated metacognitive pastime that draws on a man or woman's know-how, basic talent, techniques, and the ability to coordinate a couple of techniques. (Younus, 2024) examined that English language teachers' professional development impacts on students' learning proficiency including writing skills. Therefore, it is clear that students of tertiary level still have some problems on English writing skill which is totally unexpected at this stage of education.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The study comprised participants exclusively from the Department of English at two universities in Bangladesh: one public and one private. A total of 100 students were randomly selected from the first year of the, first semester, all of whom had successfully completed Basic English (101) and English Composition (102) courses. These courses specifically target students seeking additional language practice to enhance their command of English. The primary objectives of these courses are to refine students' writing abilities in English, emphasizing formal correctness and instilling grammatical proficiency crucial for both reading and writing. Within the participant pool, 52 students belonged to a public university, while 48 were affiliated with a private university in Bangladesh. The gender distribution of the students was 58 male and 42 females. The age of the participants ranged from 17 to 20 years. Importantly, these learners had previously completed secondary and higher secondary levels, in which English was a mandatory subject.

To gather comprehensive insights into the participants' perspectives, the researchers administered a questionnaire consisting of 10 open-ended statements to selected students from both institutions. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten teachers actively instructing the aforementioned courses in the English Department. The teachers selected for the interviews represented a wealth of experience, encompassing both public and private universities. This group comprised one professor, one associate professor, four assistant professors, and four lecturers. The inclusion of both male and female students and teachers was purposeful, with participants chosen randomly to ensure diverse representation. This approach aims to facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the research findings by encompassing various perspectives from both genders.

Data Collection instruments

Data were collected through questionnaire, writing sample analysis and interview.

Survey Questionnaire

Data collection employed a survey questionnaire (Appendix A) with 10 open-ended questions and predetermined response options, targeting research inquiries and specific topics (Uddin et al., 2020). The questionnaire was distributed to 100 students, all of whom completed and returned it. Students were informed that providing their names was optional. The questions sought to elicit information on students' perspectives, challenges, views, and motivations within the English Department, particularly focusing on writing difficulties and coping strategies. Results were quantified as percentages, and analysis of responses identified the causes of their writing challenges.

Writing Samples

To obtain real picture of writing problems, writing samples (Appendix C) were collected from the target students. Data included four descriptive topics. Participants were

informed that their samples would not be graded, ensuring they felt at ease while writing. Students were instructed to start with prewriting before completing a final draft, choosing from four topics: the significance of their English writing abilities, women's empowerment, tourism in Bangladesh, and campus violence. This encouraged free expression and clear articulation of ideas. The samples highlighted students' writing difficulties. Permissions were obtained from course instructors at two universities to collect samples and questionnaires during class breaks.

In-depth Interview

Ten teachers who were offering courses to first-year undergraduate students and were currently teaching were interviewed to determine their perceptions of the students' writing problems in the English Department. Each interview lasted approximately ten minutes. The interviews were conducted face to face. In-depth interview questions have been included in the (Appendix B).

Data Analysis

The collected quantitative data were statistically analyzed. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Finally, both datasets were triangulated, compared, and contrasted in the discussion part.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings from Survey Questionnaire

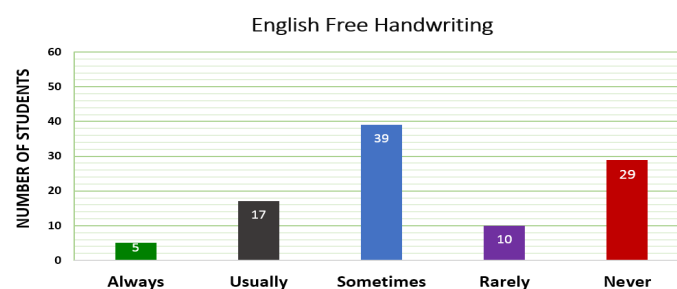


Figure 1: Do you practice English Free Hand Writing?

As shown in Figure 1, 29% of students never practice English Free Handwriting, whereas only 5% of learners always practice English Free Handwriting, 17% of students usually practice it, and 39% of students sometimes practice English Free Handwriting. On the other hand, 10% of the learners rarely practiced it. Although the learners know that practice makes a man perfect, they practice it less. As a result, they have poor examination scores. Only 20% of students always practiced English writing.

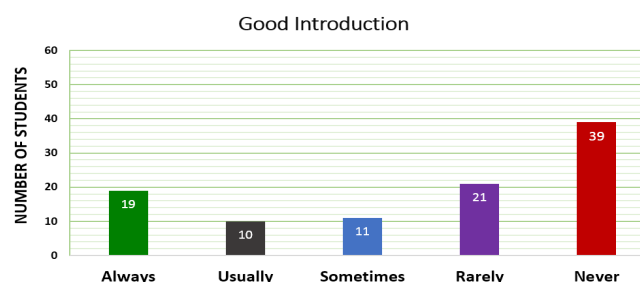


Figure 2: Are you able to write a good introduction?

Based on questionnaire responses, almost 80% (79 out of 100) of students could write a good introduction, whereas only 19 of them could write well. They were unable to define the topic and

portrayed it clearly starting in a written document. This proves that the learners could not hold the attention of the readers.

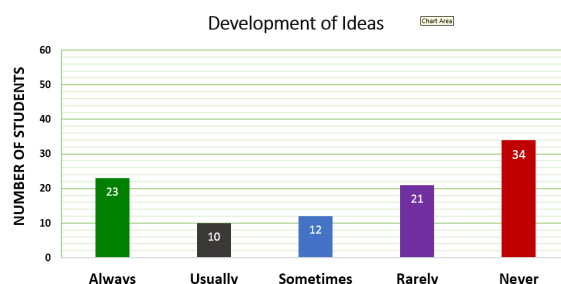


Figure 3: Can you develop your ideas when you write a paragraph or essay?

The body or the development of ideas is the core component of a composition. This is the main body of the writing. 23% of the students could not develop ideas in their writing. They always fail to arrange their bodies of writing sequentially. For this reason, these learners are unable to maintain cohesion and coherence when writing English compositions. However, only 34% of learners did not make mistakes in developing the body of their English writing. Ten of the students responded that they usually decorate their bodies, and 12% responded that they try to maintain the sequence of developing ideas. 21% of learners were rarely able to write their bodies properly. This is because of their disinterest in and lack of practice in English writing (Hasan & Ibrahim, 2017; Hasan et al., 2020; Hasan et al., 2018, Hasan & Labonya, 2022).

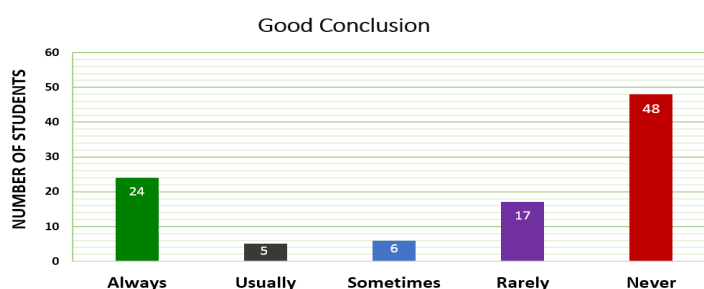


Figure 4: Does your writing bear a good conclusion?

Like the introduction and body of composition writing, the terminator or conclusion is also very important. However, the study clarifies that many learners always fail to write standard conclusions. 24% of the students could conclude their writing properly. In contrast, 48% reported that they lacked good writing terminators.



Figure 5: Do you think that your writing contains grammatical mistakes?

As shown in Figure 5, 46% of students always made grammatical mistakes. This is a very poor number. It is the general conception of all people that university students are proficient in grammar. They must have the proper knowledge, at least in terms of basic grammar. The usual number of respondents was 19, while only 20 students did not make any grammatical mistakes. On the contrary, seven students confirmed that they rarely made grammatical mistakes, which is

very close to being a grammatical mistake maker. Finally, it was observed that eight students sometimes made grammatical mistakes. As English grammar is one of the core components of English, all learners are expected to know at least the basic rules of grammar.

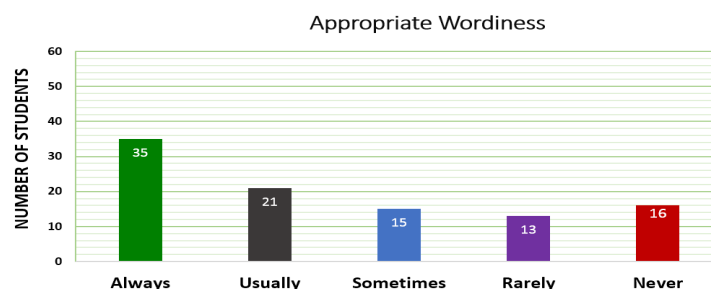


Figure 6: Can you use suitable words in the sentences?

The term "wrong use of words" denotes the inappropriate application of certain terms in specific contexts, such as pairing "do" with "favor" or "draw" with "conclusion." Research indicated that many students frequently make such errors. 35% of students always used appropriate words in their composition writing, while 16% of students never used appropriate words, and 13% rarely used proper words in the proper place. Of these, 21% usually use, and the rest (15%) sometimes use appropriate words when they write any English composition.

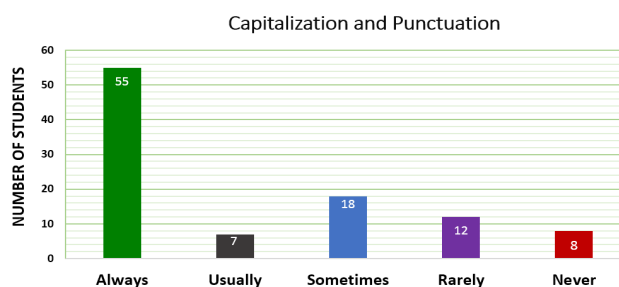


Figure 7: Do your writing has problems on capitalization and punctuation?

Figure 8 indicates that 12% of students rarely understood proper punctuation placement, with 40% having difficulty distinguishing between colons and semicolons. Furthermore, 35% occasionally grasped comma usage, and 40% sometimes used periods or question marks correctly. Additionally, 35% never used apostrophes for contractions or possessive forms, while 50% did not use quotation marks correctly.

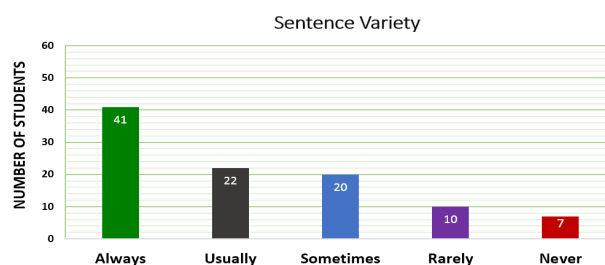


Figure 8: Do you have sentence variety in your writing?

Figure 8 shows that 41% of students' writing contains sentence variety, 22% of students' writing contains the usual variety of sentences, and 20% of students sometimes write their composition

with sentence variation. It is 10% of students who rarely do sentence variation, and 7% of learners never have sentence variation in their writing composition. A good piece of writing usually contains sentence variation, meaning simple, complex, and compound sentences will lie in it (Hasan et al., 2018, Hasan & Labonya, 2026).

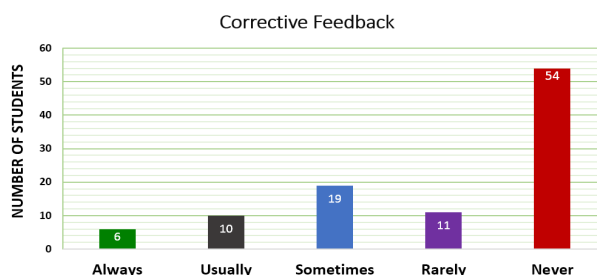


Figure 9: Do you get corrective feedback from your elders, parents and teachers?

Figure 9 shows that 54% of students did not receive corrective feedback and 11% of students rarely received corrective feedback. Thus, both rarely and never respondents constituted 65% of the total. Thus, it is clear that most students did not receive corrective feedback on English writing. Nineteen percent of students sometimes received corrective feedback, whereas the usual number of students receiving corrective feedback was only 10.

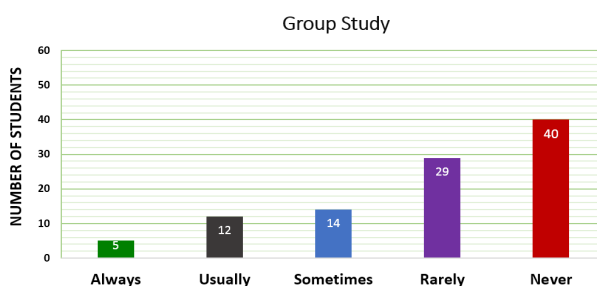


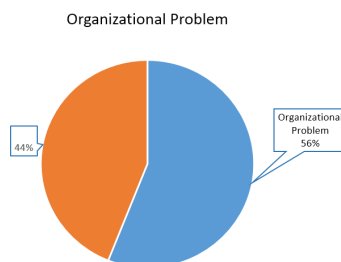
Figure 10: Do you do group study on writing problems?

Group studies help learners to be clear on any obscure and complex topics. This is a part and parcel of English writing skills. Only 5% of students studied forums to practice English writing. If they share their views on writing problems, sheer resolves can be created. However, from the survey, it was seen that 40% of students never do group studies, and 29% of students rarely conduct group studies. Only a few students sometimes performed group studies (14%). Five percent of students always make study forums to practice, and 12% students usually do it. These findings are consistent with those of Hasan and Ibrahim (2017; Hasan et al. (2020); Hasan et al. (2018).

Findings from the writing sample

This study shows that English writing presents significant challenges for students. Understanding a language's grammar is crucial, as grammar forms its framework, and vocabulary adds substance. Analysis of students' written work revealed various errors, indicating difficulty with both structural and grammatical elements. These mistakes were quantified and presented numerically.

a) Organizational Problem



Analysis of the writing samples indicated participants struggled to develop clear concepts, brainstorm ideas, and present relevant information. Their work lacked organization and coherence, often including unrelated thoughts. Disorganized ideas present a major hurdle in English composition. Chart 1 shows that 44% of students fail to structure their writing effectively, resulting in a lack of cohesion and logical flow within paragraphs.

b) Error in Spelling

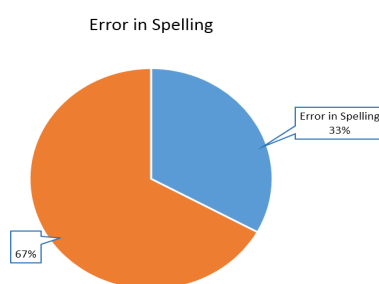
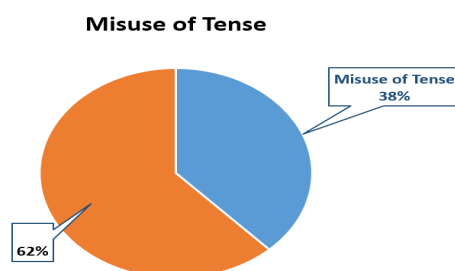


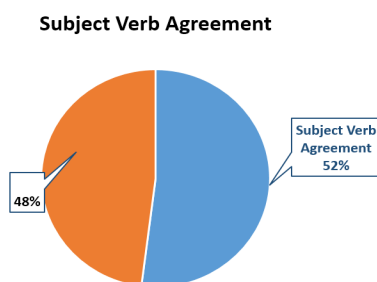
Figure 2 shows that spelling errors were the most common writing issue in this study, comprising 430 (33%) of the observed problems, ranking second among 14 categories. Students often misspelled words based on pronunciation, making errors such as omitting, adding, transposing, or substituting letters, e.g., "writting" for "writing" and "grammaer" for "grammar." These mistakes likely resulted from first language (L1) interference. In Bangla, students learn to spell words orthographically rather than phonetically, which is believed to cause incorrect English spellings.

c) Misuse of Tense



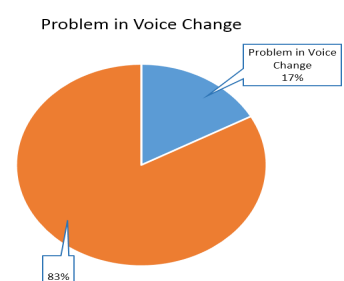
The second most common writing challenge for students was incorrect verb tense usage (287 (38%)). Many students were unaware of their inconsistent use of present and past tenses within sentences or paragraphs. English tenses, with their multiple forms and nuanced uses, often pose difficulties. For instance, the past simple tense can sometimes indicate future scenarios: "If I had wings, I would fly in the sky." Thus, many students struggled to choose the correct tense to convey their intended meaning accurately.

d) Subject-verb-agreement



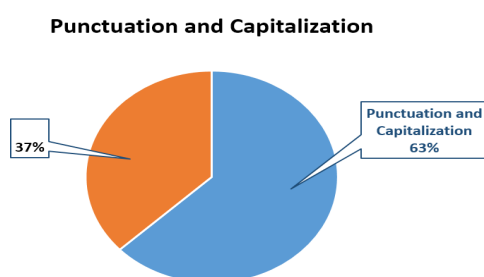
Students have consistently been taught the importance of subject-verb agreement, yet a significant number of errors (405, or 52%) persist in this area. Common mistakes include using plural verbs with singular subjects and vice versa. In Bangladesh, major natural attractions include Cox's Bazar, Rangamati, and Sylhet.

e) Problem in active and passive sentences



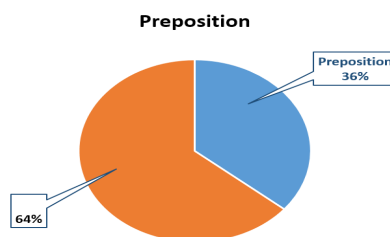
Some students made mistakes in active and passive voice 114 (17%). They used an active voice, which could be a passive voice. On the contrary, they used a passive voice where it was supposed to be an active voice, for example, Bangladesh has given all everything beautiful nature (Bangladesh has been gifted with beautiful nature). This proves that learners have a poor knowledge of voice.

f) Punctuation and Capitalization



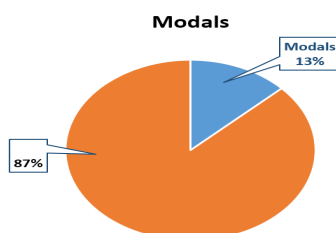
In attempting to create complex sentences, some students unintentionally generated sentence fragments. Misuse of punctuation led to many fragmented sentences, run-on sentences, and comma splices. At times, students' lengthy sentences became cumbersome due to incorrect punctuation and capitalization. Punctuation and capitalization errors represented 315 (63%) of the students' mistakes.

g) Preposition



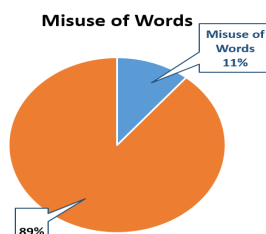
Most of the students misused preposition and the total number was 311 (36%). Even unnecessary use preposition made the writing vague; for example, because it is important to us (because it is important for us).

h) Modals



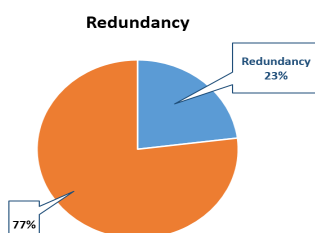
From the record of the writing sample, the researcher found that 13% of the learners used wrong modal verbs and the total number of errors was 206. They did not know the general use of can, could, may, might, shall, should, will, would, have to, have to, had to, ought to, etc. Learners failed to correctly use the modals. They used 'should' where they had to use can, e.g., "If we are good at English writing skills, we should benefit" (If we are good at English writing skills, we can be benefited/could be benefited).

i) Misplacement of words in sentences



The students' writing showed native language interference, leading to frequent translation errors from Bangla to English, such as "we injoy every situation in our country" (meaning: "We enjoy every place/spot in our country"). Additionally, they often used inappropriate words or phrases that did not enhance the meaning. Errors related to word misuse and incorrect word choices totaled 106 (11%).

j) Redundancy



Redundancy is another obstacle in English writing skills. From the writing samples of the learners, it is clear that they are not aware of redundancy when they write any composition. For example, “Bangladesh has given everything beautiful nature”. The total number of mistakes made regarding redundancy was 103 (23%).

Table 1: Classification of writing problems and percentage per category

Category of writing problems	Frequencies of writing problems	Percentage
Organizational problem	430	44%
Error in spelling	379	33%
Misuse of tense	287	38%
Subject-verb-agreement	405	52%
Voice	114	17%
Punctuation & Capitalization	315	63%
Preposition	311	36%
Modals	206	13%
Misuse of words	106	11%
Redundancy	103	23%

Findings from Interview

Upon concluding semi-structured interviews, participants' responses were quantified and expressed as percentages. Diverse data were collected from ten academic staff members, including one professor, one associate professor, five assistant professors, and three lecturers. All participants identified grammatical deficiencies as the primary challenge faced by students.

- a. Limited vocabulary and lack of motivation hinder English writing proficiency. Students often exhibit passive behavior in the classroom, refraining from active participation or expressing their writing challenges. They typically avoid seeking clarification or assistance from instructors, choosing to remain silent.
- b. A significant concern is students' inadequate knowledge and understanding, including unfamiliarity with the writing process and methodologies for approaching topics. Additionally, they often struggle to elaborate on supporting details in their work. One teacher said, “When I ask students to write about any topic, they take it lightly. They simply gathered irrelevant ideas carelessly and hastily. They cannot concentrate on expressing their ideas clearly. They think that this writing piece will not be counted for grades.”
- c. The instructors anticipate that the students scarcely practices writing outside the classroom even for their assigned assignments. This is a major problem for students because this practice makes them weaker writers. They simply write in the classroom and exam hall. Another teacher said, ‘It’s true that most of the students always try to avoid writing into the classroom. They request an assignment or homework, but we should make them practice the given topic in the classroom. This will help a lot.”
- d. Teachers believe that students’ educational background plays a major role in their writing weaknesses. In Bangladesh, most students are from the Bangla medium, and curriculum designs are exam-oriented. This is why they felt comfortable with Bangla writing.
- e. Memorization is the only tool to obtain good grades for Bengali medium students, which hampers their English writing capabilities.

- f. Most respondents (90%) stated that their main focus was on covering semester material and delivering presentations, with time constraints significantly hindering their ability to address individual students' writing issues.
- g. A semester/trimester system was identified by 58% of educators (n = 7) as a source of excessive stress for students.
- h. Ten teachers (83%) stated that students were more concerned about their major course, and one of the most common allegations from students was that they do not have much time to study their non-English major course and always show excuses for not improving their writing skills. They used to find out how to manage to obtain a medium grade in an English course. Thus, they become weak writers and do not feel comfortable studying at an English-medium university.

Suggestions

The following measures could be undertaken to upgrade writing proficiency of the tertiary level learners.

a) Modern Approaches

To develop writing proficiency, multilayered approaches including innovative teaching methodologies, integration of technology in language teaching and comprehension of basics of English writing skills. (Meza et al., 2024) recommended visual aids and digital resources that stimulate students and motivate them to practice writing willingly. English writing problems could be removed by engaging learners in group works that promotes critical thinking and fosters creativity (Hue & Lan, 2024). Prioritizing digital tools like Storyboard (Suryani et al., 2024) proposed to employ students in project-based learning that change attitudes to writing skills. In another study, (Hasbullah et al., 2023) examined that intelligences (e.g., linguistic, visual, kinesthetic) removes writing anxiety. Updated assessment policies can reduce writing complexities (Ismail et al., 2021).

b) Points of Primary Importance

Pre-session courses can be helpful in preparing students for the main courses by equipping them with the necessary skills. A solid foundation is laid by providing appropriate guidance and encouragement from kindergarten through the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC). Frequent observations aid in tracking the development and identifying the problem areas. Engagement is increased in interactive classes, which makes learning more enjoyable. Gamification or fun learning apps, such as Kahoot, could increase motivation and escalate writing skill proficiency in the classroom (Hossain & Younus, 2024). Students learn how to cut out superfluous words while still gaining valuable English vocabulary knowledge. Both an understanding of phrase structures and firm command of fundamental grammar are essential. Acquiring an error-correction mindset aids student in recognizing and fixing errors, and comprehending mother-tongue interference can improve language learning. To become proficient, one must practice often and consistently, in addition to developing writing and reading habits. Understanding syntax facilitates imitation and clearer communication (Hasan & Ibrahim, 2017; Hasan et al., 2020; Hasan et al., 2018, Hasan & Labonya, 2022).

c) Points of Secondary Importance

It is imperative for outlaw coaching centers and guidebooks to improve the quality of the educational experience and promote self-directed learning. A more precise evaluation of students' abilities can be obtained by changing the current junior-testing procedure. Giving teachers a good wage is a powerful way to encourage commitment and dedication to work. Encouraging student participation requires a classroom climate that is conducive to learning.

Assigned teachers receive ongoing training to guarantee that they are knowledgeable about their current teaching practices. It is critical that students comprehend how to organize their thoughts logically when writing. Instructors should be trained to handle behavioral issues with students, especially during adolescence. Collaboration between academic staff and administrators at universities is essential to creating regulations that support discipline and a welcoming learning environment.

d) Teachers' Approach

- **Classroom Consideration:** Student-to-student learning can be significantly enhanced through collaborative writing projects. Different students bring different skills to the table and after a 10-minute writing activity, but all come away with learning something new from their peers. Some students may be more creative, others may have a richer lexicon, and some may know more about how different grammatical constructs can be used for different narrative purposes. Such collaborative tasks have the potential to enrich students' learning experiences and should be frequently used in language teaching.
- **Group Activities:** Two main issues often emerge during team activities. One issue arises when teams are too large or have substantial skill differences, leading to a few students handling most of the work while others are excluded. The other concern is the potential for off-topic discussions during group sessions. Nonetheless, both challenges can be effectively managed and mitigated.
- **Diverse skills:** For advanced groups that finish tasks quickly, the instructor will offer additional assignments like expanding their writing or incorporating more complex vocabulary. In mixed-ability groups, the teacher will assign roles such as note-taker, grammar checker, or content evaluator to ensure equal participation, preventing exclusion or academic lag. Ting-Xiang, Zhou (2019) suggested to add updated texts and follow modern teaching approach because the text books lacks in dedicated writing sections that lead to shallow writing skills.
- **Group size:** The teacher will keep groups 3-4 for most writing tasks.
- **Educators can use peer evaluation forms to tackle student disengagement.** These tools allow group members to assess each other's contributions, including their own, which may encourage participation from reluctant individuals.
- **Writing Ethics:** When students write, they are expected to write from their own competence. They were not supposed to copy the others. If they steal from others' writings, they are accused of plagiarism. On rare occasions, a student may cheat by doing any of the following.
 - a) Intellectual thieving peer or someone's assignments
 - b) Copying from literary texts
 - c) Using online tool for translation
 - d) Copying native speakers' texts.
- **Computer-Mediated Communication:** In the past decade, digital communication platforms have become more common, allowing students to engage in real-time discussions in virtual chat rooms (synchronous communication) or exchange messages with delays (asynchronous communication). The internet has broadened interaction opportunities among students and with a diverse group of native and non-native speakers of the target language. Research shows that digital communication platforms can.
 - i) promote motivations of the target learners to learn the language,
 - ii) decrease their anxiety,

- iii) develops their proficiency in the target language,
- iv) assist them to grow intercultural competencies.

To reap these potential benefits, instructors need to design CMC tasks that are appropriate for their students, well integrated into the overall syllabus and meaningfully evaluated.

- Classroom writing activities range from replication to independent composition. Initially, students trace letters, transcribe substitution tables, and copy examples. At the other end, they write essays with only a topic or heading provided. Moving along this continuum, the focus shifts from accuracy to fluency in writing.

IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Implications for future research

The study examined key issues in second language (L2) writing among Bangladeshi college students. It analyzed writing samples to identify challenges and used questionnaires to explore underlying factors. Findings showed students struggled with organizing ideas, including relevant information, producing sufficient content, using clear language, providing necessary details, and generating ideas. The study concluded that misconceptions and attitudes towards writing contributed to these difficulties, indicating a lack of education on writing stages like strategy use, brainstorming, structuring ideas, and reviewing.

This research explores students' perspectives on L2 writing challenges and their approaches, without addressing pedagogical aspects. Future studies could include language instructors' viewpoints for a more comprehensive understanding. Participants gave ambiguous responses about strategy instruction, indicating that classroom observations might have provided clearer insights. Comparing teachers' and students' views on writing issues could offer new insights. Additionally, a large-scale empirical study could lead to innovative developments in L2 writing research.

Limitations of the study

This research has several limitations. The main constraint is the small sample size of target learners. A study with 200 or more participants, rather than 100, might have provided more valid insights. Additionally, the study focused only on participants from predominantly rural backgrounds at two universities. Including an extra private and public university could have offered more comprehensive information. Another limitation is the data collection methods. Although questionnaires and writing samples were used, some students submitted incomplete questionnaires. Conducting student interviews could have supplemented these instruments and helped gather more appropriate data.

CONCLUSION

Examining the challenges faced by tertiary-level second language (L2) writers reveals the importance of understanding the distinction between correct and effective writing. Educators, as mentors and facilitators, can teach this concept to their students. Many L2 writers do not differentiate between writing for exams and general writing. For exams, they often focus solely on memorizing and reproducing course material, mistaking the learning of model paragraphs and essays for mastering writing skills. In contrast, general writing requires logically analyzing and

organizing ideas to produce coherent compositions on specific topics. Students taught traditional writing methods often struggle to create well-structured paragraphs and essays that meet academic standards.

Teaching fundamental writing principles and techniques enables students to master exam writing and create coherent compositions on various subjects. Educational institutions should integrate writing instruction at all academic levels, initially in the native language and then in the second language (L2). This is crucial because students struggling with writing in their first language (L1) often face challenges in L2 regarding idea planning and structuring. To ensure these courses are effective, educators must receive adequate training beforehand.

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APPENDICES

Appendix-A

Survey Questionnaire

Questions	always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
1. Do you practice English free handwriting?					
2. Are you able to write a good introduction?					
3. Can you develop your ideas properly when you write a paragraph or essay?					
4. Does your writing bear a good conclusion?					
5. Do you think that your writing contains grammatical mistakes?					
6. Can you use suitable words in the sentences?					
7. Do you believe that you make spelling mistake in your writing?					
8. Do your writing has problems on capitalization and punctuation?					
9. Do you have sentence variety that means simple, complex and compound in your writing?					
10. Do you do group study on writing problems??					

Appendix B

In-depth Interview Protocol

Demographic Profile of the Participants:

Gender:

Age:

Type of University:

Affiliation:

Experience of Teaching:

What are the perceptions of English teachers of Bangladeshi undergraduate students?

- a. What are the reasons for weaknesses of your students' writing?
- b. Do you think that your learners' lack organizational problems in writing skill?
- c. Do you believe that your students practice writing in and outside the classroom??
- d. How do you consider the students' background of study to mean Bangla or English medium impact writing?
- e. How do you see the practice of memorizing topics and writing in the exam?
- f. Do you believe that CA, that is, midterm, presentation, keeps the students away from writing?
- g. What is your opinion about semester/ trimester impact on students' writing?
- h. Are there any discrepancies between the major course and minor course options?
- i. What reasons do you find for committing to the memory of specific questions in the examination?
- j. What are the attitudes of the students to the non-major courses writing?

Appendix C

Writing sample.

Importance of English Writing Skills

The importance of learning and writing English is very necessary for us. We are students. So, we should develop our writing skills. Because it is very important to us. If we are good in English writing skills, we should benefit. When we read write in English essays, paragraph and other things we follow the rules of grammar.

If we get good marks in exam, we also develop ours. English is a very important our every day life. When we application in any job, we write this application in English. So, we should be good at in English writing skills.

If we est establish our, we should be good at English writing skills. So, it is very important for us.