Linguistic Errors and Skill-Competency of Students in Writing Business Letters

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Abstract

Business writing has a standard way of writing and formality in communication, this space for clearer and concise communication should be evident in the letter, otherwise, it shall create miscommunication and confusion. Thus, a level of students' learning in terms of the knowledge of format and content should be mastered by the learners. The study analyzed the Linguistics Errors and Skill-Competency in Business Letter Writing of student-leaders in College of Education in University of Nueva Caceres. This study sought identify kind of letters archived in the College of Education; determine the Linguistics Errors of College of Education students in Business Writing in terms of Mechanical, Morphological, Lexical, and Syntactic; recognize the Level of Competency in Business Writing Skills of College of Education students in terms of Format, and Content; and establish the relationship of the Linguistic Error and the Level of Competency in Business Writing Skills of the College of Education students. The Letter request is the common letters submitted in the office; The students are committing errors particularly in the Punctuations, Sentence Structures, and Word Choice. Thus, should learn and relearn the important concepts in the business letter writing format and content.

Keywords: *Business Letter, Linguistic Error, Skill-Competency, Writing*

INTRODUCTION

Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages through verbal or nonverbal means, including speech, or oral communication; writing and graphical representations (such as infographics, maps, and charts); and signs, signals, and behavior. More simply, communication is said to be the creation and exchange of meaning. (Nordquist, 2019) This is a basic yet important part of human life in which even the interaction of people, society, and culture within the community speaks of the phenomenological importance in which deemed significant in understanding the symbolic meaning underneath the expressed ideas. (Paderan, Buenavida, Cuyos, & Terana, 2020) Through communication, ideas are developed, conversation happens, and sustenance of life is completed. A lot of things may be benefitted when communication is clear and concise.

However, not all communication is good because of the several impediments that people usually encounter. This is because of many factors such as lack of effective communication skills which may lead to judgement from other people, unnecessary solutions, and unnecessary concerns. Moreover, the changes caused by the emergency health due to COVID-19 incurred new normal approaches in teaching and learning and has urged to heightened the voices of the people concerned to see the gap in the interface of traditional and technological means. (Boltton; Nurbianta, Paderan, & Hamdani, 2020)These creates a linguistic noise that further becomes a barrier of good communication.

These concerns are also evident in the business communication that are usual in the transactions elsewhere such as in office, corporate, businesses, and schools. Business communication refers to the involvement of a constant flow of information that facilitates a mutual exchange of understanding that originates from the receiver. (Juneja, 2021)

Specifically, the written communication that are usual in the transactions of the people in formal communication in a form of letters, memos, information, and exchange of conversations. Written communication is the most common form of business communication and it is expressed in any type of interaction that makes use of the written words. It was also found out that in US, the blue chip companies write poorly (Written Communication, 2020) With this, poor communication skills may lead to a waste of valuable time, and destruction in good will towards an overall business. These pitfalls may lead to a higher risk of rejection, frustration, and uncertainty for future opportunities.

Given these cases, it is but important to give emphasis on the business letter writing as early as college years so that they would be used to it and consider writing business letter as easy as it should be because they have been used to it. In the Psychology of habit, a person will become use to an activity when a person used to the task in as habitual manner, where especially when he/she is driven by goals. With that, motivated acts are manifested. (Wood & Ringer, 2016) The role of the institution is to provide the students the avenue to be trained and learn the things that needs learning.

Business writing has a standard way of writing and formality in communication, this space for clearer and concise communication should be evident in the letter, otherwise, it shall create miscommunication and confusion. Thus, a level of students' learning in terms of the knowledge of format and content should be mastered by the learners.

Having this idea, the researcher pursued this study on the evaluation of the students' business writing skills to help the students be prepared of future communication with the companies and be able to increase their confidence level in their written communication by avoiding technical and grammatical error. Also, addressing this will add another skill to students especially in their written competency as a future professional. This will tag the university as producers of students who are future ready. Furthermore, future researchers may evaluate also the content of the present study and analyze the students' ability in every year level in terms of writing business letters.

This study focused on the Linguistic Errors in the Business Letters written by the students in the College of Education. The theories where this study anchored in include Linguistics Theory by Noam Chomsky (1980), Process Theory of Composition by Janet Emig (1968) and Progressivism by John Dewey.

Linguistics Theory by Noam Chomsky (1980) examine particular languages in depth to determine which of the intricate details that are found in one language turn up in all the others. He also discussed several linguistics theories like Grammar Theory which states that learning more languages will not progress if the 1st language is not mastered. The linguistic knowledge of a person will naturally come out because it is innate for a person. (Betchel & Graham, 1998; Breeden, n.d.) This theory explores the human linguistics concept from structures to context. This theory helped the researcher understand the linguistic concept of the writings especially in the business letters. Especially in this business letter writing, formality and clarity in the use of language should be given emphasis to adhere to the standard way of learning.

Process Theory of Composition by Janet Emig (1968) refers to the field of composition studies that focuses on writing as the process rather than a product. In her study she exemplifies that the writing process is broken down into pieces to determine the content by exploring on the content of the writing which includes the teaching, reviewing, brainstorming, and editing. This study anchors on this theory on the evaluation of the written output, as a material, that is subjected to assessment to check the difficulties and constraints of the submitted letters in the

office. The process of writing is affected by the students' process and the skills they have encountered as a product of several concerns that they may have lack or missed in the learning process. This theory would also provide insight for the researcher's exploration of students' level of skills in writing business letters.

Progressivism Theory by John Dewey shared that orientation in this education is a social construct that based the learning in an active environment. This interconnects intellectual, social, and emotion to recreate a curriculum that meets the practical side of learning. This theory elevates the interest and interaction of the students in the class because it gives emphasis on the learnings that are relevant because of the real world situations and are thought-provoking. This theory is in response to the traditional education that were too restrictive and formal. (Oey, n.d.)

In this new normal, the progressivist theory hovers around the educational implementation for the students are given the independent way of learning and thus focuses on the result of the output. This progressivist aspect in education challenges the ideas on the traditional way of teaching especially that the modality and the strategies have changed. However, this theory provided a direction on the researcher's study.

There have been notable studies that have contributed to the success of the present research such as the study of Banten (2017), Pratiwi, Rukmini, and Faridi (2017), Wang (2010) , Gupitasari (2013), Napitupulu (2017), and Yingying (2020). Banten (2017) studied the linguistics errors of the stduents through an evaluation of students' letter of complaint written in the class. The study may be similar but the process and central focus of this study varies with the present study due to its achieving of the letters which is more of an authentic letter that have been used in the department to provide an authentic feedback.

Also, the research for linguistic competence of Pratiwi, Rukmini, and Faridi (2017) in the classes by evaluating the essays written by students is a good support in understanding the result of this present study since the researcher would have the overview of the different linguistic competency of the students. Thus, the present study used the authentic letters of the students and just focused on the Mechanical, Morphological, Lexical, and Syntactic ability of students.

Wang (2010) examines the rhetorical patterns of the letters written by the selected universities in China and in US. The researcher used textual analysis in the claim letters and its cultural factors that may impact the rhetoric research, practice, and pedagogy. This study is good and is related to the researcher's study but in contract different in focus for it does not focus in the linguistic errors of the letters hence, it focused on the textual, cultural, practical, and pedagogical context of the letter which is not included in the scope of the researcher.

Gupitasari (2013)reports the result of the process-genre approach in analyzing the business letters written. This study investigates the students' improvement in writing the letter of application. The research is relevant to the present study because it also focused on the analysis of the letter but the difference is the mode and content of the analysis.

Napitupulu (2017) explored the Linguistic Errors committed by Indonesian students in their business letter writing in the class . The study includes the analysis of the linguistic errors that include the grammatical, syntactic, substance, and lexical errors that has been committed by the students' writing. Although this study gave the researcher an overview on the linguistics error, the study did not include the factors that caused the difficulty and the error of the students.

Yingying (2020) explored on the language features that the writing of the business letter revealed in the students writing. This study presented the important things that the students should be focusing on because of their weaknesses in the writing. With this, the researcher was able to present the significance of the linguistics study and its impact in the business world and

in globalization. This study is related to the researcher's study because of the fact that it explores on the concept of language at work in the business but did not include in its scope the linguistic errors nor the difficulty which the researcher decided to focus on.

The mentioned studies in the linguistic error, linguistic competence, and analyzed the business letters using textual analysis. These researches made a similar study with the researcher that allowed them to measure the common error committed by the students in writing business letters. The studies focus on specific letters where they asked their students to write letters and subjected them for a study. Although these references are similar to the researcher, the researcher also find these references different from the present studies because the researcher focuses on the categorized linguistic errors and backed up with the difficulties that the students experience so that the study shall be provide solution in writing business letters.

Ramadhani and Sir (2018), Villoso and Medalla (2019), Guice and Sims (2020), and Sanu (2016)focused on innovative techniques in teaching business letter writing to the students such as utilizing flipped classroom, process oriented skill through portfolio assessment, and experimental way of teaching. Their strategies are significant in developing the various ways of teaching students to capture their interest and engage them more business letter writing. These studies are important for it gave the researcher strategy in creating the instructional material that is effective and efficient. The difference of these references from the study is that these references are focused in the face-to-face mode of teaching which the researcher planned to deviate because of the new normal that has been in place.

Having said those, the researchers have pursued this study to share with the researchers' discovery of the common errors that students usually commit when writing a business letter. This allows the students to reflect on their skills in writing business letter and allow the researcher to explore on the technicalities in business letter.

The study analyzes the Linguistics Errors and Skill-Competency in Business Letter Writing of student-leaders in College of Education in University of Nueva Caceres. This study sought answer to the following questions:1. What are the kind of letters archived in the College of Education?; 2. What are the Linguistics Errors of College of Education students in Business Writing in terms of: a. Mechanical , b. Morphological, c. Lexical, d. Syntactic; 3. What is the Level of Competency in Business Writing Skills of College of Education students in terms of: a. Format, b. Content; 4. What insights can be derived from the investigation of linguistics error and skill competency of the students in Writing business letters?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study is a Mixed-Method that utilizes the Qualitative and Quantitative Method in research. This is a research approach that collect and analyze both qualitative and quantitative data within the same study. The mixing takes place from the data collection, analysis, and interpretation. (Shorten & Smith, 2017) Further, Qualitative Research is the process of collecting, analyzing, interpreting non-numerical data such as language. This is usually used to understand an entity subjectively that perceives and give meaning to the reality that confronts the study. On the other hand, Quantitative Research involves the process of objectively collecting and analyzing numerical data to describe, predict, or control variables of interest. (McLeod, 2019)

In this study, researcher did a document analysis through discourse analysis based on the gathered archived letters in the College of Education in University of Nueva Caceres. The

researcher also did a survey questionnaire from the 17 student leaders of School Year 2020-2021 at the University of Nueva Caceres to get their perceived difficulties in writing a business letter for they were the ones who usually prepares business letters.

Data Gathering Procedure

Upon approval of the study of the researcher, the researcher sent a letter of permission to the Office of the Dean in the College of Education to collect the archived business letters from School Year 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. The reason for utilizing these archived letters is because the letters submitted to the office have already undergone pre-writing, writing, and post writing, yet are not exempted from linguistic errors.

Also, the researcher requested the student-leaders of School Year 2020-2021 to fill-out the Google Form made by the researcher to determine the skill-competency of the students based on their experiences when writing a business letter.

Upon collection of the letters from the College of Education, the researcher categorized the letters according to its types and it was subjected to discourse analysis. The researcher analyzed the letters using the researcher linguistic error identification template.

Table 1
Linguistics Error Identification Template

Letter	Linguistic Error	Specific Error	Word/Sentence Identified
1			
2			
3			

Since the researcher is novice in linguistics competence, the researcher had an inter-rater who are experts in the writing field to validate the analysis of the researcher on the linguistic errors based on the business letters collated.

The qualification for the language expert are as follows: A) A holder of masters or doctorate degree in language or literature or linguistics; B) Has teaching experience for at least five (5) years; C) Has experienced editing or proofreading technical papers. There shall be two (2) language experts who will validate the identified linguistics errors by the researcher. One expert shall be from UNC CED and the other should an outsider (not affiliated to UNC). They were given a template where they signed to indicate that they confirm the errors identified by the researcher. If there are things that the researcher failed to identify, they can add to the list made by the researcher.

After which, the researcher summarize the Linguistic Errors Identified in the letters through the revised Linguistic Error Log, adapted from Shafa Firda Nila (2017), as the researcher's basis in identifying the frequency and percentage of errors. The frequency of the errors was counted and the percentage of errors were computed. They were ranked from the highest to the lowest number of errors.

In the Skills-competency, the researcher sent the google form to the student-leaders and they answered it. As the Google Form closed, the link-submission of the responses from the

Table 2
Sample Revised Linguistic Error Log (adapted from Shafa Firda Nila)

Linguistic Errors		Letters						FLE	%
		1	2	3	4	5	6		
Mechanical	Spelling								
	Punctuation								
	Capitalization								
Morphological	Verb								
	Noun								
	Article								
Syntax	Sentence Structure								
	Word Order								
Lexical	Word Choice								

FLE – Frequency of Linguistic Errors

student-leaders were disallowed. The researcher computed for the average weighted mean and ranking to know the result of the skill-competency of the students in writing business letters based on their experience. Below is the interpretation of the data based on the result of the average weighted mean.

Highly Competent   – 3.26-4.00
Competent   – 2.51-3.25
Less Competent   – 1.76-2.50
Not Competent   - 1.00-1.75

The researcher also designed a coursera- and LinkedIn-like lesson as an instructional material in teaching business letter. This is a coursera-like because it is shorter than coursera course and can be finished for 2 weeks. Moreover, the researcher considered this as linkedIn-like because the lessons are not as short as the Linked-In courses but will have videos similar to learning videos in linked-in. the researcher made a lesson plan as the basis of this asynchronous learning course uploaded in the Google Classroom.

Research Instrument

Questionnaire. The data were collected through the survey questionnaire made by the researcher. The questionnaire is divided into two parts.

This part of the questionnaire is a Likert Scale where the students answered and choose between the range of 1 and 4. This allowed the researcher know the level of students' competency in business letter writing skills with at least five (5) indicators in each category. The scales are Highly Competent – 4; Competent – 3, Less Competent – 2, Not Competent – 1.

Dry Run. The researcher conducted a dry-run to other students and teachers who are not included in the scope. This allowed the researcher to solicit comments, suggestions, and recommendations on the crafted questionnaire. This also provided feedback to the questionnaire designed by the researcher.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
Archived Business Letters in College of Education

Writing a Business Letter is an essential in the communication processes between employees, clients, and associates in an establishment. (The Importance of Different Kinds of

Business Letters, 2021) In this way, a clear message from the sender to the receiver is the utmost priority in the business letter. Nevertheless, a skill should be well nurtured to be more productive and oriented with the letter writing that would suit the need of the company or institution.

In this way, the researcher archived from the documents of the College of Education as regards to the business letters that has been submitted by students to the office of the Dean. The researcher asked permission from the administrative assistants yet all of the papers have been disposed because the office shifted to online transactions. So, the researcher made a way to contact the student leaders to ask for a copy of their letters, however few responded while others said that some are already submitted in the office of students services. With the limited number of time, there were 18 letters that the researcher was able to collect and analyzed in this study coming from different organizations and individuals.

Table 1 shows the kinds of letters archived from the College of Education at the University of Nueva Caceres. There were 18 letters archived. The "Request Letter" is seen as the common letter written by the student leaders with a frequency of 7 (38.8%) that ranked 1st. On the other hand, "Solicitation Letter", "Request letter", and Permission and Approval Letter" are also the usual communication letter sent to the office with a frequency of 3(16.6%) that ranked 2nd. Lastly,

Table 1
Archived Letters in College of Education

Kind of Letters	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Solicitation Letter	3	16.6	2
Request Letter	7	38.8	1
Excuse Letter	3	16.6	2
Permission and Approval Letter	3	16.6	2
Announcement Letter	1	5.7	3
Invitation Letter	1	5.7	3
Total	18	100	

"Announcement Letter" and "Invitation Letter" are the 3rd in rank with the frequency of 1 (5.7%).

Since the letters were written by student leaders, it is then expected that the common transactions that they lay down to the office are letters that requests for something such as request to conduct activity, request to borrow something, request to attend an activity, and any request that needs approval of the head of the office. This is common because the student leaders should be permitted by the Dean before a certain request is implemented/conducted/done. The leadership of the head of the office is therefore respected and honored which makes the activity good.

The least letter that the researcher was able to collect are the "announcement letter" and the "invitation letter." This may be because of the announcement letter is more of sending an announcement for the selected individual for a meeting at a special date. This needs approval of the office for it to be disseminated personally. However, the usual announcements were sent through Group Chats and not through letters unless it is for a very formal way of communication. Also, the researcher was able to have one copy of letter of invitation because most of the letters were already under the care of the student's affairs and most invitation letters are done when there are seminars with invitation from the outside.

The practice of the student-leaders in which they become more professional because they are being introduced to the business cycle that emphasizes the importance of the letter writing to

formalize the request when it is in written form. Beyond letter writing, one can interpret this gesture as an interaction within the environment that is nurturing. The theory of John Dewey on Progressivism explains that orientation in this education is a social construct and is based on the learning in an active environment. (Oey, n.d.) This makes the educational environment more interactive and official because letters makes history since it is a record that is kept for future use. An active educational environment is a productive and nurturing one because a lot of skills are developed and a lot of people are involved.

In this manner, the communication process is experienced and the upward and downward communication is already experienced by the students which makes them advance in terms of experiences. Through this, the student-leaders are given opportunity to grow in the communication aspect and makes them ahead with others.

Linguistic Errors in Business Writing

This portion is the analysis of the researcher based on the letters archived from the College of Education in the University of Nueva Caceres. Having the collated 18 letters, the researcher had a closer look in it to determine the different linguistic errors committed by the student-leader who wrote the business letters. The researcher identified the errors in each linguistic aspects and counted them. Linguistics Errors are Classified according to Mechanical, Morphological, Syntax, and Lexical. Under Mechanical are spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Morphological was

Table 2
Linguistic Errors in Business Letters

Linguistic Errors		Letters		
		FLE	**%**	**Rank**
Mechanical	Spelling	3	2%	8
	Punctuation	31	23%	1
	Capitalization	18	13%	4
Total		52	38%	1
Morphological	Verb	6	4%	7
	Noun	9	7%	5
	Article	7	5%	6
Total		22	16%	4
Syntax	Sentence Structure	29	21%	2
	Word Order	6	4%	7
Total		35	26%	2
Lexical	Word Choice	28	20%	3
Total		28	20%	3
Overall Total		**137**	**100**	

limited to noun, verb, and article. Syntax includes sentence structure and word order while lexical pertains to word choice.

Table 2 presents the data about the Linguistic Errors committed by the student-leaders in their business letter writing. Among the general Linguistic Errors, Mechanical Errors ranked 1 with the frequency of 52 (38%), Syntax ranked 2 with the frequency
of 35 (26%), Lexical ranked 3 with the frequency of 28 (20%), and lastly Morphological with a frequency of 22 (16%) that ranked 4.

Mechanical Errors are said to be the common errors that are being committed by the native and non-native people. The factors that contributes to committing this error is because the people are usually more concerned with content rather than the form. (Understanding Making Mistakes in Written Language, n.d.)Nevertheless, not focusing on improving this common mistake may lead to further grammatical errors such as the run-ons and sentence fragments. In order to avoid this, student-leaders has to be immersed even more in business writing and should constantly be provided with feedback that would help them improve. Chomsky said in his Linguistic Theory said that the mastery on the language is important so that it would naturally come out in the person. (Breeden, n.d.; Betchel & Graham, 1998) The role of the mentors and the teachers is significant in this stage because a simple advice can help the student-leaders become better. This communication skill would not just be significant in their student life but also in their professional jobs in the future.

However, it has been observed in the letters that Morphological aspects in linguistics is seen to have the least errors in that the student-leaders committed in their letters. The usual errors fall under the plurality and singularity of the words in the letter and the agreement of the noun and verb that created conflict in the letter. However, despite the presence of these morphological errors, it was seen lesser compared with others. The main reason might be the exposure of the student-leaders in the business writing that made them familiar and refer to the existing letters that has been done and used by the organizations. The pattern though is not exact and has to be edited. Similar to this is the research of Juriah and Kasumawati (2015)who studied the Morphological Errors committed by students in and he arrived at conclusions that it is because of the confusion of students between the singularity and plurality of the nouns and verbs, struggle of the students in converting a sentence with the right tenses, and the identifying the right word in the arrangement of the sentence such as the use of article.

Proceeding to the specific errors in each linguistic classification, Punctuation ranked 1st as the common errors committed by the students with a frequency of 31 (23%). Sentence Structure ranked 2nd with the frequency of 29 (21%). Word Choice ranked 3rd with a frequency of 28(20%). Capitalization ranked 4th with the frequency of 18 (13%). Noun ranked 5th with the frequency of 9 (7%). Furthermore, Article ranked 6th with the frequency of 7 (5%), and Word Order and Verb ranked 7th with the frequency of 6 (4%). Lastly, Spelling is the least that is ranked 8th with the frequency of 3 (2%).

Punctuations, Sentence Structure, and Word Choice are the top errors among the 17 letters evaluated by the researcher and verified by three (3) experts. These errors coincide with the conclusion of the study of Juriah and Kasumawati (2015) as mentioned. But for the student-leaders of the UNC-CED, these errors are committed because of the few considerations. Their language competencies should still be improved because it may be the reason why these errors are committed. In the study of Kaweera (2013), he studied the errors committed by the students in their writing and was able to find out that the error were caused by the students' competency on the target language. In the same way, Chomsky (1980) stated in his theory that the students' knowledge on the natural language would affect the language competency of the students, thus, a need to relearn should be done to be better. Thus, constant practice and learning is the key to improvement.

The College of Education should also have some extra- activities for the students-leaders in refining the communication skills through workshops and mentoring from the advisers. These are important so that there will be support for the students' improvement in developing the skills in business communication writing that will be helpful when they engage in their workplace. If

there are already existing programs for it, further improvement has to be made to ensure the student-leader's holistic development.

Mechanical Errors

Mechanical errors pertain to orthographical mistakes that includes the punctuations, capitalization, and spelling. (Understanding Making Mistakes in Written Language, n.d.)These mistakes are commonly experienced by the people when they are in a rush of doing the writing.

Punctuation

Based on the analysis of the researcher, the following are the errors committed by the researchers. For punctuation, the letters commonly commit mistake in the use of comma. In a series of words, comma should be used as well as for the introduction of self. This can be seen in the letters.

> *"The College of Education of the University of Nueva Caceres will celebrate its 71st foundation anniversary with the theme… …on February 24,26&27, 2020."*

It should be reinstated where the date should not me misplaced and be near the event where it is modifying and Comma should be placed. Also, the comma has to be placed after "2020" to separate the dependent sentence.

> *"…foundation anniversary on February 24, 26 and 27, 2020, with the theme "Igniting Blue Pride through…Possibilities."*

Moreover, another punctuation that has been seen erroneously used in formal letter is the colon (:) after the Salutation. Formal letter should not end the salutation with a comma but with a colon.

> *"Dear Dean Lilly,"*

This should not be the case because friendly letter usually use comma but official letters used colon. Which should be:

> *"Dear Dean Lilly:"*

The instances where comma and colon are placed were not that mastered by the student-leaders. They may be familiar with those but are not that clear as to how to use them. This may be minor in sense but is important especially when the sentences are long.

Capitalization

The students were having some concerns in distinguishing the proper and common noun. They have some errors in capitalizing common nouns which should have not been capitalized. The example from the letter:

> *"…the Education Students thru incentives to have their headresses during the parade…"*

The *"students"* should not be in capital letter because it is in common noun. There are other words in the letters which were capitalized such as the 3rd Year, Prospectus, God Bless You, university of…, Organization, Truly Yours, and a lot more.

> *"…the Education students, through incentives, to have their headdresses…"*

The simple identification of proper noun and common noun is important so that emphasis on the nouns are acknowledged.

Spelling

The errors committed in spelling is very minimal and these are just the "thru" and the "*headress*." The word "Thru" is informal and in business letters "through" should be used. Also, the correct spelling of "*headress*" is "*headdress*."

These may be an error in the letter because they are unfamiliar with this. These words may not have been use always that is why they are committing mistakes. However, these are the concerns that should be addressed. The use of dictionary and other technology in identifying errors and connection should be used to avoid mistakes.

Morphological Errors

Morphology is the study of the internal structure of words and forms a core part of linguistic study today. This pertains to how the words are formed and how every single letter contribute to the meaning. (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia, 2016)

Verb

The common errors that has been identified in the letters are usually the past and present form of the verbs.

Incorrect	Correct
We firmly believed…	believe
"…Ivy Gordo and Mary Joy Hertez,	has
have a total of 26 units…"	
'It aimed to showcase …'	aims

Although only few verb mistakes were committed, still the verbs are commonly about the past-ness and the present-ness of it. The students have to be conscious of the subject and verb agreement so that it will not lead to bigger confusions as well.

Noun

This section also shares the common errors for noun.

Incorrect	Correct
"…while studying to become	educators
a future educator…"	
"…a series of discussion and	sessions
mentoring session…"	
"CED Alumni are also invited…"	College of Education
"…our faculty member to be	faculty member
excused in their respective classes	departments
in other department for they will attend the…"	

These examples show the common errors of the students in the plurality and singularity of the word. Since the sentences are complex sentences, the students are confused as to what are the main subject of the sentence.

Article

For the Article, confusion is also seen in the use and not use of "A" and "The" in the sentences of the content of the paragraph.

Incorrect	Correct
'…while studying to become a future educator.'	Remove "a"

'...in one (1) of a prominent fora on youth   "a to "of the"
empowerment namely ...'

These few samples are the indicators that the student-leaders committed such mistakes because of the unfamiliarity of when would "a" and "the" will be used.

Syntactic Errors

Syntax pertains to the arrangement of words in sentences, clauses, and phrases, and the study of the formation of sentences and the relationship of their component parts. (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia, 2016) In this part, the errors particularly in sentence structure and word order are expressed.

Sentence Structure

In the letters, Sentence Structures is the common errors committed by the student-leaders particularly the subject and verb agreement, inconsistent perspective leading to incorrect use of the point of view, preposition use, redundancy and wordy sentences, and others.

> *This is due to lack of prospectus that's why we weren't able to enroll to every subject that we have to.* **(ending in a preposition)**
> *...we humbly request Mr./Ms. _____ to be excused* **(Insert "for")**
> *...'In consonance with the...participation of the students.* **(The sentence is very redundant)**
> *In this regard, we are humbly soliciting and gathering sponsorship donations from you to be used by our department and and to allocate the budget respectively.* **(very wordy)**

The sentences in the letters have several inconsistencies and problems in sentence structures which exemplifies the importance of review of the grammatical error so that their linguistic competence should improve.

Word Order

In the sentences in the paragraph, there is a need for sentence rearrangements, revision of sentences, and has poor word order. These takes an eye to see the mistake so that the sentences are clear in the expression of the ideas.

> *The UNC College of Education will be holding the 2018nMini-concert dubbed as "70:Re-loaded" on December 10, 2018 5:00PM. It aimed to showcase talented students from the department with the theme, "UNC: Then and Now". CED Alumni are also invited in this grand event.* **("...with the theme, "UNC: Then and Now" is totally misplaced. This should have been placed after '...dubbed "70:Re-loaded"'. After placing it there, the phrase should end with a comma.)**

This is just one among the sentences that needs revisiting to ensure the continuous flow of ideas. This will allow the readers to have clear grasp of reading in one flow of reading.

Lexical Errors

an error made in the choice of an appropriate word in a context, either syntactic or situational. In other words, the writer or the speaker makes a wrong choice of an inappropriate word, under the impression that it is the right word. Lexical errors in foreign language learners'

compositions because those errors appear to be one of the main causes of communication problems. (Andera & Yildirim, 2010)

Word Choice

In this aspect, the letters evaluated by the researcher has so many errors including the following but not limited to: Too much words, the need to be concise and direct to the point, reworded, improper use of preposition, missing preposition and perspectives, incomplete phrases, unnecessary words, and others.

Level of Competency in Business Writing Skills

Competency in Business writing skills is important to learn because this skill is practically useful since every company are using communication letters to send important messages from top leadership to the employees and from one company to another. In every workplace, employees are required to write reports, memos, letters, and notes. They even present in to higher and lower ranks which includes business communication both in written and oral. (Brooks, 2017) This means that this skill is more than just a knowledge that should be learned but also a need to become more competent in the workplace.

Table 2 presents the perception of the students on their level of competency in business writing skills. The presentation of data includes their perception on the content and the format and this has been related to the analysis of the letters in archived from the College of Education.

Generally, **content** got a weighted mean of 3.27 described as *Highly Competent* while **format** has a weighted mean of 2.68 described as *Competent*. The confidence level of the students is high in writing a business letter because they know what they would like to write but their confidence level is getting lower when the technicalities in writing a business letter is looked into. These are the important concepts that the school has to look into.

Content

Based on the data gathering of the researcher, "I complete the important information in the business letter" ranked 1st with the weighted mean of 3.42 described as *Highly Competent. It is followed by "I can make my idea concise and clear," "I can express my ideas properly in the letter," and "I remain courteous in the language usage in the sentence" which ranked 2nd with the weighted mean of 3.31 described as Highly Competent. Then, ranked 3rd are "I can be professional in tone and in language in the communication," "I can clearly share my thoughts in writing business letters," and "I write in short paragraphs and using appropriate words in sentences" with a weighted mean of 3.25 described as Competent. Lastly, "I know how to start writing a business letter," "I can use technical words in communicating through business letter," and "I can arrange my ideas well in the letter I am writing" ranked 4th with a weighted mean of 3.19 described as Competent.*

Student-Leaders know how information that they have to put in the letter because they know the purpose of what they are writing. Understanding the objectives of the letter gave them the direction as to what should be indicated in the letter. Also, since the student-leaders know whom they are sending the business letters, the students are careful of their writing. They express their ideas clearly, remain courteous in their language usage, and makes the ideas clear and concise because they are oriented of their role as student-leaders and they consider their readers when writing. This confirms the theory of Janet Emig (1968) on Process Theory of Composition where she stated that in her study on writing, students are more concerned in the process than the

product. Exploring the rationale of the letter is an advantage for the student-leaders because they can express intention through writing.

On the other hand, the respondents' least answers that needs to be improved are "knowing how to write a business letter," "using technical words in communicating through business letter," and "arranging my ideas well in the letter." These are the common concerns that needs improvement.

Table 2
Level of Student-Leader's Competency in Business Writing Skills

No.	Indicator	AWM	INT	Rank
	CONTENT			
1	I know how to start writing a business letter	3.19	C	4
2	I can use technical words in communicating through business letter	3.19	C	4
3	I can make my idea concise and clear	3.31	HC	2
4	I can express my ideas properly in the letter	3.31	HC	2
5	I can be professional in tone and in language in the communication.	3.25	C	3
6	I can arrange my ideas well in the letter I am writing.	3.19	C	4
7	I can clearly share my thoughts in writing business letters.	3.25	C	3
8	I complete the important information in the business letter	3.43	HC	1
9	I remain courteous in the language usage in the sentence	3.31	HC	2
10	I write in short paragraphs and using appropriate words in sentences	3.25	C	3
	TOTAL	**3.27**	**HC**	
	Format			
1	I am knowledgeable of the different formats in writing a business letter	2.81	C	7
2	I can use appropriate formats of letters in specific intention.	3.06	C	4
3	I comprehensively know the parts of the letters	3.19	C	3
4	I can explain the importance of each parts in Business Letters	2.88	C	6
5	I know the kinds of business letters.	2.56	C	9
6	I know the difference and similarities of email and printed formats of letters.	3.00	C	5
7	I can make letters including the technical parts.	2.69	C	8
8	I know the writing process of making a letter	3.06	C	4
9	I can use proper punctuations and mechanics as part of business letter writing	3.25	C	2
10	I observe proper spacing in between parts of business letter writing.	3.31	HC	1
	TOTAL	**2.68**	**C**	

Legend:
Highly Competent   – 3.26-4.00
Competent   – 2.51-3.25
Less Competent   – 1.76-2.50
Not Competent   - 1.00-1.75

Although based on the analysis of the researcher, the students are having challenges in terms of the pre-writing which may include conceptualization, brainstorming, and writing the letter. With these concerns, the professor and mentors of these student-leaders should respond to these notes for improvement that could a help the students.

Format

After the data gathered from the survey, the following are the result of the study. The respondents indicated "I observe proper spacing in between parts of business letter writing" as ranked 1ˢᵗ with the weighted mean of 3.31 described as *Highly Competent*. Also, "I can use proper punctuations and mechanics as part of business letter writing" ranked 2ⁿᵈ with the weighted mean of 3.25 described as *Competent*. "I comprehensively know the parts of the letters" ranked 3ʳᵈ with the weighted mean of 3.19 described as *Competent*. Then, "I know the writing process of making a letter" ranked 4ᵗʰ with the weighted mean of 3.06 described as *Competent*. I know the difference and similarities of email and printed formats of letters ranked 5ᵗʰ with a weighted mean of 3.00 described as *Competent*. Consecutively, "I am knowledgeable of the different formats in writing a business letter" and "I can explain the importance of each parts in Business Letters" ranked 6ᵗʰ with a weighted mean of 2.88 and 2.81 described as *Competent*. Moreover, "I can make letters including the technical parts" ranked 8ᵗʰ with the weighted mean of 2.69 described as *competent*. Lastly, "I know the kinds of business letters" ranked 9ᵗʰ with a weighted mean of 2.56 described as *competent*.

Based on the perspective of the student-leaders, they feel competent and highly competent in terms of spacing, punctuations and mechanics, and parts of the letter. In their point-of-view, these are less to not problematic for them because their confidence level is high since they were able to state that they are competent in these. But despite their perspective, there are still things that they have to learn and review to improve their ability and develop their skills in writing business letters.

In addition, the least in ranks showed that kinds of business letters, technical parts of the letters, and formats of letters are the least of a problem because of their familiarity of those. It may have been taught them several times, experienced to write them in their previous experiences, and learned to use them correctly. Continuous practice has to be done for the student-leaders' solidification of skills in writing business letters.

The results of these study should also be forwarded to the office of students' affairs so that these will be given emphasis as one of their action items in their amelioration of leadership skills. Thus, further improvement of the letter-writing skills should also be welcomed as one of the activities every semester or school year where new sets of officers are elected. Moreover, mentoring should also be improved so that the student-leaders would have someone to listen to for corrections and improvements.

Significant Relationship of Linguistic Error and Level of Competency in Business Writing

Drawing out the relationship between the identification of the linguistic errors and perception of the student-leaders on their competency in business letters gave the researcher an overview about the skill-set of the student-leader and the confidence in the communication skills.

Through this, the researcher is able to provide specific proposal that would quantify the needs of the student-leader but it would be great if the suggestions are to be given attention by the Office of Students' Affairs and the solution for the problem has to be addressed.

The next page shows the Table 3 which is about the Comparison and Contrast between the Linguistic Errors and Competency in Business Writing. In this part, the researcher presents the top and least linguistic errors, as well as the least and highest in terms of their perception.

For Linguistic Errors, Punctuation, Sentence Structure, and Words choice are the common errors committed by the student-leaders in writing a business letter. This is comparable to their perception where starting a letter seems to be a challenge. Also, the use of technical

words and organization of ideas are two of concerns that can still be improved in the student-leader's ability. The students' perception on their competency, although they feel competent but they are not highly competent, confirm the statistics of the errors committed in the letter. This would mean that there should be a move for the students to improve on their basics in writing emphasizing on the punctuation, sentence structure, and word choice.

In case of the punctuations, the common marks that has been identified which the students should learn in the use of comma (,). This appears to be the common mistake that can be seen in the body of the paragraph. Also, colon (:) should

Table 3
Insights Derived from the Investigation of the Linguistic Errors and Competency in Business Writing

Linguistic Error	Level of Competency
Common Error	**Least Perception on Competency**
Punctuation	Start writing a letter
Sentence Structure	Use of technical words
Word Choice	Organization of ideas
	Identifying Kinds of Business Letters
	Writing Business Letters
	Formats of Business Letters
Least Errors	**Top Perception on Competency**
Spelling	Punctuations and Mechanics
Verb	Proper Spacing
Article	Parts of the Letter
	Important Information
	Expression of Ideas

also be reminded to the students because they have common error in the salutation. These are simple yet important ideas that needs reminder for the students because meanings are changing when the "comma" is not used properly and formality of the letter is affected when it is missed to be used in salutation.

The subject-verb-agreement, which is a very common mistake in general, are also not an exemption to student-leaders who communicates with the heads of the university whom they are dealing with. The meaning is always affected when these are mistakenly expressed. Sentence structure is basic yet it could ruin the sentence and meaning. Especially that in letter, there is an absence of the physical person who wrote the business letter so the expression of ideas and organization of it should be properly expressed. The study of Coloquit, Canabal, and Paderan (Coloquit, Canabal, & Paderan, Improving Students' English Writing Proficiency through Interactive Writing Technique, 2020) eludes that teachers should device strategies to make the students write and realize their errors so that their proficiency in writing continue to increase. The skill in students' writing skills should be amplified so that the practical application of this learning shall help them ace their work-related tasks in the future.

Lastly, the proper use and choice of words which is linguistically termed as diction is important so that the collegiality of the business letter is expressed. In this way, professionalism is practiced and student's communication skills are improved. However, this cannot just be learned everyday but through continuous interaction with the people either writing or speaking.

Choice of words is one of the reasons why many are misinterpreted because of the inappropriateness of the words that may affect the tone, mood, and meaning. Communication is really important because it is the message that is ought to be learned continuously despite the different identified factors that affects the skills of the students in speaking such as the environment, personal experiences, and varied exposures. Thus, a strategic and effective teaching technique should be adapted in teaching so that students are able to improve their oral communication skills. (Pontillas & Talaue, 2021; Pontillas, 2020)

There was no conflict with the least linguistic errors and top perception in terms of students' perception on their competency in content and format. However, an exemption was seen in the perception of the students that they think they are competent in punctuations and mechanics. As the researcher thoroughly review the business letters, these concerns in punctuations and mechanics are seen highest. The student-leaders may have been used to with the pattern in writing business-letters which should be corrected to further improve their skills in writing.

Having this comparison and contrast, it is the role of the office of the students' affairs to ensure the leadership skills of the student-leaders which includes the skills in writing a business letters. It is a must that student-leaders should undergo trainings and workshops to build the right confidence in business letter writing. This may also be a contribution to the intrinsic and extrinsic factor for the students to achieve more in their academics and practically apply their learning in the real world. Thus, investing in these concepts may also lead to the upscaling of the Philippine academic quality for it shapes the minds of the students in a much more realistic learning. (Briones, 2021; Coloquit, Philippine Education in the Modern World: A Trench for Global Academic Success or another Year of Educational Failure?, 2020)

CONCLUSIONS

Wring Business Letters is a necessary skill for students for it is needed in many inter-office communications both in academic and corporate world. In schools, the student-leaders are literally exposed in many different academic and co-curricular activities that allows them to utilize learning in a more practical sense including writing letters pertaining to the request on various facilities, resources, and approval for the proposed activities are the common communication letters that they are used to. However, the students should have a firm grasp on the skills on writing business letters so that there shall be a smooth flow of communication between and among the concerned people either email or public announcements shared through social media groups and pages.

In terms of the skills, the student-leaders have poor familiarity in the use of the use of "comma" and "colon" in writing the content and the proper punctuation in the salutation; unfamiliarity with the plurality and singularity of the nouns; and missed the point of not abbreviating the words in the letter to avoid confusion and miscommunication. These issues committed by the student-leaders in their letters leads to the notion that there is a lacking of mastery on sentence structure and in language structures. This is because of their less exposure in the writing business letters to apply their learning and improve their use of the English Language.

The concern also in word choice surfaced which is because of their less learning due to less indulgence in reading that led to limited vocabulary. With this, many students failed to be sensitive with the proper choice of words to express their concrete message and ideas.

Lastly, the curriculum should include the basics in letter writing due to the problematic basics in business letter writing such as the kinds, formats, and technical parts of the letter. The focus of teaching and learning should be both in the content of the letter and the technical aspects of it. The most challenging part for the student-leaders is starting and developing business letters because of the templates that are already available in the offices with hinders their familiarity in business letter writing.

Teaching and learning should be reviewed, thus curriculum should be evaluated so that the students may be prepared as they face the professional world. Hence, they will be more competent in the communication through business letters. To be adept in written communication through business letters means good proficiency in communication and an advantage in moving forward with their career.

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