

Criminology Students' Discourse Writing Deficiencies: An ESP Monograph

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Abstract

This study examines the discourse writing deficiencies of Criminology freshmen of Cagayan de Oro College-PHINMA, using the qualitative research method of case analysis. Forty criminology freshmen were asked to write on the topic "Why did you enroll in the Criminology program?" All the errors in students' compositions were identified and classified into various criteria of discourse writing based on the modified Jacobs et al.'s instrument for writing evaluation. The findings of the study show that Criminology freshmen are generally deficient in the five areas of discourse writing namely: content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. The results of this case analysis form the data-based English for Criminology: An ESP Monograph which is constructed in five lessons: Narrating the Emergence of Criminology, Investigating the Shooting Incident, Discussing the Crime Scene Search, Reporting the Traffic Violators and Violations, Cause and Effect of Why People Join Gangs.

Keywords: academic writing, content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, mechanics.

Introduction

In the Philippines, English is learned as a second language. Students and professionals are expected to develop a level of excellence in the use of English to perform the different functions in life. On this idea, it is the tough role and job of language teachers to produce students who are English language proficient. The teaching and learning of English can help the students to deal successfully with their academic demands and to perform successfully in their disciplines and professional contexts.

The teaching of English in Philippine context aims to facilitate learners attain the fluency and accuracy in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to Fatemi (2008), of the four skills in English, writing is considered to be the most complex and difficult skill to master. This difficulty, according to Estalkhabijali and Khodareza (2012), lies not only in generating and organizing of ideas but also in translating these ideas to readable texts.

It is important productive skill through which thoughts and ideas are disseminated, it is present for instructors of writing in different educational environments to utilize the different methods, approaches, and techniques that can serve to produce better writers. However, these advances have been compromised through the generation of written products containing grammatical and lexical inaccuracies, which often frustrate and distract readers (James 1998 in Fatemi, 2008).

Writing in a second language is a complex, challenging and difficult process. This difficulty and complexity arise from the fact that writing includes discovering a thesis, developing support for it, organizing, revising, and finally editing it to ensure an effective, error-free piece of writing (Langan, 1996). It is the learned process of shaping experiences into text, allowing the writer to discover, develop, clarify and communicate thoughts and feelings. Writing requires and supports the

development of thinking skills. Learning to write brings the learner into the literate community as an active participant in the conversation.

Students' performance in writing has been a concern of many schools now. Even college professors from different disciplines want to receive writing projects which are unified, organized, structured, focused and clear. These are the qualities expected of good writing but which are often deficient in student writing. Achieving these qualities is often difficult for many college students and will require proper instruction. Any school that hopes to provide such instruction must examine the current status of writing instruction being given to their students and make a serious assessment of the writing needs of their students. Needs assessment is a complex process, but one of its important components is an assessment of students' writing deficiencies. The focus of this study is on the latter.

Cagayan de Oro College-PHINMA offers many degree programs. Among the degree programs offered by the school, it is the Criminology program that has the great number of enrollees. It is also the program that the school is famous for because it never misses to top in the Criminologist Licensure Examination. The program should be given much attention in their progress since it is a field of study that examines the existence of crime from cause to consequence. However, the students have been observed to have deficiencies in their academic writing. Hence, an assessment of the writing deficiencies is necessary to perceive the language needs of the students.

Thus, this study investigated the case of the discourse writing deficiencies of Criminology freshmen of the Cagayan de Oro College-PHINMA. The findings of the study were used as bases in constructing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instructional monograph for academic writing. The researcher has observed that students generally are unable to comply satisfactorily with their writing assignments. By identifying their discourse writing deficiencies, hopefully, the program coordinators will be able to improve the syllabus in writing instruction.

Method

Participants

The target units of analysis of this case analysis of discourse writing deficiencies involved the college freshmen of the Criminology program of the Cagayan de Oro College-PHINMA. One class in English 097 (Communication Arts and Skills 1) under the tutelage of the researcher was chosen as a microcosm representing all criminology freshmen of the college: a prototype of the case scenario.

Design

The study utilized the qualitative research method of case analysis, which determined the case of discourse writing deficiencies of Criminology freshmen of the Cagayan de Oro College-PHINMA.

Procedure

This case study was conducted in two phases (phase one: discourse writing deficiencies determined, phase two: ESP instructional monograph for academic writing constructed).

Phase One: Discourse Writing Deficiencies Determined

The Criminology freshmen of English 097 (Communication Arts and Skills 1) were given a diagnostic test in discourse writing: writing a composition on "Why did you enroll in the Criminology program?" the students were made to write a paragraph, which is expected to be complete with introductory sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence.

Their compositions (discourse texts) were then analyzed according to the standard units of written discourse from the Jacobs et al.'s instrument (1981) for writing evaluation, namely: content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. Although adapted from Jacob's criteria for evaluating compositions, it is different in that it contains a list of features that are expected to be present under each area of a composition.

Accordingly, these deficiencies are enumerated as raw data with corresponding frequencies and ranks to determine their dominant occurrence.

Phase Two: ESP Instructional Monograph for Academic Writing Constructed

Based on the findings (writing deficiencies), an instructional monograph for academic writing was constructed. This monograph was approached through ESP with authentic texts on criminology topics used as reading springboard for writing exercises based on the writing deficiencies. It is constructed in five lessons: Narrating the Emergence of Criminology, Investigating the Shooting Incident, Discussing the Crime Scene Search, Reporting the Traffic Violators and Violations, Cause and Effect of Why People Join Gangs. An intervention of language focus was also included to correct the writing deficiencies of the students. Each writing exercise was logically arranged (based on a specific authentic text on criminology textuality) as outlined below:

- I. Authentic Text (Criminology)
 - A. Critical Analysis
 - B. Vocabulary Building
- II. Language Focus
- III. Academic Writing Tasks
 - C. Sentence Construction
 - D. Paragraph Writing
 - E. Essay Writing

This ESP instructional monograph on academic writing serves as the output of the study.

Results

Their compositions (discourse texts) were then analyzed according to the standard units of written discourse adapted from Jacobs, et al., namely: content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. Accordingly, these deficiencies were enumerated as raw data. The following table organizes the analysis of data for the discourse writing deficiencies.

Table 1: Discourse Content Deficiencies in Writing

| Components | Actual Discourse Content Deficiencies Enumerated |
|---|--|
| Clarity of Topic Sentence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ lacks a viewpoint or attitude (does not identify what the paragraph is about) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the topic sentence is too narrow |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the topic sentence is too broad |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ unclear topic sentence because of the erroneous sentence structure (run-on, comma splice, fragments, etc.) |
| Paragraph Development of the Topic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ unclear main idea and controlling idea of the topic sentence |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ lacks development of the main ideas (no adding details and facts about the main point) |
| Adequate Supports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ lack unity and coherence on the supports |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ insufficient supports to explain the main idea of the sentence |
| Overall Topic Knowledge and Understanding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ some supports are unimportant |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ inability to perform task because of the lack of knowledge on the support about the topic |

Table 2: Discourse Organization Deficiencies in Writing

| Components | Actual Discourse Organization Deficiencies Enumerated |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Discernible Paragraph Pattern | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ unorganized paragraph due to lack of unity and coherence |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ do not have clear understanding on how to develop the paragraph and what paragraph development to use |

| | |
|--|---|
| Clear Sentence Transitions | ▪ no transitional words |
| | ▪ nonappearance of commas after transitions |
| Sentence Connectors | ▪ the inappropriate use of more than one sentence connector in one sentence |
| Appropriate Use of Sentence Connectors | ▪ inappropriate use of coordinating and subordinating sentence connectors |
| | ▪ the use of ‘and etc.’ |

Table 3: Discourse Grammar Deficiencies in Writing

| Components | Actual Discourse Grammar Deficiencies Enumerated |
|--|--|
| Complete Sentence | ▪ run-on sentences and comma splice |
| | ▪ fragmentary sentence |
| Effective Combinations of Simple, Compound, Complex Sentences | ▪ missing subject and object/ demonstrate predicate |
| | ▪ missing relative pronoun |
| Correct Arrangements of Words, Phrase, Clauses in Sentences | ▪ missing words – <i>be</i> verb omission, auxiliary verbs, etc. |
| | ▪ redundancy cases, when unnecessary words are used, making the sentence difficult to understand |
| Correct Phrasing and Usage of Tenses, Agreements, Prepositions, Articles, Modifiers, inflections | ▪ wrong forms of part of speech |
| | ▪ misuse and absence of article |
| | ▪ mistake in verb tense |
| | ▪ mistake in number (singular and plural) |
| | ▪ misuse of prepositions and absence of preposition |
| | ▪ mistake in infinitive structure |
| | ▪ mistake on the inflection plural form of irregular verbs |
| ▪ wrong structure when using modal verbs | |

Table 4: Discourse Vocabulary Deficiencies in Writing

| Components | Actual Discourse Vocabulary Deficiencies Enumerated |
|--|---|
| Appropriate Idiomatic Use of Words and Expressions | ▪ Incorrect structure of idiomatic expressions |
| Clarity of Meaning Through Choice of Words | ▪ Use of inappropriate words |
| Academic Speech register (Formal level of Usage) | ▪ Use of contractions and abbreviations |
| | ▪ Use of colloquial terms |
| | ▪ Use of vernacular word |

Table 5: Discourse Mechanics Deficiencies in Writing

| Components | Actual Discourse Mechanics Deficiencies Enumerated |
|----------------------|--|
| Correct Spelling | ▪ wrong spelling of a word |
| | ▪ the confusion on the spelling of the expletive ‘there’ |
| Correct Punctuations | ▪ absence of comma after an introductory element |
| | ▪ incorrect use of possessive and contraction apostrophe, and the absence of apostrophe in the contraction of “I am” |
| | ▪ the use of comma before subordinating conjunction |

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Correct Capitalizations | ▪ pronoun 'I' not capitalized |
| | ▪ a capital letter not used to begin a proper name |
| | ▪ sentence not begun with a capital letter |
| Legibility of Handwriting | ▪ compositions written in print |
| | ▪ incomprehensible penmanship and presence of erasures |
| | ▪ no indentation on the first line of the paragraph |

Discussion

Content

Discourse content criterion is the students' ability to focus on a central topic and to give relevant and concrete supports. However, most of the students create sentences that change one idea to another in which the reader will have the difficulty on what the writers want to convey. It is clear that many students have little grasped of the topic and whatever little understanding they have is irrelevant.

The first component in discourse content criterion is the clarity of topic sentence. Students are unable to write a topic sentence that states its topic clearly. While the topic sentence may be implied in some forms of writing, a topic on "*Why did you enroll in the Criminology Program?*" would mostly likely require the explicit topic sentence.

Topic sentence identifies what the paragraph is about and makes the point about the topic. It expresses the main idea that the paragraph is trying to get across to the reader. However, the topic sentences identified in the compositions of the respondents have errors. McWhorter (1999) says that a topic sentence should identify your topic and express an attitude or viewpoint. A topic needs to tell the reader what is important or interesting about the topic. It should state the point to the rest of the paragraph. Nevertheless, there are topic sentences from the compositions of students that lack viewpoint or attitude.

Some topic sentences express a point of view, but they cover too much information. It a broad topic that cannot be covered or supported in a single paragraph. With a broad topic sentence, it will end up with too many facts and ideas that do not sufficiently explain the topic sentence. On the other hand, the topic is too narrow which is also another deficiency in the students' compositions. The students with this type of error do not have enough to write about the topic to complete the paragraph. The topic sentences that are too narrow also frequently lack a point of view.

Another deficiency is the ambiguous and unclear topic sentence. The reasons are the erroneous sentence structures (run-on, comma splice, fragments); unclear main idea and controlling idea of the topic; and do not make a point about the topic. The unclear topic sentences caused by erroneous sentence structure like run-on, comma splice and fragments were very transparent in the students' compositions. They do not express a complete thought which are needed in a topic sentence. So, the topic sentences appear unclear and incomplete.

The unclear main idea and controlling idea of the topic sentence is also a problem. The controlling idea of a topic sentence is the key word or group of words that expresses its basic idea. The controlling idea gives direction to the composition. It lets the reader know what to expect, and it gives a definite focus to the entire composition. The paragraphs in a composition are related to the controlling idea like the sentences in a paragraph are related to the topic sentences. It is the controlling idea that ties all the paragraphs together and makes them part of the larger composition concept. Without a controlling idea, the composition lacks focus. The writer has nothing to center the composition on, and the reader may not know the writer's point (Germana Tutoring Services, n.d.).

The second component in discourse content criterion is the paragraph development of the topic. The developed paragraphs must have supporting sentences to prove or explain the point made in the topic sentence. The development shows two deficiencies. The first deficiency shows the lack development of the main ideas. It is expected that supporting details in a paragraph will give the readers specific facts, ideas, or evidences to expand, develop and support the main idea of the paragraph. According to Reinking et al. (2007), the details which are bits of information may mean little. When those are added together, they clearly illustrate a point.

The second deficiency is the lack of unity and coherence on the supports. The supporting sentences do not focus on only one idea and do not flow smoothly from one sentence to another. The supporting details should explain the main idea and there should be a logical ordering of the sentences within the paragraphs through the creation of smooth transitions between the sentences.

The third component in discourse content criterion is the adequate supports or sufficient details. Sufficient means enough details to make the topic sentence believable and convincing (McWhorter, 1999). Nonetheless, the compositions show insufficient supports to explain the main idea of the sentence. The compositions do not have enough details to thoroughly support the main idea. The second deficiency is the unimportant supports that show unrelated and random sentences.

The fourth component in discourse content criterion is the overall topic knowledge and understanding of the topic. The compositions illustrate the inability to perform task because of the lack of knowledge on the support about the topic. The students did not supply enough information that will make the point clear. That is if the paragraph is supported by a sufficient number of details, examples, illustrations, or reasons. Unfortunately, the compositions do not demonstrate knowledge on the topic.

Organization

Brannan (2003) believes that the quality of good writing includes effective organization. In paragraph writing, it must include an introductory sentence, supporting sentences and a concluding sentence. The introduction sparks interest and acquaints the reader with what is to come. The supporting sentences deliver the main message and exhibit a clear connection between ideas so that the reader can easily follow thoughts. The concluding sentence ends the discussion so the reader feels satisfied rather than suddenly cut off. Overall, the composition should follow a pattern that is suited to its content.

The first component in discourse organization criterion is discernible paragraph pattern. But the students produced unorganized paragraph due to lack of unity and coherence. This results to jumbled points of their compositions. The next problem is the students' lack of understanding on how to develop the paragraph and what paragraph development to use. They must develop a paragraph based on the topic asked.

Most of the compositions do not have transitional words that lead their compositions to lack of unity and coherence. Transitions are words and phrases to show the audience how its ideas stick together and how they work together to illustrate the topic sentence. Thissen (2002) states that transitional expressions glue the sentences together. The use of transitional expressions signals the connection among the various sentences.

Another error is the absence of comma after the transitions. It is a rule in using transitions that a comma must be placed after the transitions. Carte and Skates (1993) affirm that transitional expressions or conjunctive adverbs such as *however, therefore, for example, in conclusion, nevertheless*, etc. should be set off with commas.

The third component in discourse organization criterion is the sentence connectors. The first deficiency identified is the use of more than one sentence connector in a sentence. The sentences became too long because of no proper punctuations employed by the students. This results to fused sentences. It means that sentences have more than one independent clause.

The fourth component in discourse organization criterion is the appropriate use of sentence connectors. The first error of this component is the inappropriate use of coordinating conjunctions

and subordinating conjunctions. Coordinating conjunctions as conjunctions – *and, but, yet, or, for, so* and *nor* - that connect sentence parts that are grammatically equal in rank. While subordinating conjunctions – *when, because, since, so that, before, etc.* – are conjunctions that join dependent clauses to independent clauses (Freeman, 1997). So, independent clauses can be joined to produce compound sentences by using the coordinating conjunctions. However, dependent clauses are not complete; thus, independent clauses must be attached by using the subordinating conjunctions as the start of the sentence.

Another error is the inappropriate use of ‘*and etc.*’ This structure suggests redundancy of the connector *and* since *etc.* means ‘*and so forth*’ (Forlini, 2009).

Grammar

The first component in discourse grammar criterion is to see if students can construct complete sentences. A complete sentence should start with a subject and should be followed by a verb or an object. The results show that majority of the students do not have ability to construct complete sentences. The deficiencies of this criterion are the run-on sentences and comma splice, and fragmentary sentences produced by the students. Run-on sentences are clauses run together without a conjunction or proper punctuation. Whereas, a comma splice is two independent clauses joined with only a comma (Carter and Skates, 1993). This error results to unclear idea.

Nevertheless, fragmentary sentence is not a complete sentence. It does not have a subject or it does not have a predicate. It is an incomplete structure punctuated as a complete sentence but it lacks the necessary independent clause.

The effective use of a combination of simple and compound sentences is another component in discourse grammar criterion. These types of sentences are basic requirements for grammatical competence and are prerequisites of writing. The error on this is the missing of subject and object or it demonstrates predicate only which is very erroneous. Obviously, students have difficulty expressing their ideas using the language.

The next deficiency is the lack of relative pronoun. Relative pronouns relate group of words to nouns or other pronouns and often introduce adjective clauses or noun clauses. The relative pronouns that refer to people are *who, whom, whoever, whomever, and whose* and those that refer to things are *that, what, whatever, which* (McWhorter, 1999).

The third component in discourse grammar criterion is the correct arrangements of words, phrase, and clauses in sentences. Yet, the deficiencies observed are the missing words such *be* omission, auxiliary verb, etc.; redundancy cases when unnecessary words are used making the sentence difficult to understand; and wrong forms of part of speech.

The missing words such *be* omission can be seen when the students did not include the *be* verb, auxiliary verb or other words needed to complete the sentence. Next error in this component is the redundancy cases when unnecessary words are used and repeated making the sentence difficult to understand. Further, the wrong forms of parts of speech that were employed by the students. This deficiency can be seen when a student had a wrong structure on the part of speech.

The fourth component in discourse grammar criterion is the correct phrasing and usage of tenses, agreements, prepositions, articles, modifiers, inflections. But, errors are apparent such misuse and absence of article; mistake in verb tense; mistake in number; error in infinitive; mistake in modals; mistake and absence of prepositions; and error in inflection.

Articles can be classified as indefinite and definite articles. Indefinite articles (*a, an, Ø*) classify a noun and represent or reflect a type, group, or a class distinct from some other type, group or class. The definite article (*the*) can identify a noun and show that it has been singled out in some way (Frodesen, 1997). However, misuse and absence of articles are present in students’ compositions.

Wrong application of verb tense can be seen when the students did not apply the correct tense to the verb in sentences. It can be thought that some of students are not aware of the different rules for tenses application. According to McWhorter (1999), verbs are an important part of any

language because they express action. Nonetheless, they also indicate time. Verb tense suggests the time frame. So, sentences must be constructed with the correct tense of the verb for the meaning to be clear and easy to follow. The common error is the use of *did, do, does* that needs to be followed by base form of the verb.

The mistake in number is also a deficiency in students' compositions. In standard English, subject-verb agreement is a requirement. That is, a verb form needs to be appropriate for the subject. In general, agreement depends on three factors: person, number, and tense (Carter and Skates, 1993). There are still other errors which are very apparent in their writings. There was also erroneous structure of infinitive. In the rule, infinitives begin with *to* followed by a verb (*base form of verb*). This is a kind of verbal that appears alone or in phrases and can function as adverbs, adjectives, and nouns.

An error in modals is also very evident. Modal auxiliaries influence the "mood" of verbs by expressing ideas such as ability, advisability, necessity, and possibility. The common modal auxiliaries are *will, would, can, could, shall, should, may, might, must*. These auxiliaries are followed by the base form of either the main verb, the *be* auxiliary, or *have* auxiliary (Carter and Skates, 1993).

Another deficiency is the adding *-s* to plural form of irregular verb. This illustrates the mistake in inflection. Inflection is the modification of a word to express grammatical categories but they do not change the essential meaning or lexical category of the word (Rowe and Levine, 2009). The students also demonstrated incorrect use or demonstrated confusion for correct usage of prepositions. Further, some sentences do not have prepositions that link and relate objects to the rest of the sentence.

Vocabulary

Another major problem in the compositions of students is the students' difficulty in expressing themselves in comprehensible sentences. Many of their sentences are poorly constructed: the phrasing is often unidiomatic and often incomprehensible; the vocabulary is limited and substandard.

The first component in discourse vocabulary criterion is the appropriate idiomatic use of words and expressions. The data disclose that the respondents did not use the vocabulary level appropriate for college and that some of the words and figures of speech or idioms were not correctly used. Moreover, the second component in discourse vocabulary criterion is the clarity of meaning through choice of words. An error is identified as the use of inappropriate words.

The third component in discourse vocabulary criterion is academic speech register. The deficiencies are the use of the contractions and abbreviations, the use of colloquial, and the use of vernacular word. Another error is the use of colloquial terms. The use of informal language is not accepted in academic writing but students seem not aware of it. It is informal and its appearance in formal documents can reduce them to illogical. The use of vernacular words is also used by the students which show informality and lack of vocabulary.

The number of different words available to writers is determined by their breadth and depth of word knowledge and their ability to retrieve words as needed. In planning writing, skilled writers consciously select appropriate words to convey their ideas. Students with more limited vocabularies may have difficulty with a) word-retrieval ability, b) knowledge of morphology, or c) breadth and depth of word knowledge. Word retrieval involves the ability to rapidly access the individual words that are stored in memory. When students have difficulty with word retrieval, the problem is not the lack of intact word knowledge, but rather quick and efficient access to these words. Students' knowledge of morphology helps them to gain meaning by recognizing how prefixes, suffixes, and roots contribute to and alter word meaning. Breadth and depth of word knowledge or semantics includes both knowledge of word meanings and the various shades of meaning a word may have. Semantic knowledge helps one to differentiate between words that have shared yet different meanings (Mather et al., 2009).

Mechanics

The first component in discourse mechanics criterion is the correct spelling. The error in the spelling is the confusion on the spelling of some words and of the expletive 'there'. Spelling is much more difficult than reading because the person has to recall and reproduce the entire word correctly, not just recognize it. Accurate spelling requires knowledge of English writing system. Four aspects of oral language have particular relevance to spelling: phonology, orthography, morphology, and semantics. Phonology refers to the sounds of language. English has estimated forty to forty-four phonemes. Orthography refers to the writing system of a language, including the spelling patterns, punctuation marks, and numbers. Morphology enables students to form plurals, show possession, or change verbs to different tenses. Many students with learning and language problems are not as proficient as their peers in using morphological knowledge to help with spelling. Students may have difficulty forming plurals, possessives, and verb tenses. Semantics or vocabulary knowledge aids a writer in word choice and in the spelling in meaning but sound alike (Marther et al., 2009).

The second component in discourse mechanics criterion is correct punctuations. In the component of punctuation, three deficiencies are observed. The first error is the absence of comma after an introductory element, when a dependent clause should be separated by a comma from the independent clause. Introductory clauses are introduced by subordinate conjunctions such as *after, although, as soon as, because, before, even though, if, once, since, unless, when, where, while* usually, a comma should separate the clause from the rest of the sentence. The second error is the incorrect use of possessive and contraction apostrophe, and the absence of apostrophe in the contraction of "I am".

The last component in discourse mechanics criterion is the capitalization. The errors identified are the pronoun 'I', the first letter of proper names, and the first word of a sentence not capitalized. The personal pronoun 'I' should be capitalized. Proper names must be capitalized also. However, students did not capitalize it. The other error is when the first word in the sentence is not capitalized. The correct use of punctuation and capitalization helps the reader understand the writer's intent.

The last component in discourse mechanics criterion is the legibility of handwriting. The compositions show three deficiencies. The first deficiency is when the students write in print or in uppercase in their compositions. The second is when there is no indention on the first line of the paragraph. In addition, the third deficiency is when the students produced incomprehensible penmanship.

Handwriting is a fine-motor skill that enables students to record their thoughts. Effective handwriting requires both legibility and fluency. Legibility refers to the clarity and accuracy of the letter forms, whereas fluency refers to the ease and quickness of the formation. Legible handwriting involves six interrelated characteristics: a.) letter formation, or the composition of the stroke; b.) size and proportion, or the size of the letters and the proportional size between uppercase and lowercase letters; c.) spacing, or the amount of letters and words; d.) slant or the consistency in direction of the writing; e.) alignment, or uniformity of size and consistency on the writing line; and f.) line quality, or the steadiness and thickness of the line (Barbe, Wasyluk, Hackney, and Braun in Mather et al., 2009).

Conclusion

The findings of the study through error analysis show that the Criminology freshmen in COC-PHINMA are generally deficient in the five areas of discourse writing namely content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. An instructional material should be developed to improve the academic writing skill of students.

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