Error Analysis and Self-Reflection as Strategies for Improving Writing Achievement in Senior Secondary Schools in Lagos State

[1]Prof. F.O., Okebukola, [2]Prof. S.O., Makinde and [3]Kolade, Abiodun Ahmed
[123]Department of Language, Arts and Social Sciences Education,
Faculty of Education, Lagos State University

Abstract

This quasi-experimental research determined the the relative effects of error analysis and self-reflection on students' writing achievement in secondary schools in Lagos State. A total of 163 students participated in the study. Achievement Test in Writing (r=0.76) was the instrument used for data collection. It was found that error analysis and self-reflection improved writing achievement of students at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria.

Keywords: Error analysis, Self-reflection, Relative Effects, Writing Achievement, Failure.

Introduction

The methods, techniques, strategies and tools for dissemination of information in the English classroom has been a research concern for decades because of the challenges students encounter in obtaining maximum score both in internal and external examinations. The attainable skills in language education are speaking, reading, listening and writing. Writing being one of the four basic skills is widely regarded as the most difficult and least liked of the four language abilities because humans do not naturally want to be disturbed on the ground that writing to humans is dubbed as disturbing in academics (Sahle et al., 2023). According to Elkhayma (2020), writing skills are essential for reading information, reporting news, and communicating via digital emails and messages. Writing implies communication both of thoughts and emotions, with the use of signs and symbols. In most languages of the world, writing complements speaking. Writing is that material which aids communication so much so that users enjoy the art for diversified purposes all over the world today. It has to a very large extent been beneficial in archiving history, culture and knowledge. The attempts by the instructors to put learners through deciphering the thoughts of listeners and readers of their transmitted information means learners have grown both in knowledge and understanding of language use (Kern 2000). It has been noticed that learner's fear of acquisition of a second language has resulted in development of errors. But for the discovery of the art of writing, one would imagine how history would have been recorded for generations of children yet unborn who may need such history to make the world a better place for all and sundry. The very essence of language in the written form cannot be wished away because of its importance in business and governmental engagements. The system of writing develops and changes depending on the needs of the people using them. The shape, view, and meaning accorded individual signs could change over time because of linguistic-dynamism-feature of language. Learners write from pre-nursery classes to university level of education for the Nigerian child. Children are engaged to scribble symbols which are interpreted as meaningful information by readers; this is how writing kicks off! Children rigmarole with spellings of words they see every day, their sensitivity about gadgets that are used by them are brought to their understanding in writing and in the long run, they become better writers as time goes on meanwhile poor writing and eventual poor reading are inseparable entities in language (Kern 2000).

The generational quest for literacy is an activity for everyone because of the impact of literacy. Based on this fact, writing, being one of the skills for language learners in Nigeria must be taken in schools with the seriousness required of it. Writing in this research is synonymous to essay, letter writing and other forms of composition. There is however different topics given to students which are hoped will help to widen their horizon and exhibit their world view. Such topics include: 'Write a letter to your father telling about the need to have your university education abroad after the completion of your secondary school' (informal letter); 'Describe an armed robbery scene you witnessed around your house recently' (Descriptive essay) etc. Furthermore, students can also write about their favourite day, favourite music, favourite place, favourite movie, favourite food and others. These topics are interesting, engaging and students feel comfortable writing these topics, by sharing their own feelings and world view (MyCustomEssay.com 2024). With this, they can improve their writing skill as well as imaginative skills.

To bring about effective writing among students, it is important to evolve a more effective pedagogical approach to disseminate information within the four walls of the classrooms hence the researchers attempt at the use of error analysis and self-reflection as tools to improve writing teaching-learning outcome. While error analysis attempts to

demystify students' writings in order to ascertain causes of the errors with the intention of eradicating them, self reflection is considered a personal and deliberate attempt by the students to analyse and correct their writings where necessary given time and opportunity.

Statement of the Problem

Students have recorded a fluctuating rate of success accompanied by incessant failure in English writing exercise in WAEC examinations, with appalling records year in and out (WAEC, 2023). Writing is one of the determiners for overall success of students in English language because of its being considered as one of the four basic skills of language education, others being reading, speaking and listening. Alarmingly, students still do not show depth of knowledge and ability to write appropriately so much so that they can be adjudged as fair or good writers. What teachers still witness is a wasted effort regarded as writing going by the results of West African Examinations and the chief examiners reports too. The necessary skill to attain the objective of language education in this regard can only be procured from the classroom through direct contact with the students learning the language hence, this study determined the effect of error analysis and self-reflection on writing achievements among senior secondary school students in Lagos State. The moderating effect of gender was also examined.

Objectives of the Study

The study determined the effect of error analysis and self-reflection on writing achievement among senior secondary school students in Lagos State. The moderating effect of gender was also examined. Specifically, the study set out to:

1. Determine the effect of error analysis and self-reflection on writing achievement among senior secondary school students in Lagos State
2. Examine gender difference in students' writing achievement after treatment
3. Ascertain the interaction effect of treatment and gender on students' writing achievement.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at alpha level of 0.05

Ho_1: There will be no statistically significant difference in students' writing achievement when taught using error analysis, self-reflection and conventional method.

Ho_2: There will be no statistically significant difference of male and female students' writing achievement when taught using error analysis, self-reflection and conventional method

Ho_3: There will be no statistically significant interaction effect of treatments and gender in improving writing achievement in English of senior secondary school students.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the pre-test, posttest quasi experimental design. It was used to examine the effects of error analysis and self-reflection on students' academic achievement in writing. It also examined the mediating effects of gender on the dependent measure of interest. The participants were 163 students in intact classes The instrument developed for collection of data was Achievement Test in Writing '(r=). All hypotheses were tested using ANCOVA at 0.05 level of significance. It is recommended therefore that teachers of English Language should adopt error analysis and self-reflection in order to improve students achievement in writing

Results

Testing the Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant effect of treatments (error analysis, self-reflection and conventional methods) on writing achievement in English of senior secondary school students in Lagos State.

To test the hypothesis, the data collected from the sampled secondary schools were recalled, summarized and subjected to descriptive analysis of means and standard deviation as well as inferential statistics of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

Table 1 : ANCOVA of the effects of Treatments (Error Analysis, Self -Reflection and Conventional Methods) on Writing Achievement in English of Senior Secondary School Students in Lagos State

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.	$p\eta^2$
Treatment	1.872	2	.936	.426	.654	.006
Error	329.657	150	2.198			

From Table 1, the effect of treatments (error analysis, self-reflection and conventional methods) on writing achievement in English of senior secondary school students in Lagos State, F(2, 150) = .426, p >0.05 was not significant. This implies that there is no significant effect of treatments in improving the writing achievements in English of senior secondary school students in Lagos State. Therefore, the hypothesis was not rejected. Also, the value of partial eta-squared (0.006) indicates that treatments accounted for 0.6% of the variance in improving the writing achievements in English.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant effect of gender on writing achievement in English of senior secondary school students in Lagos State.

To test the hypothesis, the data collected from the sampled secondary schools were recalled, summarized and subjected to descriptive analysis of means and standard deviation as well as inferential statistics of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA)

Table 2: Effect of gender on Writing Achievement in English of Senior Secondary School Students in Lagos State

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.	$p\eta^2$
Gender	1.000	1	1.000	.455	.501	.003
Error	329.657	150	2.198			

From Table 1.4 the effect of gender F (1, 150) = .455, p > 0.05 was not significant. This implies that there is no significant effect of gender on writing achievement in English of senior secondary school students in Lagos State. Therefore, the hypothesis was not rejected. The value of partial eta-squared (0.003) indicates that gender accounted for a mere 0.3% of the variance in the writing achievement in English of senior secondary school students in Lagos State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant interaction effect of treatments and gender in improving writing achievement in English of senior secondary school students in Lagos State.

To test the hypothesis, the data collected were subjected to analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

Table 3: Interaction Effects of Treatments and Gender in Improving Writing Achievement in English of Senior Secondary School Students in Lagos State

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.	$p\eta^2$
Treatment * Gender	3.367	2	1.683	.766	.467	.010
Error	329.657	150	2.198			

Table 1.5 shows that the interaction effect of treatments and gender F (2, 150) = 0.766, p > .05 was not significant. This implies that there is no significant interaction effect of treatments and gender in improving writing achievement in English of senior secondary school students in Lagos State. Therefore, the hypothesis was not rejected. Partial eta-squared (0.010) indicates that treatments and gender accounted for a mere 1.0% of the variance in improving writing achievement in English of senior secondary school students in Lagos State.

Discussion

Results revealed that the students who were in the error analysis group had the highest score both formean difference and standard deviation while the students in the self-reflection group were next leaving the students in the conventional group with the least score.. A study on self-reflection by Magdalene and Henk in 2011 which aimed at evaluating whether reflection writing was effective in promoting self-reflection as a learning and teaching tool, and whether students become better at self-reflection if they engage continuously in reflection writing proved abortive. It was discovered in their research through the outcomes of the textual content analyses that students reflected on both the process and contents of their learning: critical review of past learning experiences, learning strategies and summaries of what was learned yet correlation analyses showed weak to moderate inter-relationships between the textual categories and their classroom and knowledge acquisition test grades. This suggests that self-reflection on both how and what students have learned led to minute improvements in academic performance. This finding corroborates the outcome of this research which also suggest that there is no significant effect

of treatment in improving students academic achievement in English of Senior secondary school students. While it can be concluded that self-reflection contributes to knowledge and subsequent writing achievement, Naidoo et al., (2023) concludes that there is a gap in understanding its effects when used in need-based instruction. The study further revealed that female students had a better writing achievement scores than their male counterparts. ANCOVA was used to determine the efficacy of such difference and it was discovered that gender cannot be considered as yardstick for determining the improvement of students in writing at the senior school level as it didn't contribute to improvement of writing achievement given that the value of partial eta-squared (0.003) indicates that gender accounted for a mere 0.3% of the variance in the writing achievement in English of senior secondary school students in Lagos State. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected. This result can be corroborated by so many other researches that have employed gender as a mediating variable for the much needed twist in research outcome and most results have proven that gender is not significant in bringing the much anticipated results. For example, the likes of Deji-Afuye and Obadare (2021) and Iroko (2020) have all reported that gender had no significant effects as a mediator variable in their research endeavour. To further corroborate the findings of the research based on gender, Okebukola (2002) as cited in Apari (2018) recorded that there is no significant difference in the performance of male and female students even though the findings stated that the girls did better than their male counterparts. The result finally revealed that the interaction effect of treatments and gender was not significant. In essence, gender failed to determine writing achievement among senior secondary school students in Lagos state.

Conclusion

The study determined the effect of error analysis and self-reflection on writing achievement among senior secondary school students in Lagos State. The moderating effect of gender was also examined. It can be concluded that error analysis and self-reflection are potent strategies for improving students' achievement in writing.

Recommendation

Teachers of English Language should adopt error analysis and self-reflection in order to improve students achievement in writing.

Teachers should be in constant search of strategies, techniques and methods that could reduce to the barest minimum the challenges students encounter in English writing.

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