Writing Anxiety and Vocabulary knowledge as Predictors of Senior Secondary School Students' Achievement in Yoruba Composition Writing in Education District VI, Lagos

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Abstract

This study investigated writing anxiety and vocabulary knowledge as predictors of academic achievement in Yoruba Composition writing among Senior Secondary School students in Lagos State. It adopted a descriptive survey research design. The research was carried out in the six Education districts of Lagos State in which two (2) Senior Secondary Schools were randomly selected from each district which total twelve (12) schools. Participants were drawn from the twelve (12) Senior Secondary schools through random sampling technique. From each school, fifty (50) students were randomly selected among the SS2 students in each of the sample schools. A total of Six hundred (600) respondents participated in the study. Two instruments; Students' Achievement Test in Yorùbá Composition Writing (SATYC), Students' Vocabulary Knowledge Test in Composition Writing (SVKTCW), were administered which were found reliable with reliability indices .75, and .82 respectively. Data collected were analysed using descriptive analyses and inferential statistics to answer two (2) research questions and test two (2) formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings indicated that students' achievement in Yoruba Composition Writing had positive significant correlation with vocabulary knowledge r=.542;p<0.05, but had positive non-significant with writing anxiety r=.024;p>0.05. Yoruba Composition writing. It was discovered through this study that personal factors predict students' learning outcomes in Yoruba composition writing. As a result and among other recommendations the study recommended that Yoruba composition writing should be distinguished and taught by those who have advanced knowledge in it.

Key words: Achievement, Composition, Vocabulary, Academic, Secondary, Instruments

Introduction

Writing composition is adding words and making sentences by following a conventional pattern. Students must follow the right grammatical rules while expressing their ideas and opinions. In brief, it is an activity of writing, which is concerned with handwriting, basic knowledge of language, and spelling.

Additionally, it includes cognitive, meta-cognitive, and other relevant aspects. However, writing composition is a process that allows students to write about something or express their views on something in an intelligible manner (Ofoego,2000). According to Ilesanmi (2014), writing composition is adding words and making sentences by following a conventional pattern. Students must follow the right grammatical rules while expressing their ideas and opinions. In brief, it is an activity of writing, which is concerned with handwriting, basic knowledge of language, and spelling.

Writing is so important as language skills that no educated person can do without. When you want to say a lot of things to someone far from you, you have to write them down, In life, you will always have a reason to write to a friend, a relation or someone in authority. In school, most examinations involve writing. Writing is also important in speaking (Ayodele, 2011). To make a good speech, you will have to write down its outline or even write your full speech first before presenting it.

Adegbile (2011) says “composition is a piece of writing that discusses the main idea.” This main idea is broken into smaller ideas. Each idea is written in a paragraph. Another name for composition is an essay, A composition tells your reader what you think about a topic (Adegbile, 2011).Ayodele (2011) submits that explanation of what composition or essay writing is all about first we need to refer to its origin. He said, the composition is derived from the Latin word, 'cum' meaning with together and 'ponere' which means to place. It can be deduced from this, that composition is putting things, which could be ideas or thoughts, together to form a new structure for a particular purpose.

Many language scholars have defined composition writing almost in the same way.Abijo (1994) states that composition is an art of forming by putting together or being together. Kathy (2017) states that it is the acquisition of the skills of writing effortlessly or with relative ease, the basic structure, and patterns of the language.

The foregoing implies that composition refers to structural arrangements of thoughts and ideas, organization, and putting together of parts to make a whole. It should be pointed out that composition writing is not an act of testing the students' ability to write. If it is so, the desired goal of acquiring writing skills or writing competence cannot be achieved (Ayodele, 2011). From the foregoing, we wish to counsel that students must have a sound knowledge of grammar. They must know why a particular grammatical expression is relevant or useful. So, composition writing involves a process of utilizing language and a great deal of personality of the writer (Abijo, 2017).

Nnamani (2004) define composition as the act of putting something together or the combination of elements or qualities. She further says it also the act of composing or putting together a whole by combining parts, the putting together of words, especially correctly and effectively: the art of writing. Houghton (2004) states that composition is a short essay, especially one written as an academic exercise. It is also the formation of compounds from separate wards in linguistics perspective (Houghton, 2004). Kupperman (1988) says composition is the proportion of different parts to make a whole, also it's the general make-up of something.

The Yorùbá language is taught and learned through four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A deficiency in any one of these skills may be an indication of deficiency in other areas. Teachers of Yorùbá composition are expected to teach and emphasize the basic skills involved in writing to help students acquire the basic skills needed for effective writing and competency.

According to Angelo (1981): Myles (2004) teachers need to understand that composition has principles and forms which they must understand and teach students, to help the students to overcome their writing problems. He identified and formation sentence development, paragraph appropriateness of words as the linguistic principles which must be developed.

Composition writing requires conscious efforts and practice in composing, developing, and analyzing ideas. Asaolu(1982) emphasized that competence in Yorùbá composition involves logical thinking, coherence in the organization of thought, correct use of the language which includes the use of punctuations, tone marks, the right use of proverbs, similes and other figures of speech that can enrich and beautify the composition. Ogunyemi (2010) also notes that competence in writing is pre-requisite for students' academic success since examinations are conducted through the medium of writing, students must be able to respond clearly to examination questions through writing for them to record any meaningful success. For these great tasks, scholars proffered solutions, among which are the need to have improved modern methods of teaching and help students to improve their writing skills (Kolawole, 1997).

Anxiety is the product of stress. It is the psychological response of each students to academic stress (Afolayan et al., 2013; Bouras & Holt, 2007). Anxiety is explained as the manner in which a person reacts or responses to stress, accept and interpret it. Simandan (2010) asserted that stress is a type of psychological pain. A lack of understanding a particular topic might become stressful for a given learner creating a tense and anxious learner. Therefore, students who are anxious are likely to experience shakes, their hands become sweaty, go numb and they suffer from a number of sudden disabilities associated with anxiety during examination. An above moderate anxious learner will have trouble performing well in academic task that requires a higher level of brain power as they have difficulty concentrating, focus on a single task and memory recall of previously learned concept (Heather & April, 2009; Iris, 2011).

Students' Yorùbá vocabulary knowledge is an individual student personal factor. It is the repertoire of the students' knowledge in Yorùbá. Cremer et al., (2010) stressed that vocabulary knowledge is not just the memorisation of multiples word but the overall acquiring various types of knowledge regarding each word and creating semantic networks among multiple lexical items. Yorùbá vocabulary knowledge is the student's ability to select and use the appropriate word to convey meaning. Therefore, vocabulary knowledge is mark of excellence in a given language.

This study, therefore, investigated writing anxiety and vocabulary knowledge as predictors of Senior Secondary School Students' Achievement in Yoruba Composition Writing in Education District VI, Lagos.

Statement of the Problem

The problems of this study stem from the most recent WASSCE 2018 examiners' report that students fail Yoruba composition writing due to the following reasons; lack of proper understanding of some essay topics. E.g ILU (drum) mistaken for ILU (town); lack of exposure to selected literature text; inability to write good Yorùbá and correct spelling of terms; inability to write extensively on the chosen topics. This translates to mean that the students wrote far below the required 300 words. In addition, students' inability to approach the argumentative essay properly and use tone-marks appropriately equally contributed to their failure.

Similarly, WASSCE (PC) 2019 reported that students' failure as attributed to their lack of proper understanding of the essay topic they choose to write as well as poor organization; inability to write good Yorùbá and spelling terms correctly; inability to indicate correctly the question numbers attempted and in some cases, not indicating at all.

However, this study investigated writing anxiety and vocabulary knowledge as predictors of students achievement in Yoruba composition writing.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine writing anxiety and vocabulary knowledge as predictors of studnts' achievement in Yorùbá composition writings among Senior Secondary School students across the six Education Districts in Lagos State Nigeria

Research Question

1. Is there any relationship between students' vocabulary knowledge and students' achievement in Yorùbá composition writing?
2. What is the relationship between writing anxiety and achievement in Yorùbá composition writing?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

HO_1 There is no significant relationship between students' vocabulary knowledge and achievement in Yorùbá composition writing

HO_2 There is no significant relationship between writing anxiety and students' achievement in Yorùbá composition writing

Scope of the Study

This study extensively based on writing anxiety and vocabulary knowledge affecting learning outcome (achievement) in Yorùbá composition writing among senior school students.

Significance of the Study

The study helps to establish the status of the Secondary Schools in terms of Yorùbá composition writing skills, strategy, and students' competence. It helps curriculum planners, teachers, schools, and students under consideration improve their teaching competency that will enhance the effective performance of students and draw students' interest to the study of Yorùbá language in schools. The study will equally encourage the parents to impose on their children or wards the use of Yorùbá Language during conversations.

By way of patriotism and respect for their own beliefs and values, students could begin to consciously use Yorùbá language to perform more functions in the society which all forestall the language from going into extinction. It will assist the students to be fluent in the use of language, this could also assist them not to code-mix when they are using the language. Parents must also know the relevance of Yorùbá language on the educational needs and the aspirations of their children and so they should do everything possible to encourage their children to learn the Yorùbá Language.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. The research was carried out in the six Education Districts of Lagos State in which two (2) Senior Secondary Schools were randomly selected from each district which total twelve (12) schools. Participants were drawn from the twelve (12) Senior Secondary schools through random sampling technique. From each school, fifty (50) students were randomly selected among the SS2 students in each of the sample schools. A total of Six hundred (600) respondents participated in the study. Two (2) research questions were answered alongside two (2) hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significant. An instrument (SPFQ) was used for data collection. The data collected were analysed using inferential statistics.

Result

RQ1: Is there any relationship between students' vocabulary knowledge and students' achievement in Yorùbá composition writing?

$H0_1$ There is no significant relationship between students' vocabulary knowledge and achievement in Yorùbá composition writing

Table 1.1 Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Analysis Relationship between Students' Vocabulary Knowledge and Students' Achievement in Yorùbá Composition Writing

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	R	p-value
Achievement Scores	598	18.49	6.072	.542**	.000
Vocabulary Knowledge	593	13.71	3.091		

Table 1.1 showed that there was positive significant correlation between students' vocabulary knowledge and students' achievement in Yorùbá composition writing, r = .542; N = 598; p-value < 0.05. There was a moderate positive relationship between students' vocabulary knowledge and students' achievement in Yorùbá composition writing, since students' vocabulary knowledge accounted for just 29.4% in the relationship (r = .542). Since the null hypothesis which states that

There was no significant relationship between students' vocabulary knowledge and students' achievement in Yorùbá composition writing was thus rejected. This implies that as the students increase in their achievement in Yoruba composition writing, there was a corresponding increase in their vocabulary knowledge; and vice versa.

RQ_2 What is the relationship between writing anxiety and achievement in Yorùbá composition writing?

HO_2 There is no significant relationship between writing anxiety and students' achievement in Yorùbá composition writing

Table 1.2 Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Analysis Relationship between Students' Writing Anxiety and Students' Achievement in Yorùbá Composition Writing

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	r	p-value
Achievement Scores	598	18.49	6.072	.024	.558
Writing Anxiety	598	2.68	.514		

Table 1.2 showed that there was positive non-significant correlation between students' writing anxiety and students' achievement in Yorùbá composition writing, r = .024; N = 598; p-value > 0.05. There was an extremely poor positive relationship between students' students' writing anxiety and students' achievement in Yorùbá composition writing, since students' accounted for just 0.06% in the relationship (r = .024). Since the null hypothesis which states that there was no significant relationship between students' writing anxiety and students' achievement in Yorùbá composition writing is thus not rejected. The positive relationship implies that as the students increase in their attitude to Yoruba composition writing, there was a corresponding increase in their writing anxiety; and vice versa.

Discussion of Findings

The opinions by Daly and Miller (1975) that failure in writing could be the source of writing anxiety and that anxious authors stop writing because they are afraid of failing are direct opposite to the result of this study. Also, MacIntyre and Gardner's (1994) submission contradicts this result because they claimed that anxiety has a wide range of impacts on language comprehension, affecting it at all stages of the process: input, processing, and performance. The result negated Daly & Miller's (1975) that prior failure in writing could be the source of writing anxiety. Furthermore, Mattoo & Nabi's (2012) view is similar to the result of this study. They actually claimed that academic anxiety is essential to inspire students to prepare for examinations and can also lead to better results. The linkage of writing anxiety to poor writing success in Chen & Lin (2009) and Saito & Samimy's (1996) reports is considered invalid based on the result of this study. Likewise, their position that writing anxiety cannot be applied to more difficult learning practices, such as the summarizing and synthesizing required in the writing phase is in contrary to the result of this study.

The results of these variables revealed that there was positive significant correlation between vocabulary knowledge in achievement in composition writing. The result of this study keys into Schmitt, Wun-Ching, & Garras, (2011) submission that vocabulary knowledge is considered essential for mastering any language skill, as well as understanding written and spoken texts. In Addition, Schmitt's, et al., (2011) findings that more language learners are introduced to, the more secure they are in their abilities to comprehend and understand foreign words from context is relevance to the result of this study. Furthermore, the result is also in line with Wun-Ching, & Garras, (2011) findings that learning a target language necessitates a certain amount of vocabulary and that writing entails development, vocabulary may be seen to play an important role in writing by allowing constructive use of the language

Similarly, the result supported Pichette, Serres & Lafontaine (2012) proposition that if enough time is allotted for each assignment, writing a text willlead to substantially higher recall than reading. And that language teachers can turn to writing tasks that include newly taught words in order to improve students' retention

Conclusion

The study concludes that there was positive non- significant correlation between students' vocabulary knowledge and their achievement in Yoruba composition. Similarly, there was also positive non- siginificant correlation between writing anxiety and student achievement in Yoruba composition writing.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made.

1. Teacher should engage in meaningful activities by attending conferences, seminar, workshops etc. that will enhance their knowledge about different personal factors which will often bring about better performance among students.
2. Government must show adequate concern by intensifying effort to ensure that Yoruba language is being taught in our schools. Also, they must employ more Yoruba teachers into our schools.
3. Government should ensure proper monitoring and implementation of the Yoruba curriculum in schools. Similarly, they must equally make the teaching and learning of Yoruba interesting and rewarding across all levels of education.
4. Adequate number of recommended textbooks, teachers guide, articles on Yoruba composition and other materials that will serve as references shouls also be made available for teachers.

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