



The Influence of Male and Female Teachers' Teaching Strategies in Writing Achievement in Secondary Schools in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of male and female teachers strategies of teaching writing achievement in secondary schools in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State. The population of the study consisted of students and English language teachers in the 19 public secondary schools in Jalingo Local Government Area. The population was 4, 549 made up of 4,528 SS 11 students and 21 English language teachers during the 2017/2018 Academic Session. A sample of 1570 SS students was selected through proportionate sampling, while the entire 21 English Language teachers in Jalingo Local Government Area were used. Hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The ex-post facto design was adopted for the study. Writing Achievement Test (WAT) was used to collect data while Teachers' Teaching and Assessment Strategies Observational Check-list (TTASOC) was used to elicit information from teachers. The instruments were researcher designed, Pilot testing was carried out using 50 students and four teachers from one school outside the sampled school, to test the reliability of the instrument, inter rater reliability was sought using Kendall coefficient, WAT yielded reliability of 0.77 which was considered reliable for the study. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer research questions while inferential statistics of ANOVA was used to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study showed that there was a significant mean achievement scores of students when guided/controlled and mini lesson strategies were used by both male and female teachers. It was observed that male teachers emphasis more of group work and structured activities, ask more display questions that make the exchanges between them and students shorter but more frequent. The study therefore recommended that English Language teachers should frequently give students' writing tasks that will help them develop fluency in writing and also sharpen their writing skills.

Introduction

Writing is one of the four basic language skills; the others are listening, speaking and reading. Writing involves putting down impressions, statements or declarations (Aliyu, 2010). The author states that depending on the situation, purpose and target audience, it may take different forms; which includes letter writing, memoranda, personal note, speech writing, creative writing, summary, article, comprehension, narrative, descriptive, argumentative and expository. Each of this type of composition requires a different approach to writing. Aliyu's view is similar to that of Olagbaju (2019), who also states that writing, involves composing, which implies the ability to tell or retell pieces of information in the form of narrative or descriptive or to transform information into a new text as in expository or argumentative essays. It is a continuum of activities that range from more mechanical or formal aspects of writing down on one hand to a more complex act of composing on the other end.

Writing is a powerful and indispensable tool for documenting, preserving and disseminating information across cultures and nations with accuracy and certainty. It is useful in refining and extending knowledge; a means of expressing oneself and combating loneliness (Okome1, Regina and Ofuani, (2021).

In spite of the importance of writing, it has been observed that the teaching of writing by teachers does not meet the writing demands of school workplace and the global community. Muodumogu (2013) asserts that many teachers are afraid to teach writing because they do not know how to teach it. Writing instruction poses a great challenge to language teachers in Nigeria. This is because the teachers are not trained to teach writing as a process and when they attempt to do it, they do not use effective methods. In addition, the English textbooks in use in schools lack adequate guidelines for effective teaching of writing. For this reason, students are rarely engaged in activities that will inculcate effective writing skills in them. It is probably correct to say that what passes for writing instruction in many classrooms is a test of composition, as no conscious effort is made to develop specific writing skills (Özüdogru, 2020). Other causes of poor writing by students have also been identified as ; misconception of the nature of writing , poor writing assessment practices , inadequate time for writing practices in schools and especially ineffective instructional strategies and lack of proper training in teaching of writing (Özüdogru, 2020).

The process approach to writing is one in which the teachers' role is that of a facilitator. The teacher moves around the class, listening to comments, providing feedback and helping students to brainstorm by using the questioning techniques such as what? Where? When? and how? to encourage the students to write their own text in what is referred to as guided writing (Nwogu, 2008). Process writing in every writing lesson is based on effective planning of writing. Each essay type (narrative expository, descriptive and argumentative) includes a before (introduction), during (instruction) and after (application components) phases. The introduction provides a link to what students already know and explains what students are going to learn. The instruction component is the explicit teaching aspect, while the application component provides students the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learnt. (Muodumogu & Unwaha, 2013). It is against this background that the study seeks to investigate the influence of male and female teachers strategies of teaching writing on SS students' achievement in secondary schools in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State.

Statement of the Problem

There have been consistent reports of poor achievement of senior secondary school students in English language in the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) conducted by West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State. This has continued to be a source of concern to stakeholders in education. WAEC chief examiners report of 2013, 2014 and 2015 in Taraba State reveals that the percentages of students who sat for examination for the mentioned years and got five credits including English was 16.43%, 15.30% and 21.94% respectively.

Also, the WAEC Chief Examiner's Report (2016) reveals that students have problem in expressing themselves well in writing because of poor knowledge of the rules of grammar and inability to construct good sentences. Views expressed by various authors consider teachers poor instructional and assessment strategies as contributory to poor students' performance in writing. These views however, are not based on systematic investigation of teachers instructional and assessment strategies for writing. This research intends to do this in this study. Considering the indispensability of writing for learning purposes and for general communication, there is need to investigate what really occurs in the classroom in order to come up with an empirical basis for improving the teaching of writing in schools. This therefore necessitates this study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to establish whether there is a difference in the influence of male and female teachers strategies of teaching writing on SS students' achievement in secondary schools in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State.

Research Question: What would be the influence of male and female teachers' teaching strategies on SS students' achievement in writing in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State?

Hypotheses: Ho₃. There is no significant influence of male and female teachers' strategies of teaching writing skills on SS students' mean achievement score in writing in Jalingo LGA of Taraba State

Significance of the Study

A study on the influence of male and female teachers teaching strategies of writing skills would be useful to students, government agencies, curriculum planners and educational administrators, textbook writers, teachers of English language in teaching writing to students especially at senior secondary school level and in future research. This is because strategies that could be used in teaching and assessing writing effectively will be identified.

The findings of the study may also be useful to both teachers in training and graduate of language education. The writing skill and assessment strategies that could be identified may help broaden teachers' knowledge and develop students skills in learning writing. It may also be important to students in encouraging them to develop interest in the step by step process involved in writing thereby improving their level of proficiency in writing.

The research findings may serve as a guide to future researchers who may want to research in the area of teaching writing skills. This may broaden their empirical base to examine the similarities and differences between the findings here in and their research work with the view to enhancing the teaching of writing skills.

Government agencies may also use the findings as basis for developing curriculum that will make for effective teaching and assessment of writing skills. Textbook writers of English language if they are exposed to the writing strategies may feature it in the textbooks which will provide learners favorable opportunities to exercise their creative talents.

If curriculum planners and policy makers are exposed to the different teaching and assessment strategies identified through workshops, they may find them effective and recommend them for use in secondary schools especially at the senior secondary levels. Out of the four language skills, Writing appears to be the best measure of learning outcome as it provides ample evidence for teachers to ascertain the strength and weaknesses of the learners. This underscores the relevance of this study in the learning process.

Scope of the Study

This research work is delimited to the influence of male and female teachers' teaching strategies on SS students' achievement in writing in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State. The independent variables are gender influence on teachers' teaching strategies. The sub-independent research variables are teachers' teaching strategies such as; group writing, modelling, guided/ controlled, free writing, mini writing and student practice. The dependent variable is students' academic achievement.

The institution of study is public secondary schools. The unit of analysis is senior secondary students'. The place of the study is Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State, while the period of study is 2017/2018 session.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Ausubel's theory of cognitive structure-subsumption theory of meaningful verbal learning, Ausubel David Paul is the main architect of this theory. He was an American psychologist. The theory postulates that concepts grow and become organized through a subsumption process. As each new concept is acquired, it is categorized and fitted into existing structure. The continuity or relativity between the learners existing cognitive structure and the information to be learnt, makes the new information meaningful.

According to Ausubel (1963) there is greater retention on the part of the learner if the information to be presented is meaningfully organized by the teacher. For Ausubel, prior information existing within the individual's cognitive structure is very important in the acquisition, organization and understanding of new information/material. As new learning must be linked to existing knowledge to create meaning. Ausubel advocates for advance organizer where relevant subsume (generalized body of knowledge that the learner already acquired) do not exist.

The relevance of Ausubel's cognitive structure theory to the present study is as follows: in the first place, writing draws a lot from background experience. Secondly, the new information task will be more meaningful when it can be anchored to the students' daily experience. This implies that students experience on writing skills can be improved through writing tasks that could lead the students to the new tasks. Thirdly, the use of activity based approaches in teaching writing and in making good assessment strategies will make the writing activities more meaningful and better understood. Finally, a student exposed to writing tasks is capable of doing well, if the contents and objectives of such teaching are effectively organised to pave way for effective acquisition, understanding and subsequent retention of what were learnt.

Research Methodology

This study adopted the ex-post facto design. The population of this study was 4,549, made up of 4,528 Senior Secondary students and 21 English Language teachers in all the 19 public secondary schools in Jalingo Local Government Area during the 2017/2018 academic session (Taraba State Ministry of Education, Jalingo, 2017). The sample of this study was 1,591 made up of 1,570 SS students, and 21 English Language teachers. The sample for the study was arrived at using a sample size calculator, setting the margin of error at 2% and confidence level at 95% (Checkmarket, 2018). Proportionate sampling was used to determine the number of students to be used for the study in each of the 19 public Secondary Schools, while the entire 21 English language teachers made up of 10 males and females were used, since their, number is not large.

The instruments that were used to collect data were Teachers' Teaching and Assessment Strategies Observational Checklist (TTASOC) and Writing Achievement Test (WAT). These instruments were developed by the researcher. The TTASOC was used to gather information from teachers. The TTASOC consists of two sections A and B. Section A contains personal information on the teachers with regards to name of school, sex and qualification. Section B contains items on teaching strategies such as: group writing, modelling, guided/ controlled, free writing, mini writing and student practice. observation. The WAT has five essay test items and each student was required to select one. The test items consist of argumentative, descriptive, expository, narrative essay types and letter writing. The WAT was used to test students' ability to communicate effectively in writing, their competence in expressing themselves clearly and coherently in a manner suitable to the audience, purpose, topic and context of the writing.

The researcher developed a marking guide for the WAT using West African Examination Council's (WAEC) format. This was used in marking students' WAT. Each essay was scored out of 50 marks. In the scoring, 10 marks was awarded for content, 10 marks for organization, 20 marks for expression and 10 marks for mechanical accuracy.

The instruments were pilot tested to establish reliability. The pilot testing was carried out in one government secondary school in Ardo Kola Local Government Area outside the sampled schools. The pilot testing lasted for two days. The purpose of the test was to establish the reliability of the instruments and determine the time that would be adequate for the administration of the instrument in the main study. The researcher used regular class teachers as research assistants.

The research assistants were responsible for the administration and collection of the instruments. To ensure the reliability in scoring the essay test, the students' essay were photocopied and given to two scorers to mark, with a marking guide provided by the researcher. The two scorers' degree of agreement was measured using Kendall's coefficient. The essence of this was to permit a more appropriate estimate of the accuracy of a particular rater. The inter-rater scores were further tested for significance of the mean scores difference (between rater 1 and rater 2) using paired-samples t-test. The t-test indicated no significant difference between rater 1 ($M = 7.22$, $SD = 3.93$) and rater 2 ($M = 7.33$, $SD = 3.61$), $t(49) = 0.318$, $p = .752$. The eta squared statistics (.05) indicates a small effect size with no difference in scores awarded by rater 1 and rater 2. The difference in the mean scores for the two raters was 0.12.

This difference is relatively low, which suggested that the marking guide was adequate and would be maximally utilized in scoring the scripts in the main study.

Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t- Test. According to Ajai and Amuche (2015), ANOVA is used where there are more than two groups for which the mean difference in scores are to be compared and t-Test is used where there are two groups for which the mean difference in scores are compared.

If p- value is equal or less than 0.05 (ie, $p < 0.05$) it is said to be significant and we reject the null hypothesis. If p-value is greater than 0.05 (ie, $p > 0.05$) it is said not to be significant and we do not reject the null hypotheses.

Research Question: What would be the influence of male and female teachers' teaching strategies on senior secondary students achievement in writing in Jalingo LGA

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Influence of Male and Female Teachers' Teaching Strategies on Students' Achievement

Strategies of teaching writing	Male			Female			Mean difference	Remark
	N	Mean	Std. Dev	N	Mean	Std. Dev		
Modelling	492	9.97	4.76	271	9.81	5.18	0.16	In favour of male
Free Writing	-	-	-	78	11.15	3.46	-	-
Guided/Controlled	150	12.76	6.21	256	11.17	5.36	1.59	In favour of male
Mini Lesson	60	12.93	5.59	22	9.00	6.28	3.93	In favour of male
Students Practice	70	7.71	4.47	166	7.95	5.45	-0.24	In favour of female

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of male and female teachers' teaching strategies on senior secondary students' achievement in writing in Jalingo LGA. The table shows that 492 students had mean achievement scores of 9.97 with a standard deviation of 4.76 when modelling was used in teaching writing by male teachers, 150 students had mean achievement scores of 12.76 with a standard deviation of 6.21 when guided/controlled was used in teaching writing by male teachers, 60 students had mean achievement scores of 12.93 with a standard deviation of 5.60 when mini lesson was used in teaching writing by male teachers, and 70 students had mean achievement scores of 7.71 with a standard deviation of 4.47 when student practice was used by male teachers.

The table further shows that 271 students had mean achievement scores of 9.81 with a standard deviation of 5.18 when modelling was used in teaching writing by female teachers 259 students had mean achievement scores of 11.17 with a standard deviation of 5.36 when guided/controlled writing was used by female teachers, 78 students had mean achievement scores of 11.15 with a standard deviation of 3.46 when free writing was used in teaching writing by female teachers, 22 students had mean achievement scores of 9.00 with a standard deviation of 6.28 when mini lesson was used by female teachers and 166 students had mean achievement scores of 7.95 with a standard deviation of 5.45 when student practice was used in teaching writing by female teachers.

The high mean and low standard deviations recorded in the achievement of students when guided/controlled, mini lesson and free writing strategies were used by both male and female teachers indicate that these strategies are effective when used by both male and female teachers.

The mean difference between the male and female students achievement in modeling is 0.16 in favor of male students. It is 1.59 between male and female in guided/ controlled lessons and 3.93 for mini lesson all in favour of the male teachers. However, for student practice the mean difference is 0.24 in favour of female teachers.

Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that there was a significant mean achievement scores of students when guided/controlled and mini lesson strategies were used by both male and female teachers. This suggests that these strategies are gender sensitive. This is because male and female teachers may behave differently in the classroom, and students may react differently to their teaching methods as well. It is quite possible that what appears to be gender differences might instead, be different teaching style (Islahi & Nasreen, 2013). Even though, it was observed that male teachers' neglected free writing, it could be so because male teachers tend to be dominating, exacting and exercising greater control in the classroom. Male teachers emphasis more of group work and structured activities, ask more display questions that make the exchanges between them and students shorter but more frequent (Laird, Garver & Niskode, 2017). In some researches male teachers were better than female teachers while reverse is the case in other studies (Pisa, 2009; Ofodu, 2010).

The finding confirms the result of the earlier study by Taqi, Al-Darwish, Akbar and Al-Gharabali (2015) who revealed that both male and female teachers are sometimes able to understand the students' educational needs. This suggests that both genders are sometimes good language teachers, demonstrating that gender is not a criterion for good teaching. Islahi and Nasreen (2013) also found that there was no significant difference between the effectiveness of male and female teachers in teaching writing.

However, there was no significant mean achievement scores of students when modelling and student practice strategies were used by both male and female teachers. This suggests that these methods are not gender sensitive. The finding is in disagreement with the result of the earlier study by Taqi, Al-

Darwish, Akbar and Al-Gharabali (2015) who revealed that both male and female teachers are sometimes able to understand the students' educational needs. Understanding here has implication on the teachers' ability to influence their writing positively through the teaching strategy adopted which was not possible in the present study.

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of male and female teachers' teaching strategies on SS students' achievement in writing. It is essential to know that the study was necessitated by the researchers concern over the poor performance of students' resulting from poor methodology that has been in use over the years. Students need to be exposed to the teaching of writing using the process oriented method such as guided/ controlled writing. Free writing and mini lesson and peer assessment strategy with the view to improving their achievement in writing. Therefore, language teachers should use appropriate instructional and assessment strategies that would contribute to the improvement of students' academic achievement.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study;

- i. English Language teachers should frequently give students' writing tasks that will help them develop fluency in writing and also sharpen their writing skills.
- ii. Government should organize conferences, seminars and workshops regularly for English Language teachers to educate them on the best assessment and instructional practices that will enhance students' achievement in essay writing. Such workshops would also enable teachers to understand the assessment strategy that would uncover learners strengths, and weaknesses and guide teachers to design instruction that would address their learning needs.
- iii. Government agencies, colleges of education, universities, National Teachers Institutes, Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria, Universal Basic Education Commission, local government authorities, non-governmental organizations and institutes of education should encourage in-service training for English Language teachers where modern and effective assessment and strategies of teaching writing skills would be learnt.

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