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Effects of Instruction in Post Writing Activities in Senior Secondary Students' Achievement in Proofreading Spelling and Punctuation on Composition Writing in Jos East Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

Many theories and researches in the methodologies of composition writing as a product needs to be shifted to writing composition as a process to comb with the poor achievement of senior secondary students in English Language, specifically composition writing is alarming. This is portrayed in internal and external examinations which has raised serious concern among stake holders in education. To salvage this situation, this paper sets out to determine the effects of instruction in post writing activities on senior secondary two students' achievement in composition writing in terms of proofreading spelling and punctuation. Two research questions guided the study, and two corresponding null hypotheses were formulated, and tested using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The quasi-experimental design was used, the one that utilizes the non-equivalent pre-test post-test design. A Student Composition Writing Achievement Test (SCWAT) was used for collecting data from 160 SSII students in four intact classes. The simple random sampling technique was used to select two schools from the eight schools in Jos East Local Government Area of Plateau State. The data collected through SCWAT were computed using Mean and Standard Deviation to answer the two research questions, while the hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Covariance at 0.05 level of significance. The finding from the analyses showed that students who were exposed to post writing activities, that is proofreading spelling and punctuation in the experimental groups achieved better than the students in the control groups who were not exposed to the treatment. The study concluded that teachers of English should use the Process Oriented and Learner Centre Approach to teach composition writing like post writing activities (proofreading spelling and proofreading punctuation to improve students' achievement in composition writing. The study, therefore, recommended that students should be exposed by teachers of English on the use of post writing activities to enhance students' achievement in composition writing. Also, the teachers of English should adopt the intervention schedule on post writing activities, collaborate with curriculum planners, and textbook writers to incorporate proofreading spelling and punctuation into students' English composition writing programme.

Keywords: Post writing activities, proofreading spelling, Punctuation, Achievement, Composition writing.

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Introduction

The importance of composition writing cannot be overemphasized as it cuts across board, because it is one of the 21st Century skills needed for sustainable development globally. It is also an integral component of English Language curriculum of secondary schools in Nigeria. Composition writing involves the mental preparation of different writers on one hand, and scripting of ideas, opinions, views, and thoughts in written form using graphic symbols. Composition writing is equally a productive skill that helps students to develop in writing competence to cope with the varieties of writing tasks inherent in school, daily life and in all spheres of life. This (Epale, 2020) reiterates that composition writing is fundamental to academic success in school subjects and in different areas of human endeavours, because students and the general public are engaged in substantial composition writing exercise not in school alone, but in workplace or in daily interaction. The acts of composition writing are inherent in the school curriculum.

In this paper, composition writing is a medium of communication that involves the representation of written symbols. It is a skill in which different writers put creative ideas and thoughts in written form (Akram, 2020). In other words, writing is a cognitive activity which requires the writer to control several variables simultaneously. This involves using writing to encrypt and express individual thoughts and personal experiences which can eventually be retrieved and interpreted over time. Post writing activities according to Onogwu in Milaham (2025) is the step and act in the writing process of polishing the final composition text by revising and making changes that are necessary to make the meanings of the ideas generated clearer, accurate, authentic and consistent when shared to the intended reader or audience, such as peers or instructor. Post writing activities are the under explored areas in teaching of writing which involves tasks such as; self-assessment, peer review, proofreading spelling and punctuation, and reflection on writing process.

The theoretical foundation incorporating post writing activities was propounded through the theory of Linda Flower and John Hayes in 1981, which lies in the Process Oriented Approach to writing. The theory emphasizes the significance of proofreading as one of the integral components of the writing process. Proofreading seems to be one of the difficult tasks which writers employed in the final composition text. Proofreading activities are processes of correcting wrongly spelt words and inappropriate punctuations. Students lack the ability to proofread their spelling and punctuation when writing composition among others, which renders the students' write-up vague, ambiguous and incomprehensible. This shows that the teacher of English Language should be intentional and knowledgeable in teaching composition writing using post writing activities that is; proofreading spelling and punctuation for the students to acquire higher achievement in their educational pursuits and future career. One of the skills in teaching post writing activities whereby words are appropriately spelt out including phrases, clauses and sentences and being correctly punctuated (using acceptable conventions) to bring out a modified written composition before submission or publishing. Furthermore, proofreading spelling and punctuation are indispensable activities that give the composition writing its hallmark. Composition writing is a complex activity that involves a number of skills to evoke the right information in the target audience.

Composition writing achievement in this paper refers to scoring of the students' composition after tests to identify the low, average, high and excellent achievers. The need to write composition is virtually important in every profession as it is a valued skill, whether it is used for drafting reports, composing e-mails, creating marketing materials, or developing proposals. Students also need to communicate proficiently in writing. Ebibi, Bako and Dung, (2022) emphasis that students who master composition writing skills have easy access to employability and open doors to diverse career opportunities. Also, Editor (2019) notes that proofreader's pore over every last letter and shred of perfection. This implies that proofreaders check for many things in the composition in punctuation like; commas, semicolons, apostrophes, commas, full stop and others, and spelling; misspellings, inconsistencies copying before submitting or publishing any written composition to be considered complete and authentic.

Considering the strategic importance of writing among other language skills, it is a matter of concern that most senior secondary students are unable to spell words correctly and punctuate sentences appropriately due to increasing exposure to and familiarity to social media short text messaging (SMS). These language related problems have been caused by improper teaching methods by inexperienced or unqualified teachers who teach composition writing as a product rather than a process (Ezeokoli and Igubor, 2016). The authors further reiterate that what is currently obtainable in many composition writing classes is an offshoot of the product-based approach that is traditional method of teaching English Language which many teachers have been used to from their earlier professional training. The reliance on these methodologies have led students to copying and reproducing teacher-made format of composition writing. The consequence of this has led to massive failure rates in English Language during the conduct of most public examinations in Nigeria.

For instance, the statistics from National Examination (NECO) Chief Examiners Report for 2018, 2019, and 2022 respectively clearly show that 58.4%, 49.5% and 50.2% of the number of candidates who sat for this examination were able to score credit pass in English Language (Akoje, 2018). There was incorrect spelling and inappropriate punctuation identified in the composition, which showed candidates' inability to proofread spelling and punctuation in the composition paper before submission. However, it is believed that students' ability to this regard would improve tremendously if the students are exposed to proofreading spelling and punctuation as one of the most important post writing activities.

It can be deduced generally from the aforementioned that post writing activities are critical for a successful composition writing and should be inculcated and cultivated by the teachers of English and the senior secondary students. This implies that at the proofreading stage, writers not only polish and refine their work, but also give the writer a chance to review the work, add in anything he/she might have missed out and eliminating any little unnecessary errors the writer

may have made (Abby, 2017). At the backdrop of this, this study sought to improve senior secondary students' achievement in proofreading spelling and punctuation on composition writing in Jos East Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria.

Purpose

The aim of this study is to ascertain the effects of instruction in post writing activities on senior secondary students' achievement in proofreading spelling and punctuation in composition writing. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. determine SSII students' ability to proofread spelling in composition writing before and after treatment.
2. determine the achievement of SSII students to proofread punctuation in composition writing before and after treatment.

Research Questions.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the pre-test and post-test achievement mean score in proofreading spelling of SSII students' in composition writing in the experimental and control groups?
2. What are the pre-test and post-test mean score in proofreading punctuation achievement mean scores of SSII students in composition writing in the experimental and control groups?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance in the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the post-test achievement mean score in proofreading spelling of SSII students in composition writing in the experimental and control groups.
2. There is no significant difference between the post-test achievement mean score in proofreading spelling of SSII students in composition writing in the experimental and control groups.

Materials and Method

The study adopted quasi-experimental research design specifically the pre-test and post-test of nonequivalent group. This design was employed because the researcher used two schools with intact groups as the school authority did not permit them to randomize. The design compared two groups (experimental and control) to ascertain the effects of the treatment. The two groups were given pre-test, then the experimental group was exposed to the treatment package (instruction on post writing activities; proofreading spelling and proofreading punctuation). On the other hand, the control group was exposed to composition writing using the conventional methods (discussion and lecture). A post-test was later administered to both groups, which was used to compare and to ascertain the effect of the treatment. The population of the study consisted of all SS II students (620) in eight public senior secondary schools in Jos East Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria. The sample of the study comprised of 160 SSII students selected from two schools from the area of the study.

The instrument for data collection was Students' Composition Writing Achievement Test (SCWAT). The instrument was developed by the researcher to test students' achievement in composition writing. The instrument was in two sections: 'A' and 'B'. Section 'A' consisted of students' demographic data which include: Name of School, class, group identification number. While section 'B' of the instrument was the analytical part which focused on expository composition. This part tested students' ability to compose meaningful composition on the title "Factors Responsible for Poor Reading Culture among Students, and the Possible Solutions." The students are to explain the various factors responsible for poor reading culture among students and the possible solutions. It also contained the instruction that students should apply post writing activities (proofreading spellings and punctuation). In addition, students are required to write not less than 350 words, the test duration was 45 minutes.

Validity and Reliability

In order to ascertain the content validity, the instrument was subjected to scrutiny by experts. Two experts in English Education and two experts in Research, Measurement and Evaluation Unit of the Educational Foundations Department, Faculty of Education of the University of Jos. These experts evaluated the suitability of the introductory statement, adequacy of the instrument, ease of wordings, and the relevance of the items to the variables under investigation. The instrument was administered to a group of SSII students and re-administered after a period of two weeks. The test re-test method was used to establish the stability of the instrument. The two scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient of stability of 0.86 was obtained for the items. A reliability coefficient of 0.75 and above is adequate as suggested by Kothari and Garg (2014).

Experimental Procedure

The activities within the pre-test and post-test sessions lasted eight weeks. The first week was used for pre-test, the six weeks were used for administering the treatment package, while the eighth week was used for the post-test. The researcher prepared 24 lessons using post writing activities which were delivered to the SSII students by the researcher and two research assistants using the treatment schedule and the lesson plan for the treatment. The students in the experimental and control groups were taught twice a week (Mondays and Wednesday) on double period of 80 minutes each day. For the

control group, the training schedule was the same topics with the one used for the experimental group, except that the control group were taught using the conventional methods (discussion and lecture) by their teachers who were not trained on post-writing activities.

Method of Data Analysis

The research questions raised were answered using Mean and Standard Deviation. These methods adopted was based on the indices that the mean scores take into consideration all the individual scores in the group, while the standard deviation squares up the deviation of such scores from the mean thereby addressing the negative mean scores. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The choice of ANCOVA was based on the fact that the sample were not formed on the basis of randomization, but rather on intact classes.

Results and Discussions

Research Question one

What are the pre-test and post-test proofreading spelling achievement mean scores of the SSII students in composition writing between the experimental and control groups?

Table 1 reveals the pre-test and post-test proofreading spelling achievement mean score of SSII students in composition writing in the experimental and control groups. In the experimental group, the post-test achievement mean score was 8.77 and standard deviation of 0.74, higher than the pre-test mean score of 3.17 and standard deviation of 0.84 with a mean gain of 5.60, indicating that there was improvement in the achievement of students after treatment. Also, for the control group the mean score was 2.81 and a standard deviation of 0.66 at the pre-test. The post-test mean score of students rose to 4.35 and a standard deviation of 0.66. The findings show that students in the experimental group had a higher achievement mean score of 8.77 after treatment using post writing activities than those in the control group (4.35) who were not given treatment with a mean difference of 4.42. This means that at the pre-test the students in both groups had a poor achievement in proofreading based on spelling of composition, but after the intervention, the experimental group performed better than the control group. It can be deduced that post writing activities did improve students' achievement in proofreading spelling in composition writing more than the discussion or lecture method.

Research Question Two

What are the pre-test and post-test proofreading punctuation achievement mean scores of the SSII students in composition writing between experimental and control groups?

Table 2 reveals the pre-test and post-test proofreading punctuation achievement mean score of SSII students in composition writing between the experimental and control groups. In the experimental group the post-test achievement mean score was 9.31 and the standard deviation of 1.24, higher than the pre-test mean score of 2.39 and standard deviation of 0.81 with a mean gain of 6.92, indicating that there was improvement in the achievement of students after treatment. Also, for the control group the mean score was 3.24 and a standard deviation of 0.94 at the pre-test. The post-test mean score of the students rose to 5.45 and a standard deviation of 0.74. The findings show that students in the experimental group had a higher achievement mean score of 9.31 after treatment using post writing activities than those in the control group 5.45 who were not given treatment with a mean difference of 3.86. This means that, at the pre-test the students in both groups had poor achievement in proofreading based on punctuation in composition writing, but after the intervention the experimental group performed better than the control group. It means that post writing activities do improve students' achievement in proofreading based on punctuation in composition writing more than the conventional methods (discussion or lecture).

Testing Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in post-test proofreading spelling achievement mean scores of SSII students in composition writing between experimental and control groups.

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was employed in testing the null hypothesis of the post-test achievement means scores of SSII students in proofreading spelling in composition writing between the experimental and the control groups and the result is presented in table 5.

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine if a significant difference exists in the post-test achievement mean score of students in proofreading based on spelling in composition writing when exposed and not exposed to post writing activities. Table 3 shows that $F(1,157) = 316.04, P < 0.05$; since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null-hypothesis was rejected, indicating that there was a significant effect of post writing activities on achievement of students in proofreading spelling in composition writing. The result further reveals an adjusted R square value of .668 which means that 66.8 percent of the variation in the dependent variable which is achievement in proofreading spelling in composition writing is explained by variation in the treatment of post writing activities, while the remaining is due to other factors not included in this study. Hence, we can say that post writing activities can help improve students' achievement in proofreading spelling in composition.

Hypothesis Two

There no significant difference in the post-test proofreading punctuation achievement mean scores of SSII students in composition writing for experimental and control groups.

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was employed in testing the null hypothesis on the post-test achievement mean scores of SSII students in proofreading punctuation in composition writing between the experimental and control groups and the result is presented in table 4

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was employed in testing the null hypothesis on post-test achievement mean score of students in proofreading punctuation in composition writing when exposed and not exposed to post writing activities. Table 6 shows that that $F(1,157) = 337.30, p < 0.05$; since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that there was a significant effect of post writing activities on achievement of students in proofreading punctuation in composition writing. The result further reveals an adjusted R squared value of 0.679 which means that 67.9 percent of the variation in the dependent variable which is achievement in proofreading punctuation in composition writing is explained by variation in the treatment of post writing activities, while the remaining is due to other factors not included in this study. This implies that post writing activities can help improve students' achievement in proofreading punctuation in composition writing.

Discussion

The study was aimed at determining the effects of instruction in post writing activities on senior secondary students' achievement in proofreading spelling and proofreading punctuation on composition writing in Jos East Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria. The result of the study indicated on research question one, table one, and hypothesis one, table two revealed that post writing activities improved students' achievement in proofreading spelling in the findings where the experimental group after the intervention then the control group which the treatment is with head. The finding agreed with the finding of Costa and Arias (2014) and Bamidele (2015). The implication of this finding to the study is that, teachers of English should adopt the use of post writing activities in composition writing lessons to help students write composition with correct spelling of words, error free composition, so as to communicate their thoughts and ideas effectively both in school and workplace. The implication of this finding to the study is that using proofreading spelling in post writing activities enhances students' achievement in composition writing.

Furthermore, analysis of data findings from the study also indicated improvement in post writing activities based on proofreading punctuation. The result from the analysis of data research question 2, and test of hypothesis 2 provided sufficient evidence after the treatment, which has significance in students' achievement based on proofreading punctuation in composition writing. This is in tandem with the findings of O'Brien (2015) and Arju (2016) who discovered that post writing activities in composition writing lesson help students write better composition void of punctuation errors.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the process oriented and learner centred approach to teaching composition writing instruction like the post writing activities (proofreading spelling and proofreading punctuation) should be employed by teachers of English and students to improve the students poor achievement in composition writing. For one thing, as writing is a process, and for another, it is an active activity.

1. Students should be exposed by teachers of English in instruction on the use of post writing activities through proofreading spelling to improve the student's achievement in composition writing.
2. Teachers of English should teach the students using the intervention schedule on post writing activities based on proofreading spelling and punctuation.

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Tables

Table 1: Pre-test and Post-test proofreading Spelling Achievement Mean Scores of SSII Students in Composition Writing between the Experimental and Control Groups.

GROUP	Pre-test		post-test		SD	Mean Gain	x- Diff
	N	Mean	SD	Mean			
Experimental	84	3.17	0.84	8.77	0.74	5.60	4.42
Control	76	2.81	0.66	4.35	0.66	1.54	

Table 2: Pre-test and Post-test Proofreading Spelling Achievement Mean Scores of SS II Students in Composition Writing Between the Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean Gain	x- Diff
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Experimental	84	2.39	0.81	9.31	1.24	6.92	3.86
Control	76	3.24	0.94	5.45	0.74	2.21	

Table 3: ANCOVA Result on Post-test Proofreading Spelling Achievement of SS II Students in Composition Writing between the Experimental and Control Groups

Source	Type III Sums of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared Proofreading
Corrected Model	18078.795	2	9039.398	160.813	.000	.672
Intercept	10985.361	1	10985.361	195.433	.000	.555
Pre-achievement	3692.940	1	3692.940	65.698	.000	.295
Group	17764.664	1	17764.664	316.038	.000	.668
Error	8825.049	157	56.211			
Total	450749.000	160				
Corrected Total	26903.844	159				

R Squared = .672 (*Adjusted R Squared* = .668)

Table 4: ANCOVA Result on Post-test Proofreading Achievement of SS II Students in Proofreading Punctuation in Composition Writing between the Experimental and Control Groups

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	23090.439	2	11545.219	168.904	.000	.683
Intercept	18611.911	1	18611.911	272.288	.000	.634
Pre-achievement	1201.123	1	1201.123	17.572	.000	.101
Group	23055.511	1	23055.511	337.297	.000	.682
Error	10731.536	157	68.354			
Total	435624.000	160				
Corrected Total	33821.975	159				

R Squared = .682(*Adjusted R Squared* = .67)