

EFFECT OF GUIDED STRATEGY ON UPPER BASIC SCHOOL(UBS) STUDENTS' WRITTEN ENGLISH IN ILORIN, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to find out whether guided strategy is better than the conventional strategy in teaching writing skills in upper basic schools in Ilorin, Nigeria. this is in a bid to improve the writing performance of the students. A quasi-experimental design involving pretest and posttest group was designed with two groups of one experimental (guided strategy) and the other control (conventional strategy). The main objectives are to find out which group performed better out of the two and to also examine gender influence. The

methodology involved a researcher designed instructional package on guided strategy and National Examination Council standardized test which were used as treatment and test instrument respectively for data collection. The post-test scores were subjected to Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to test the two hypotheses generated for the study. The findings revealed that students taught using guided strategy wrote differently and better than their counterparts taught using the conventional strategy. Also, there was significant difference in the written English of male and female students taught using

guided strategy. It was concluded that guided strategy is very effective in the teaching of writing skill especially in the upper basic schools. The implication of this is that teachers should gradually shift away from the conventional strategy and move to guided strategy with more concentration on the male students. Recommendation was made that teachers of English language should use guided strategy as it will promote creativity and build students' confidence in writing especially in English as a second language class.

Keywords: Guided strategy, writing skills, essay writing, UBS, English as a Second Language

ملخص البحث

الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو معرفة ما إذا كانت الإستراتيجية الموجهة أفضل من الإستراتيجية التقليدية في تدريس مهارات الكتابة في المدارس الأساسية العليا في إيلورين ، نيجيريا. هذا في محاولة لتحسين الأداء الكتابي للطلاب. تم تصميم تصميم شبه تجريبي يتضمن مجموعة الاختبار القبلي والبعدي مع مجموعتين من واحدة تجريبية (إستراتيجية موجهة) والأخرى مجموعة تحكم (إستراتيجية تقليدية). وتتمثل الأهداف الرئيسية في معرفة المجموعة التي كان أداءها أفضل من الاثنان وكذلك دراسة تأثير النوع الاجتماعي. تضمنت المنهجية التي صممها الباحث حزمة تعليمية حول الإستراتيجية الموجهة

Introduction

Language is a means of communication by human beings. Four skills are ascribed to language. These are listening, speaking, reading and writing. The receptive skills are listening and reading, while speaking and writing are expressive skills. Out of these

واختبار موحد من مجلس الفحص الوطني والذي تم استخدامه كأداة للعلاج والاختبار على التوالي لجمع البيانات. تم إخضاع درجات ما بعد الاختبار لتحليل التباين (ANCOVA) لاختبار الفرضيتين اللتين تمخضتا عن الدراسة. كشفت النتائج أن الطلاب الذين درسوا باستخدام الإستراتيجية الموجهة كتبوا بشكل مختلف وأفضل من نظرائهم الذين تم تدريسهم باستخدام الإستراتيجية التقليدية. أيضاً ، كان هناك اختلاف كبير في اللغة الإنجليزية المكتوبة للطلاب والطالبات الذين يتم تدريسهم باستخدام الإستراتيجية الموجهة. وخلص إلى أن الإستراتيجية الموجهة فعالة للغاية في تدريس مهارة الكتابة خاصة في المدارس الأساسية العليا. والمضمون من ذلك هو أن المعلمين يجب أن يتعدوا تدريجياً عن الإستراتيجية التقليدية وينتقلوا إلى الإستراتيجية الموجهة مع التركيز بشكل أكبر على الطلاب الذكور. تم تقديم توصية بضرورة استخدام معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لاستراتيجية موجهة لأنها ستعزز الإبداع وتبني ثقة الطلاب في الكتابة خاصة في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإستراتيجية الموجهة ، مهارات الكتابة ، كتابة المقالات ، UBS ، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية

skills, writing is the most difficult because without its mastery, one's educational and professional achievement are significantly limited (Adedimeji, 2005). Writing, actually, is a skill that has a whole lot of benefits, not only to students but to teachers too. The following according to Juddy (2020) are the major importance of writing. It Improves Communication Skills. Communication (oral and non-verbal), is one essential skill every student must master to be able to

succeed not only in their academics but in life as a whole, because without communication, the real essence of life would be lost, which is why writing has been deeply integrated into the school curricular as a way to significantly improve the communication skills of students.

Writing provides students with the avenue to learn all the rules of their language and how they can better organize their ideas more coherently using the punctuation, gestures, paralinguistics, and so on, which are major parts of communication, can also be improved upon when we learn how to use writing as means of expressing our ideas and messages clearly and directly to our listeners. Writing Sharpens Creativity and Imagination Levels. Research confirms all humans as naturally creative. When one writes, certain areas of one's brain are activated, especially what is referred to as the "frontal cortex"; the part of the brain popularly known to be the seat of creativity. However, without any effort to actively demonstrate this inherent creativity we have, especially with writing, it would remain stifled and almost impossible to develop over time. So, the more frequently one writes, the more the whole of one's brain is enhanced to generate novel ideas that can be applied to solving real-life problems. By producing ideas, reflecting on, and juxtaposing them, one can also form free and productive ways of extensively exploring the world around and also improving every situation one may find oneself in. Writing can also widen students' knowledge capacity, and significantly, too. Even before developing the ability to write, at least sufficiently, one must first have been able to read, too. Writing, therefore, involves a lot of research, 99% of the time, into things not known and may

even know, as well. As one continues to write and, of course, carry out research, one also continues to widen one's knowledge base and develop an excellent memory, too.

Through writing, learners are able to learn about things that happened in the past, events that are currently happening, and the possible ways they can actively influence future situations with present actions, in the process. Moreover, it is Vital to academic success writing, without any doubt, is a significant part of your academics. Not only that, writing is vital to the learners' academic success, in that it is identified as one of the most important requirements a student must satisfy to be able to earn excellent grades and also a good degree, at the end of it all.

Therefore, writing involves composition which implies the ability to tell or give information in the form of narrative or descriptive or to transform information into new text as in expository or argumentative essays (Adegbile & Alabi, 2007). It is the most specialised skill through which ideas, thoughts and information are transferred from generation to generation.

Olajide (2010) sees writing as the construction, building, modeling and laying together of original ideas and thoughts for the purpose of transmission either for the enjoyment of others or for the initiation of action. Coulmas (2003) describes as a critical skill for shaping the future learners. In addition, writing is a system for recording language by means of visible or tactile means. Thompson (2008) supports Coulmas' (2003) view by referring to writing as a skill which requires more concentration than speaking because the writer has no chance of correcting him/herself on the spot if not understood.

Writing is both process and product. Maduekwe (2007) asserts that writing as a process is done for a purpose which results in a product. It is a process of thought and emotion that requires certain skills and abilities to gain the product and accomplish the purpose. An individual writer determines the purpose and judges the product. The process of writing can be divided into three namely: pre-writing, writing and post-writing stages. Pre-writing stage involves planning and brain-storming (Maduekwe, 2007). At this stage, the writer thinks of what to write by listing or asking relevant questions in an area of interest. This involves the purpose of writing, the audience and how to organize the ideas (Azikwe, 1995).

At writing stage, the writer makes a draft in a continuous piece of the ideas outlined at the pre-writing stage, the draft revised, and edited with the intention of improving the writer's skill. It involves organising plans to enable the writer to present the introduction, the main point and the conclusion (Adedimeji, 2005 & Maduekwe, 2007). Meanwhile, post-writing/re-writing stage involves revising, editing and proof reading. It aims at ensuring that the piece of information written is edited, revised and improved upon. At this stage, the writer makes the final readjustments and check accuracy so that the text is maximally understood by the reader and the texts succeed in passing across the intended message unambiguously. Achieve qualitative education for all as an effective instrument for eradicating illiteracy and poverty.

Olajide (1999) asserts that teachers should only act as facilitators in writing class because the class is meant to be an interactive experience between the teacher and the students. Essay writing forms an

integral part of English language teaching in Nigerian secondary schools where standard written English is examined.

The learners who are struggling writers face lots of difficulties in their writings (Okasha and Hamdi 2014). They further stated that the use of strategic writing techniques by the teacher should be applied in class in order to solve the writing problem that students face in school. Similarly, it is further pointed out that learners with poor writing are not coming out with good academic performance in class. Likewise, they discovered that strategic writing technique used by the teachers also enhanced students in the experimental group with good writing skills and also change their attitude towards effective use of the skill.

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria was launched 1999 with the goal of providing free, universal and compulsory basic education for every Nigerian child aged 6-15 years. Especially languages such as English, French among others. The following are the specific objectives of UBE: Check the shocking drift of our country into an inglorious past of illiteracy, check the all-pervading decay in education, check the dwindling girl-child school enrolment in the northern state and the increasing school drop-out of boys in the south-east, south-west and south-south. It was further stated that check the socio-cultural problem and their very serious disorientation and distortion of our value system, develop a strong consciousness for education, provide basic education for every child of school-going age, vigorously pursue adult education. Similarly, UBE pointed out that divorce politics from education, improve planning in primary education, provide equipment and train teachers, provide an adequate

educational infrastructure. Provide adequate text-books and infrastructural materials and funding. It was finally posited that create opportunities for career orientation and realisation in the primary and junior secondary school section (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2008).

Furthermore, it was divided into lower and upper basic schools for children between ages 12-14+years. This programme has faced serious challenges over the years. One of the serious challenges is in the area of Language teaching. Ndukwe (2015) noted that poor teaching of language in Nigeria has consistently created a serious unstable command of languages by learners especially in the area of written task. The researcher further observed that instruction in English language is either mechanistic or unsystematic.

Upper basic school students face high demanding academic tasks. They must pass English language in order to graduate to senior secondary school. They must write an essay (composition) in their examinations. At this level, written composition is usually controlled and guided as it is based on oral words. They write on their family, friends or holidays and so on. They are made to be aware of how ideas are organised and presented in clear, logical manner and of the ways in which sentences are combined to form meaningful units through a variety of semantic devices or cohesion.

Guided strategy is an instructional process in which writing is taught through modeling, support and practice (Tyner, 2004). It offers the learners the opportunity to make useful connections between text, sentence and word level decisions and help them shape and redraft through the guidance of the teacher (Holdich & Chung, 2003). This can be done through pictures, video or

paper-based text which relates to the writing subject (Lan, Hung & Hsu, 2011). It is a step-by-step procedure that involves planning, writing editing, revising and publishing. The teacher works with a group of learners on a writing task based on what they have previously learnt about the writing process. It offers students the opportunities to receive immediate teachers' feedback on their writing efforts they understand that one ultimate goal is to take responsibility for their writing and put into practice learnt problem-solving techniques.

Many studies have been conducted on the use of guided strategy in teaching. Uzoegwu (1995) studies the effectiveness of two teaching methods (guided and non-guided) on students' achievement in writing. The results indicated that the students taught essay writing through guided method received higher than those taught with non-guided method. Ejembi (2002) carried out research on guided strategy on junior secondary school students' achievement in English essay writing in Nsukka. His findings revealed that more still need to be done in the use of guided strategy. The findings shows that students from rural and urban areas performed with no significant effect but male students had a higher mean score compared to their female counterparts.

Lan et.al (2011) studied the effect of guided writing strategies on students' writing attitudes based on media richness theory in Taiwan. They discovered that using rich media guided writing strategy had significant differences than pen and paper guided writing strategy in terms of writing attitudes towards motivation, enjoyment and anxiety. Their findings revealed that students taught using guided strategy performed better than those taught using conventional strategy.

Muslimi (2002) asserts that social and cultural factors affect learning among men and women. Also, these factors are responsible for the difference in the abilities of men and women. He further opines that in some specific learning situations, women often perform better than men while in some other cases, men perform better. Ige (2012) asserts that gender plays a major role in language learning of students. Offorma (2010) concludes that the influence of gender in language has been a controversial one as there has been a disagreement among researchers. This shows that there can be difference in the performance of both male and female in language learning.

Statement of the Problem

According to the Nigeria language policy, English language is to serve a dual role as a school subject and as a medium of instruction. Therefore, learners at this level are required to write different kinds of factual and imaginative texts for a wide range of purposes. learners are required to use English as a second language effectively and with confidence for a variety of purposes including learning. However, Kannan (2009:2) in his statement argues that even though students are studying English, they are not able to produce even a single sentence without any grammatical error in English. In most schools in Nigeria, conventional strategy is adopted to teach learners where students only practice writing to pass tests or examinations. This focus on writing to pass examinations reduces writing to produce product and receiving a grade from the teacher and this is not likely to make students interested in writing. They lack the necessary tools under the conventional strategy to approach writing in an argumentative essay and engage in a complex process that includes exploration of a problem, evaluation of facts and

evidences. Therefore, learners need to be aware that good writing is not just grammatically accurate and that other factors such as organization, coherence and the use of cohesive devices are essential elements of good writing and teachers need to address this by employing appropriate strategies for teaching this important skill. From these problems it is evident that there is a need for educators to improve their strategies, attitudes and try out new strategies. Therefore, this study aims to examine the strategies suitable for the improvement of upper basic writing skills in English as a second Language. At the same time, it also aims at identifying the interactive effects of gender in the strategy employed. Undoubtedly, this study is also to generally determine the effect of guided strategy on upper basic school students' written English in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. However, the objectives of this study are to:

1. examine the general written English performance of the upper basic school students
2. assess the difference in the written English performance of students exposed to guided strategy in the experimental group and the students in the control group
3. to determine the interactive effect of gender on the written English of upper basic school students.

Research Questions

The following research questions are answered in this study:

1. What is the general written English performance of upper basic school students?
2. What is the difference in the written English performance of upper basic school students exposed to guided strategy and those exposed to conventional strategy?

3. What is the interactive effect of gender on the written English performance of upper basic school students?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in this study.

HO₁: There will be no statistical significant difference in post test scores in written English performance of upper basic school students who were taught using guided and conventional strategies.

HO₂: There will be no interactive effect of gender on the written English performance of upper basic school students after teaching them using guided strategy

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was a quasi-experimental design of pretest-posttest non-randomized groups which consisted of two group, one, experimental, while the other, control. Both groups were pretested. The treatment (Guided strategy) was administered to the students in the experimental group, while the students in the control group were taught using the conventional strategy. Both groups were taught for five weeks. A post-test was administered after giving the treatment to both groups.

The target population of the study comprised all Upper Basic School Three students of public schools in Ilorin. This group was chosen because they have been taught writing in their last three years of universal basic education and would soon be in the senior secondary school where a lot of writing activities will be demanded of them. Two schools were selected purposively for the study namely: Bishop Smith Memorial Junior Secondary School as experimental group, while Sheik Abdul Kadir Junior College was chosen as control group. Both

schools were of the same status in terms of year of establishment, ownership and gender. Meanwhile, two intact classes from the UBE 9 arm were selected through the simple random method. 100 students were sampled from the two schools.

A training manual was prepared by the researcher for the teachers that took both the experimental and control groups. Also, standardized instrument (BECE essay questions) was used in the pre-test and post-test exercises. This is the ability test on essay writing. Topics from narrative, descriptive, expository, and argumentative and letter were taught and pre -tested and post-tested. The essays were scored using:

Content	= 10
Organization	= 10
Expression	= 20
Mechanical Accuracy	= 10
Total	= 50

Three research questions were raised in the course of this study. Research question 1 was answered using frequency count and percentage, while research questions 2 and 3 had corresponding hypotheses which were tested with the use of inferential statistics. The hypotheses were postulated and tested using Analysis of Covariance (ANOVA) at level of significance 0.05.

Findings and Discussion

The research question 1 was answered by frequency count and percentages.

Research Question1: *What is the general written English performance of Upper basic school students?*

Table 1: General Performance of Students' Post-test Result

Table 4: Participants' Post-test Results

Post-test Control Group		Post-test Experimental		Variance				
Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage				
High	31	62	42	84				
Low	19	38	8	16				
Total	50	100	50	100				
					Corrected model	456.5189	2	228.259
					Intercept	4821.035	1	4821.035
					Pre-test Group	11.308	1	11.308
					Group	413.440	1	413.440
					Error	2342.792	97	24.152
					Total	52841.000	100	
					Corrected Total	2799.310	99	

a. Rsquared = .163 (Adjusted R squared = .146)

Table 1 showed that in the control group, 31 (62%) scored above 50%, while 19 (38%) scored below 50%. Meanwhile, in the experimental group, 42 (84%) scored 50% and above, while 8(16%) scored below 50%. This revealed that the performance of students in the experimental group was higher than that of the control. This shows that the experimental group performed better than the control group in written English performance.

Hypotheses Testing

HO₁: *There is no significant difference in the written English performance of students taught using guided strategy and those taught using conventional strategy.*

In order to test hypothesis one, students' scores that were taught using guided strategy and those taught with conventional strategy were used for the computation. The pre-test scores were used as covariate, while the post-test scores were used as dependent variable.

Table 2: Results of Analysis of Covariance on the Differences between the Experimental and Control Groups

Source	of	Sum of squares	Df	Means square	f-ratio	Significance
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Table 2 showed that the calculated F-value is 17.118 with calculated level of significance .000 computed at critical level of significance 0.05. Since the calculated level of significance (0.000) is less than the critical level of significance (0.05), hypothesis 1 was therefore rejected. This implied that there is a significant difference in the written English of students taught using guided instructional strategy and those taught using the conventional strategy.

Table 3: Mean Scores of the Difference in the English Language of Students Taught Using Guided Instructional Strategy and Conventional Strategy

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation
Guided strategy	24.48	5.254
Conventional Strategy	20.26	4.521

The significant difference favours guided instructional strategy with the mean score of 24.48 and the standard deviation of 5.254 greater than the mean score of 20.26 and standard deviation of 4.521 of conventional strategy.

HO₂: *There is no interactive effect of gender and treatment on written English of upper basic school students.*

In order to test hypothesis two, male and female students' scores in pre-test and post-test were used in computation.

Table 4: Results of Analysis of Covariance in the Interactive Effect of Gender and Treatment on the Written English of Upper Basic School Students

Source of Variance	Sum of squares	Df	Mean squares	f-ratio	Significance
Corrected model	5814.8099	2	123.403	4.690	.011
Intercept	5814.619	1	5814.619	220.619	.000
Treatment	1.753	1	1.753	0.067	.797
Gender	203.728	1	203.728	7.742	.006
Error	2552.504	97	26.314		
Total	52841.000	100			

a. R squared = 0.088 (Adjusted R squared = 0.069)

Table 4 revealed that the calculated F-value is 7.742 with calculated level of significance .006 computed at critical level of significance 0.05. Since the calculated level of significance (0.006) is less than the critical level of significance (0.05), hypothesis 2 was therefore rejected. This implied that there was interactive effect of

gender and treatment on written English of upper basic school students.

Table 5: Mean Scores of Male and Female Students in Written English in Upper Basic School

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation
Male	20.67	4.397
Female	23.81	5.637

The significance difference is in favour of female student with the mean score of 23.81 and the standard deviation of 5.637 greater than the mean score of 20.67 and standard deviation of 4.397 of male students.

The first finding reveals that there is a significant difference in the written English of Upper Basic School students taught using guided instructional strategy and those taught using the conventional strategy. The students taught with guided strategy performed better than the students taught with the conventional strategy.

This is in support of Uzoegwu (1995) who affirms that guided strategy assists students in building their writing skills and encouraging them to put their ideas in the written form. The guidance given by the teacher is a stimulator to the students to put their ideas into writing. Ejembi (2002) supported this finding by asserting that guided strategy is an effective strategy in teaching writing as it helps students to develop their writing skills.

The finding is in line with the Okasha and Hamdi (2014) who posited that the use of strategic writing techniques by the teacher should be applied in class in order to solve the writing problem that students face in school. they discovered that strategic writing technique used by the teachers also enhanced students in the experimental group with good writing skills

and also change their attitude towards effective use of the skill.

The second finding shows that there is an interactive effect of gender and treatment on the written English of students taught using guided strategy as it favours the female students. The female students performed better than their male counterparts. This finding is in consonance with Umo's (2011) findings that female students performed better than their male counterparts who were taught Igbo grammar through games.

In contrast, Uzoegwu (1995) averred that male student performed their female counterparts in writing in Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria, although the difference was not significant. Tunde-Awe (2003) concludes that differences in findings of some studies on the performance of male and female could be as a result of the time, cultural background of the learners and sample used for the studies. It could be deduced that there is a possibility of one gender group to outperform the other even in written English because there are many factors that come to play before, and during writing.

Conclusions

It can be concluded that students taught with guided strategy write significantly better than those taught using the conventional strategy. This implies that guided strategy gives students better competency in writing than the conventional strategy. Guided strategy provides students with a particular guidance that allows them to focus on conventions such as spelling, punctuation and standard usage.

It can also be inferred that the performance of male students needs to be improved upon. Since female students are performing better in writing, it shows that they are determined not to lag behind in

education matters. On the whole, the study shows that learners face numerous challenges relating to writing in English as a second Language (ESL) class. The teaching of writing skills in ESL class was hampered, among other things by lack of appropriate teaching strategies. This means that there is still a lot that needs to be done to improve the learners writing skills. Students should be motivated to play an important role in improving their writing skills through guided strategy. Teachers who lack the skills should also be given specific training in teaching writing skills. The study not only suggested the need for new language teaching approaches, but also suggested the need for enrichment programmes to empower both educators and learners to improve the writing skills.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study. Since there is a positive effect of guided strategy on written English performance of Upper Basic School students, the strategy should be made use of in the teaching of writing at the upper basic school level. Also, teachers should be adequately trained in the use of guided strategy. They should also be given all the necessary instructional aids that would enhance the use of guided strategy. Not only that, more attention should be focused on male students as they are found to perform less than their female counterparts. They should be given more practices in writing using guided strategy in order to become good writer. Parents as stakeholders must be involved and be equipped to assist children to practice writing and do homework at home. This can be done through enrichment programmes that must be implemented by the individual school or quality assurance department of the State ministry of education. School

authority and state ministry of education or individual philanthropist could give constant support by providing the schools with enough textbooks and other resource material that will help both teachers and learners to improve the writing skills. Teachers must be sponsored for in - service training and workshop where they will be exposed to or introduced to new methods to teach writing skills. Where necessary there must be rewards in the form of prizes so as to motivate the learners.

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