

ASSESSMENT OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY, EVALUATION PROCEDURE AND CONTENT KNOWLEDGE ON STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ESSAY WRITING IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study assessed English language teachers' instructional quality, evaluation procedure and content knowledge on students' performance in English language essay writing in Imo State, Nigeria. This is a correlation study, guided with two research questions and three hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study population was 10,441 senior secondary school 2 students (male and female) and 213 English language teachers (male and female) in 76 government-owned schools in Owerri Education Zone I the study area. Cluster and proportionate to size sampling techniques were used to sample 400 students and 100 English language teachers for the study. Three researcher-made instruments: two 4-point rating scales, one for students and the other one for teachers; and a 50 objective test items with four options for students with Cronbach reliability coefficient $r = 0.90$; 0.81 and Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient $r = 0.86$ respectively were used to generate data for this study. Data were analysed using Pearson 2-tailed t-test statistics to answer the research questions and t-test ANOVA (Analysis of Variates) for the hypotheses. Findings revealed significant positive relationship among teachers' instructional quality, evaluation procedure and content knowledge on students' achievement in English language essay writing. It was therefore recommended, among others, for English language teachers to improve on their instructional quality, evaluation procedure and content knowledge.

Key words: English language teachers' instructional quality, evaluation procedure, content knowledge, students' achievement

Introduction:

English, being the official language in Nigeria is also the language of classroom interactions, trade and commerce, religion, judiciary, computer, science and technology (Oyekanmi, 2020). It is the medium of instruction in schools as soon as a child is promoted to Basic 4 (Primary 4) in any of the Universal Basic Education schools in Nigeria (FGN, 2013). As a result of this, English has gained the status of being one of the compulsory subjects a person must have passed at a minimum credit level to be considered suitably qualified for admission into institutions of higher learning. Thus, it is one of the subjects that are mostly failed by learners, both in internal and external examinations. Researchers like Fakeye, (2014) and Olaleye, (2011) claim that learners' performance in English language is poor due to their inability to articulate comprehensively and meaningfully their ideas in English language essay writing (Dada, 2015).

However, Viadere (2006) states that the quality of education of a nation could be determined by the quality of the teachers which is an important factor in improving students' performance in English essay writing (Jansen, 2016 and Cooley, 2009). Owoeye and Yara (2011) cleverly state that well trained teachers of English with sound instructional qualities and modern evaluation procedures are assets to the teaching profession while Sa'ad and Usaman (2014), Elturki (2013), Bernard (2004), and Regier (2007) opined that learners produced by such teachers are always with outstanding, enviable qualities though Mosha (2017) declines to state that there are many other factors apart from teacher's evaluation procedures .

Academically, Adeogun, (2017) and Trueman and Hartley (2016) state that qualified English language teachers refer to those who have sufficient academic trainings and are proficiently certified to have been adequately equipped to impart knowledge and skills to learners. According to Cotterell (2004) and Mosha (2017), such teachers are adequately equipped with current teaching methods, content knowledge and evaluation procedure as occasion arises (Amakiri, 2009). They, according to (Obi, 2008) give directions, ask questions and accepts or rejects responses from learner in friendly and polite manner (Dada, 2015 and Adeyemi, 2010).

Good language teachers possess a deep knowledge of the subject matter (Crowford, 2017; Christopher and Redempta, 2016). They are able to manipulate, simplify, and individualize this information more easily because they are masters of it (Owolabi and Adebayo, 2012). They, according to Flook, Repetti & Ullman (2005); Murad (2013); and Marie, (2000) have the ability to teach and explain the

lesson in a different way using eclectic method to carry every student along. Their stated behavioural objectives, according to Haider and Hussain (2014) and Wu, (2013) are well organized and stated, having clear ideas about their daily teaching plans, assignments, and grading policies (Murad, 2013). Their structured lessons and assignments, according to Fehintola (2014), Aturapane, Glowwe and Wisniewaki (2013) and Freberg (2014) offer many opportunities for students to learn new skills (Oyekanmi, 2020). Above it all, competence in teaching, according to Grooves and Choi (2017) and Asio and Usman (2014) is the result of their clearly stated objectives, good focus and adequate use of modern evaluation procedures which is geared towards helping students overcome their difficulties in English essay writing (Dada, 2015).

In that wise, they provide quick and accurate assessment of students' work. Owolabi and Adebayo (2012) said that for such language teachers, tests and other projects are evaluated in a timely manner. And, without constant evaluation of learning, students cannot make expected progress since adequate evaluation produces feedback which is a cardinal aspect of learning (Olaleye, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

Writing structurally acceptable essays in English language for most senior school students in public senior secondary schools in the study area is a herculean task as English Language teachers are often portrayed as unattractive grammar-mongers whose only pleasure in life is to point out the faults of others, most especially in essay writing. For the most part, within the classroom, any mention of essay writing causes the students moments of discomfort. English language is rule-governed, and the rules must be mastered and followed very strictly before one can be seen as having overcome its writing format difficulties.

Many teachers have tried to make essay writing a non-threatening, imaginative and useful activity within the English curriculum while most parents endeavour to provide school materials within their economic reach for their wards, yet the problem still persists.

However, could the poor achievement of students in English essay writing be associated to students' inability to articulate their ideas very perfectly due to inappropriate English Language teachers' teaching method, their inability to give students instructional quality? Or, could it their inability to follow modern and adequate evaluation procedure? Seeking answers to these questions stand the reasons of this study.

Methodology

This study is a correlation research design and the study area is Owerri Education Zone1 of Imo State. It comprises five local government areas, namely; Owerri Municipal Council, Owerri North Local Government Area, Owerri West Local Government Area, on latitude 5.476310 and longitude 7.025853. Its GPRS coordinates are 5⁰28'34.7160"N and 7⁰ 1'33.0708"E. The population of this study comprises of 10,441 senior secondary school two (SS2) students and 213 English language teachers from the 76 government owned senior secondary schools in the study area. The sample size for this study is 400 SS2 students (191 male and 209 female students) and 100 English language teachers (35 males and 65 females) using cluster and simple random sampling techniques. Two research questions were posed and three null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. Three researcher-made instruments of which one was a 50 English language objective test items with 4-point options A, B, C, and D, and two 4-point rating scales: one for English language teachers and the other one for the students, each with 10 statements with rating options Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 in two clusters A and B with reliability coefficients $r = 0.90$; 0.81 and 0.86 respectively were used to generate data analysed using Pearson 2-tailed t-test statistics to answer the research questions while hypotheses were tested using Pearson t-test analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistics. Findings revealed significant relationship between teachers' teaching instructional quality and academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students ($r = 0.103$). The correlation indicates that the coefficient of the teachers' evaluation procedure and academic performance in English Essay writing among secondary school students is significant at $p < .05$. It is therefore suggested, among others, that teachers should improve on their instructional quality, evaluation procedures and content knowledge.

Research Questions: The following Research Questions guided this study:

1. What is the relationship between teachers' instructional quality and students' academic performance in English Essay Writing in Owerri Education Zone I of Imo State?
2. What is the coefficient of relationship between teachers' evaluation procedures and students' academic performance in English Essay Writing in Owerri Education Zone I of Imo State?

Hypotheses: The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. The coefficient of relationship between teachers' instructional quality and students' academic performance is not significant

2. The coefficient of relationship between teachers' evaluation procedure and students' academic performance is not significant
3. There is no significant relationship between teachers' content knowledge and academic achievement in English Essay Writing among secondary school students.

Results

Research Question One: What is the relationship between teachers' instructional quality and students' academic performance in English Essay Writing in Owerri Education Zone I of Imo State?

Table 1: Correlation of Teachers' teaching instructional quality and its relationship with academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students.

	Performance in English Essay Writing	Instructional Quality	Remarks
Performance English Essay Writing	1.000	.103**	Significant
Pearson Correlation		.002	
Sig. (2-tailed)	400	1.000	
N			
Mean	43.38	46.92	
SD	10.82	11.21	

S = Significant at 0.05 alpha level; low positive coefficient of relationship

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1: shows the relationship that exists between Teachers' teaching instructional quality with academic performance in English Essay writing among secondary school students. The correlation indicates that the coefficient of the teachers' teaching instructional quality and academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students at $p < .05$. There is positive relationship exist between the variables ($r = 0.103$). A general overview shows that academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students have the strong relationship with teachers' teaching instructional quality. Therefore, it was concluded that there is significant relationship between Teachers' teaching instructional quality and academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students.

Hypothesis One: The coefficient of relationship between teachers' instructional quality and students' academic performance is not significant

Table 2: Relationship between teachers' instructional quality and academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students

Variables	N	R	P	Sig
Teachers' Instructional quality	400	.103**	.002	Sign
Academic performance in English Essay Writing	400			

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2: indicates a significant positive correlation found between teachers' instructional quality and academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students ($r = .103$; $p < 0.05$). Therefore the hypothesis was rejected. This implies that teachers' instructional quality significantly contributes to students' performance in essay writing among secondary school students. Hence, there is significant relationship between teachers' instructional quality and academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students.

Research Question Two: What is the coefficient of relationship between teachers' evaluation procedures and students' academic performance in English Essay Writing in Owerri Education Zone I of Imo State?

Table 3: Correlation of Teachers' Evaluation Procedure coefficient correlate with academic performance in English essay writing among secondary school students

	Performance English Essay Writing	Teachers' Evaluation Procedure	Remarks.
Performance English Essay Writing			
Pearson Correlation	1.000	.339**	Significant
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
N	400	1.000	
Mean	43.38	68.38	
SD	10.82	12.50	

S = Significant at 0.05 alpha level; moderate positive relationship

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 3: shows the relationship that exists between Teachers' Evaluation Procedure coefficient correlate with academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students. The correlation indicates that the coefficient of the teachers' evaluation procedure and academic performance in English Essay writing among secondary school students is significant at $p < .05$. There is positive relationship exit between the variables ($r = 0.339$). A general overview shows that teachers' evaluation procedure correlate positively with academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students. Therefore, it was concluded that teachers' evaluation procedure influences academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students.

Hypothesis Two: The coefficient of relationship between teachers' evaluation procedure and students' academic performance is not significant

Table 4: Correlation showing Relationship between teachers' evaluation procedures and academic performance in English Essay Writing among Secondary School Students

Variables	N	R	P	Sig
Teachers' Evaluation Procedures	400	.339**	.001	Sign
Students Performance in English Essay Writing	400			

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4: shows the relationship that exists between teachers' evaluation procedures and academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students. The correlation indicates that the coefficient of the teachers' evaluation procedures and academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students is significant at $p < .05$. There is positive relationship exit between the variables ($r = 0.339$) and the relationship observed was also significant. A general overview shows that teachers' evaluation procedure has significant influence on students' performance in Essay writing. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between teachers' evaluation procedures and academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students was rejected. Hence, there is significant relationship between teachers' evaluation procedures and academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between teachers' content knowledge and academic achievement in English Essay Writing among secondary school students

Table 5: Relationship between teachers' content knowledge and academic achievement in English Essay Writing among secondary school students

Variables	N	R	P	Sig
Teachers' Content Knowledge	400	.219**	.000	Sign
Academic performance in English Essay Writing	400			

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 5 shows a significant positive correlation found between teachers' content knowledge and academic achievement in English Essay Writing among secondary school students ($r = .219$; $p < 0.05$). Therefore the hypothesis was rejected. A general overview shows that teachers' content knowledge has the strong relationship with performance of students in essay writing. Hence, there is significant relationship between teachers' content knowledge and academic achievement in English Essay Writing among secondary school students.

Summary of Findings

Findings of this study were presented and summarized in the same order in which the research questions answered and hypotheses tested:

- i. The finding indicates that the coefficient of teachers' teaching instructional quality and students' academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students was significant at $p < .05$. This implies that there was significant relationship between teachers' teaching instructional quality and academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students ($r = 0.103$).
- ii. The correlation indicates that the coefficient of the teachers' evaluation procedure and academic performance in English Essay writing among secondary school students is significant at $p < .05$. There is positive relationship between the teachers' evaluation procedure and academic performance in English Essay writing among secondary school students ($r = 0.339$).

iii. In the same vein, there was a significant relationship between teachers' instructional quality and academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students;

iv. There was significant relationship between teachers' evaluation procedures and academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students.

v. There was a significant relationship between teachers' content knowledge and academic achievement in English Essay Writing among secondary school students;

Relationship between teachers' teaching instructional quality and academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students

There was significant relationship between teachers' teaching instructional quality and academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students. This means that cognitive factors of the teachers' variables are most important than any other factors in predicting the academic performance of the participants. This finding corroborate Jansen (2016); Hulst and Janean (2021) who discovered that, teachers' factors have significant impact on students' academic performance. Also, this finding is against the finding of Trueman and Hartley (2016) who found that students' factors are more significant in predicting students' academic performance.

Relationship between the teachers' evaluation procedure and academic performance in English Essay writing among secondary school students

There was a significant relationship between teachers' evaluation procedures and academic performance in English Essay Writing among secondary school students. Accordingly, there was a significant correlation between teachers' evaluation practices and students' achievement. Findings revealed that the provision of qualified teachers of the English language using the right approach to the teaching of the English language and adequate evaluation procedures can improve secondary school students' performance in the English language. This supports the findings of Sa'ad and Usaman, (2014). This finding also supports Diseth (2011) opinion that qualities of assessment procedures help determine what individuals do with the knowledge and skills they have. Other researchers like Boyd & Eckert (2002); Bernard (2004) and Regier (2007) supported this assertion.

Relationship between Teachers' Content Knowledge and Students' Academic performance in English Essay Writing

Findings from research questions one show positive significant relationships between students' achievement in Essay writing and teachers' content knowledge. Studies of Crawford, (2017); Katz, (2017); Christopher & Redempta, (2016); Owolabi & Adebayo, (2012) and Haider & Hussain, 2014 agree with this. The study of Wu, (2013) emphasizes the need for English language teachers to improve their content knowledge levels which invariably will help students in their academic performance. This assertion is also supported by Fakeye, (2012); Choi & Lee, (2016); Fehintola, (2014) and Aturapane, Glewwe, & Wisniewski, (2013). However, this finding contradicts Freberg, (2014); Grooves & Choi (2017); Asio & Usman, (2014) and Owolabi & Adebayo, (2012) findings who opined that English language teachers' content level may not be the only indices to determine students' performance in English language.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. English language teachers should improve on their instructional quality, evaluation procedure and content knowledge which will eventually help students improve on their achievement in English language essay writing.
- ii. English language teachers should be effectively trained and retrained by government through seminars and conferences in order to enhance their competency in the subject area as it concerns their instructional quality.
- iii. The State Ministry of Education should make more efforts on the inspection and monitoring of schools to ensure inspection and motoring of schools to ensure that teachers improve their subject content knowledge level.
- iv. The government and ministry of education should ensure that trained English language teachers are posted to schools and are provided adequate facilities to improve their instructional quality, modern evaluation procedures, and their subject matter content level.

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