

## ENRICHING STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY THROUGH LITERARY MODELS: IMPLICATIONS FOR SELF-ACTUALISATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

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### ABSTRACT

The study sought to determine the relative effects of oral and written literary models as enrichment inputs on students' writing ability in Yoruba. A pre-test, post-test, control group quasi-experimental design was adopted in the study involving a 4 × 2 × 3 factorial matrix for data analysis. An achievement test in Yoruba composition writing and a verbal ability test were administered to the subjects (288 students, selected from eight secondary schools in Yewa South Local Government Area of Ogun State) in experimental and control groups. Data analysis was done using the Analysis of Co-variance (ANCOVA), Multiple classification Analysis and the Scheffe Post Hoc Analysis. Findings revealed that students exposed to the treatments performed better than their counterparts who were not in Yoruba composition writing. While verbal ability contributed significantly to variations in subjects' achievement, gender was found not to have contributed significantly to subjects' achievement in composition writing. Implication of findings for students' self-actualisation and sustainability were discussed.

### INTRODUCTION

The universal declaration of Linguistics Rights by the United Nation's Organisation (UNO) in (1996) and cited in Emenanjo (2000) endows the individual with certain inalienable personal rights in language matters which are;

- § the right to be recognised as a member of a language community;

- § the right to the use of one's own language both in private and public;
- § the right for the individual's language to be taught;
- § the right to inter-relate and associate with other members of one's own language community of origin;
- § the right to an equitable presence of one's own language and culture in the communications media and
- § the right to receive attention in one's own language from government bodies and in socio-economic relations.

It could be inferred from the personal rights enumerated above that an individual's mother-tongue or first language is crucial and central to the teaching and learning as well as socio-economic and political development (Makinde, 2004). The realisation of the potency of the mother-tongue for learning other subjects gave birth to the language provisions in the National Policy on Education (1977), revised in 1981 and 1988. Studies like Macaulay (1982), Fafunwa, Macaulay and Sokoya (1989), Ande (1990), Akinbote and Viatonu (1996) and Salawu (1999) found that teaching in the mother-tongue facilitated more meaningful learning than instruction received in English.

From the researcher's experience as a teacher in some secondary schools in Ogun and Oyo States, it is pertinent to observe that our secondary school students are not sufficiently proficient in the mother tongue. Many of them cannot communicate effectively in their local languages not to talk of writing composition in such languages. The problem of many of the students is paucity of ideas to present balanced essays on given topics. There is therefore the need to enrich them with the necessary communication skills considering the relevance of oral and written communication in the day-to-day activities among humans.

According to Ayodele, Araromi, Aderoju and Isiugo-Abanihe (1995), writing is one of the most obvious indices of modern civilisation. Williams (1990) defines composition writing for the secondary school student as writing beyond the sentence level. It requires some technicalities and its teaching must be guided by well-defined principles which underlie its content and methodology (Makinde, 2004). Scholars like Isola (1995), Babalola (1999) and Ezeokoli (1999) have argued in favour of using literature materials to develop language teaching. However, few studies have been carried out to support such arguments empirically. Examples of these include Stephen (1997) and Hirsch and Spitzer (1997).



This study derives its support from the whole language approach which according to Weaver (1990) emphasises that language is kept whole and not fragmented into skills. Literary skills and strategies are developed in the context of whole authentic literacy events. According to Ohia and Adeosun (2002), the whole language approach is based on the assumption that as human mind seeks unity among parts for a wholeness of understanding so do language arts require integrating all the elements of language before learners can make sense of the process of thinking, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Literature by nature consists of certain resources that cannot be divorced from language study as literature is language in action. In this study, oral and written literary materials were used for enriching students' linguistic resources for composition writing. All the four basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing were integrated in the study.

The following hypotheses were tested in this study at .05 level of probability:

1. There is no significant main effect of treatment on students' achievement in Yoruba composition writing.
2. There is no significant main effect of gender on students' achievement in Yoruba composition writing.
3. There is no significant main effect of verbal ability on students' achievement in Yoruba composition writing.

## Method

### Research Design

The study adopted the pre-test, post-test control group, quasi-experimental design and the diagrammatic representative of the design is as shown:

$O_1$	$X_1$	$O_2$	$E_1$
$O_3$	$X_2$	$O_4$	$E_2$
$O_5$	$X_3$	$O_6$	$E_3$
$O_7$	$X_4$	$O_8$	$C$

Where

$O_1, O_3, O_5, O_7$  = Pretest observations for experimental and control group respectively.

$O_2, O_4, O_6, O_8$	=	Post-test observations for the experimental and control groups
$E_1, E_2, E_3$	=	Experimental groups 1, 2, 3 respectively
$C$	=	Control group
$X_1$	=	Treatment for group 1 (Discussion + Oral Literature Model)
$X_2$	=	Treatment for group 2 (Discussion + Written Literature Model)
$X_3$	=	Treatment for group 3 (Discussion + Oral and Written Literature Model)
$X_4$	=	Treatment for group 4 (Discussion in the Conventional way Control)

Meanwhile, intact classes were used and in order to partial out initial variation among the groups and to ensure that the results were as a result of the method employed, the analysis of covariance was used in analysing data.

### Subjects

The target population for this study were senior secondary students in Yewa South Local Government Area of Ogun State. From the 22 secondary schools in the local government area, 8 schools were selected using purposive/judgmental sampling technique and guided by the following criteria:

- Schools where Literature in Yoruba (which was a separate subject in the SSCE programme as at the time of this study) was not taught at the Senior Secondary School level.
- Availability of a qualified Yoruba language teacher (at least a Bachelor's Degree holder)
- Schools are owned by Ogun State government in order to ensure uniformity of Yoruba language programme.

A class from each selected school was randomly chosen and two schools were randomly assigned to each of the treatment and control groups. In all, 288 students (167 males and 121 females) were involved in the study.



## Instrumentation

Five instruments were used for the study:

### 1. Verbal Ability Test (VAT)

The VAT is a 36-item test adopted from Australian Council for Educational Research Higher Test which was used to classify subjects into three levels of verbal ability (High, Average and Low). The test had been revalidated for Nigerian use by Obemeata (1974), Iyaagba (1993) and Olaboopo (2000). This researcher also revalidated the VAT using Kuder Richardson (Kr21) formula at .73.

### 2. Achievement Test in Yoruba Composition Writing (ATYCOW)

The ATYCOW consists of 5 composition topics selected from 10 topics after a test-re-test procedure on a neutral sample of 100 SS II students. The 5 selected topics were found to be the most popular among the sample. The ten topics were initially subjected to face validation by Yoruba language and test construction experts. The reliability co-efficient of .90 was established using the test-retest procedure. The ATYCOW was used to measure students' achievement in composition before and after the treatment. Students' composition were scored using the standard of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and the National Examination Council (NECO) for making Yoruba language in the senior secondary school certificate examination (SSCE).

### 3. Teaching and Learning Guide (TALG)

This experimental instructional programme was prepared to guide the teachers in knowing what to teach and how to teach it effectively. It highlights the content of the literature materials and the activities of the teachers and the students.

### 4. Audio Tape of Oral Literature Materials in Yoruba (ATOLIMY)

The ATOLIMY contains the oral literature materials which were presented to experimental groups 1 & 3. The materials cover: Iyere Ifa (Ifa Chant); Ese Ifa (Ifa verse), a folktale (the story of King Alaran-an and Kin-in-kin bird); Oriki - Orile (geneology Poem); Ijala (Hunters' chant); Rara (Wailing chant); Ekun Iyawo (Nuptial chant) and Esa Egungun (Masquerade chant). These were delivered orally and relayed on tape.

### 5. Written Literature Materials in Yoruba (WOLMAY)

The WOLMAY consists of extracts from the three genres of written literature (poetry, prose and drama). Extracts are taken from Fafunwa (1950) *Ogboju Ode ninu Igbo Irunmale*; Isola (1978) *Afaimo*; Makinde (1999) *Aseni n sera e*; Oladiipo (1973) *Aroye Akewi*; Odunjo (1961) *Akojopo Ewi Aladun*; Owolabi (1977) *Lisabi Agbongbo Akala*; Okediji (1997) *Aajo Aje*; and Adebisi (1988) *Apolo in Olabintan*, A. (ed) *Akojopo Ewi Abalaye ati Ewi Apileko*. These materials were presented to experimental groups 2 and 3.

## Procedure

The researcher visited the selected schools (eight) that were involved in the study in order to obtain the necessary permission from the school principals. He discussed the research intentions with the teachers. The eight teachers that were involved were experienced graduate teachers of not less than five years. The teachers were trained for a period of three weeks (two weeks for training and one week for practical) before the commencement of the experiment. The TALG and other instruments were made available to the teachers during the training. A double period out of the four periods allocated to Yoruba on the time-table per week was used for the experiment. The treatment which involved exposure of students to literary models, literary appreciation, (using discussion method in all the groups) and writing of literary models in students own words lasted for eight weeks. Meanwhile, the VAT and the ATYCOW were administered on all the groups before and after the treatment.

## Findings

Data collected were analysed using Analysis of Co-variance (ANCOVA), Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) and Scheffe Post-Hoc Analysis. The findings are presented below

**Ho 1:** There is no significant main effect of treatment on students' achievement in Yoruba composition writing.

The summary of the analysis is presented in table 1.



**Table 1:** Summary of ANCOVA on the Post-Test Scores of subjects according to Instruction, Gender and Verbal Ability in Yoruba Composition Writing

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean squares	F	Signif. of F
Covariates (Pretest)	69.626	1	69.626	11.394	.001
Main Effects	7956.391	6	1326.065	217.007	.000
Treatment	7578.705	3	2526.235	413.412	.000*
Gender	1.860	1	1.860	.304	.582
Verbal Ability	39.200	2	19.600	3.207	.042*
Explained	9780.833	24	407.535	66.692	.000
Residual	1607.111	263	6.111		
Total	11387.944	287	39.679		

The summary of ANCOVA as shown in table 1 reveals that treatment was found to have contributed significantly to variations in subjects achievement in Yoruba composition writing ( $F_{3, 287} = 513.412$ ;  $P < .5$ ). The MCA of the ANCOVA is presented in table 2 and it describes the performance of subjects according to instruction, gender and verbal ability.

**Table 2:** Multiple-Classification Analysis of Post-Test Achievement Scores of Subjects According to Instruction, Gender and Verbal Ability

Grand mean = 22.98

Variation + Category	N	Unadjusted Deviation	Eta	Adjusted for Independent Deviation	Beta
Instruction					
1. Disc. + Oral Lit. model	72	-.38		-.30	
2. Disc. + Written Lit. model	72	3.33		3.41	
3. Disc. + Oral & Written Lit. model	72	6.18		5.86	
4. Conventional	72	-9.14		-8.96	
			.92		.89
Gender					
1. Male	167	.71		-.07	
2. Female	121	-.98		.10	
			.13		.01
Verbal Ability					
1. High	100	1.05		.40	
2. Medium	142	-.22		-.04	
3. Low	46	-1.62		-.73	
			.14		.06
Multiple R <sup>2</sup>					.84
Multiple R					.92

Key:

Disc. = Discussion

Lit. = Literature

The MCA in table 2 presents the adjusted mean of achievement according to instructional strategy, gender and verbal ability. The grand mean was 22.98. Experimental group 1 had a mean score of 22.98; group 2 had 26.39; group 3 had 28.84 and group 4 had 14.02. This implies that group 3 (combined oral and written literature models group) had the highest post-test measure while the conventional group had the least mean score.

In order to identify the pairs of group means with significant variations, the Scheffe Post-Hoc Test Comparison was carried out as shown in table 3

**Table 3:** Scheffe Post Hoc Analysis of Post-Test Means of Achievement According to Treatment Groups

Mean	Groups	Group 4	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
14.02	4		*	*	*
22.68	1	*		*	*
26.39	2	*	*		*
28.84	3	*	*	*	

\*Denotes pairs of groups significantly different at the .05 level.

It can be observed from table 3 that the mean score of experimental groups 1 - 3 differed significantly from the control group. Also there was a significant difference between experimental groups 1 & 2; experimental groups 1 & 3 and lastly experimental group 3 is significantly different from experimental groups 1 & 2. On the basis of these findings as analysed in tables 1, 2 and 3; the null hypothesis that there is no significant main effect of treatment on students' achievement in Yoruba composition writing is rejected.

**Ho2:** There is no significant main effect of gender on students' achievement in Yoruba composition writing

In table 1, the ANCOVA indicates that gender was not found to have contributed significantly to the variations in subjects' achievement in Yoruba composition writing ( $F_{1, 287} = 304$ ;  $P > .05$ ). The MCA in table 2 also presents the achievement of each gender type and the analysis shows that males have a slightly higher achievement score of 23.91 than the females 22.08 though the difference was not significant. Based on this result, the null hypothesis is not rejected, since there is no significant difference in the achievement scores of male and female subjects.



**Ho3:** There is no significant main effect of verbal ability on students' achievement in Yoruba composition writing

The ANCOVA in table 1 reveals that verbal ability contributed significantly to variations in subjects achievement scores in Yoruba composition writing ( $F_{2, 287} = 2.207$ ;  $P < .05$ ). The MCA was carried out to further determine the achievement of each verbal ability group as shown in table 2 and it was found that high verbal ability group had a higher mean score 23.38 than the other groups. This was followed by the medium and low verbal ability groups with post-test mean scores of 22.94 and 22.25 respectively. The Scheffe post hoc analysis was also computed in order to compare the pair of group means with significant variations as shown in table 4.

**Table 4:** Scheffe Post-Hoc Analysis of Post-Test Achievement Scores According to Verbal Ability Groups

Mean	Groups	Group 1 (High)	Group 2 (Medium)	Group 3 (Low)
23.38	High			*
22.94	Medium			
22.25	Low	*		

\* Denotes pairs of groups significantly different at the 0.5 level.

It could be observed from table 4 that the mean post-test achievement scores of high verbal ability group 23.38 differed significantly from that of low verbal ability 22.25. However, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of high and medium verbal ability groups and mean scores of medium and low verbal ability levels were not significantly different. In the light of the significant difference between the post-test achievement mean scores of high and low verbal levels, the null hypothesis 3 is rejected.

## Discussions

Findings reveal that all the treatments contributed significantly to variations in subjects achievement scores in Yoruba composition writing as shown in tables 1 - 3. The analysis shows the superiority of the experimental groups over the conventional group. The Oral and Written literature model group had the highest mean score of 28.84 followed by the Written literature model group 26.39; the oral literature model group (22.68) and the Conventional group which has the least mean score

of 14.02. This finding is supported by Olaboopo (1999) who noted that any child who is exposed to a wide variety of literary rich environment will communicate effectively in writing. It is most likely that the enrichment model groups have actually improved their writing skills due to the exposure they had with the literary materials. By analysing models according to themes and discussing them, their ability to generate ideas for composition topics was enhanced. The study of literary models and the analysis of sentence structure and style perhaps afforded them the benefit of extending their vocabularies and the proper use of Yoruba language. It could be further argued that the subjects have benefited greatly in terms of organisational and orthographic skills of composition writing. This corroborates the views of Williams (1996) and Ajayi (1996) that the use of models in teaching composition writing will help students to write better.

According to Aboderin (1990) and Kolawole (1997), oral discussion before writing a given composition topic assists learners to write better. It is therefore understandable that the experimental groups had an edge over the conventional group.

It is revealed in the analysis of data that gender had no significant main effect on subjects' achievement in Yoruba composition writing as indicated in table 1 ( $F = .304$ ;  $P > .05$ ). This confirms earlier reports by Akinbote (1999) and Oden (1999). However, Olaboopo (1999) observed a significant difference between the achievement levels of the gender groups. The present study tends to contradict the general belief that females are better in language learning. It seems to confirm the views of Obi-Okoye (1989) that language learning is not gender bound but depends on the individual learner's interest and degree of seriousness and attitude. The implication of this finding is that literature enrichment materials could be useful for teaching both sexes to produce the desired outcomes in writing achievement.

It was also found that verbal ability had significant main effect on students' achievement in Yoruba composition writing as shown in tables 1, 2 and 4 ( $F = 19.6$ ;  $P < .05$ ). It could be seen in table 4 that subjects in the high verbal ability group had the highest mean score and the difference between the mean scores of high and low verbal ability levels was found to be significant. However, earlier studies like Kolawole (1997) and Olaboopo (1999) found no significant difference between verbal ability and achievement in students' writing tasks. This implies that there could be more to Yoruba composition writing than verbal ability.



### **Implications of Findings for Self-Actualisation and Sustainability**

According to Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1996), self-actualisation is defined as feeling of satisfaction that one has achieved what he desired. In other words, the individual has the ability to satisfy his needs without much help from outside. Self-actualisation according to Maslow (1954) is "the desire to become more and more what one idiosyncratically is, to becoming everything one is capable of becoming." It has to do with the need to maximise one's skills, potentialities for continued self-development, and for being creative in the real sense of it. Hence, Maslow noted that a musician must produce music, the poet must compose poems, the artist must paint if they are to be ultimately actualised. It is that phase of psychological development where an individual realises his full potential as a human being.

Sustainability is the ability of an individual to ensure and maintain the state of psychological fulfillment of life for everyone and for generations to come (Chijioke, 2004). Sustainability according to Chijioke relates to those infrastructures, policies and behaviours that are conceptualised, instituted and maintained over a given period of time. For any society to realise self-actualisation, and sustainability, the following objectives must be achieved:

- \* social progress, which recognises the needs of every citizen;
- \* effective protection of the environment;
- \* prudent use of natural resources and;
- \* maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment (Chijioke, 2004: 3 & 4).

This study was motivated by the need for teachers to introduce effective methods, innovations and strategies in the teaching of Yoruba composition writing especially at the secondary school level. The study has shown that positive results could be realised in students' writing achievement when they are exposed to such materials from time to time. It will enhance their versatility and also help them to enjoy writing and writing well to communicate their ideas more effectively. According to Lawal (2005), literature has the potential of developing the child's imagination as reading is an instrument of imagination development.

Exposure of subjects to literature models of good writers could help learners to become creative writers in the language as well as good users or speakers of the language. Such students could become playwrights, novelists and poets of tomorrow. Good mastery of the language could help such students to choose a future career in the language as teachers, lecturers, newspaper reporters, translators,

actors, singers and good traditional counsellors. In these days of economic recession which has resulted in the explosion of unemployment figure, a good mastery of Yoruba language and good writing ability could enhance the prospect of an individual for self-actualisation and sustainability.

It can also be inferred from this study that there is the urgent need for all stakeholders in education to take the issue of effective teaching of Nigerian languages more seriously. For Nigerian children to be more creative and develop our abandoned indigenous science and technology to compete favourably with the advanced countries, there is the need for indigenisation of instruction not only at the nursery and lower primary education but throughout primary education and beyond. Traditional vocations should be revived by exposing the young ones into them. The problems of unemployment, poverty, unpatriotic attitude, disintegration would be adequately tackled if the educational sector is adequately funded and the system directed towards the realisation of our national objectives.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the fact that effective writing ability is a facilitator for self-actualisation and sustainability, the following recommendations are proffered:

- Literature in Nigerian languages and those of other languages relevant to the Nigerian context should be integrated in the school curriculum and made compulsory at the tertiary levels to ensure that students are exposed to basic writing skills.
- Language associations should organise workshops and seminars for all categories of teachers for the purpose of bringing the importance of literature as enrichment input in language teaching and learning to their awareness.
- Literature experts should be encouraged to write more inspiring and good materials that could help young learners have their language skills enriched. The government and non-governmental organisations can assist literary text writers through financial assistance.
- Tariffs on educational materials should be lifted so that publishers could publish literary materials at minimal costs in order to make them available to readers at affordable prices.
- Literary artists in indigenous languages and English should write more on themes that are responsive to the interest of children.
- To stimulate students' interest in reading, teacher trainees should be made to take a course – compulsorily in reading and communication skills.



## Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the thesis of this study lies in the fact that literary enrichment models could contribute in no little way to improve composition writing achievement by addressing the problem of poverty of ideas, poor linguistic ability, limited vocabulary as well as making composition writing a pleasurable and an interesting activity among the students. The relevance of literary models towards ensuring self-actualisation and sustainability of acquired language skills has also been x-rayed. It is therefore proposed that literary studies should be integrated into the programme of every learning institution in Nigeria.

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