

Relative Effectiveness of Two Summary-skill Techniques on Secondary School Students' Achievement in Summary Writing in Ibadan Metropolis

Ayanniyi, M. A.

*Department of Teacher Education
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.
E-mail: mikefunmbi@yahoo.com*

ABSTRACT

This aim of this study was to examine the relative effectiveness of two summary-skill techniques on secondary school students' achievement in summary writing. The study adopted pre-test, post-test, control group quasi-experimental design. The instrument used was Students' Achievement Test in Summary adapted from West African Examinations Council (WAEC). Three hypotheses were tested at 0.5 alpha level. Data were analysed using means, standard deviation and ANCOVA. There is significant main effect of treatment on achievement in summary, but there is no significant effect of gender on students' achievement in summary. On the other hand, the interaction effect of treatment and gender on students' achievement in summary is not also significant. Students have been found performing very poorly in summary writing. This happens because teachers have not been teaching it appropriately. Summary-skill techniques are very effective in the teaching of summary. Teachers of English Language in secondary schools should make use of summary-skill techniques in the teaching of summary.

Keywords: *Two summary-skill techniques, students' achievement, summary writing*

INTRODUCTION

Language has been regarded as an important tool of communication among human beings. It plays multifaceted roles in human endeavours that could not be underestimated. According to Sanusi (1996), language is an integral part of culture, communication and learning. In the same vein, the role which it plays in the education of man is enormous and perhaps invaluable. Wallwork (1980) opines that language is used to establish our social relationships with each other. It is used to embody or enable thought. That is to say language and thought are mutually interdependent. It is also used to enable self-expression and it shows creativity. This is also re-echoed by Lucy (1992) and Gumperz and Levinson (1996). English Language is not an exception to this. According to Fakeye (2001), ability to use English Language effectively may qualify one for entry into an international community of wealth, power and influence apart from using it as local, national and medium of instruction in schools. It is a core subject in the senior secondary school curriculum. Failure to pass it at credit level may mar the progress of a student's life. It is very unfortunate to note that at the school certificate level, the performance of students in this subject is nothing to write home about almost on a yearly basis. Scholars and researchers have given many reasons for this ugly situation. In the opinion of Iyagba (1983), one of the reasons for poor performance of students in English Language at Senior Secondary Certificate Examination level is that

teachers of English Language do not bother to use the available resources and techniques which will motivate the students to learn. Adenle (1996) attributes this ugly situation to poor reading ability of students. He therefore advises teachers of English Language to use methods and techniques that would improve the reading skills of students. This is echoed by Adelabu (1998) when she says that many students lack efficient reading skills which account for their poor reading comprehension. There are many aspects of English Language where students' knowledge is tested at the school certificate level such as: essay/letter writing, comprehension, summary, lexis and structure and test of orals. Paper 1 has three aspects viz: essay/letter writing - 50 marks, summary writing - 30 marks and comprehension - 20 marks. It could be realised that summary writing is an aspect of the language test that carries a reasonable percentage of 30 out of 100% of the paper. It is therefore very unfortunate to note that summary is an aspect of the language where students perform dismally. Without mincing words, teachers should struggle to see that their performance improves in summary writing.

According to Biney (1985), summary means act of shortening a passage by writing only the salient or main points in it. Aderibigbe (1985) also describes summary as bringing out the main items or highlights in a piece of writing. In the opinion of WAEC Chief Examiners' Report of May/June 2005, the major weakness of the candidates is the inclusion of irrelevant or unnecessary details in their answers. They therefore advise candidates that, to summarize is to state the core of the matter. Similarly, Banjo et al (2007) contend that summary calls for cogency, brevity and clarity of points. According to Aimunmondion (2009), some teachers seem not to know how to teach summary in the class. The teaching of English Language itself has been handled by incompetent hands, when it comes to summary teaching, many teachers lose interest. Failure of teachers to use appropriate method or techniques to teach summary like the use of summary skills is responsible for students' poor performance in summary writing (Aimunmondion, 2009).

These summary skills could be regarded as teaching techniques that are very germane, invaluable and indispensable to the teaching and learning of summary. One very grievous and unpardonable offence students usually commit in summary writing is that of mindless lifting and inclusion of extraneous materials (Aimunmondion, 2009). But the question is: as teachers, do we teach the students the various techniques they can use so as not to fall into these mistakes in summary writing? Some of these summary skills are: ability to identify and restructure the topic sentence in paragraphs, ability to condense vocabulary in each paragraph, ability to condense structure, ability to paraphrase the passage, ability to differentiate between important and irrelevant ideas, ability to economize paragraphs among others. How many secondary school teachers are aware of these summary skills? If they are aware of them do they utilise them? These are what the students should be taught before they can excel in summary writing. It is hoped that if students are able to apply all or some of these skills to summary passages, it will go a long way in enhancing their better performance in summary writing. The researcher in this study has experimented two of these summary-skill techniques viz: ability to identify and restructure the topic sentence in paragraphs and ability to condense vocabulary in paragraphs. The topic sentence is the

main sentence in a paragraph (Fasokun et al, 1988). It is on it that other sentences in the paragraph depend. The knowledge of the topic sentence in paragraphs therefore, adds to the understanding of the main theme of the passage. In the process of summarizing a paragraph, Sybil et al (1990) recommend as follows:

- (i) Identify the main topic of the paragraph and restructure.
- (ii) Look for the topic sentence which is usually given as the first sentence in most cases in a paragraph.

If it is not given as the opening sentence, see if it is implicit, or if it is in the middle or at the end of the paragraph. According to Sybil et al (1990), it means the topic sentence is mobile. It could appear as the first sentence in a paragraph. It could also appear in the middle or end of a paragraph. This is also reechoed by Banjo et al (2007). The restructuring being mentioned in (i) above is to bail the students/candidates out of being penalized for mindless lifting. The implication of what Sybil et al (1990) and Banjo et al (2007) are saying is that if a passage has five paragraphs, there will be five topic sentences. It is these five topic sentences that will be restructured after identification since the candidates are usually expected to write their answers in sentences. So, all the topic sentences will constitute correct answers to the question(s) asked after they might have been restructured.

On condensation of vocabulary, Crawshaw and Perkins (1978) look at it as the process of making a long piece of writing shorter by taking out everything that is not necessary. They contend that when tackling a summary passage one has to consider his vocabulary very carefully. According to them, a phrase needs a considerable number of words and one may not be able to afford to use it. Nevertheless, they maintain that a little thought may result in one word which will express the identical idea. It is therefore the opinion of the researcher in this study that the performance of students in summary writing will be enhanced if judiciously used.

One factor that has plagued the teaching and learning of English Language today at senior secondary school level in Nigeria is students' poor performance in the language. It has been identified that a contributory factor to this usual abysmal failure in the language is their poor performance in summary writing due to poor method of teaching. The study therefore investigate the effects of two summary- skill techniques viz: ability to identify and restructure the topic sentence in paragraphs and ability to condense vocabulary in paragraphs on students' achievement in summary writing. The study further determine the moderating effect of gender on students' achievement in summary writing. The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance in the study:

- H₀1 There is no significant main effect of treatment on students' achievement in summary writing.
- H₀2 There is no significant main effect of gender on students' achievement in summary writing.
- H₀3 There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and gender on students' achievement in summary writing.

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

A pre-test, post-test, control group quasi-experimental design was used in the study. The study therefore adopts 3x 2 factorial matrix which is expressed in detail below:

Table 1: Tabular representation of the factorial matrix (3x2)

Treatment	Gender
Identification and restructuring of topic sentence	Male
	Female
Condensation of vocabulary	Male
	Female
Control	Male
	Female

The variables of the study are categorised into three, namely:

Independent variable: What constitutes the independent variable is instructional strategy manipulated at three levels viz: (i) identification and restructuring of topic sentence, (ii) Condensation of vocabulary, and (iii) Control.

Moderator variable: This is only one i.e Gender varied at two levels - male and female.

Dependent variable: It is only one, that is, Achievement in summary writing which is summarized on table 2 below:

Table 2: Tabular representation of variables in the study:

Independent variables	Moderator variable	Dependent variable
Instructional strategy	Gender	Achievement
i. identification and restructuring of topic sentence.	Male	
ii. Condensation of vocabulary.	Female	
iii. Control		

One hundred and twenty students in three co-educational senior secondary schools in Ibadan metropolis participated in the study. The three schools used were randomly selected among the schools in the metropolis. An intact class was used in the three schools. Two schools were used as experimental groups while the remaining one was used as control group. Only one instrument was used in the study and this is Students' Achievement Test in Summary Writing. The summary test was adapted from WAEC which is believed to have been validated and found reliable. The researcher visited the three schools used namely: African Church Grammar School, Apata, Ibadan; Baptist Secondary Grammar School, Oke-Ado, Ibadan and Anglican Commercial Secondary Grammar School, Orita Mefa, Ibadan to seek the consent of their principals. Having obtained the approval, Senior Secondary school 3, English Language teachers were employed as research assistants. That is, one research assistant per school. African Church Grammar school, Apata, Ibadan and Baptist Secondary Grammar School, Oke-Ado, Ibadan were used as experimental groups while Anglican Commercial Grammar School, Orita Mefa, Ibadan was used as control group. The research assistants in the two experimental groups were briefed on what would be their roles concerning the use of the two summary-skill techniques while that of the control group was instructed to teach with a conventional method without exposing the students to any summary-skill technique. Before the treatment commenced, the pre-test was conducted in all the groups. After a week of the conduct of the pre-test,

treatment followed for three weeks after which the same test given in the pre-test was re represented to the three groups as post-test. The scores of the pre-test and post-test were compared to determine which group had performed better in the summary test. The data collected were analysed using means, standard deviation and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to test the hypotheses and to determine the main and interaction effects of the variables under study. Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) was also used to determine the direction of effects of the independent and moderator variables on the dependent variable. The results of the study are presented in the order of the hypotheses and followed by their discussion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A 3x2 ANCOVA of Post Summary Achievement Scores by Treatment and Gender with pre-test achievement as covariates is shown on table 3. The results indicate that all the experimental groups performed better than the control group. This shows that the summary-skill techniques used were very effective in all the experimental groups. The results show a significant effect of treatment on students' achievement in summary. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant main effect of treatment on students' achievement in summary writing is rejected. Table 4 shows the effect of gender on achievement in summary writing. On table 3, gender was seen not to have contributed significantly to the students' achievement scores in summary. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant main effect of gender on students' achievement in summary writing is retained. The Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) of Post-test Summary Achievement Scores by Treatment and Gender with Pre-test Achievement as covariates are shown on table 4. The Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) on table 4 shows the adjusted summary achievement mean scores of the treatment groups as follows: Experimental Group 2 obtained the highest adjusted mean scores of 27.12, followed by Experimental Group 1 with 26.85 while the control group obtained the adjusted mean score of 14.30. These values were got by adding up the grand mean and the adjusted mean.

The table also shows that treatment accounted for 43.69 (0.661)2 x 100). The Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) on table 4 shows the adjusted mean achievement scores of students according to gender. Female students performed better than male students but the difference is not significant (23.59 and 22.01) respectively. Table 4 indicates no significant interaction effect of treatment and gender on students' achievement in summary. Thus, null hypothesis that there is no significant interaction effect of treatment and gender on student's achievement in summary writing was not rejected. This shows that the summary-skill techniques could be used with all the students irrespective of their gender in the teaching of summary. This corroborates the studies of Grace (1998a), Chun and Plass (1996) and Makinde (2004) who report that sex is no barrier to students' achievement. However, the study is contrary to the studies of Salami (1997), Brosnan (1998) and Eccles (1989) who realize that gender contributes significantly to the achievement of students in their academic career. The combination of treatment and gender was not found significant on the achievement of students in summary as shown On table 3. This implies that treatment

is gender insensitive. In other words, it shows that the effects of treatment on students' in summary does not vary from male to female. This result supports the findings of Aremu (1998), Adegbile (1999) and Adesoji (1999) who do not see any interaction effect of gender on students' performance in their various studies. However, the study is incompatible with the studies of Oyesiji (1999), Oladunni (1996) and Bacon (1992) who argue on the contrary. It therefore follows that teachers of English Language should apply summary-skill techniques in the teaching of summary irrespective of their students' gender to enhance their achievement scores in summary writing.

Table 3: Summary of ANCOVA for the Post Summary Achievement Scores by Treatment and Gender

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig of F
Covariates (Pre-test)	122.960	1	122.960	2.209	.109
Main effects (Combined)	4,395.186	3	1,465.062	31.088	.000
Treatment	4,338.851	2	2,169,426	46.035	.000*
Gender	56.334	1	56.334	1.195	.276
2-way interactions:					
Treatment x Gender	90.653	2	45.327	.962	.385
Model	4,608.799	6	768.133	15.300	.000
Residual	5,513.707	117	47.126k		
Total	10,122.56	123	82.297		

Table 4: The Multiple Classification Analysis of Post-test Summary Achievement Scores by Treatment and Gender

Variable + Category	N	Unadjusted deviation for factors and covariates	Eta	Adjusted deviation for factors & covariates	Beta
Grand Mean = 22.79					
Treatment:					
Experimental Group 1	43	3.9963		4.0602	
Experimental Group 2	40	4.0431		4.3385	
Control Group	41	-8.1358	.633	-8.4909	.661
Gender:					
Male	63	-.7229		-.7608	
Female	61	.7466	-.081	.8064	.088
Post-test by Treatment and Gender with Pre-test as Covariates					

CONCLUSION

This study shows that there is significant effect of treatment on students' achievement in summary writing as the experimental groups performed better than the control group. Gender is found not to contribute significantly to variations in the students' achievement scores in summary writing. Treatment and gender are also found not to have significant effect on the variation in students' scores in their achievement in summary writing. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that there is need for secondary school teachers to know that it is necessary for them to employ summary skill-techniques in summary teaching to enhance their students' performance. Teachers should not be gender biased while discharging their pedagogical assignment in the classroom. Whether a student is a male or female they should be given equal treatment by the teacher

REFERENCES

- Adegbile, J. A.** (1999). The relative effectiveness of three models of expository advance organizer on secondary school students' learning outcomes in reading comprehension. (Ph.D Thesis, University of Ibadan, Ibadan).
- Adelabu, S. B.** (1998) The relative effectiveness of pre-question, outline and graphic on undergraduates' achievement in reading. Ph.D Thesis, University of Ibadan, Ibadan).
- Adenle, I.** (1996). *The teaching of composition with literary work*. Ibadan UPL.
- Aderibigbe, Timo** (1985). *A guide to the study of O' level English Language*. Ibadan: University Press Ltd, Nigeria.
- Adesoji, F. A.** (1999). Mock examination results and students' gender as correlates of performance in the senior secondary school certificate examinations in mathematics. *African Journal of Educational Research*, 5 (1), 101-102.
- Aimunmondion, M. C.** (2009). Effects of thought- flow knowledge and shared reading instructional strategies on senior secondary students' achievements in English reading comprehension and summary writing. Ph.D Thesis, University of Ibadan.
- Aremu, A. O.** (1998). Behavioural preparedness of students that are willing to take important examinations. A study of University of Ibadan students (B.Ed project, Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Ibadan, Ibadan).
- Bacon, S.** (1992). The relationship between gender, comprehension, processing strategies and cognitive and affective response in second-language listening. *Modern Language Journal*, 76, 160-178.
- Banjo A., Ben E., Uzoma O. and Ayo A.** (2007). *New secondary English course for senior secondary schools*. Ibadan: University Press PLC.
- Biney, C. L.** (1985). *The new examination English for GCE & WASC students, letters/essays, grammar, comprehension and summary*. Lagos: IBRA Printing Company Nigeria.
- Brosnan, M. J.** (1998) The implications for academic attainments of perceived gender -appropriateness upon special task performance. *British Journal of Education Psychology*, 68, 203-215.
- Chun, D. M. and Plass, J. L.** (19967). Effects of multimedia annotations on vocabulary acquisition. *Modern Language Journal*, 80, 183-198.
- Crawshaw and Perkins** (1978). *Practice in summary writing*. Lagos: Celtic Educational Services Ltd.
- Eccles, J. S.** (1989). Bringing young women to maths and science, gender and thought. *Psychological Perspectives*, 12, 65 -70
- Fakeye, D. O.** (2001). Relative effects of instruction in componential and rhetorical strategies on senior secondary school students' achievement in essay writing (Ph.D Thesis, University of Ibadan, Ibadan).
- Fasokun, T. O. et al** (1988). *English Language associateship certificate in education Series*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nig) Ltd.

- Grace, C.** (1988a). Personality type, lexical ambiguity and vocabulary retention in Call. *CALICO Journal*, 15, 19-45.
- Gumperz, J. and Stephen L. (eds.)** (1996). *Rethinking linguistic relativity*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Iyagba** (1983). Reading-writing and discussion strategies as determinant of senior secondary school students' achievement in essay writing. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- Lucy, John A.** (1992). *Language diversity and thought. A reformation of the linguistic relativity hypothesis*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Makinde, S. O.** (2004). The relative effect of oral and written literature models as environmental inputs on students' achievements in, and attitude to Yoruba composition writing. (Ph. D Thesis, University of Ibadan, Ibadan).
- Oladunni, M. O.** (1996). *Introduction to research methods and statistics in education*. Ibadan: TAFAL Publications, Nigeria Ent.
- Oyesoji, A. A.** (1999). Effects of gender and parenting style on academic performance of undergraduate students of a Nigerian University. *African Journal of Education Research*, 5 (1), 169-174.
- Salami, S. O.** (1997). Birth order , gender , family type and vocational preferences of IJMBA' Level science students. *Journal of science Teaching and Learning*, 3 (1&2), 32-42.
- Sanusi, I. O.** (1996). *Introducing the linguist and linguistics*. Ilorin: Jimsons publishers.
- Sybil, L. J. et al** (1990). *Language in action for higher education*. Ibadan: CECTA (Nig.) Ltd. Publishers.
- WAEC Chief Examiners'** (2005). Report May/June.
- Wallwork, J. F.** (1980). *Language and linguistics*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.