

Effect of Methods with Linguistic Packages and Socio-economic Background on the Overall Achievements of Senior Secondary School Students in Essay Writing

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ABSTRACT This study investigated the effects of the combination of reading-writing, discussion and lecture methods with packages of linguistic inputs and socio-economic background on the achievement of Senior Secondary School students in essay writing in Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated for the study. The design of the study was Quasi-experimental pre-test – post-test and control group. The population is the Senior Secondary Schools in Ekiti State Nigeria. A sample of five hundred and twenty-one students were elected for the study from eight randomly selected secondary schools. Four different instruments were used for the study. A pre-test was administered on the students before the treatment. The students were taught for six weeks before an achievement test was administered on them. The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis using Analysis of Variance and Analysis of Covariance and Post hoc analysis. The findings from the study show that the combination of linguistic package with reading-writing was the best method to enhance students' performance in essay writing. Also, the result shows that socio-economic status influence students' performance in essay writing. It was recommended that teachers should take the advantages of the reading-writing method combined with linguistic packages to enhance better teaching of English Language. They should also endeavour to find out the socio-economic status of their students in order to teach them with suitable methods.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching children to write has gained the attention of researchers and educators because it is the key to subsequent educational success among other things. Every child needs to become competent in writing in order to succeed at school and to discharge responsibilities as a citizen of a democratic society. A citizen who writes has the capacity to actively participate in the continuity of learning and put across his ideas, feelings and important information to others. Writing enables people to externalise their ideas through reading, listening and observation there by contributing to information dissemination and perhaps academic success.

Writing skill is very important in language learning and in academics. If a student is to be successful in academics, he must be able to communicate effectively bringing what he knows to the knowledge of others in writing especially during examinations. A student must be able to write answers to questions convincingly in examinations before he can attain academic

success. In order to do this, the student must learn and master some writing skills. Such language skills include ability to generate ideas in terms of content, organisation of ideas, discuss the ideas in terms of good expression and ability to use mechanical writing skills such as correct grammar, punctuation marks and varieties of sentences. When these skills are fully mastered by the students, they can write answers to questions in examinations successfully.

Many students fail examinations nowadays because they did not master writing skills in the area of generation of contents, expression, sound organisation of ideas and the use of mechanical skills. The issue of poor performances of students has become worrisome among scholars. Iyagba (1993), Kolawole (1998), Obanya (2004), have all found from their various studies that many students are failing English language in public examinations. Also the report of West African Examinations Council (WAEC) 2006- shows that many students failed other courses in addition to failing English language. The rate of failure is closely related to the inability of the students to

express their ideas and generate adequate contents for discussion.

The efforts made over the years to improve the situation have not yielded fruitful results. Studies such as Ubahakwe (1991), Omodiaogho (1992), Obemeata (1995), Ayodele (2000) among others have identified some causative factors for what is generally referred to as the fallen standard of English language in Nigeria. Some of the causes are; lack of qualified teachers, incompetence and lack of motivation on the part of the few existing ones. Inappropriate pedagogy employed in schools as it relates to the learner's interests and needs, his linguistic, cultural and geographical environment as well as the goals or purposes of the target language.

The above causes are of serious concern to language educators and solutions must be found for them in order to improve the performances of our students, not only in English language but in other subjects. It is on this note that the crux of this study is based on the need for appropriate method of teaching writing in the secondary schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of three methods namely, reading-writing, lecture and discussion on the achievements of students in essay writing. The study will also attempt to determine if socio-economic background has effects on students' achievements in essay writing. Above all, it is hoped that the outcome of the study will enable language teachers to select the best methods for teaching essay writing and will therefore enhance the performance of students in essay writing.

Statement of the Problem

Many scholars such as Ayodele (2001), Ohia (2002), Obanya (2004) have revealed that the performance of many students in English Language and other subjects have fallen drastically. It is common knowledge that many teachers and parents have complained about the abysmal failure of their children in public examinations. A survey of teaching methods used by language teachers in Nigeria by Ubahakwe (1979) revealed that some of the methods used by language teachers cannot enhance effective learning of English language in English as a

second language environment. It is on this note that this study focuses on searching for the best method that will enhance students' performance in writing skills generally. Based on the problems stated above, the following general questions were raised.

Will writing skills of students improve if they were taught with good methods combined with selected linguistic skills?

Will socio-economic background of the students affect their writing skills?

Research Questions

As a result of the statement of the problems highlighted above, the following research questions were formulated.

1. Will there be any difference between the overall performance of students in essay writing before and after being instructed with reading – writing, discussion, lecture methods and the control group?
2. Will there be any difference based on the socio-economic status of the students in their overall achievement on essay writing, after being taught with reading –writing, discussion, lecture methods and the control group?
3. Will there be any difference between the interaction effects of methods and socio-economic status on the overall achievement of students after being instructed with reading-writing, discussion lecture method, and the control group?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following research hypotheses were generated from the research questions above.

- i. There is no significant difference between the overall performance of students in essay writing before and after being instructed with reading writing, discussion, lecture and the control group.
- ii. There is no significant difference between the overall performance of students from different socio-economic status after being instructed with reading-writing, discussion and lecture methods and the control group.
- iii. There is no significant difference between the interaction effects of methods and socio – economic status on the overall achievement of students after being instructed with

reading – writing, discussion, lecture and control group in essay writing.

Literature Review

The teaching of English language as a second language began in Nigeria formally in 1842 when the missionaries started primary school education in Nigeria. Since its introduction, English language was taught according to Howatt (1984) in colonial schools in essentially the same way as in the mother country. The textbooks used then were originally written for the native speakers and to assist the youths to get through the Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations. For a very long time, these books were in use in Nigerian primary and secondary schools. The beginning of the problems of English Language teaching and learning in Nigeria can be traced to the import of foreign books, designed for native speakers into Nigerian classrooms for learners who study English as a second language. English language is the medium of education and education itself is the sole instrument of social and economic mobility because its acquisition enables an individual to function effectively in the society.

English language has been the language of instruction in Nigeria since the colonial period and it is enjoying the status till today. It can be said that both the colonial government and subsequent governments were interested in the promotion of English Language. The Nigerian government policy; NPE (2004) and the Federal Republic of Nigerian constitution 1999 support this claim. For instance, the National Policy on Education (2004) states that the language of instruction at the lower level of primary school education shall be the language of the immediate environment of the child while English language shall be used for instruction after this level.

The National constitution also says that, the deliberation at the National Assembly shall be held in English language while Nigerian languages will be used when they are adequately developed.

The point here is that the Nigerian government favours the use of English language more than the Nigerian languages. Some Nigerian languages like Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa have been developed to the level that they can be used for deliberation at the National Assembly.

From the discussion so far, English language is very important in Nigeria. Any student who may wish to proceed to higher institution of

learning must be proficient in the use of English language. If English language is the medium of instruction in Nigeria, then students must be able to communicate effectively in speaking and writing media. For a student to excel in academics, he must be able to write his ideas in clear terms. This means that he must master some important writing skills such as ability to generate content, express ones ideas about the content, organise the ideas and write correct sentences that will express the exact information the writer wishes to put across to his readers.

Freeman (1996) found that students ability to speak and understand English language does not translate into effective students communication in writing. This means that writing skills are important and different from speaking skills and should be taught to the learner of English as second language. The implication of this is that teachers of English as a second language must use good methods, approaches and techniques to teach the language. These three terms are not the same.

Anthony (1963) and Richard and Rodgers (1986) describe approach to language teaching and learning as a theoretical or ideological concept which underlies a particular way of teaching language. Approaches have been described as the theory of language teaching and it serves as the bedrock for language methods. It deals with the theories about the nature of language teaching these theories constitute the principles for second language teaching practices.

With regards to theories of languages, two major theories are identifiable in second language teaching, these are; the behaviourist and the cognitive learning theories. Behaviourism holds that languages learning is a kind of habit formation and therefore emphasizes the act of drilling learners up to the point of responding to stimuli spontaneously. Cognitive on the other hand believes that language learning is a rule – governed process in which the brain is actively involved. This view of language learning stresses active involvement of the learner and the need to sensitize him to the rules governing specific language structures.

Methods on the other hand refer to the design used in the process of determining the objectives, and syllabus contents of what to be learnt. It refers to the overall plan for orderly presentation of material; in such a way that no one contradicts the other. This implies that it addresses the issue

of teacher and learners' role as well as the role of instructional materials in the class.

Technique on its own refers to the actual classroom practises followed by the teacher to achieve the spelt out educational objectives. Richards and Rodgers (1986) describe the relationship among the three terms treated above by saying that "a method is theoretically related to an approach, it is determined by a design, and is practically realised as a procedure.

Having clarified the above terms, it is important to look at the methods used in this study. The primary method of interest in this study is reading-writing, others are lecture and discussion methods. These methods are combined with a package of linguistic inputs to enhance the students' ability to write good essays.

Reading as a language skill is used to retrieve information from texts. Lincon (1999) says that one of the best ways to enrich ideas for essays or to enrich the ideas the students already have, is to allow them to read relevant materials. He says that reading can stimulate action, fascination, outrage, sympathy and bafflement. The implication of the above statement is that, when a reader begins to read a piece of material, he can begin to think and write about that reaction. In turn, the act of thinking and writing about his reaction can lead him to writing different text from what he has read. Also reading can help the reader to analyse what he has read, to explain, amplify, attack, fend or evaluate the writers' facts, ideas opinions or argument. Above all, reading – writing as a method can show the reader something about how to write, it can give him something to imitate. Iyagba (1993) uses reading writing among junior secondary school students and found it better than discussion method for the teaching of essay writing. Discussion method is a student centred method of teaching. When students are allowed and guided to use discussion method, they are expected to participate actively and interact freely among themselves.

The discussion method can be organised in different forms, it can be a round table mode of discussion, or a debate under the guidance of a teacher. Some perceived advantages of discussion method are that it helps in the development of inquiry behaviour in the learner. It provides avenue for the learners to share their ideas and helps to develop other oral communications, thinking and listening skills. Iyagba (1993), Oyinloye (2005), in their separate studies found

that students instructed with discussion method could not write good sentences like those instructed with reading – writing method.

Another method of study is the lecture method. Afe (1995) says that lecture method is an economic method that may be used to: transmit knowledge to learners, introduce a problem and recapitulate, analyze and synthesize information that has been generated during non – structural activities. Kolawole (1998) compared this method to activity and discussion methods and found that discussion method is better than lecture method when it comes to essay writing. He also concluded that activity method is the best method of teaching composition writing in the senior secondary school. From the above, it can be concluded that the teacher of essay writing must base his teaching on good language theory, method and approaches. The need for good method of teaching is paramount hence this study investigates the effects of the combination of linguistic inputs with reading – writing, discussion and lecture methods on the achievements of students in essay writing.

Another intervening variable considered in the study is the students' socio – economic status. This deals with the learners' background and other environmental factors that can aid language learning especially learning skills. The instructional package tagged linguistic inputs were adopted from the current senior secondary school English language syllabus and scheme of work for senior secondary class two. The linguistic package was constructed to assist the learners in the use of tenses, phrases, clauses, sentence types and paragraphing. Other features include mechanical accuracy like punctuation marks and spelling.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study is a Quasi- experimental study which involves, pre-test post-test and control group. Intact classes were randomly assigned to different treatment conditions. The treatment has four levels that is, reading writing, discussion, lecture and a package of linguistic inputs. The independent variable has five levels namely, expression, organisation, content, mechanical accuracy and students' socio-economic background. The scores of the subjects in expression, content, organisation and mechanical accuracy were taken before and after the administration of

the treatment. These scores were regarded as the overall score of the samples. The students' socio-economic status was determined before the commencement of the experiment.

The Population

The population of the study is the senior secondary schools students in Ekiti state. These schools are spread across the sixteen local government areas of the state. The schools are located in both rural and urban areas of the state.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The samples for the study comprise SSII students drawn from secondary schools which were randomly selected through stratified random sampling procedure from the schools in Ekiti state

Research Instruments

Four different instruments were used for the study. They are;

- i. Questionnaire on Students Socio-Economic Background (QSSEB)
- ii. Instructional package 'Linguistic inputs' (LIN)
- iii. Achievement Tests in Composition(ATC)
- iv. Teaching Learning Guide (TLG)

Validation of Research Instruments

The research instruments constructed by the researcher were given to language specialists at the University of Benin, Benin city Nigeria for the establishment of both face and content validity

Reliability of the Instrument

In order to determine the reliability of the instruments, a total number of 120 secondary school students who were not taking part in the study were selected from three secondary schools and were taught for three weeks. The questionnaire on students' socio-economic background was administered on the students twice each on different occasions of three weeks' interval. The students were taught in three experimental groups with combination of a package of linguistic inputs with three different methods, one in each group that is reading –writing, lecture

and discussion methods. The control group had no access to the package of the linguistic inputs as they continue with their scheme of work in English language. The scores generated through the data were subjected to Pearson product moment correlation analysis. Reliability coefficient obtained were as follows. Achievement Test $r = 0.70$, Socio-Economic status $r = 0.75$, linguistic package 0.65 all significant at 0.05 level

Administration of Instruments

The students were taught in their various schools for six weeks. The students were subjected to pre—test before the commencements of the real experiment while their socio-economic status was determined before the real experiment.

An achievement test was administered on the students at the end of the experimental session. The data collected were subjected to statistical Analysis such as ANOVA and ANCOVA.

RESULTS

In order to determine the effects of treatment on the overall achievements of students in essay writing, the data collected from the 521 subjects were analysed using ANCOVA and Scheffe multiple range comparison.

Hypothesis One

This hypothesis states that there is no significant difference between the overall performance of students in essay writing after being instructed with reading – writing, discussion, lecture and the control group.

Table 1a reveals the performance in post test score of the students' in essay writing. The table seems to reveal that the reading –writing method group has the largest mean of 15.44 followed by lecture method, 10.36; discussion method 8.35 and the control group 7.70 .The table seems to reveal

Table 1a: Dependent variables, overall achievements of the students post test mean score

Group	Mean	Standard deviation	Number
Reading–writing	15.44	4.26	124
Discussion	8.35	3.76	135
Lecture	10.36	10.62	132
Control	7.70	2.26	130
Total	10.38	6.26	521

that the lecture method group is the most heterogenous group while the control group is the most homogenous group. This seems to suggest that the group exposed to reading – writing method performed best followed by the lecture method group and the discussion group respectively. It seems to suggest that the control group is the poorest.

Table 1b shows F calculated for the effect of method on the groups as 41.041 which was significant at 0.05 levels. The implication of this is that there is significant difference in the effects of the method of teaching investigated on the achievements of the students in essay writing Table 1c shows the post hoc analysis on the student achievement after being exposed to treatments. The pair wise comparison of the Reading–writing method group with the discussion method group was found to be significant (mean of difference -7.09) at 0.05 level of significant, while the pair wise comparison of reading-writing method and the control group mean of difference 7.74). The table also shows significant difference between lecture method

group and the control group (Mean of difference 2.66 significant at 0.05 levels). The table shows that those taught with reading-writing method performed better than those taught with discussion and lecture method. This implies that reading –writing is the best method of instruction among the methods investigated.

It was, however, observed that there was no significant difference between the pair wise comparison of discussion method group, the lecture method group and the discussion method and the control group.

The results of the analysis in relation to hypothesis one confirms that the subjects differed significantly on the mean post-test overall achievements according to the instruction given. These findings therefore confirm that reading – writing method had the greatest effect on the overall achievements of students in essay writing. It was also found that the lecture method was more effective than the method used for the control group.

Hypothesis two states that there will be no significant difference between the overall

Table 1b: Summary of ANCOVA of post test overall performance of students in essay writing to methods of instruction. (Reading –writing, discussion, lecture methods and control group)

Source	Type III sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean of square	F	Significant
Corrected model	4777.2199 ^a	4	1194.305	31.704	.000
Intercept	5145.173	1	5145.173	136.583	.000
Overall performance pre test	116.961	1	1546.018	3.105	.079
Group	4638.055	3	37.671	41.041	.000
Error	19438.055	516			
Total	80392.00	521			
Corrected total	24215.225	520			

Table 1c: Post Hoc of multiple range comparison using Scheffe methods dependent variable overall performance of students post test scores

I Groups for study	(j) Groups for study	Mean difference (I-J)	Standard error	Significant	95% Confidence interval	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
Scheffe Reading-writing	Discussion	7.09*	0.76	0	4.94	9.23
	lecture	5.07*	5.07*	0	2.91	7.23
	control	7.74*	7.74	0	5.57	9.90
Discussion	Reading-Writing	-7.09*	0.76	0	-7.23	-4.04
	Lecture	-2.02*	0.77	0.068	-4.13	9.59 E.0:
	Control	0.65	0.77	0.865	1.47	2.77
Lecture	Reading-Writing	-5.07*	0.77	0	.923	-2.91
	Discussion	2.02	0.75	0.068	9.59 E.02	4.13
	Control	2.66*	0.76	0.007	.53	4.80
Control	Reading-writing	-7.74*	0.77	0	-9.9	-5.57
	Discussion	0.65	0.76	0.865	-2.77	1.47
	Lecture	-2.66*	0.76	0.077	-4.8	-0.53

achievements of students from different socio-economic status after being instructed with reading-writing, discussion lecture methods and the control group.

Table 2a reveals that there is no significant difference between the overall achievements of students who come from high and low socio-economic status in the reading-writing method group as reflected by the result of the analysis of the data t-statistics calculated 1.76, table value 1.96

Table 2b shows that there is significant difference between the overall achievements of students from high and low socio-economic status in the discussion method group as reflected by the result of the data – t-statistics calculated 2.10 and table value 1.96.

Table 2c reveals that there is no significant difference between the overall achievements of students from high and low-socio-economic status in the lecture method group as shown from the result of the analysis t calculated is .593 while the table value is 1.96.

Table 2d reveals that there is no significant difference between the overall achievements of students from high and low socio-economic status in the control group as reflected by the result of the data, t-calculated is 1.354 while the table value is 1.96.

The result of the analysis in relation to hypothesis three shows that the reading-writing method of instruction influences the achievement of the students evenly while significant differences were established between students from low and high socio-economic status in the discussion group.

Hypothesis three investigated whether there was significant difference between the interaction effects of methods and socio-economic status on the overall achievement of students after being instructed with reading –writing, discussion, lecture and control group in essay writing.

Table 3a reveals the interaction effects of methods and socio-economic status of students on their overall performance in essay writing. The

Table 2a: Effects of socio-economic status on students' overall achievements in the reading-writing method group

<i>Socio-economic status</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>Degree of freedom</i>	<i>c_{calculated}</i>	<i>t_{able}</i>	<i>Significant.</i>
High socio-economic status reading-writing	56	16.00	3.41	123	1.79	1.96	Significant
Low socio-economic status reading-writing	74	14.96	3.00				

Table 2b: Effects of socio-economic status on students' overall achievements in discussion method group

<i>Socio-economic status</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>Degree of freedom</i>	<i>c_{calculated}</i>	<i>t_{able}</i>	<i>Significant.</i>
High socio-economic status discussion group	58	9.79	3.18	132	2.10	1.96	Significant
Low socio-economic status discussion group	76	8.66	3.03				

Table 2c: Effects of socio-economic status on students' overall achievements on the lecture method group

<i>Socio-Economic Status</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>Degree of freedom</i>	<i>c_{calculated}</i>	<i>t_{able}</i>	<i>Significant.</i>
High socio-economic status lecture	52	10.0	2.81	130	.593	1.96	Not significant
Low socio-economic status lecture	74	14.96	3.00				

Table 2d: Effects of socio-economic status on students' overall achievement in the control group

<i>Socio-Economic Status</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>Degree of freedom</i>	<i>c_{calculated}</i>	<i>t_{able}</i>	<i>Significant.</i>
High socio-economic status control group	55	7.91	1.38	128	1.354	1.96	Not significant
Low socio-economic status control group	75	8.27	1.58				

table seems to reveal that the students from high socio-economic status from the reading-writing method group has the highest mean score of 16.00 followed by students from low socio-economic status in the reading –writing method with a mean

score of 14.95, students from high and low socio-economic status in the lecture method have mean score of 10.00 and 10.28 respectively which are slightly above the mean scores of students from high and low socio-economic in discussion group status which recorded mean score of 9.79 and 8.66 respectively. Also students from high and low socio-economic status in the control group recorded mean scores of 7.91 and 8.29 respectively. These were found to be lowest mean scores of the students in the experimental group.

On the whole, only students from the high and low socio-economic status in the reading-writing method group have the highest total mean score of 15.38. This seems to suggest that the students in the reading-writing group have the best performance.

Table 3b shows the interaction effects of socio-economic status of students and methods on their overall achievements in essay writing. The 2 ways ANOVA indicates that there was a significant difference in the interaction effects of methods and socio-economic status of students

Table 3a: Interaction effects of methods and socio-economic status (SES) on students’ overall performance in essay writing.

Method status	Socio-economic	Mean deviation	Standard	N
Reading Writing	High	16.00	3.41	50
	Low	14.96	3.00	74
	Total	15.38	3.20	124
Discussion	High	9.79	3.18	58
	Low	8.68	3.03	76
	Total	9.15	3.13	136
Lecture	High	10.00	2.81	52
	Low	10.28	2.93	80
	Total	10.17	2.87	132
Control	High	7.91	1.38	55
	Low	8.29	1.54	75
	Total	8.13	1.48	130
Total	High	10.80	4.08	215
	Low	10.52	3.76	305
	Total	10.64	3.86	520

Table 3b: Summary of 2-way ANOVA of interaction effect of socio-economic status (SES) and methods on students overall achievements in essay writing

Source	Type III Sum of square	Degree of freedom	Mean square	F	Significant.
Model	62.864.457a	8	7858.06	1044.6	0
METHOD	3908.75	3	1302.92	173.202	0
SOCIOSTA	18.086	1	18086	2.404	0.122
METHOD*	63.833	3	21.278	2.829	0.038
Error	3851.54	512	7.523		
Total	66716	520			

Table 3c: Post HOC tests of multiple comparison of interaction of effects methods and socio-economic status (SES) on students’ overall performance in essay writing.

(I) Method (J) Method	95% Confidence interval				
	Mean difference (I-J)	Standard error	Significant	Lower bound	Upper bound
<i>Reading Writing</i>					
Discussion	6.23*	0.34	0	5.27	7.19
Lecture	5.21*	0.34	0	4.25	6.17
Control	7.25*	0.34	0	6.28	8.21
<i>Discussion</i>					
Reading Writing	-6.23*	0.34	0	-7.19	-5.27
Lecture	-1.02*	0.34	0	-1.96	-7.40E-02
Control	1.02*	0.34	0	7.15E-02	1.97
<i>Lecture</i>					
Reading Writing	-5.21*	0.34	0	-6.17	-4.25
Discussion	1.02*	0.34	0	7.40E-02	1.96
Control	2.04*	0.34	0	1.09	2.99
<i>Control</i>					
Reading Writing	-7.25*	0.34	0	-8.21	-6.28
Discussion	-1.02*	0.34	0	-1.97	-7.15E-02
Lecture	-2.04*	0.34	0	-2.99	-1.09

on the overall achievement of students in essay writing as indicated by the result of the analysis F test 2.829. Significant at 0.38 level.

The null hypothesis was rejected. The table further revealed that the effect of methods of teaching on students from different socio-economic status on the overall achievements according to the group high and low socio-economic status was significant at 0.00 level.

The table 3c shows that there was a significant difference in the socio-economic status of the students F test 2.404 significant at .122.

The result of the post hoc analysis shows that all the students in the experimental group performed better than the control group. The students from high socio-economic background in the reading-writing method group have the best performance. The table 3c also show that the interaction effects of methods and socio-economic status were significant. This means that the methods have different effects on the performance of the students from different socio-economic background.

It is observed from Figure 1 that there was an interaction effect between students from high and low socio-economic status in the lecture group. This implies that the lecture group is capable of taking care of students from high and low socio economic background . It is further concluded that other experimental methods give room for disparity between students from low and high socio-economic status. Therefore, lecture method seems to be best method to teach students from different socio-economic status.

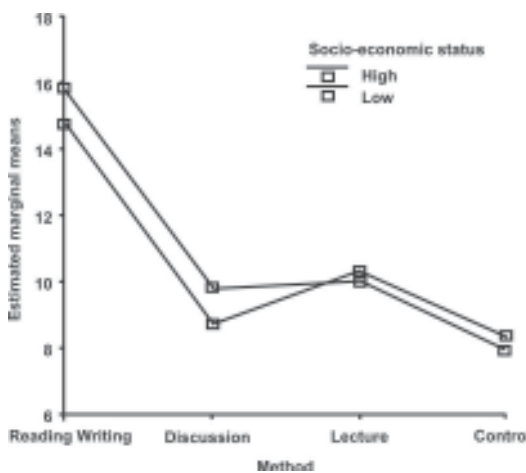


Fig. 1. Estimated marginal means of overall performance

Hypothesis one aimed at establishing whether there was any significant difference in the overall performance of students in all the dependent variables content, organisation, expression and mechanical accuracy in essay writing. The findings of this study, Tables 1a, 1b, 1c show that students taught with reading-writing methods performed better than other students taught with other methods as well as the control group. The study showed that there was significant difference in the overall achievement of the students exposed to treatments in favour of reading-writing group. On the whole, the study showed that two of the methods, namely reading-writing and lecture methods combined with a package of linguistic input had significant effects on the control group which is an indication that they were effective for the teaching of essay writing to the senior secondary school students. Reading-writing method combined with linguistic package designed for the study was found to be more effective than the lecture and discussion methods as well as the control group. The finding corroborates the findings of Iyagba (1993), Oyinloye (2005) who found that discussion method was least effective because it was discovered that students taught with discussion method could not write good grammar like their colleagues in the reading-writing and discussion groups. The findings of Kolawole (1998) that discussion method was better than lecture method contradicts the findings of Iyagba (1993) and Oyinloye (2005) who found that discussion method was not as effective as lecture and reading-writing methods because it cannot lead students to have more gains in sentence construction. This study also supports the findings of Lincon (1993) that students who were exposed to relevant reading materials had better experience and knowledge of the topic they had read because reading stimulates reactions from the readers.

Students' socio-economic status was considered as a very important factor that could influence the students' overall achievement in essay writing. The study revealed that the socio-economic status had no significant influence on the students from low and high socio-economic backgrounds in the reading-writing and lecture methods. The study further shows that the socio-economic status has different influence on the students from low and high economic status in the discussion method group.

The implication of these findings is that

reading-writing and lecture method are good for the teaching of essay to students from low and high socio-economic groups while discussion method was found to be unsuitable for the teaching of essay to students from low and high economic status.

The study further shows that the methods of teaching have interaction effects on the achievement of the students. It proves that lecture method combined with linguistic inputs seems to be the best method to teach students from both low and high socio-economic status even though, the students' achievements were not as high as those from the reading-writing group.

CONCLUSION

As a result of the findings from the study, it was concluded that the combination of reading-writing method with packages of linguistic inputs is the best method for teaching students to have high gains in essay writing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study show that the reading-writing method had greatest advantages over the other methods of teaching examined in the study. As a result of this, it is recommended that language teachers should take the advantage of the combination of the package of linguistic inputs and reading-writing methods to teach their students in large classes and from different socio-economic status. Teachers should also take cognisance of the students' socio-economic status.

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