

The Multifarious Import of Recursive Peer-Editing on Expression and Mechanics among English as a Second Language Writers

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ABSTRACT: This research work examines the Multifarious Import of Recursive Peer-Editing on Expression and Mechanics among English as a Second Language Writers. The purpose is to find out the implications of subjecting students' essay work to constant editing by peer-editors, teacher and the writer. The study employs the pre-test post-test control quasi-experimental research design. The sample consists of 80 senior secondary school final year students. One instrument is used to gather data. The West African Examinations Council's (WAEC) English Language Essay Questions. The data generated are subjected to statistical analysis and the results of the analysis shows that there is no significant difference between the pre-test scores of both the control and the experimental group hence at take-off the two group homogeneity is established. There is significant difference in the post-test scores of the experimental and the control group. Treatment has significant effect on expression and writing mechanics. There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the students in the control group. As evident from the out-come of the research, the use of recursive editing has significant effect on students' expression and mechanics in essay writing. Therefore, the inclusion of recursive editing is recommended for writing skill development at this level.

KEYWORD: *Editing, Second language, Interference, Grammar, Peer-review*

I. INTRODUCTION

For English as a Second Language writers, the process of writing in an academic environment is challenging; this becomes conspicuous as a result of the processing of what to write from the First Language platform of writing, thus writing in English remains a herculean task for students who learn English as a second language, (Akinwamide 2008). Some ESL students' social and cultural background are at variant with the cultural background of English Language, hence students experience difficulties with form, morphology, vocabulary and syntax that are different in English and their native language. It has been observed that, students generally do not see any difference between their spoken English and written English. For example, ESL students often find it clumsy to connect subordinate sentences with conjunctions such as "because" or "although" to form longer sentences because in speaking, they use short sentences connected by conjunctions such as "and" and "or" in the presentation of the message before the audience. The errors committed in spoken form are easily noticeable in the written form where the errors are graphically laid bare.

There are certain morphological orientations in English Language that are also at variant with many of the native languages in Nigeria. For example, Yoruba Language which is one of the major languages spoken in Nigeria employs post modification in morphological build-up, eg;

<u>Yoruba Language (post-modification)</u>	<u>English Language (Pre-modification)</u>
Ogede dudu	Unripe Plantain
Epo pupa	Red Oil
Omo rere	Good Child

With this background, concerted effort is demanded of the teachers and learners in teaching and learning of these grammatical variations before competence can be achieved in writing in a second language.

Nunan (2000) says that, learning to write is the most difficult of the macro - skills for all language users regardless of whether the language in question is first, second or foreign language. This is in line with the previous views of Bell and Burnaby (1984) who believed that writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously.

Statement of the Problem

The annual complaints about the unwholesomeness of final year performance in English Language is a strong factor prompting academic researches in the bid to removing the jinx inherent in good performance in English as

a second language. To this focus, the researcher is on the lookout for the plausible effects of recursive editing on the writers and their writings.

Research Questions

- Would there be any difference between the pre-test scores of students in the Control and Experimental groups?
- Would there be any difference between post-test scores of the students in the Control and Experimental groups on Expression?
- Would there be any difference between post-test scores of the students in the Control and Experimental groups on Mechanical-Accuracy?
- Would there be any difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the students in the Control group?

II. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

In order to answer the questions raised on this study, the following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H0₁ There would be no significant difference between the pre-test scores of the students in the Control and Experimental groups.

H0₂ There would be no significant difference between post-test scores of the students in the Control and Experimental groups on Expression

H0₃ Treatment would have no significant difference between post-test scores of the students in the Control and Experimental groups on Mechanical-Accuracy .

H0₄ There would be no significant difference between the Pre-test and Post-test scores of the students in the Control group.

Scope of the Study

The study covered two states in southwest Nigeria. The states are Ekiti and Ondo where Yoruba Language is predominantly spoken. All the students studied English as a second language. The sampled schools are in the respective state capitals. The English-Language teachers and students from the two schools operate the same syllabus as recommended by the West African Examination Council (WAEC).

Research Design

The pre-test, post-test, control, two-group-quasi- experimental design was used for this study. This allowed the application of treatment on the experimental group and comparison with the control group.

Diagram of the Design

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experiment	O ₁	X	O ₂
Control	O ₃		O ₄

Where O₁ means first observation for experimental group.

O₃ means first observation for control group.

X means treatment for experimental group. (treatment is the Free Expression Method)

O₂ means second observation for experimental group.

O₄ means second observation for control group.

Population

The population of this study was made up of all the final year students of Ekiti and Ondo States Public Senior Secondary Schools. The two states belong to the Yoruba speaking people of Nigeria. Ekiti State capital city is Ado-Ekiti while Ondo state capital city is Akure. All the public schools in both states have been presenting students for the Senior School Certificate Examinations. All the schools used the Federal Ministry of Education English-Language Curriculum. They were also familiar with both NECO and WAEC Syllabi.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The Sample for this study comprised 80 students selected into the experimental and control groups. Cluster sampling technique was employed to select two states. These are Ekiti and Ondo states. Two schools were purposively selected from Ekiti and Ondo States public secondary schools that were of comparable standards.

Research Instrument

One instrument was used to collect data for this study. The instrument was the Essay Writing Achievement Test (EWAT). This was an adapted WAEC Essay Writing past questions. The test was designed to cover those topics on which the pre-test and post-test observations were based. This instrument is of national and international status and currently in use by the two examination bodies. It has been standardized and is employed by teachers of English for grading School Certificate Examinations and General Certificate Ordinary Level Examinations.

Validity of the Instruments:

For face, content analysis and editing, the instruments were given to experts in the field of Measurement and Evaluation, Language Testing Experts critical appraisal before administration. The main instrument is of international standard and so its credibility and validity could be sustained and guaranteed.

Construct Validity

In ascertaining the construct validity of this instrument, a trial testing of the instrument was carried out on two groups of students and the results compared. A high validity coefficient of 0.93 was obtained.

Reliability of Instruments:

The reliability coefficient was established before administration using the test retest method. In doing this, the instrument was personally administered to 80 students on two occasions in Ado Ekiti and after two weeks the same test was administered on the same respondents. The Pearson product moment correlation was used to determine the coefficient (r) 0.93

Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher first observed the two groups (Pre-test) after which the experimental group was treated by giving them writing tasks and subjected the students to multiple peer editing. The experimental group was allowed to do collective correction before rewriting again. The students in the control group were not exposed to any treatment. The researcher observed all the groups again for post-test. The students' essay work for pre-test and post-test were scored and the result subjected to statistical analysis.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

All hypotheses generated were tested with t-test and the decision was taken at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the pre-test scores of students in the Control and Experimental groups

Table 1: The t-test analysis on the pre-test scores of the Control and Experimental groups for all the variables.

Variables	Groups	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-table
Expression	Control	40	2.45	1.04	78	0.206	1.980
	Experimental	40	2.50	1.13			
Mechanic/Accuracy	Control	40	1.43	0.84			
	Experimental	40	1.45	0.78		0.37	

$P > 0.05$ N = 80 df = 78

Table 1 above shows that t-cal (0.130, 0.653, 0.206, 0.137) was less than t-table (1.980) in each of the variables at 0.05 level of significance. The mean scores of the Control group bear no significant difference with the mean scores of the Experimental group. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected. That is, there is no significant difference between the pre-test scores of students in both control and experimental groups. This established the homogeneity of the two groups.

There is no significant difference between post-test scores of the students in the Control and Experimental groups on Expression

Table 2 The t-test analysis of post-test scores of Control and Experimental groups on Expression.

	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-table
Control	40	2.63	1.15	78	16.405	1.980
Experimental	40	9.78	2.51			

$p < 0.05$, N = 80, df = 78

In the above table, the t-calculated (16.405) is greater than the t-table (1.980) hence the null hypothesis is rejected. The implication of this is that, there is significant difference in the post-test scores of the Control and Experimental groups. The Experimental group has a mean score of 9.78 which is significantly greater than 2.63 the mean score for the Control group. Therefore, the Experimental group performance is better in Expression than the Control group.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between post-test scores of the students in the Control and Experimental groups on Mechanical-Accuracy.

Table 3: The t-test analysis of post-test scores of Control and Experimental groups on Mechanical-Accuracy.

Groups	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t-cal	t-table
Control	40	1.28	0.70	78	11.659	1.980
Experimental	40	4.05	1.33			

$P < 0.05$, N = 80, df = 78

From the table above, the mean score 4.05 for Experimental group is significantly greater than the mean score 1.28 for Control group which indicates better performance of the Experimental group in the applications of the appropriate Language Mechanics in Essay-Writing. According to the table also, the t-calculated (11.659) is significantly greater than the t-table value (1.980) hence, the null- hypothesis is rejected.

H0₄: There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the students in the Control group.

Table 4: The t-test analysis on the pre-test and post-test scores of the students in the Control group

Variable	Test- Type	\bar{X}	SD	t-cal	t-table	Df	N
Expression	Pre-test	2.45	1.04	0.746	2.021	39	40
	Post-test	2.63	1.15				
Mech./Accuracy	Pre-test	1.43	0.84	1.138			
	Post-test	1.28	0.70				

$P > 0.05$

In the table above, the mean difference between pre-test and post-test scores in each of the variables is not significant. The table also shows t-calculated less than t-table at 0.05 level of significance; hence, the hypothesis is accepted. The implication of the above is that the students in the control group has no significant improvement in the pre-test and post-test. No matter how long an inappropriate approach is employed, desirable results will be elusive.

IV. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed a wide range of different performance as evident in the students' scores. The effects of the treatment on the Experimental group sparked off a notable significant difference between the Control and the Experimental groups. At take-off, there was no significant difference between the pre-test scores of the students in the Experimental and Control groups as evident in table one. This displayed the homogeneity of the two groups. This was in line with the general out-cry of the nation about the mass failure recorded yearly in this subject. In addition, the homogeneity of the two groups gives credence to balanced take-off for experimental study and justifiable comparison of the findings.

The importance of the editing stage cannot be over emphasized. This allows interventions in students' writings at any stage. Trupe (2001) says, effective intervention results in better papers. Students who are asked or required to spend more time on a paper will think more about their topic, retain more information, and develop more powerful insights. Furthermore, students' writing skills need practice in order to perfect the expression. On the other hand, the Control group which was not exposed to the treatment given to the Experimental group maintained a non-significant variation in the mean scores at pre-test and post-test levels in the test for Expression and Writing Mechanics.

Recommendations

Peer-editing and collaborative writing make the final draft a more refined work. The application of recursive editing as the treatment on the Experimental group warranted the greater mean scores on the variables of Expression and Writing Mechanics when juxtaposed with the Control group hence, the following recommendations are made.

1. Textbook authors should look for ways of including editing drills in their books
2. Language teachers should facilitate the act of peer-editing in language class
3. More time should be given to language lesson.

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