

Improving Secondary School Students' Achievement In English Essay Writing Using Two Modes Of Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategies

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Abstract

Writing is a tool for communication and learning. However, students' performance in essay writing in Nigeria has been poor. This under-achievement has been traced to ineffective methods and strategies. Literature reveals that most studies focused on innovative ways to improve students' achievement in essay writing without attention to essay structure-based instructional strategies. This study, therefore, determined the effects of two modes of Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategies (ESBIS) on students' achievement in argumentative and expository (cause/effect) essays. The moderating effects of vocabulary knowledge and attitude to essay writing were also examined. The study adopted a pretest-posttest, control group, quasi-experimental design using a 3x2x3 factorial matrix. Two Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Benin City were randomly selected. Three public secondary schools from each LGA were purposively selected while two intact SS II classes were randomly assigned to each of the treatment and control groups. The instruments used include: Achievement Tests in Argumentative ($r=.79$) and Expository Essays ($r=.80$), Vocabulary Knowledge Test ($r=.83$), Questionnaire on Students' Attitude to Essay Writing ($r=.73$). Data were analysed using ANCOVA and Bonferroni post-hoc test at 0.05 alpha level. There was significant main effect of treatment on students' achievement in each of argumentative ($F_{(2, 284)} = 9.78; \eta^2 = .064$) and expository ($F_{(2, 284)} = 55.26; \eta^2 = .28$) essays and in both combined ($F_{(2, 284)} = 4.80; \eta^2 = .033$). The two-way interaction effect of treatment and the moderator variables on students' achievement in each of argumentative and expository essays as well as in both combined was not significant.

Keywords: Essay structure-based instructional strategy; Attitude to essay writing; Vocabulary knowledge; Achievement in essay writing

Background to the Study

Communication is the bedrock of human relation. It is indispensable to human existence for man is a social animal. In order to participate effectively in any communicative act, an individual must know and use correctly the rules guiding such an act. The principal instrument with which people communicate is language. This therefore implies that a person has to be proficient in the language of communication if meaning is to be effectively conveyed. To be truly proficient in a language, competence in the four skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing – is important. Listening and speaking are referred to as oracy skills, while reading and writing are the literacy skills. However, of the four language skills, writing is probably the most difficult because it requires the application of knowledge of the other three skills. It is also a complex skill that is not naturally acquired; it is usually learned in formal education settings.

Writing is an essential tool for personal and professional growth of humans. Perhaps, of greater importance, is the pivotal role writing plays in academic settings. Progress in school is dependent on learners developing a satisfactory degree of writing proficiency and fluency (Graham and Perin, 2007; Stucky, Kirkwood and Donders, 2014; Cummings and Petscher, 2015). Teachers primarily assess students' performance through writing (Grigorenko, Mambrino and Preiss, 2012). A student cannot graduate from school without taking written examinations, continuous assessment tests, writing assignments, and engaging in note taking activities in class. Writing is also an adaptable means of evaluating students' knowledge and academic capability on high-stakes educational assessments (Foster, 2006; Hinchcliff, 2009; Levstik and Barton, 2015). One of such high stakes examinations is the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) for students exiting the secondary level of education in Nigeria. It is conducted by examining bodies such as the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and The National Examinations Council (NECO).

The subject in which the writing skill is tested in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations is English Language. The subject is compulsory and candidates are required to obtain at least a credit pass in it in order to gain admission into any institution of higher learning in Nigeria. In order to do this, candidates must possess good writing abilities. This is because the part (Paper 1) of the WAEC examination requiring a direct application of writing skills carries the highest marks – 120 marks (60%) out of a total of 200 marks for the whole paper which includes Papers 2 and 3. Paper 1 is further divided into three sections – A (Essay Writing = 50 marks), B (Comprehension = 40 marks), and C (Summary = 30 marks). In all, the essay writing section carries the most marks in Paper 1 (41.7%). The essay writing section demands the following kinds of writing – letter, speech, narration, description, debate/argumentation, report, article, exposition and creative writing (WAEC, 2014).

However, as important as the ability to write well is to students' academic life generally and success in the English Language examination specifically, research has shown that students are generally poor in written English (Oladunjoye, 2005; Asokhia, 2009; Ezeokoli & Ezenandu, 2013; Ogunyemi, 2014). Adedeji (2008) observes that the level of educational achievement in terms of competence in written English in Nigerian schools has been quite low. The various Chief Examiners' Reports of WAEC have

consistently shown that students' performance in writing has been poor (WAEC, 2007-2013). For example, the 2009 report reveals that candidates' weaknesses include, among others, students' unfamiliarity with the written word. In spite of the fact that deliberate attempts are made to give candidates tests within their experience and capabilities, it has been noted that most of them fail to show an understanding of the requirements of the questions they attempt and their essays are dominated by errors of grammar/poor expression, spelling and punctuation and wrong amalgamation (WAEC, 2007-2012).

Several reasons have been given as causes of the poor performance of students in essay writing. However, as Ahmad (2008) notes, success in teaching in the classroom lies in teachers' hands because they are responsible for stimulating students' interest and in directing the mood and flow of the class. Thus, a major cause of students' underachievement in essay writing is that of poor methodology. Teachers of writing usually adopt ineffective methods and strategies in class. For example, teachers tend to adopt the lecture method which does not require much from them other than the presentation of the lecture over the duration of the period allotted to English Language on the school time table. This situation supports Kolawole's (1998) survey which found the lecture method to be the dominant method of teaching in Oyo State. Similarly, Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu's (2006) study in Benin City reveals that English Language teachers in public secondary schools in Nigeria still depend heavily on the traditional lecture method in English lessons.

Similarly, the content of writing lessons seems to be deficient. According to Hyland (1990), EFL/ESL students face difficulties when asked to produce a piece of writing often due to inadequate understanding of how texts are organised. In order to facilitate effective writing therefore, teachers have to familiarise students with the rhetorical structures which are an important part of the meanings of texts. While content knowledge is important in essay writing, it is not sufficient. Students must know how to organise the content to meet the writing task (Meyer and Poon, 2001). However, teachers tend to focus more on the content of essays without paying due attention to text organisation; students are rarely helped to understand the underlying structure of particular essay types (Steele, 2004). This underscores the need for this study.

Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy (ESBIS) is based on the notion that the structure of a text contributes significantly to the realisation of the meanings it contains and that a clarification of this structure can be an important pedagogical resource (Reynolds and Miller, 2003). To that end, ESBIS explicitly teaches text structures, providing a guide for the writing task, whether it is a persuasive/argumentative, narrative, descriptive or expository writing (Gersten, Baker and Edwards, 1999). It typically includes numerous explicit models and prompts aimed at helping learners master the text structure being taught. In essence, Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy makes text structure more explicit and "visible to students and helps to demystify the writing process" (Gersten et al., 1999, p. 4). In this study, two modes of ESBIS are employed: Argumentative ESBIS which focuses on the

structure of the argumentative essay and Expository ESBIS which deals with the structure of the expository essay. The following paragraphs provide a justification for the choice of these two essay types.

Argumentation, according to Eemeren, Grootendorst and Henkemans (1996, p.5), “is a verbal and social activity of reason aimed at increasing (or decreasing) the acceptability of a controversial standpoint for the listener or reader, by putting forward *a constellation of propositions* intended to justify (or refute) the standpoint before a rational judge”. Students’ written arguments have been found to be usually shorter and less developed compared to narrative and expository writings (Applebee, Langer, Mullis, Latham and Gentile, 1994). According to Ferretti, Lewis and Andrews-Weckerly (2009), students’ argumentative essays rarely concede opposing positions, take into account the merits of different views, or attempt to systematically incorporate or refute alternative views. These may be due, perhaps, to the neglect of the teaching of argumentative writing. Crowhurst (1990) observes that students have little opportunity for argumentative writing although such a mode is demanded in higher education.

Consequently, in examinations, students prefer answering questions other than those requiring argumentation. For example, the WAEC Chief Examiner’s Reports have frequently shown that students prefer answering questions on letter writing (formal and informal) and narration in contrast to argumentative writing which attracts few attempts that are largely unsatisfactory (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012). Based on these reports, it is likely that students perceive these essay types as easier even though their performance does not justify that. It is also possible that teachers concentrate more on these essay types, believing that students will find them easier coupled with the fact that they always feature in every examination. This situation echoes Graham and Perin’s (2007) observation that in spite of the real-world need for flexibility in writing skill, classroom instruction sometimes over-emphasises certain forms of writing over others. Hence, there is an urgent need to create interventions aimed at remedying students’ aversion to and poor performance in argumentative writing.

In addition to argumentative writing, students find it difficult to write expository essays. According to Spenser (2005), the expository essay is the one which is used to explain or give information about a topic. It gives facts, explains ideas, or defines conditions. Most of the writing engaged in by adults such as taking notes, jotting phone messages, composing business letters, and others are expository in nature (Mariconda, 2001). Despite its centrality to everyday writing tasks, expository writing is often neglected in favour of narrative text in the early school years (Duke, 2000). This lack of exposure to expository texts may place students at a disadvantage in their later years of schooling when they are required to produce expository writings. According to Applebee, Langer, Mullis, Latham & Gentile (1994) and Bruning and Horn (2000), students at the secondary and college level often have difficulties with writing expository texts.

The organisational (discourse) structure of an expository essay often follows a logical presentation of ideas (Mora-Flores, 2008) according to different structures. Meyer (1999) gives the

following as types of expository text structures: description, sequence, causation (cause/effect), problem/solution, and compare/contrast. The writer must choose which structure or which structure combinations to use. Each structure presents different writing challenges. This makes expository writing quite complicated. Hence, it has been advocated that expository essay structures be explicitly taught to English learners (ELs); learners “need to understand how to write to inform, different from what they learned about narrative writing” (Mora-Flores, 2008, p. 45). However, this study focuses on the cause/effect text structure. The cause/effect essay explains why an event happened, and what resulted from the event. The essay is a study of relationship between two or more events or experiences. The essay could discuss both causes and effects, or it could simply address one or the other. In other words, the essay may focus on causes only, effects only, or a combination of the two (Cadbury, 2014).

Two factors informed the choice of the cause/effect type of expository essay. First, is the awareness that this type of essay is a necessary skill for effective participation in higher education and in the professions. In other words, it is a type of essay that students would increasingly write when they enter higher institutions and in their professional lives. Second, mounting pressures for improved student standardised test performance (such as in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations) necessitate the need for increased attention to cause/effect exposition. The preceding ten years (2005-2014) have revealed that the cause/effect structure is the most common form of exposition candidates are required to write in the essay section. Put differently, 40% of WAEC’s English Language (Paper 1) content is cause and effect, compared to others such as the problem/solution (10%), sequence/enumeration (8%), compare/contrast (0%) and description (0%). Hence, it is essential to provide students with the tools necessary to develop an understanding of the cause/effect type of text structure. Table 1 presents the types and structures of essay questions asked in the May/June WAEC examinations over the past ten years.

Table 1: Types and Structures of Essay Questions in the May/June WAEC Examinations (2005-2014)

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Essay Type	Structure										
1.IL	Enu	C/E	C/E	C/E	C/E	C/E	Enu	Enu	C/E	C/E	10
2.Article	C/E	P/S	P/S	C/E	Narr	P/S	C/E	C/E	C/E	C/E	10
3.FL	C/E	Enu	C/E	C/E	P/S	C/E	C/E	C/E	P/S	C/E	10
4.Argue	De	De	De	De	De	De	-	De	De	De	10
5.Narr	Narr	Narr	Narr	Narr	Narr	Narr	Narr	Narr	Narr	Narr	10
6.Speech	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mixed	-	-	-	10
Total	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	50

Source: Adapted from WAEC (2005-2014)

KEY

IL = Informal letter FL = Formal letter Narr = Narration C/E = Cause/effect

Enu =Enumeration P/S =Problem/solution De = Debate

Table 2 presents the frequencies of the structures in the WAEC examinations and their percentages.

Table 2: Frequencies and Percentages of the Essay Structures in WAEC May/June Questions(2005-2014)

Structures	Frequency	%
Argumentative (debate)	9	18
Cause/effect	20	40
Enumeration	4	8
Problem/solution	5	10
Mixed	1	2
Narration	11	22
Total	50	100

Source: Adapted from WAEC (2005-2014)

Furthermore, there are variables besides teaching methods and strategies that can influence students’ academic achievement in writing. One of such is students’ vocabulary knowledge. According to Kolawole (1998), students’ problem in essay writing begins from their inability to express themselves. In the process of learning a second language, vocabulary is considered an important component; in writing, it can determine the whole essay length (Pikulski and Templeton, 2004). The importance of vocabulary in L2 writing in formal academic settings requires L2 learners to have a strong linguistic foundation, including a vast range of lexical skills (Flinspach, Scott, and Vevea, 2010). Several studies indicate that language instructors rate the lack of vocabulary knowledge as one of the most serious issues in students’ writing and that L2 learners feel that the quality of their writing is influenced by their lack of vocabulary knowledge (Laufer and Nation, 1995; Hyland, 2003; Deng and Hu, 2007; and Zhou, 2009). Although there are some studies which do not show a positive relationship between vocabulary and writing, a majority of the results support the fact that vocabulary knowledge is one of the important features to influence scores of essays (Pikulski and Templeton, 2004). Hence, this study sought to determine the moderating effect of vocabulary knowledge on students’ achievement in argumentative and expository essays.

In addition to vocabulary knowledge, another variable that can influence academic achievement in writing is students’ attitude to writing. General research on attitudes and learning affirms that attitudes towards writing affect writing quality (Hall, 2014). Reid (1993) posits that one of the most prominent factors affecting students’ success in college composition is the students’ attitude toward their writing

task. In other words, how the students feel and react towards their writing tasks and activities greatly determine the quality of their composition. Studies such as those of Chou (2004), Lin, Liu and Yuan (2006), Merisuo-Storm (2007) and Ismail (2008) indicate that positive attitude to writing leads to better writing achievement. However, there are some studies with contrary findings to the ones earlier presented (Kolawole, 1998; Oden, 1999; Jahin and Idrees, 2012). The inconclusive nature of the findings on the influence of attitude to writing on writing achievement necessitates the use of students' attitude to essay writing as a moderator variable.

Moreover, various studies over the years, have experimented with different methods and strategies aimed at improving students' performance in essay writing in Nigeria. For example, Iyagba (1993) examined which of Reading-Writing and Discussion Strategies on the one hand and Reading-Writing and Discussion Strategies combined could facilitate students' achievement in English essay writing. Kolawole (1998) focused on the relative effectiveness of a package of linguistic inputs on the expression, achievement and attitude of senior secondary school students in essay writing. In the second part of the study, it determined which of Activity, Discussion and Lecture methods was most appropriate for presenting the package. Fakeye (2001) examined the relative effects of instruction in Componential and Rhetorical Strategies on senior secondary school students' achievement in essay writing. Ogunyemi's (2014) focus was on the effect of Implicit Manageable Reactive Focus on Form and Explicit Manageable Reactive Focus on Form on students' learning outcomes in essay writing.

Outside Nigeria, several attempts have also been made. Hammann and Stevens (2003) examined the use of Summarisation Instruction, Text Structure Instruction and a combination of both forms of instruction in improving students' writing of compare/contrast essays. Hasan and Akhand (2010) determined the effects of product and process approaches to writing on learners' performance in writing. Yang (2012) investigated 24 English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learners' progress in composing three different promotional brochures in an 18-week genre-based writing course in an EFL university. A review of these studies on writing reveals that while there are a number of studies on essay writing, a majority of them overlooked the importance of varying the methods used according to essay type. In other words, they looked at essay writing in general with a one-size-fit-all-approach to essay writing. Only two of the studies reviewed focused on a specific essay type. Besides, most of the studies did not take into cognisance the structure of the different essay genres. Those studies which did take cognisance of the different essay genres however, were either restricted to students in institutions of higher learning in an EFL context or to students in an L1 situation. Thus, there is a need to bring into focus more studies dealing with specific essay types according to their structures.

Statement of the Problem

Written communication skills are central to learning. They offer a powerful advantage in a world where people must constantly learn new information, whether in academic, work, or personal life. However, it has been observed that English essay writing is problematic to many students. Teachers tend

to concentrate essay writing instruction on letter writing and narrative genres at the expense of others. In addition, teachers often adopt ineffective methods and strategies of teaching writing which are mostly product-oriented. Although many past studies have focused on the effects of different approaches, methods and strategies on students' achievement in essay writing, only a few have concentrated on teaching essay writing in relation to a specific genre by focusing on their structure. In the Nigerian context, there seems to be a paucity of studies that focused on essay structure in relation to specific genres. Against this background, this study determined the effects of two modes of Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategies on students' achievement in argumentative and expository (cause/effect) English essay writing. It also examined the moderating effects of students' vocabulary knowledge and attitude to essay writing on the dependent measures.

Hypotheses

Based on the stated problem, the following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level:

H₀₁: There is no significant main effect of treatment on students' achievement in

- a. Argumentative essay.
- b. Expository (cause/effect) essay.
- c. Argumentative and expository (cause/effect) essays combined.

H₀₂: There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and students' vocabulary knowledge on their achievement in

- a. Argumentative essay.
- b. Expository (cause/effect) essay.
- c. Argumentative and expository (cause/effect) essays combined.

H₀₃: There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and students' attitude to essay writing on their achievement in

- a. Argumentative essay.
- b. Expository (cause/effect) essay.
- c. Argumentative and expository (cause/effect) essays combined.

Methodology

The study adopted a pretest-posttest, control group quasi-experimental design with a 3 x 2 x 3 factorial matrix for the purpose of data analysis. Three categories of variables were used in the study. The first is the independent variable (the instructional strategy) which was manipulated at three levels: (a) Argumentative Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy (b) Expository Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy (c) Modified Lecture Strategy. The second are the moderator variables (students' vocabulary knowledge varied at three levels – high, medium and low – and students' attitude to essay writing varied at two levels – positive and negative). Thirdly, there are three dependent variables, namely: Students' achievements in argumentative essay writing; students' achievement in expository (cause/effect) essay writing; and students' achievement in argumentative and expository (cause/effect) essay writing combined.

The participants in the study comprised 357 Senior Secondary two students in public secondary schools in Benin City, Edo State. From the five Local Government Areas in Benin City (Egor, Ikpoba-Okha, Oredo, Ovia North and Ovia South), two were randomly selected. Further, six schools, three from each of the two Local Government Areas, were purposively selected. Thereafter, two intact classes, were randomly assigned to each of the treatment and the control groups. The following criteria guided the selection of schools used:

- i. The schools must have professionally qualified (minimum of a B.A. + PGDE or B.Ed degree in English) English Language teachers with at least three years post-qualification teaching experience.
- ii. The schools must have presented candidates for WAEC and/or NECO examinations for at least five years.
- iii. The schools must be far away from each other.
- iv. The schools must be willing to participate in the study.

Twelve instruments were used in the study. They comprise seven response instruments and five stimulus instruments. The response instruments are: (1) Achievement Test in Argumentative Essay Writing (ATAEW) (2) Achievement Test in Expository (cause/effect) Essay Writing (ATEW) (3) Questionnaire on Students' Attitude to Essay Writing (QSAEW) (4) Vocabulary Knowledge Test (VKT) (5) Research Assistants' Assessment Guide (RAAG) (6) Achievement Test in Argumentative and Expository (cause/effect) Essay Writing Marking Guide (ATAEMG) (7) Vocabulary Knowledge Test Marking Guide (VKTMG).

The following constitute the stimulus instruments:

1. Teachers' Instructional Guide for Argumentative Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy
2. Teachers' Instructional Guide for Expository Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy
3. Teachers' Instructional Guides for Modified Lecture strategy in Argumentative and Expository (cause/effect) Essay Writing (TIGMCS)
4. Lesson Notes
5. Students' Participation Guide for Essay Structure-Based Strategy Instruction (SPG)

Four of the measurement instruments are discussed in details in the following paragraphs.

Achievement Test in Argumentative Essay Writing (ATAEW): This is a self-designed instrument. The instrument was used to measure the students' performance before and after treatment. It is a three-item instrument testing students' argumentative writing abilities. The questions are parallel items based on the WAEC and NECO examination questions. The test was scored using the WAEC and NECO analytical method of grading essays viz:

Content = 10; Organisation = 10; Expression = 20; and Mechanical Accuracy = 10. Total = 50

Achievement Test in Expository (Cause/Effect) Essay Writing (ATEW): This is a self-designed instrument. The instrument was used to measure the students' performance before and after treatment. It is a three-item instrument testing students' expository (cause/effect) writing abilities. The questions are parallel items based on the WAEC and NECO examination questions. The test was scored in the same way as the Achievement Test in Argumentative Essay Writing (ATAEW).

Questionnaire on Students' Attitude to Essay Writing (QSAEW): This is a self-designed instrument. The instrument was designed to solicit students' views, beliefs and feelings about essay writing. It is divided into two sections – A and B. Section A covers students' demographic data. Section B, a 33-item modified Likert scale with four options – Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree – solicits information on students' attitude to essay writing. The questionnaire was scored thus: SA = 4; A = 3; D = 2; SA = 1. For negative items, the reverse was the case. The instrument was administered on participants before treatment to determine the effect of attitude to essay writing on achievement in argumentative and expository essays.

Vocabulary Knowledge Test (VKT): This is a self-designed instrument. The Vocabulary Knowledge Test (VKT) was used to measure the students' knowledge of words – meanings, antonyms, synonyms and the context in which some words are used. It is a 44-item instrument made up of three sections – A, B, and C. Section A contains 24 items selected from Laufer and Nations' (1999) "Productive Vocabulary Levels Test" which requires completing missing words based on the context of the sentence. Sections B and C each contains ten parallel WAEC and NECO objective question items dealing with the synonyms and the antonyms of words respectively. The test was scored using the Vocabulary Knowledge Test Scoring Guide (VKTSG). Each question in Section A carries 2.5 marks (a total of 60 marks for the section), while each question in Sections B and C carries 2 marks (a total of 40 marks for both sections). This brings the total marks to 100.

The four measurement instruments were constructed by the researchers and subjected to expert opinions of some lecturers in the field of Language Education and English Language from the Faculties of Arts and Education, University of Ibadan, to read for face and content validity. Thereafter, the instruments were test-run for reliability and co-efficients of .79, .80 and .83 were obtained respectively for the Achievement Tests in Argumentative and Expository Essay Writing and Vocabulary Knowledge Test using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. A reliability co-efficient of .73 was obtained for the Questionnaire on Students' Attitude to Essay Writing using Cronbach's alpha.

Research Procedure

The study was carried out in four stages: (1) Identification of schools and training of research assistants (2) Administration of pretest (3) Treatment and (4) Administration of posttests

During the treatment stage, the experimental and control groups (each comprising two intact classes of senior secondary school two students) were exposed to different instructional strategies for eight weeks. In

addition, the three treatment groups were exposed to instruction in both essay genres (argumentative and expository) with instruction in only one essay genre constituting treatment. The other essay genre was taught in each group as each teacher saw fit.

Experimental Group I (Argumentative ESBIS)

This experimental group was exposed to Argumentative ESBIS using the following steps:

- Step 1:** Teacher gets students to engage in oral debate using a familiar controversial topic (e.g. doctors are more important than teachers).
- Step 2:** A sample argumentative essay is presented to the students and their attention is drawn to the structure (thesis, argument and conclusion) of an argument which the teacher discusses with the students using the following questions:
1. What is the purpose of this essay?
 2. What tells you what the essay is about?
 3. What position or stand has been taken by the writer?
 4. Does the writer support his/her stand? How?
 5. How is the essay concluded?
- Step 3:** Teacher analyses the communicative activities possible in the Thesis stage of an argumentative essay.
- Step 4:** Students provide their own written examples of the moves taught.
- Step 5:** Students identify in oral form, the communicative activities (moves) used in the sample essays.
- Step 6:** Students identify some topics for argumentation and they are written on the chalkboard.
- Step 7:** In groups of seven, students choose any of the topics identified and orally present to the whole class, arguments for or against their chosen topics.
- Step 8:** Students write their individual Thesis paragraphs for their chosen topic.
- Step 9 (Evaluation):** Students revise their written work and correct grammatical errors under the teacher's guidance. (Teacher briefly dwells on an identified grammatical problem in students' writing).
- Step 10 (Conclusion):** Teacher summarises the lesson by means of questions and has students submit their written work.
- Step 11 (Assignment):** Students are given an assignment to help them prepare for the next lesson.

Experimental Group II (Expository ESBIS)

This experimental group was exposed to Expository ESBIS using the following steps:

- Step 1:** Students are led by the teacher in a discussion of the causes of road accidents as depicted on the chart on the whiteboard.
- Step 2:** Teacher shows students the diagrammatic structure of the cause/effect essay.
- Step 3:** Teacher analyses the use of the moves in the Thesis stage of the cause/effect essay.
- Step 4:** Teacher models the use of some of the moves in the Thesis Stage of the cause/effect essay.

Step 5: Students orally provide their own examples of each of the communicative activities in the Thesis stage of the cause/effect essay.

Step 6: Students choose a topic and identify its causes and/or effects.

Step 7: Teacher models the use of the moves in the Discussion Stage of the cause/effect essay.

Step 8: Students discuss the causes or effects of the topic following the moves modeled by the teacher.

Step 9: Teacher models the use of the various moves in the Conclusion Stage of the cause/effect essay.

Step 10: Students orally provide their own examples.

Step 11 (Evaluation): Students compose their individual essays using the moves learnt under the teacher's guidance.

Step 12 (Conclusion): Teacher summarises the lesson by means of questions and has students submit their compositions.

Step 13 (Assignment): Students are given an assignment to get them prepared for the next lesson on composition writing.

Control Group (Modified Lecture Strategy)

In this group, one of the classes was exposed to argumentative essay writing while the other was exposed to expository essay writing using the Modified Lecture Strategy which is typical of the conventional classroom. The following steps were used:

Step 1: Students are required to express their views on given controversial topics.

Step 2: Teacher writes the new topic on the chalkboard.

Step 3: Students are given guidelines for writing the argumentative essay by the teacher.

Step 4: Teacher asks the students to make contribution to the selected topic for argumentation.

Step 5: Students are given the opportunity to ask questions.

Step 6: Teacher gives notes on the topic taught.

Step 7 (Evaluation): Students are asked to write their own essays on the topic explained.

Step 8 (Assignment): Teacher asks the students to complete their essays at home.

The same steps were followed for instruction in expository (cause/effect) essay writing with modifications to reflect the expository (cause/effect) essay.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) and Bonferroni post-hoc analysis. All hypotheses were tested at .05 alpha level.

Results

The results are presented in the order of the hypotheses formulated.

H₀₁ (a): There is no significant main effect of treatment on students' achievement in argumentative essay.

In order to test this hypothesis, the Analysis of Covariance was computed. The summary is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of ANCOVA of Posttest Achievement Scores of Participants in Argumentative Essay by Treatment, Attitude and Vocabulary Knowledge

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	8376.853 ^a	18	465.381	3.532	.000	.183
Intercept	1745.615	1	1745.615	13.248	.000	.045
PRE_ARG	3543.898	1	3543.898	26.896	.000	.087
TREATMENT	2577.228	2	1288.614	9.780	.000*	.064
TREATMENT * ATTITUDE	94.756	2	47.378	.360	.698	.003
TREATMENT * VOCABULARY	226.038	4	56.510	.429	.788	.006
Error	37420.084	284	131.761			
Total	105887.000	303				
Corrected Total	45796.937	302				

* Significant at $p < .05$

Table 3 shows that there is significant main effect of treatment on students’ achievement in argumentative essay ($F_{(2, 284)} = 9.780$; $p < .05$; $\eta^2 = .064$). This implies that the posttest argumentative essay scores of students in the Argumentative Essay Structure-Based group differ significantly from Treatment II and control. Therefore, hypothesis 1 (a) is rejected. In order to determine the group with the highest mean score, the Estimated Marginal Means were computed and are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Estimated Marginal Means for the Treatment and Control Groups

Treatment Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Treatment I (Argumentative)	18.55	1.252	16.085	21.012
Treatment II (Expository)	11.25	1.297	8.676	13.781
Control	12.26	1.233	9.834	14.688

Results on Table 4 show that the Argumentative Essay Structure-Based Group had the highest mean score (\bar{X} = 18.55) followed by the Modified Lecture Strategy Group(\bar{X} = 12.26) and the Expository Essay Structure-Based Group (\bar{X} = 11.25) respectively. This implies that students exposed to Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy for Argumentative Essay performed better than those exposed to the Modified Lecture Strategy and the Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy for Expository Essay respectively. Further, the sources of the significant effect of treatment on achievement in argumentative essay were traced using BonferroniPost-hoc test as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Bonferroni Post-hoc Analysis of Treatment Effect on Students’ Achievement in Argumentative Essay

Group	N	Mean	Expository	Control	Argumentative
Expository(Treatment II)	120	11.25			
Control	119	12.26			
Argumentative (Treatment I)	118	18.55	*	*	

*Pairs of groups significantly different at $p < .05$

Table 5 shows that students’ posttest achievement mean scores of the Argumentative Essay-Structure Based group (Treatment I; \bar{X} = 18.55) is significantly different from those of the Modified Lecture Strategy (Control; \bar{X} = 12.26) and the Expository Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy (Treatment II; \bar{X} = 11.25). This implies that the Argumentative Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy is the only significantly different group and the most effective in enhancing students’ achievement in argumentative essay.

H_{01 (b)}: There is no significant main effect of treatment on students’ achievement in expository essay.

Table 6: Summary of ANCOVA of Posttest Achievement Scores of Participants in Expository Essay by Treatment, Attitude and Vocabulary Knowledge

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	2665.540 ^a	18	148.086	9.782	.000	.383
Intercept	7381.547	1	7381.547	487.594	.000	.632
PRE_EXPO	271.564	1	271.564	17.938	.000	.059
TREATMENT	1673.093	2	836.546	55.259	.000*	.280
TREATMENT * ATTITUDE	18.242	2	9.121	.602	.548	.004
TREATMENT *	64.588	4	16.147	1.067	.373	.015

VOCABULARY						
Error	4299.397	284	15.139			
Total	58824.000	303				
Corrected Total	6964.937	302				

* Significant at $p < .05$

Table 6 shows that there is significant main effect of treatment on students’ achievement in expository essay ($F_{(2, 284)} = 55.259$; $p < .05$; $\eta^2 = .280$). This implies that the posttest expository essay scores of students in the Expository Essay Structure-Based Group differ significantly from Treatment I and control groups. Therefore, hypothesis 1 (b) is rejected. In order to determine the group with the highest mean score, the Estimated Marginal Means were computed and are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Estimated Marginal Means for the Treatment and Control Groups

Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Argumentative (Treatment I)	11.22	.419	10.399	12.049
Expository (Treatment II)	16.89	.440	16.022	17.756
Control	11.41	.409	10.604	12.216

Results on Table 7 show that the Expository Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy Group had the highest mean score ($\bar{X} = 16.89$) followed by the Modified Lecture Strategy Group ($\bar{X} = 11.41$) and the Argumentative Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy Group ($\bar{X} = 11.22$) respectively. This implies that students exposed to Expository Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy performed better than those exposed to the Modified Lecture Strategy and the Argumentative Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy respectively. Further, the sources of the significant effect of treatment on achievement in expository essay were traced using Bonferroni Post-hoc analysis as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Bonferroni Post-hoc Analysis of Treatment Effect on Students’ Achievement in Expository Essay

Group	N	Mean	Argumentative	Control	Expository
Argumentative (Treatment I)	118	11.22			
Control	119	11.41			
Expository (Treatment II)	120	16.89	*	*	

*Pairs of groups significantly different at $p < .05$

Table 8 shows that students’ posttest achievement mean scores of the Expository Essay-Structure Based group (Treatment II; \bar{X} = 16.89) is significantly different from those of the Modified Lecture Strategy (Control; \bar{X} = 11.41) and the Argumentative Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy (Treatment II; \bar{X} = 11.22). This implies that the Expository Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy is the only significantly different group and the most effective in enhancing students’ achievement in expository essay.

H_{01(c)}: There is no significant main effect of treatment on students’ achievement in argumentative and expository essays combined.

Table 9: Summary of ANCOVA of Posttest Achievement Scores of Participants in Argumentative and Expository Essay (Combined) by Treatment, Attitude and Vocabulary Knowledge

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	8489.662 ^a	18	471.648	3.082	.000	.163
Intercept	9616.178	1	9616.178	62.828	.000	.181
PRE_ARG_EXP	4361.714	1	4361.714	28.497	.000	.091
TREATMENT	1469.495	2	734.747	4.800	.009*	.033
TREATMENT * ATTITUDE	203.931	2	101.966	.666	.514	.005
TREATMENT * VOCABULARY	304.153	4	76.038	.497	.738	.007
Error	43468.087	284	153.057			
Total	275553.000	303				
Corrected Total	51957.749	302				

* Significant at p< .05

Table 9 shows that there is significant main effect of treatment on students’ achievement in argumentative and expository essays ($F_{(2, 284)} = 4.800$; $p < .05$; $\eta^2 = .033$). This implies that the combined posttest scores of students in the treatment groups differ significantly from those of the control. Therefore, hypothesis 1 (c) is rejected. In order to determine the group with the highest mean score, the Estimated Marginal Means were computed and are presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Estimated Marginal Means for the Treatment and Control Groups

Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Argumentative (Treatment I)	29.45	1.339	26.811	32.083
Expository (Treatment II)	28.27	1.400	25.514	31.027
Control	23.85	1.323	21.233	26.442

Results on Table 10 show that the Argumentative Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy Group had the highest mean score (\bar{X} = 29.45) followed by the Expository Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy Group (\bar{X} = 28.27) and the Modified Lecture Strategy Group (\bar{X} = 23.85) respectively. This implies that overall, students exposed to the Argumentative Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy performed better in argumentative and expository essay than those exposed to the Expository Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy and the Modified Lecture Strategy respectively. Further, the sources of the significant effect of treatment on achievement in argumentative and expository essay combined were traced using BonferroniPost-hoc analysis as shown in Table 11.

Table 11: BonferroniPost-hoc Analysis of Treatment Effect on Students’ Achievement in Argumentativeand Expository EssaysCombined

Group	N	Mean	Control	Expository	Argumentative
Control	119	23.85			
Expository (Treatment II)	120	28.27			
Argumentative (Treatment I)	118	29.45	*		

*Pairs of groups significantly different at $p < .05$

Table 11 shows that students’ posttest achievement mean scores of the Argumentative Essay-Structure Based group (Treatment I; \bar{X} = 29.45) is significantly different from those of the Modified Lecture Strategy group. (Control; \bar{X} = 23.85). This implies that the Argumentative Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy is the only significantly different group and the most effective in enhancing students’ achievement in argumentative and expository essays.

H_{02(a)}: There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and students’ vocabulary knowledge on students’ achievement in argumentative essay.

From Table 3, the interaction effect of treatment and students’ vocabulary knowledge on students’ achievement in argumentative essay is not significant ($F_{(4, 284)} = .429$; $p > .05$;

$\eta^2 = .006$). Based on this finding, Hypothesis 2(a) is not rejected. This result implies that treatment and students' vocabulary knowledge does not influence students' achievement in argumentative essay.

H_{02(b)}: There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and students' vocabulary knowledge on their achievement in expository essay writing.

From Table 6, the interaction effect of treatment and students' vocabulary knowledge on students' achievement in expository essay writing is not significant ($F_{(4, 284)} = 1.067$; $p > .05$;

$\eta^2 = .015$). Based on this finding, Hypothesis 2(b) is not rejected. This result implies that treatment and students' vocabulary knowledge does not influence students' achievement in expository essay.

H_{02(c)}: There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and students' vocabulary knowledge on students' achievement in argumentative and expository essays.

Table 9 indicates that the interaction effect of treatment and students' vocabulary knowledge on students' achievement in argumentative and expository essays is not significant ($F_{(4, 284)} = .497$; $p > .05$; $\eta^2 = .007$). Based on this finding, Hypothesis 2(c) is not rejected. This result implies that treatment and students' vocabulary knowledge do not influence students' achievement in argumentative and expository essays.

H_{03(a)}: There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and students' attitude to essay writing on students' achievement in argumentative essay.

Table 3 reveals that the interaction effect of treatment and students' attitude to essay writing on students' achievement in argumentative essay is not significant ($F_{(2, 284)} = .360$; $p > .05$;

$\eta^2 = .003$). Based on this finding, Hypothesis 3(a) is not rejected. This result implies that treatment and students' attitude to essay writing do not influence students' achievement in argumentative essay.

H_{03(b)}: There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and students' attitude to essay writing on students' achievement in expository essay.

From Table 6, it is revealed that the interaction effect of treatment and students' attitude to essay writing on students' achievement in expository essay is not significant ($F_{(2, 284)} = .602$; $p > .05$; $\eta^2 = .004$). Based on this finding, Hypothesis 3(b) is not rejected. This result implies that treatment and students' attitude to essay writing do not influence students' achievement in expository essay.

H_{03(c)}: There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and students' attitude to essay writing on students' achievement in argumentative and expository essays.

Table 9 indicates that the interaction effect of treatment and students' attitude to essay writing on students' achievement in argumentative and expository essays is not significant ($F_{(2, 284)} = .666$; $p > .05$;

$\eta^2 = .005$). Based on this finding, Hypothesis 3(c) is not rejected. This result implies that treatment and students' attitude to essay writing do not significantly influence students' achievement in argumentative and expository essays.

Discussion of Findings

Students' achievement in argumentative and expository essays

The focus of this study was to investigate the effects of two modes of Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategies on students' achievement in argumentative and expository English essay writing in secondary schools. The findings reveal significant main effect of ESBIS on students' achievement in argumentative, expository and argumentative and expository essay writing combined. In other words, findings indicate better achievement of students in the experimental groups than those in the control group.

A possible reason for this may be because students in the experimental groups were exposed to strategies that helped them understand the underlying structure of the particular essay type they were to write. As observed by Meyer and Poon (2001), it is simply not enough to know what to write (content). Students must also know how to organise the content to meet the specific writing task demands. This is in contrast to what takes place in the conventional setting where students are rarely helped to understand the underlying structure of an essay type.

Another reason for the findings of the study may be connected to the integrative nature of ESBIS. Essay Structure-Based Instructional Strategy exposes students to the listening, speaking and reading skills before they actually proceed with writing itself. Students listen as the teacher models the use of the strategy; they also listen during discussions in class. Similarly, the strategy provides opportunities for oral practice as students participate orally in class through discussions, debates or both which provides opportunities for the teacher to correct errors in pronunciation and grammar. In addition, the students read materials which exemplify the essay structures they are learning. Thus, all the language skills are brought to bear on the teaching of writing which makes ESBIS effective.

Furthermore, the results of the study are in line with findings of several other studies which adopted an essay structure-based approach such as those of Malakul and Bowering(2006), Martinez and Cueva (2010), Gardiner (2010) and Rezvani, Aqdam and Saeidi(2013). These studies found that students exposed to genre treatment performed better in writing than those who were not. The findings also support the idea that repeated exposure to a particular genre would overtime lead an individual to use that structure in his/her writing (Kamberelis, 1998). ESBIS provided opportunity for students to practise each structure stage of the target genres. Students in the experimental groups were also provided with samples of writings in the genre they were learning about. These samples served as guides for students and were reflected in some of their writings.

In addition to serving as guides for students in the experimental groups, the essay samples in the target genres were used for exploration and discussion. Use was made of teacher-student and student-student (group) discussions to develop students' writing competence (Goldstein, 2004). These discussions were done during the 'joint construction' stage which bears close resemblance to the pre-writing stage of the process approach. Discussions acknowledged and utilised students' prior knowledge which is also in consonance with the process approach's emphasis on the importance of the skills involved in writing and recognition that what learners bring to the writing classroom contributes to the development of writing ability. Therefore, it can be understood that the genre and process approaches are compatible in principle

(Desmond, 1999). As pointed out by Hyland (1990, 2003), the genre approach does not exclude the familiar tools of the process approach as students need to develop process skills. However, L2 writers need more structural support than is provided by the process writing approach.

Moreover, findings reveal better performance of students in the Argumentative Essay Structure-Based group (Treatment I) compared to students in the Expository Essay Structure-Based group (Treatment II). This result contradicts the general idea in the literature that students find argumentative writing to be one of the most, if not the most difficult. For example, contrasting argumentative and expository writing, Roca de Larios, Murphy and Machon Ruiz (1999) posit that students can be deeply engaged in an expository writing task because it is a more familiar domain. On the contrary, an argumentative writing task requires that the writer be aware of a formal register and the rhetorical conventions necessary for arguments along with an ability to manipulate abstract concepts. Several researchers have documented that adolescents and young adults find it challenging to acquire the skills needed to argue effectively (Felton and Kuhn, 2001; Reznitskaya, Anderson, McNurlen, Nguyen-Jahiel, Archonidou and Kim, 2001).

Similarly, Beach (2007) observes that high school students find argumentative writing to be a difficult genre to master because they may lack background knowledge of the conventions of this mode of writing and a limited argument schema to help them as they proceed through the writing process. Panahi's (2013) study lends credence to the idea that argumentative writing tasks are more difficult than expository writing tasks. The study revealed that treatment had a positive effect on students' expository writing task rather than on the argumentative writing task. In other words, learners achieved significantly higher scores in expository writing than in argumentative writing.

However, the idea that argumentative writing is more difficult than expository writing may not necessarily be true. Desmond (1999) observes that professional judgments about likely task difficulty are not necessarily correct. The belief that expository writing may be easier than argumentative writing is really not always substantiated in the literature. For example, Hamp-Lyons and Prochnow (1991) carried out a study which looked at how raters judge writing task difficulty. The raters judgments were then compared with students' actual task outcomes. The study revealed significantly lower grades on a language test for expository writing (which is supposedly easier) than argumentative writing (supposedly more difficult), contrary to the raters expectations. Similarly, in a study which sought to determine whether students' performance would be different based on task type (argumentative and expository writing), it was revealed that task type did not have an effect on students' written performance (Shin, 2008).

Therefore, the fact that students performed better in argumentative essay in this study is not a deviation from empirical evidence in the literature. One of the factors that could account for the result of this study might be the nature of expository writing itself. The expository essay encompasses other essay types (Beardwood, 2012). Although this study focused on the cause/effect structure, none of the expository structures are mutually exclusive. Thus, even though the dominating structure is cause/effect, the writer might still need to argue, narrate, and describe, among others.

In sum, although findings reveal better performance of students in argumentative essay compared to expository essay, it should be noted that ESBIS also facilitated students' achievement in expository writing. In each case (argumentative and expository writing), students in the ESBIS groups performed better than those in the control group. This shows that ESBIS is more effective than the lecture strategy. Thus, teachers should endeavour to make use of ESBIS in teaching all types of essays rather than relying solely on the lecture strategy.

ESBIS, vocabulary knowledge and students' achievement in argumentative and expository essays

The findings from the study reveal no significant interaction effect of treatment and students' vocabulary knowledge on students' achievement in each of argumentative and expository essays and both combined. This implies that treatment did not act together with students' vocabulary knowledge to influence students' achievement in each of argumentative and expository essays and both combined.

The results for the interaction effect of treatment and students' vocabulary knowledge is consistent with those of Iyagba (1994) who found no significant difference in the composition achievement of students with various verbal ability groups. It should be noted that vocabulary knowledge provides a measure of verbal ability as elements of verbal ability test includes word power, substitution of elements and logical selection of appropriate words (Abiodun and Folaranmi, 2007) and others which are all facets of vocabulary knowledge. Similarly, Brownes's (2002) study did not find a significant interaction effect between treatment and students' vocabulary size on students' ability to write better by incorporating vocabulary learned in their writings.

However, other studies contain findings contrary to the results of this study. For example, Olaboopo (1999) noted significant interaction effect of treatment and verbal ability on the variation in students' scores in English composition. Similarly, Noordin (2004) noted significant interaction effect between students' English proficiency level (which includes vocabulary knowledge) and the treatment applied in determining students' writing achievement. In a study which sought to understand if improved vocabulary predicted improved scores on a state mandated standardized assessment (which included writing) in the United States, Snow, Lawrence and White (2009) found a significant interaction effect between improved vocabulary scores and treatment in predicting students' scores in the state mandated test. In the same vein, Osikomaiya (2012) and Ijiga (2014) found significant interaction effect of treatment and verbal ability on students' achievement in English reading comprehension. Finally, in a longitudinal study which used students' vocabulary knowledge and metacognitive knowledge as moderator variables, it was found that while both moderator variables showed significant positive main effects on students' achievement in reading comprehension, only vocabulary knowledge moderated the effect of the treatment overtime (Okkinga, Geldsren, Van Schooten, Van Steensel and Slegers, 2014). Furthermore, the result of the study could be attributed to the complex nature of the relationship between vocabulary use in writing and learners' knowledge of individual words. As has been earlier pointed out, an individual's knowledge of individual words does not automatically mean that the individual will use such word in writing. Joe's (2010) study of an adult ESL learner's acquisition of words indicated that repeated encounters and practice with vocabulary is needed for ESL learners to produce meaningful and

grammatically accurate sentences. Similarly, Iyere (2013) avers that efficient retrieval of vocabulary is vital in timed writing examinations. Iyere (2013) further points out that a new lexical item rarely goes straight into the learner's passive vocabulary; rather, it usually passes a transition stage of partial understanding which is increased when the new word is encountered more often.

Therefore, while students might have knowledge of individual words, if they lack practice with the use of these words in writing, it could affect their writing achievement. So, it may be that in spite of the significant effect of treatment on students' achievement in each of argumentative and expository essay and both combined, when it came to putting their vocabulary knowledge to use in writing, students were deficient which led to no significant interaction between treatment and students' level of vocabulary knowledge. This assumption is supported by Nation's (2001) argument that productive vocabulary knowledge requires learner's deliberate efforts in a lengthy period of time. Since the duration of the treatment was limited, it might not have been enough for students (who earlier on had not been engaging in frequent writing practices) to put their productive vocabulary knowledge to use.

Another plausible reason for the result is that individual writing techniques differ from one person to another, depending on the individual's overall writing proficiency (Goya, Cai, Ding and Fecher, 2011). Since the writing task was timed, it might have led the students to focus on the whole writing process – generation of ideas, organisation, revision, and so on. This is because writing is a complex process which requires a number of skills. Therefore, many of the students might not have been able to focus on their vocabulary use as carefully as they could have in a less time sensitive situation. As a result, focusing on the whole writing process with the aim of completing the writing tasks in a limited time became students' primary concern which could largely have impacted the quality of their compositions in terms of vocabulary use.

ESBIS, attitude to essay writing and students' achievement in argumentative and expository essays

The study shows no significant interaction effect of treatment and students' attitude to essay writing on students' achievement in each of argumentative and expository essays and in both combined. This implies that treatment did not act together with students' attitude to essay writing to influence students' achievement in each of argumentative and expository essay and in both combined.

This result may not be unconnected to the nature of attitude. Attitude is a disposition to act in a certain way or to view an object as favourable or unfavourable (positive or negative). It is not a guarantee of performance in itself. Positive attitude on its own might not suffice to lead to high performance. To be effective, positive attitude must be accompanied with hard work and practice. Thus, in the case of writing, while a student may possess a positive attitude to writing, if that disposition is not matched with actual activities aimed at improving writing achievement, such as engaging in extensive readings, frequent writing practices and self-regulated strategy use, the positive attitude might not accomplish much success in terms of improving writing achievement.

Furthermore, students' attitude can change (Lennartsson, 2008). If attitudes change after they are assessed, they will tend to be poor predictors of later behaviour. Thus, while attitude can motivate (or demotivate) individuals towards achievement, it must be developed and sustained. The assumption that

participants in the study did not sustain their positive or negative attitude to writing during the course of exposure to treatment might account for the observed interaction effect of treatment and students' attitude to essay writing.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The ability to write effectively is a prerequisite for educational success irrespective of an individuals' vocational leaning. The results of this study have portrayed ESBIS as an effective instructional tool in enhancing students' achievement in argumentative and expository essays. It is thus concluded that explicitly teaching students the underlying structure of specific essay types enhances students' essay skills than the lecture or teacher-centred strategy. It is recommended that teachers should adopt ESBIS in their teaching of English essay writing. Besides, English Language teachers should de-emphasise sole reliance on the Lecture strategy and embrace student-centred strategies that involve students' active participation in the learning process.

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