



Student-Related Factors as Predictors of Achievement in Literature-in-English in Senior Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the student-related factors as predictors of achievement in Literature-in-English in senior secondary schools in Ile-Ife. The descriptive survey research design was utilised. A sample of 80 Literature-in-English students was selected for the study using the simple random sampling technique. Four instruments titled English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT), Questionnaire on Students' Possession and Utilisation of Literature-in-English Texts (QSPULT), Questionnaire on Students' Participation in Literature-in-English Classes (QSPLC) and Literature-in-English Achievement Test (LAT) were used to collect data. Data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed that the student's English language proficiency, text possession, text utilisation and class participation have a significant influence on achievement in Literature-in-English ($F=17.84$, $p=.000$). Text possession, text utilization and participation in Literature-in-English classes ($t= -.058$, $p=.95$), $-.198$ ($t=-1.55$, $p=.13$) and $-.305$ ($t=-1.25$, $p=.22$) decrease respectively in students' achievement in Literature-in-English. The study concluded that students' factors were found to be good predictors of achievement in Literature-in-English. Therefore, these students' factors are as significant as teachers' factors when trying to solve problems of students' performance in Literature-in-English. Teachers should therefore take cognizance of these factors to improve students' achievement in Literature-in-English.

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INTRODUCTION

Literature-in-English is one of the dynamic subjects offered in senior secondary schools. It is a literary work of art which includes drama, prose and poetry. It is an artistic work that mirrors life and, significantly, centres on the culture, beliefs, customs, religion and historical values, particularly people and society. Literature is, therefore, a reproduction of man's life in society; a creative representation of life. In literature, language shapes the perception of things. The knowledge of Literature increases students' effective use of the English language and helps learners widen their understanding of other cultures. The study of Literature helps

Language learners to achieve cultural assimilation, language competence, conflict resolution, good liberal education and development of anticipated attributes. The fact is that a student, who is exposed to all the values of Literature, will be fully incorporated into his/her culture as well as other people's culture. Such students will become fluent in the language, having a wide range of vocabulary at /her disposal. Literature allows students to be conversant with the hints of the English language and exposes them to varieties of usage.

Literature-in-English is included as a significant subject in both the secondary and tertiary institutions' curricula. It is one of the



requirements for a student to gain admission into tertiary institutions in Nigeria and such students must possess a credit pass in Literature-in-English to study courses like Law, English, Theatre Arts, Mass Communication, Linguistics, Classics and other art courses (JAMB Brochure, 2014). Literature-in-English trains learners for literacy and prepares them with skills ranging from critical thinking to creative and lifelong learning skills which are demands of 21st-century education. However, it is a fundamental subject that allows students to come to the full actualisation of their potential. Literature-in-English is stated as one of the vital subjects in the field of studies (Humanities) in the 2014 edition of the National Policy on Education to be offered by Arts students.

This, it has been observed that reading culture is declining among students, thus, they find it problematic to express themselves fluently in English, which is the language of instruction in institutions of learning in Nigeria. It is anticipated that literary texts will allow the students to experience the use of the English Language in its diverse forms and influence their expression positively. Language helps the understanding of literature, as it is the instrument used to compare, analyse and understand what is read (Oripeloye, 2017). Otagburuagu (2007) opines that Literature-in-English is a representation of life which is based on the artistic imagination of the author. According to him, Literature shows clearly the creative ability of the author and their perception of life which they try to bring out through the characters and events they create. Literature plays a vital role in the teaching and learning of the four basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

It is a form of artistic composition (spoken or written) which can be cherished, literature is studied in schools at the primary, secondary schools and tertiary levels. At the junior secondary school level, it is not taught as a separate subject because it is subsumed under English Studies. However, at the senior secondary school level, it is taught as a separate subject from the humanities as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (NPE) (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014). According to

the Nigerian National Curriculum for Senior Secondary Literature released by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) in 2013, some of the aims and objectives of teaching Literature at the Senior Secondary School level are to:

- (i) Reinforce the English language skill already acquired by the students by exposing them to language in action in literary texts and works;
- (ii) Expose students to the beauty and potential of language;
- (iii) Equip the students to develop the capacity for independent thought and judgement; and
- (iv) Develop students' ability to respond appropriately and independently to literary works.

Literature-in-English also helps in actualising the following Nigerian philosophy of education (FRN, 2014):

- a. To live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, an indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom and justice; and
- b. To promote inter-African solidarity and world peace through understanding.

However, the stated aspects of the Nigerian philosophy on education, it is crystal clear that literature not only helps to know more about a diversity of human cultures but to comprehend human nature itself. Obichukwu (2009) states that the diverse characters portrayed in literary works are representations of people in true-life situations. The experiences of these characters and the manner they retort to life's issues help learners to have a deeper understanding of human nature.

Also, Osisanlu (2012) states that literature allows students to have an intuition about human behaviour as reflected by the events, characters and situations depicted in literary works and assists students to become well-adjusted individuals who can interact freely with diverse people, consequently facilitating good social interaction. The existing harmonised West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and National



Examination Council (NECO) Literature-in-English syllabus (2021-2024) is intended to develop students with necessary literary appreciation skills as an important part of their overall educational process. This is to permit students to cultivate critical skills as tools for independent evaluation of human issues and develop their ability in assimilating literary texts at different levels of meaning which include; connotative and denotative. Its objective is to allow students largely enjoy the study of any literature and assist in moulding and forming students' character morally and intellectually.

Also, the syllabus will permit students to learn genres of literature, unique characteristics, structure, techniques and mode of appeal. Lerer (2003) stresses that teaching Literature-in-English is not about walking into the classroom, reading about some literary texts and waiting till inspiration hits. It is all about organising the critical analysis of how written texts represent the imagined world and how the imagined world represents the environment. In fact, notwithstanding the role Literature-in-English plays in the overall development of society as an invaluable subject, the student's performance in public examinations is abysmal according to literature. The West Africa Examinations Council's (WAEC) Literature-in-English Chief Examiners' reports for May/June 2011-2020 state that the performance of candidates is poor due to several factors such as; inadequate knowledge of the set texts, illegible handwriting, inability to make references to texts, poor knowledge of literary appreciation, wrong interpretation of questions, writing of irrelevancies, inability to write good English, poor expression and lack of originality in answers given. All these, according to the Chief Examiners; reports were exhibited in most of the candidate's work

Several studies such as Nsubuga (2013), Anang (2013) and Tairu (2018) have identified factors responsible for the poor performance of students in Literature-in-English as lack of instructional resources and inappropriate use of instructional strategies. Adegoke and Ademola (2005), and Amokeodo (2012) state that lack of individual motivation on the part of students, and large class size. Though

scholars such as (Okoro 2007; Gunning 2010; Stack and McCloskey 2010; Anyachebelu, Anyamene, Obumneke-Okeke, Adebola 2011; and Osisanlu, 2012) have introduced different strategies for teaching and learning Literature-in-English, like small group discussion method, readers' theatre, talking display/tape dialogues, novel court technique and creation of film strips, outcomes from these findings have not translated to significant improvement in students' performance in the subject. However, the student-related factors in this study are; English language proficiency, text possession and utilisation and class participation particularly concerning Literature-in-English, which have not been adequately researched in this part of the world and these had continued to affect students' achievement in Literature-in-English.

Proficiency in English is strongly associated with students' academic success. Language proficiency is seen as the skilful use of language orally and orthographically in a variety of settings and situations. Olamide (2008), and Fakeye and Ogunsiji (2009) opine that English Language proficiency predicts students' achievement in especially main school subjects. This is because students are taught through the English language. In Literature-in-English, proficiency in English is fundamental to the academic achievement of students. John (2006) believes that learners' ability to understand what is required in a question depends on whether or not they comprehend the language in which the questions are contained. Onukaogu (2002) affirms that English Language proficiency is certain to enhance the recognition of metaphors, analogies, figures of speech, connotation and denotation and facilitate how to distinguish between humour, satire and straightforward author strategies and tone.

Kolade (2012) in his studies on students' language proficiency and their achievement in poetry and discovers a positive correlation between them. Some studies, such as John, Olopoenia (2006), Adegoke and Ibode (2011) established the link between English Language proficiency and academic achievement in different subjects but are inconclusive. The English Language Proficiency denotes students'



level of competence in the four English Language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Thus, Smith (2002), and Adegoke and Ibode (2011) opine that except a student attains proficiency in the use of a second language (English Language) such a student may probably be retarded in thinking as well as in achievement tested in English Language and by implication Literature-in-English. Suleiman (2011) identifies inappropriate use of register, spelling errors, incorrect use of punctuation and verb tenses, lack of originality, inability to use emotive and figurative language, an appropriate response to a given assignment and inability to demonstrate richness in and coherent flow of thought as affecting students' language proficiency. Students' poor language proficiency makes them incompetent in handling Literature-in-English where proficiency is critical and a lack of it may probably hamper high academic achievement.

Manyike (2007) works on the relationship between English Language proficiency and academic subjects and reports a significant positive correlation between them. Suleiman (2011) for example, reports that learners' ability to grasp text positively influences their scores in Literature-in-English. There is a general belief, according to findings that language proficiency or the acquisition of language skills has a positive influence on students' academic achievement.

Studies on students' texts possession and utilisation reveal that they have a strong link with academic performance. Adegbile (2013) believes that text utilisation has a significant relationship with students' learning outcomes in Literature-in-English but the research was based on the English language. The significance of possession and utilisation of prescribed texts in Literature-in-English cannot be overemphasised. It is one of the subjects with the highest number of prescribed texts to be studied in Senior Secondary Schools. Text possession and utilisation do with how well students possess and make use of the literary texts, especially recommended ones in Literature-in-English. Texts are very vital in the study of Literature-in-English because

examination questions are based on recommended literary texts.

Therefore, literary texts possession and utilisation can lead to high academic achievement in the Literature-in-English. Lubben, Campbell, Gooseb and Kandjeo-Marenga (2003) stress that students who possess and utilise recommended texts do not only do better than their counterparts but are better motivated to learn, develop interest, concentrate and learn more meaningfully than those who do not use textbooks in class, do the assignment from them, or use them for personal study. Ogunyinka (2011) and Stranfords (2012) discover a positive relationship between texts possession, utilisation and academic achievement and agree that literary texts are good reference materials for valuable information as teachers cannot do everything at the period.

Ezeokoli and Igbor's (2014) in their findings show that majority of students do not possess the prescribed Literature texts. Also, Olasele (2007) and Nwaigwe (2007) discover in their study that students' level of text possession is insufficient. This reveals that non-possession of the prescribed texts in Literature-in-English by students seems to be continuous. Some of the reasons advanced for students' lack of text possession include the inability of the students to purchase the prescribed texts, using Literature as a subject to complete the number of subjects they offer for the Senior Secondary School Examinations and poverty on the part of parents may be a genuine reason for not acquiring the texts. Their study, therefore, confirmed the fact that the majority of students in the Senior Secondary School offering Literature-in-English do not possess the prescribed literary texts.

Class participation is the involvement of students in the teaching and learning process. Students' active involvement in learning could be a demonstration of adequate preparation for lessons. When students do not participate well in class they may not be motivated to learn or retain knowledge and this may negatively influence their achievement in the subject. Scholars (Auster and Wylie, 2006; Ikoh, 2007; Green, 2008; Ezenandu, 2011) stressed that students' class participation positively influences their



learning outcomes. Thus, the studies are more on other school subjects than Literature-in-English. Some of the studies are not directly linked to achievement in Literature-in-English and studies on these identified factors in this study are inconclusive.

Fakeye (2008) states that students' attitudes of being involved in class paying immersed attention, listening and talking to others about a topic, being interested in-class activities, reading from texts and being able to contribute when called to do so or otherwise, are aspects of class participation. Ogunsola (2008) notes that the value of class participation in learning cannot be over-emphasised as it assists in promoting communication, demonstrating skills, developing oral and language skills, and improving social interaction as well as sharing ideas.

West Africa Examinations Council (WAEC) Chief Examiners' Reports (2010-2020) have shown that students' performance in Literature-in-English is below average. The poor performances have among other factors been attributed to inadequate knowledge of the set texts, illegible handwriting, inability to make references to texts, poor knowledge of literary appreciation, wrong interpretation of questions, writing of irrelevancies, inability to write good English, poor expression and lack of originality in answers given. Notwithstanding, the student's performance in the subject has not improved as expected. The low performance implies that the objectives of teaching Literature-in-English in secondary schools have not been attained as expected. The Problem may probably be due to student-related factors; language proficiency, text possession, text utilization, and class participation. However, many research works based on the nexus between student-related factors and achievement in Literature-in-English are inconclusive; thus, determining these factors in educational research, is a process. This, therefore, brings to the fore the need to assess the student-related factors in Literature-in-English.

Research Objectives

The specific objectives of the research are to:

1. Examine the relative contribution of each of the student-related factors (students' English language proficiency, Literature-in-English textbook possession, text utilisation and class participation) to the prediction of achievement in Literature-in-English in senior secondary schools in Ile-Ife;
2. Assess the relationship that exists among student-related factors and achievement in Literature-in-English in the senior secondary schools and;
3. Determine the composite contribution of the student-related factors to the prediction of achievement in Literature-in-English in senior secondary schools in the study area.

Research Question

The following research question was asked and answered:

1. What is the composite contribution of the student-related factors to the prediction of achievement in Literature-in-English in senior secondary schools in the study area?

Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were raised:

1. There is no significant relative contribution of each of the student-related factors of English language proficiency, Literature-in-English textbook possession text utilisation and class participation to the prediction of achievement in Literature-in-English in senior secondary schools.
2. There is no significant relationship between the student-related factors and achievement in Literature-in-English in the senior secondary schools.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population for the study consisted of all public senior secondary school II students offering Literature-in-English in public schools in Ile-Ife. A sample of 80 students offering Literature-in-English was selected for the



study. Two Local Government Areas (LGAs) were selected using the total enumeration sampling technique. Four Senior Secondary schools were selected from each of the LGAs using a simple random sampling technique, making a total of 8 Senior Secondary schools. From each school, ten Senior Secondary school students two (SS2) were randomly selected, making a total of 80 students. Four research instruments were used for the study namely; *English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT)*, *Questionnaire on Students' Possession and Utilisation of Literature-in-English Texts (QSPULT)*, *Questionnaire on Students' Participation in Literature-in-English Classes (QSPLC)* and *Literature-in-English Achievement Test (LAT)*.

The ELPT was designed to measure students' proficiency in the English Language. It contained listening, speaking, reading and writing exercises. The QSPULT was designed to establish learners' disposition to literary text possession and utilisation in Literature-in-English. The first part was aimed at obtaining information on students' demographic data, while the second part addressed students' level of text possession and utilisation in Literature-in-English. It consisted of 30 items placed on a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The QSPLC questionnaire was designed by the researcher to collect information on how students participate in Literature-in-English classes. It was divided into two sections- A and B. Section A was designed to get personal information like name of school, class and sex. Section B comprised items on students'

participation in Literature-in-English class. It consisted of 15 items Likert-scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) where students stated their attitude toward Literature-in-English classes.

The LAT was designed as parallel questions to what was obtained in previous WASSCE questions using SS II Literature-in-English syllabus as a guide. This comprised forty objective questions on general literary principles, African and non-African drama, African and non-African prose and African and non-African poem. The research questions asked and hypotheses were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

RESULTS

The findings of the study are presented based on the research questions.

Research Question One: What is the composite contribution of the student-related factors to the prediction of achievement in Literature-in-English language in senior secondary schools in the study area?

To answer this research question, the ANOVA derivative of the multiple linear regression was used to analyze the data collected. The predictor variables under consideration are participation in Literature-in-English classes, students' proficiency in the English language, level of text utilization and level of text possession while the criterion variable is an achievement in Literature-in-English. The results obtained are presented in Table 2.

Table 1: Composite contribution of student-related factors to the prediction of achievement in Literature-in-English language

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3502.120	4	875.530	17.848	.000 ^b
	Residual	3384.745	69	49.054		
	Total	6886.865	73			

a. Dependent Variable: Achievement Test Scores

b. Predictors: (Constant), Participation in LIE classes, Addition of the Reading Skill and Listening and Speaking tests, Sum of text utilization, Sum of text possession.



Results from Table 1 above depict that the student-related factors of interest in this study viz.: participation in Literature-in-English classes, students' proficiency in English language, level of text utilization and level of text possession combine to account for 50.9% variation in the achievement of the students in Literature-in-English. Also, the combination of these factors has a significant influence on achievement in Literature-in-English ($F=17.84, p=.000$).

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relative contribution of each of the student-related factors of English language proficiency, Literature-in-English textbook possession, textbook utilization and class participation to the prediction of achievement in Literature-in-English language in senior secondary schools. To determine the relative contribution of each of the student-related factors to the prediction of achievement in Literature-in-English, multiple linear regression was utilized. The results obtained are presented in Table 3.

Table 2: Relative contribution of student-related factors to the prediction of achievement in Literature-in-English language

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	32.730	13.074		2.503	.015
1 Proficiency in English Language	1.562	.230	.610	6.778	.000
Level of text possession	-.016	.283	-.006	-.058	.954
Level of text utilization	-.198	.127	-.151	-1.552	.125
Participation in LIE classes	-.305	.244	-.132	-1.249	.216

a. Dependent Variable: Achievement Test Scores

Results from Table 2 show that a unit increase in the students' proficiency in the English language with all the other factors remaining constant, will lead to a 1.56 increase in students' achievement in Literature-in-English which is significant at a .05 significance level ($t=6.78, p=.000$). On the other hand, the other factors of text possession, text utilization and participation in Literature-in-English classes when increased by a unit each will lead to $-.016$ ($t= -.058, p=.95$), $-.198$ ($t=-1.55, p=.13$) and $-.305$ ($t=-1.25, p=.22$) decrease respectively in students' achievement in Literature-in-English.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between the student-related factors and achievement in Literature-in-English in the senior secondary schools. To determine the relationship between the student-related factors and achievement in Literature-in-English in senior secondary schools, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to obtain the (bivariate) associations among the predictor and criterion variables. The results obtained are as produced in Table 4.



Table 3: Correlation matrix showing the relationship among the student-related factors and achievement in Literature-in-English language

		Proficiency in the English language	Level of text possession	Level of text utilization	Participation in LIE classes	Achievement in LIE test scores
Proficiency in the English language	R	1				
	Sig (2-tailed)					
	N	75				
Level of text possession	R	.131	1			
	Sig (2-tailed)	.264				
	N	75	80			
Level of text utilization	R	-.225	-.215	1		
	Sig (2-tailed)	.052	.056			
	N	75	80	80		
Participation in LIE classes	R	-.231*	.351**	.380**	1	
	Sig (2-tailed)	.046	.001	.001		
	N	75	80	80	80	
Achievement in LIE test scores	R	.677**	-.039	-.317**	-.340**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	.734	.005	.002	
	N	74	78	78	78	78

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result from Table 3 shows that there is a significant negative correlation between participation in Literature-in-English classes ($r = -.231$, $p = .046$). Also, significant positive correlations exist between participation in class and text possession ($r = .351$, $p = .001$) and between participation and text utilization ($r = .380$, $p = .001$). Furthermore, results show that there is a significant positive correlation between proficiency in the English language and achievement in Literature-in-English ($r = .677$, $p = .000$) while negative correlations were obtained between text possession and achievement ($r = -.039$, $p = .734$), text utilization and achievement ($r = -.317$, $p = .005$) and participation in classes and achievement ($r = -.340$, $p = .002$). The latter reported negative

correlations are significant at a 0.01 level of significance.

DISCUSSION

The findings revealed the relative contribution of each of the student-related factors (students' English language proficiency, Literature-in-English textbook possession, textbook utilization and class participation) to the prediction of achievement in Literature-in-English in senior secondary schools in Ile-Ife. The results show that the combination of these student-related factors has a significant influence on achievement in Literature-in-English. The finding is in line with Amokeodo (2012) who supports Orji (2004) in his study that class participation has a significant relationship with students' achievement in Literature-in-English.



The finding of this study also corroborates Ezeokoli and Igubor (2014) that the majority of students do not possess the prescribed Literature texts. Also, Olasele and Nwaigwe (2007) discover in their study that the students' level of text possession is insufficient. However, the findings also reveal a significant contribution of English language proficiency to students' achievement in Literature-in-English which is in line with Kolade (2012) who in his studies on students' language proficiency and their achievement in poetry and discovers a positive correlation between them. John, Olopoenia (2006), and Adegoke and Ibode (2011) in their study establish the link between English Language proficiency and academic achievement in different subjects.

The present findings have revealed significant correlations between text utilization and students' achievement in Literature-in-English which is in line with Ogunyinka (2011) and Stranfords (2012) in his study finds the relationship between the use of textbooks and the academic achievement of secondary school learners and concludes that there is robust influence on academics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising from the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers should improve the level of language proficiency of students. Supplementary reading that can help to boost students' language proficiency could be recommended to them.
2. When Literature-in-English instruction is activity-based and student-centred, the quality and quantity of learning are improved.
3. Students should be made to be adequately engaged with the prescribed Literature-in-English texts and not just teachers' notes or commentaries on the texts that will not give the students first-hand knowledge of what is in the recommended texts. When students are made to engage with the prescribed literary texts, the rate of learning is improved.

4. Students should be made to participate in the teaching-learning process. When students have the opportunity of interacting with one another in the teaching and learning process, their interest and positive attitude are improved as learning is made permanent.
5. School authorities should enforce the possession of texts as a requirement for students who wish to offer Literature. If teachers had the backing of the school authorities, students would respond by purchasing the prescribed texts.

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