



## Effects of Shared Reading and Conferencing on the Writing of Upper Basic Students in Kaduna State

Hafsat Usman Kasim, Habiba Mohammed  
Department of Languages  
Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic  
Department of General Studies in Education,  
School of General Studies Education,  
Federal College of Education, Zaria

### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study is to investigate the efficacy of shared reading and conferencing on the writing of upper basic students in Kaduna State. Four objectives with corresponding research questions are formulated. The quasi-experimental design was adopted and contrasted with the traditional method of teaching to elicit the required information from 101 sampled students. The pre-test was administered and after four weeks, the post-test was administered to both the control and experimental groups. Mean and standard deviation are the main tools used to answer the research questions. Based on the above, the findings of the study reveal that the result of the post-test are significantly better than that of the experimental group in key areas associated with the different types of essays. As a consequence, the study concludes that alternative strategies can be successfully employed to teach writing at the basic levels. In line with its findings, the study recommends among others that teaching/learning writing should be made an interactive process at this level.*

Shared Reading, Conferencing,

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### INTRODUCTION

It is very well known fact that language has four basic skills. These skills are instrumental to students' competence and performance at the basic levels of education in teaching English as a second language context. The primary objective of teaching English language at this level is for students to attain verbal fluency through listening and speaking, and proficiency in writing through reading and writing. Thus, to facilitate the process of learning, teachers should adopt the integrative approach to the teaching of these language skills. Reading is the heart of all academic activities and basic to all ESL learners. According to Leipzig (2001). Reading is a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency, and motivation. This implies that for learners to attain recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation there are certain things required of the learners. Based on the above,

Salawu (2012) asserts that, instrumental interactive strategies of teaching could be regarded as a vehicle through which messages are delivered (by teachers). This paper views reading as the motivated and fluent coordination of word recognition and comprehension.

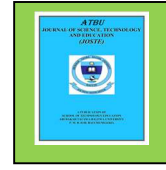
Shared reading groups are offered to all and free to attend. At the upper basic level, a group of learners one of them a trained reader leader, reads a great novel, short story or poem aloud. Then, the group stop and talk about what has been read. According to Stahl(2012) shared reading is an interactive experience that occurs when learners join in or share the reading of a big book or other enlarged text while guided aid supported by a teacher or other experienced reader. In such an event, the learner observe and expert reading the text must be large /bold enough for all the learners to see clearly so as for them to partake in the reading of the text.

Corresponding author: Hafsat Usman Kasim

✉ [hafsatuusmankasim@gmail.com](mailto:hafsatuusmankasim@gmail.com)

Department of Language, Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria, Nigeria

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Conferencing, in reading, is an individual given by teachers' activity that supports, and elevates the learners and flexibility enable them to solve their problems. Conferencing fosters independence for students learning process (Goldberg and Serravallo, 2001). They add that, "conferencing is one-to-one-work with student in which instruction is individualized to support the reader and help to "push' him /her to the edge of what he /she is just beginning to be able to do" (p.13). Thus, to this paper, conferencing is one-to-one or small group discussion, in the writing process, between the teacher and his learner that takes place regularly to discuss writing learning tasks process and attainment. According to Keene (2006) conferencing is one of the most potent tactics and it is indispensable tool when it comes to the assessment of learners understanding. Thus, conferencing, when utilize effectively gives an insight into the ways readers construct reading.

Writing, a form of human communication by means of a set of visible marks that are related, by convention, to some particular structural level of language (Olson, 2023). To Alger (2002) writing is a strategy of representing language in a visual form. In essence, writing is seen as any conventional system of marks or signs that represents the utterances of a language. It renders language visible. Whereas, speech is ephemeral, writing is concrete and by comparison, permanent. Both language skills speaking and writing depend upon the underlying structures of language.

To Cowfield (2000) there are mainly four types of essay namely; narrative, descriptive, expository and argumentative. In essence, each types has a different purposes. Put simply, some tell a story (narrative); some describe events, things, people, ideas (descriptive); some try to convince the reader of something, that is, demonstrate the validity or falsity of a topic(argumentative); and, others compare, explore and discuss problems (expository ) (Abdullahi, 2013).

It is based on these premises that this paper looks at the symbiotic like relationship that exists between reading, shared reading, conferencing and composing.

### Statement of the Problem

The suboptimal performance of learners in English in almost all academic and non-academic contexts in Nigeria is alarming. One of the causes of this substandard performance in English as reported by many researchers (Rudnisky, 2001; Kurumeh, 2006) has to do with instructional strategy by teachers. Apart from the strategy used (which is inadequate), the teachers mostly teach the skills separately rather than integrating them through interactive process.

Ahmed (2011) asserts that good writing skills is required in training and that the curriculum supports the idea that writing is an integral part of the upper basic curriculum. Despite this, most students at the basic level are apprehensive when asked to write. This is because as Okebukola (2002) puts it, Nigerian teachers mostly use the conventional lecture strategy (CLM) that centers on the teacher, textbooks, chalk, and chalkboard normally referred to as the chalk- and -talk method). Based on this, the conventional methods of teaching has largely been criticized for shifting interest from the creativity of writing as a process and product thereby writing? The academic performance of learners.

Writing and reading being an integral part of the education process are now major problems to learners at the basic level. This is attested to by the Chief Examiner (WEAC) 2013-2020 that significant percentage of the candidates did not have the required credit in English. The Chief Examiner's report of 2010/2017 specifically reveals that, 'students have inadequate knowledge of how to write essays.

Kolawole (2003) posits that senior secondary school students have poor writing skills and it accounts for their poor performance in written English examination. Balarabe (2011) added another dimension to topic under discussion, he posits that" writing by the public through various media as well as the various English examiners' reports indicate that the standard of English has fallen further drastically". He adds that stakeholders are not left out as they also have complains about the standard of writing.

Based on the myriad problems associated with writing, it is pertinent to offer

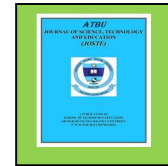
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Corresponding author: Hafsat Usman Kasim

✉ [hafsatuusmankasim@gmail.com](mailto:hafsatuusmankasim@gmail.com)

Department of Language, Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria, Nigeria

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solutions to these identified problems. In estimation of this paper, the quasi-experimental approach through the reinforcement of the teaching of what? Please expatiate. Writing through shared reading and conferencing will to a significant level, reduce the problem significantly.

### Concept of Reading/Shared Reading

Reading is one of the language skills exclusively reserved for the educated people. It refers to the deliberate looking at, and understanding written language (assigning meaning to graphic symbols (Kalindi, 2005). Reading is both a process and a product. Several researchers have investigated how process information can be used to better understand product measures about performance in reading comprehension (Myers, 2006). It is in this light that reading will be related to writing in this paper. Thus, reading as a process is partly shaped by text, reader's background and the situation the reader finds himself in (Hunt, 2004). As a product, reading is viewed or is generally associated with static information (Williams, 1971). Thus, reading to this paper is a combination of the author's graphic output and the reader's graphic input.

According to Bus, van-Ijzendoorn, and Pellegrini, (1995) shared reading is developed or borrowed from teachers /parents bedtime stories to their children /learners. According to Rockets (2023), shared reading is an interactive reading between students and students, students and teacher, students and written materials that occurs when students join to share the reading of a book or other text while guided and supported by a teacher. In this sense, the teacher explicitly models the skill (speed, expression, fluency decoding, and accuracy) of proficient reader.

Reading can be used with small groups or a whole class group. Importantly, it provides a non-threatening context in which the reading process can be modelled and the use of effective reading strategies can be encouraged. The text is read and reread at different points over a period of time, providing learners with the opportunity to use the text for different teachings purposes (such as teaching writing) and the learners to interact with the text (as an output by the writers) (Education

Dept. 2004) western Australia, 2004) on multiple occasions. It is based on these that learners will be conversant with the conventions of the written English (through reading what professional writers write); and the language structures and organizational features of written texts.

### Concept of Conferencing

Conferencing plays a vital role in supporting the growth and improvement of learners in almost every facets of their development. It is an opportunity for learners with interest as well as small group or large one to think and share ideas about a particular tasks. It is time consuming but it provides excellent learning experiences for students) to discuss one- to-one the students' progress in regards to the students' academic performance

Conferencing as pointed above according to Jia (2013) plays a vital role in students written performance through some of its factors hinder written. These factors will be critically considered during the experimental stages. Thus, because writing is a complex and individualistic skill that requires the teacher's help, teachers can change its individualistic nature through conferencing and other interactive ways of teaching it.

### Concept of Writing

The process of writing is best understood as a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organize during the act of composing. It is also seen as a goal directed thinking process, guided by the writer's own goals as to why he is writing. Writing is considered as a necessary skill ESL learners. In line with this, Zen (2005) describes it as "one of the four skills, commonly accepted as the goals of a learning a Foreign that ESL students must know". It is a strategy of representing language in visual form or the recording of information to be read later (Ager, 2012)

One of the relationships between reading and writing is that, they can both be viewed as a process and product. The product approach is the traditional one, that is, learners are encouraged to mimic models text presented

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Corresponding author: Hafsat Usman Kasim

✉ [hafsatuusmankasim@gmail.com](mailto:hafsatuusmankasim@gmail.com)

Department of Language, Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria, Nigeria

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and analyzed at an early stage. In contract, the process approach, focuses on the varied classroom activities which encourages the learner to use language in appropriately in concept (Nordquist, 2019)

There are what is tagged as the traditional modes of discourse refers to the four categories of written texts: narration, description, exposition, and argument (Nordquist; 2017). They are also known as the rhetorical modes and forms of discourse. According to Bradberry (2013). Categorized these modes into four. First, the first of the four modes, description paints a verbal picture and tells what things are. Then, the second, narration, tells a strong (mostly in a time order or order of importance. Next, the third, exposition serves as an umbrella mode (expository narration, description, comparison and contrast, definition, division, classification and so on. Finally, the fourth, argumentation, convinces the reader through logic. Thus, no one mode that is more important than another, that is, they are often combined to for the greatest impact and to convey the clearest point

It is based on the concepts discussed that this study looks at the significance of shared reading and conferencing on the teaching /learning traditional mode of discourse.

#### Authorial Review

Abdullah (2020) conducted a research on the impact of teacher-student writing conferences on the frequency and accuracy of using cohesive devices in EFL students writing. The study focused on teacher oral feedback based on the tenants of the sociocultural theory. The paper established that feedback in writing positively affected students' writing performance.

Laura (2006) investigated the use of web conferencing software as a medium for student-teacher writing conference. Using qualitative methodology, the researcher conducted out of web conferences with three first year writing students. The finding reveal that web conferencing in classroom writing opens the door for future web conferencing studies

Yea-mei (2009) conducted a research on the influence of shared reading on students

reading comprehension and motivation. The findings reveal that not only have students the process of learning reading through shared read but also shared reading effectively increased students reading comprehension.

Katrina (2016) study focused on the examination of the effects of one-to-one digital book reading intervention on children's early literacy development and families' shared reading process. The study examine how parents used digital tools to affect the reading behaviors and literacy development of their young ones. The findings established that one-to-one intervention improved the vocabulary development and reading comprehension.

Badaria (2012) conducted a study on the teaching of vocabulary using shared reading and flashcards. The focus of the study is to explore alternative way(s) of teaching vocabulary development through shared reading. They established that using books in shared reading help children to learn vocabulary better than flash cards.

Ade (2018) conducted a study on the effect of using shared reading strategy in improving reading comprehension. The study used the quasi-experimental design in the collection of data. The study established shared reading positively and significantly affects the writing and reading comprehension of learners.

Seneschal et al. (2008) investigated the relationship between the frequency of shared reading and 4- year-old student's vocabulary, morphology, syntax, comprehension and narrative skills. The study established that shared reading improves students' syntax, vocabulary, and morphological comprehension.

#### METHODOLOGY

The study employed pre-text, post-test quasi-experimental and control group design where contact classes are used. This is in line with Thomas (2020) Martius –Omole's stand who posits that, like a true experiment, quasi-experimental design aims to establish a cause-and –effect relationship between independent and dependent variables. He adds that, unlike a true experiment, quasi- experimental design does not

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Corresponding author: Hafsat Usman Kasim

✉ [hafsatuusmankasim@gmail.com](mailto:hafsatuusmankasim@gmail.com)

Department of Language, Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria, Nigeria

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rely on random assignment. Instead, subjects are assigned to groups based on non-random criteria. The sample population of 101 are selected from the four zones in Kaduna State. This is done in line with the guidance of Bese and Khan (2006) who posit that the sample of the population should come from a population that share characteristic of the study. The data collected through using past questions paper from WEAC and NECO on the four types of essay that are set based on the upper basic level curriculum. This is used to elicit the data required for this study.

A post-test was given after that the four group were given treatment for four weeks during the selected schools' normal period so as not to disrupt the programmes of the schools. This is done with the aid of trained research assistants.

The key point of the treatment was enhancing the teaching of writing through essential factors extracted from shared reading and conferencing.

The data collected will be analyzed through frequencies and percentages as well as mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions.

### Data Analysis, Findings and Discussion

This study was carried out with the purpose of establishing the effect of shared reading and conferencing on the writing of upper basic students in Kaduna State. The results are as follows:

To answer research questions one, the mean and standard deviation as well as the summary are in table 1 below:

**Table 1:** Mean and standard Deviation of the performance between the Experimental Group (narrative essay) and the Control Group

Group	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	MD
Experimental	50	5.82	4.84	12.15
Control	51	43.67	6.54	

Table 4.2 reveals that, the result of experimental group as ( $m=58.82$ ;  $SD=4.84$ ; and MD, 12.15) exposed to writing through shared reading and conferencing and control group as ( $M=43.67$ ; and  $SD =6.54$ ) exposed to conventional method. This implies that, students exposed to

narrative essay through shared reading and conferencing perform higher than those exposed to it through the conventional method.

To answer research questions two, the mean and standard deviation as well as the summary are calculated in the table below:

**Table 2:** Mean and Standard Deviation on the performance between experimental group (descriptive essay) and control group

Group	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	MD
Experimental	50	51.80	8.25	21.70
Control	51	31.10	7.84	

Table two reveals the result of experimental group as ( $M=51.80$ ; and MD =21.70) exposed to writing through shared reading and conferencing and control group as ( $M= 30.10$ ; and  $SD =78.84$ ) exposed through conventional method. This indicates that, the students exposed

to descriptive essay through shared reading and conferencing perform higher than those exposed to it through the conventional method

To answer research question three, the mean and standard deviation as well as the summary are calculated in table three below:

Corresponding author: *Hafsat Usman Kasim*

✉ [hafsatuusmankasim@gmail.com](mailto:hafsatuusmankasim@gmail.com)

Department of Language, Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria, Nigeria

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**Table 3:** Mean and Standard Deviation on the performance of Experimental Group (expository essay) and the control Group

Group	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	MD
Experimental	50	65.10	5.44	21.43
Control	51	43.67	6.54	

Table 3 reveals the result of experimental group as (m=65.10; SD=5.44; and MD=21.43) exposed to the writing through shared reading and conferencing and the control group as (m=43.67; and SD=7.84) exposed to conventional method. This illustrate that, the students exposed to expository essay through shared reading and

conferencing perform higher than the control group exposed to it through the conventional method.

To answer research question four, the mean and standard deviation as well as summary are calculated in table 4 below

**Table 4:** Mean and Standard Deviation on the performance of experimental group (argumentative essay) and the control group

Group	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	MD
Experimental	50	56.70	8.24	28.60
Control	51	28.10	8.94	

Table 4 reveals that, the result of experimental group as (m=56.70; SD=8.24; and MD=28.60) exposed to writing through shared reading and conferencing and the control group as (m=28.10; and SD=8.94) exposed through conventional method. This indicate that, the students exposed to argumentative essay through shared reading and conferencing perform higher than the control group exposed to it through conventional method.

- iii. Perform better in exposing probably because of its nature as an umbrella mode (hanging statement)
- iv. Perform better as they pronounced judgment through logic.

### DISCUSSION

Due to the four research questions posed, there are several points for discussion. Regarding the quality of the narrative essay produced by experimental group 1, when compared with other essays, is a bit better. Through the language was at times clumsy, it how tell the story. It is supposed to tell. The story, in most cases is told with unfolding series of events (with a bit of descriptive) which eventually brought resolution to the story. In some cases, students used the past historic tense, or other verbs tenses, clauses and adverbs. This is in line with the finding of Abdullahi (2020) and Senechal (2008) who established that shared reading positively affect students, writing performance

Likewise, learners from experimental group two, produced descriptive essay through selecting a many details or a few details. They

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The salient findings of this study are as follows:

After going through the procedure/ steps in shared reading and conferencing: the experimental group:

- i. Perform better in narrative essay through discussion from reality as well as indicating the chronology of events to paint a picture of how things are.
- ii. Perform better in descriptive essay which focuses on the individual characteristics of the object they were asked to describe

Corresponding author: Hafsat Usman Kasim

✉ [hafsatuusmankasim@gmail.com](mailto:hafsatuusmankasim@gmail.com)

Department of Language, Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria, Nigeria

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focus on the individual characteristics of the static object they were asked to describe. Thus, reasonably painted a verbal picture the static object telling what it really is. With the findings of Laura (2006) who established that web conferencing in classroom writing improves it and opens the door to future web conferencing studies

The multidimensional nature of the expository nature seems to encourage rather than deter this group member. It seems that the shared reading (read and reread) or similar essays and the subsequent discussion that follows significantly guided the group members. Thus, most students define, compare and contrast divide, classify in their writings. Because there is a real life exposure to texts in this mode, it enabled the learners to combine and perform different functions in the context of their assignment. This is in line with the findings of Katrina et al (2016) and Yei-mei (2009) who established the efficacy of shared reading and conferencing on vocabulary development (a key element in writing).

Based on the quality of the argumentative essay produced by the group, is reasonable overall. In language used they have average performance but in the sense of presenting their arguments, they did exceptionally well. They are convincing in their arguments using logic to support their claims. Because writing heavily relies on reading and vice-versa, this enable learners to avoid ambiguity, base argument on good evidence, and present argument in logical order. This in line with the findings of Ade (2018) thus who established that shared reading significantly affect writing and reading comprehension of learners. It is also in line that of Badaria (2012) who established that shared reading help in the vocabulary development of learners.

Through there are a lot of grammatical errors, the message sent by the learners through their respective modes of discourse is clear. The study adopted performance before competence, that is, it did not pay significant attention to the grammatical errors. Based on this, the study's messages is if the message communicated is

understood, the essence of the exercise is achieved.

## CONCLUSION

This study effort has produced steps and methods not just for teaching but also how to combine different elements (conferencing and shared reading) as a strategy to teach other language skills. The findings showed that options are there as strategies for teaching the traditional modes of discourse rather than sticking to the traditional talk-and-chalk method. Because this study looked at composing a s a process and a product, so many things are revealed in the post-test which are not there in the pre-test. Additionally, the number of words specified for each type of essay as well as the discussing and shared reading significantly to the success achieved. There are however so many gaps left by this study, these gaps will enable future research so as to fill them.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the light shed by this study on the efficacy of shared reading and conferencing as strategies for teaching writing, it will like to recommend as follows.

- i. The teaching of writing should focus on its two key elements, that is, it should always be seen as a process and product
- ii. As demonstrated by this study options for teaching writing are there for teaching writing waiting to be tapped as such teachers should strive to be innovative in teaching. this important skill.
- iii. Because the learners were fully involved, there is a significant difference between the post-test and pre-test of the experimental groups. As a consequence, there should always be interaction (between learners-learners, learners-teacher, learners-texts, learners and instructional materials) in teaching writing



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Corresponding author: Hafsat Usman Kasim

✉ [hafsatuusmankasim@gmail.com](mailto:hafsatuusmankasim@gmail.com)

Department of Language, Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria, Nigeria

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