



Effect of the Use of Writing Rubrics in Enhancing Creative Writing among Senior Secondary School Students in Sokoto State, Nigeria

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/AJARR/2022/v16i630475

Open Peer Review History:

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/86879>

Original Research Article

Received 09 March 2022

Accepted 18 May 2022

Published 20 May 2022

ABSTRACT

This quantitative quasi-experimental study investigated effect of the use of writing rubrics in enhancing creative writing among Senior Secondary School Students (SSS) in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The objective was to find out if the use of writing rubrics in creative writing will improve students' writing ability. Three research questions along with three null hypotheses guided the conduct of the research. The study used research adviser (2006) to select 364 participants from SSS 2 out of the total number of 12,220 students in SSS2 in the state to serve as samples for the study. A Quasi-experimental design was used where a pretest, treatment and post-test were conducted. The researcher developed test instrument called Essay Writing Performance Test (EWPT) which was used to measure students' writing ability and collect data for the study. A pilot study was launched to establish the reliability of the instrument which indicated the reliability index of 0.76 using Pearson Product Movement Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). Intact classes served as Experimental and Control Groups respectively. The Experimental Group received instruction on rubrics used in creative writing while the Control Group received instruction on creative writing with the conventional English text. Findings from the research revealed that participants in the Experimental Group performed better than those in the Control Group. Based on the findings, it was discovered that using writing rubrics in teaching creative writing would help students to write better in content development, organization of ideas and use of good expression.

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Keywords: Writing; writing rubrics; creative writing; enhancement; approaches; content; expression; organization.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent time, writing has not only been regarded as a means of evaluating students' performance but also as a means of attaining academic prowess and promotion. There has been decline in the performance of students in creative writing most especially in external examinations in Nigeria. Many scholars and researchers have attributed the decline in writing ability to poor learning facilities, lack of qualified teachers, over-population of students, social economic background among others [1]. Argue that unqualified English Language teachers and inappropriate methodologies are top blamer for learners' inability to write good essays which include formal letter. Many recommendations have been made by scholars on improving writing ability among students [1]. Posit that if adequate training is offered to teachers of English as a second language (L2) and they are encouraged to integrate instruction and metacognitive strategies into their classes, the performance of students in writing most likely will improve drastically.

It is strongly argued that many factors have been attributed to students' failure in writing and way forward has been offered by scholars, but less attention has been paid to modalities involved in writing itself. Creative writing goes beyond having content, organization and correct use of expression at surface level. To support students' ability in writing appropriately and creatively, factors which must take into cognizance rubrics involving content development, organization of ideas and correct use of expression must be put into consideration. To this note, this paper aims at looking into such rubrics, viewing them as alternatives to providing solution to writing problems encountered by students using English as second language. Accordingly, it is highly recommended to note that appropriate use of writing rubrics in the hands of professional tutors may be an alternative to improving correctness in creative writing.

1.1 Research Objectives

The broad objective of this research work is to find out if the use of writing rubrics can enhance creative writing among senior secondary school

students of Sokoto State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives are:

- i. To find out the difference between the performances of SS II students trained on writing rubrics in content development and the control group trained without writing rubrics.
- ii. To find out the difference between the performances of SS II students trained on writing rubrics in organization of ideas and the control group trained without writing rubrics.
- iii. To find out the difference between the performances of SS II students trained on writing rubrics in correct use of expression and the control group without writing rubrics.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the conduct of the study:

- i. What is the difference between the performances of students trained on writing rubrics in content development and the control group without the training?
- ii. What is the difference between the performances of students trained on writing rubrics in organization of ideas and the control group without the training?
- iii. What is the difference between the performance of students trained on writing rubrics in correct use of expression and the control group without the training?

1.3 Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested for the study:

- i. There is no significant difference in content development of students taught using writing rubrics and the students in the control group taught without writing rubrics.
- ii. There is no significant difference in the organization of ideas of experimental group taught with writing rubrics and the control group taught without writing rubrics.
- iii. There is no significant difference in the performances of students in correct use of expression of the experimental group taught with writing rubrics and the control group taught without writing rubrics.

1.4 Review of Related Literature

Writing is a method of representing language in visual or tactile form. It is an act of communication. It is considered a skill that needs study and practice to be developed [2]. Therefore, the ability to write is not naturally acquired; it is usually learned as a set of practices in formal institutions or other environments. Writing is a group of organized

expressions that form a whole and convey specific meanings. According to [3], "writing is much more than an auto-graphic symbolization of speech; it is, more importantly, a purposeful selection and organization of expressions."

[4] Mentions a scale classifying writing activities, they are correlating between two categories, namely, writing as an end and writing as a means.

Writing as an end in itself	Writing as means and end	Writing as a mean
[4]		

In addition, [5] defines it as a process of thinking to invent ideas, exploring and arranging them into statements and paragraphs, rather than a mere production of graphic symbols. And again, it is considered as a productive skill because the writer creates new language and does not only interpret existing information

Specifically, there are several design principles to be considered when planning for L2 writing:

- Language activities should reflect plausible real-life communication
- L₂ writing can have same wide range of purposes as L1 writing
- L₂ writing should be taught systematically, not as a random thing used here and there only as a support task [6].

The ability to write in a second or foreign language is becoming widely recognized as a crucial skill for educational, occupational, and personal reasons. One of the main goals of learning to write is to pursue careers that involve extensive writing. Moreover, at secondary and university level, writing is used as a tool for learning. However, some L2 learners view it as a difficult activity since it requires different abilities such as: mastering grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and a higher level of productive language than speaking, i.e., the written language needs to be more explicit, accurate, appropriate and effective than spoken discourse

Hence, the writer has to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs. In addition, you generate, organize, and translate ideas into readable text. To enable their readers to understand their compositions, writers must communicate their ideas clearly and keep their readers in mind [7]. In addition to that, they need to choose relevant words to make their writing as explicit as possible and complete in itself to convey the intended message. According to [8] successful writing involves:

1. Mastering the mechanics
2. Mastering and obeying conventions of spelling and punctuation
3. Using the grammatical system to convey ones intended message
4. Organizing content at the level of the paragraph and the complete text to reflect given/new information and topic/comment structures.

1.5 Approaches to Teaching Writing

Traditionally, writing was viewed as a tool for the practice and reinforcement of specific grammatical and lexical patterns. Focus was on accuracy and little attention was paid to content and self-expression. There are various approaches used in teaching English as second language writing. One of them is the habit-formation theory of learning. L₂ writing focused on controlled composition with its main emphasis on the sentence-level structure [9]. According to behaviourism, errors must be eliminated because they are believed to influence undesirable habits thus, free composition was not recommended. Nevertheless, this view of limited and controlled composition was criticized and the idea of whether one should mainly text sentence level structures has been controversial (Raimes, 1983).

Writing as a discourse level structure is the second method to L2 writing. This approach contradicts the sentence level approach, which claims that L2 writing is structural transfer from L1 and that writing is understood as organizational structure. As a result, scholars and instructors in this discipline concentrate on rhetoric or contractive rhetoric. Later in L2 writing, there was a paradigm change in which the emphasis was no longer on the written product. In the 970s, writing was considered as a process rather than a product, and the focus switched to the process of writing rather than the product. Thus, inventory procedures, several revisions, and both instructor and peer evaluation became commonplace in the writing classroom. However, in the 1990s, a new approach-genre analysis-called into question process writing. The emphasis of this new method is on the language employed in various circumstances [6]. As a result, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) were created.

[7] However summarises these approaches into three as cited by [8]:

1.6 The Traditional Approach

The focus of this method was on language form; syntax, grammar, mechanics, and structure, rather than content. Grammar is presented openly or implicitly to help students comprehend and internalize grammatical rules. This technique focuses on teaching basic sentence-level and organizing abilities. Students are typically provided writing models and then asked to commence these activities. Furthermore, little attention is paid to the text's rhetorical features or social contexts, implying that the emphasis was on student writing as a completed product, as well as grammatical and linguistic precision.

1.7 The Modern Approach

Writing is viewed as a communication act in this perspective. It assists pupils in comprehending genre limits and developing audience awareness. Furthermore, the emphasis is on meaning and content rather than form. Furthermore, the emphasis on the process of writing has shifted from a focus on the written output to a focus on the development of ideas and the writing of several versions to create writings that express learners' ideas. Teachers give their students responsibility and ownership over their own learning since writing is viewed as a

developmental process in which students select their own genres and write about their own experiences or observations. The main advantages are that they (learners) understand the importance of the skills involved in writing and recognize that what learners bring to the writing classroom contributed to the development of writing ability" less emphasis is paid on linguistic knowledge such as "grammar and text structure [6].

1.8 The Balanced Approach

According to [10], all techniques to writing overlap, and teachers should not emphasize on one way while excluding the others; instead, they should be eclectic, benefiting from all accessible methods. Students must learn to keep their audience in mind while choosing words to express their intended message. They must also learn how to build their ideas utilizing various syntactical and grammatical principles.

Because there are numerous writing approaches, it is important for every teacher not to utilize a single approach. Every strategy has strengths and flaws, and a new approach is not better to an old one, but rather a supplement to the old ones [7]. Comments that although ESL writing studies were undertaken in the 1970s, L2 authors were still placed in the basic writing course and instructed by untrained teachers. Some teachers even agreed that L1 and L2 students could study in the same class together.

Furthermore, professors frequently emphasized errors, leaving students unable to articulate themselves or produce good formal writing when they attended colleges. Although certain remedial courses were provided to prepare pupils for university life, L2 students were unable to write as well as native speakers. As a result, various multidisciplinary disciplines have sprung up to fulfill the demands of L2 writing practice. To date, there is no single theory that covers every aspect of L₂ writing, so different L₂ writing journals were established to support different theories [7].

1.9 Rubrics

Rubrics are a means of standardization in assessing individuals, their talents, and their quality [11]. [12] has detailed a set of 14 rubric design characteristics that define both the rubrics and their application in context. Specificity is one of his 14 areas of interest. Secrecy, exemplar, scoring approach, evaluation criteria, quality

levels, quality definitions, judgment complexity, users and uses, creators, quality procedures, feedback information, presentation, and explanation Rubrics are classified into two types: generic rubrics and descriptive rubrics. Descriptive rubrics will be ideal for this study because they are a type of assistance that can considerably boost the subject's comprehension and stimulate the rethinking and thought arrangement of ideas and content development.

Scholarly works demonstrated that rubrics help students enhance learning through a variety of ways, including increasing transparency, reducing anxiety, assisting with the feedback process, improving students' self-efficacy, and helping students' self-regulation. A creative writing that lacks content is not creative. In a systemic approach, it is the content that prompts the composition of ideas. To have a creative write-up, the three components of topic, organization, and proper language must be contextualized. As a result, each instructor should be conversant with these three notions that serve as the foundation for creative writing in teaching-learning processes. Writing rubrics are guidelines for creative writing that focus on topic, organization, and expression.

The practice of adding relevant and illustrative elements to support the main argument in a paragraph or essay is known as content development. Each paragraph's information must be adequately described, exhibited, or, in some situations, writers must support their topic sentence. Ideas offered in content must be relevant to the overall theme. A writer who deviates from the key theme is likely to receive a lower grade. Organization, the qualities to look for are:

- a. Suitable opening a good write-up is expected to have a suitable opening
- b. Adequate development- every content presented must be well organized
- c. Good paragraphing a good paragraphing brings out the beauty of every creative writing
- d. Balance- there must be balance opinion
- e. Coherence deviation from the subject matter should not be allowed
- f. Suitable conclusion- a suitable conclusion is always needed to award good marks under organization

Expression, the qualities to look out for when writing a creative essay under expression include:

- a. Clarity and general appropriateness of style
- b. Variation of sentence structure and type
- c. Judicious use of figurative language
- d. Skillful and sophisticated use of punctuation

Errors that must be avoided by writers include: Undeniable errors in grammar such as;

- a. The omission of essential sentence element eg, subject, predicator, complement.
- b. Wrong tenses, misuse of modal operators (may/ might, can/could, shall/should etc)
- c. Misuse or omission of articles
- d. Confusion or ambiguity in the use of pronouns
- e. Misuse of relatives, subordinators and conjunctions
- f. Errors in concord
- g. Misrelated participles
- h. Intransitive verb for the transitive and vice versa
- i. Active for passive and vice versa
- j. Errors in comparative constructions [13]

Punctuation errors, the following be put into consideration by writers:

- a. If full stop, quotation mark or exclamation mark is used in an expression, the first letter in the next expression must begin with a capital letter.
- b. The misuse of colon, semi-colon, comma must be put into consideration
- c. The use of small letter for personal pronoun 'I' must be avoided
- d. The use of small letter at the beginning of a proper noun or a sentence must be avoided
- e. Where a proper noun consists of more than one element, each of which is expected to begin with a capital letter must be written as expected, eg, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto.

1.10 Spelling Errors

Errors committed in spelling are usually taken into account under mechanical accuracy according to a marking rubric provided by an external examination body in Nigeria, the West African Examination Council (WAEC). Therefore, the writer must watch over every word written to ensure correctness.

Inability to write appropriately by students, especially those using English as a second language, has prompted researchers to seek alternatives to effective writing among students [14]. Studied literary hypertext in the foreign language classroom. The study explores if learners improve their written performance after having studied with literary hypertext in the foreign language classroom. This study also explores the effects of a collaborative narrative writing classroom on learners' confidence, and the development of autonomous learning. The participants in this case study were 13 second-year university students who studied German over a period of ten weeks. An output based approach and a communicative approach were adopted. The major instruments of the study were a website, created by the researcher, a questionnaire, and an interview. Students learned for ten weeks using computers that displayed literary hypertext. Students read extracts from novels in class as literary examples; then, they engaged in a pressure-free discussion about the texts they read. Afterwards, they wrote through Macromedia Dreamweaver, a major hypertext software.

The writing assignments were narrative writing. Students were encouraged to use forms and structures they had learnt from reading authentic literature. Moreover, students were free to choose individual or paired compositions according to their personal learning styles. The classroom activities were videoed as data. The results revealed that students' performance on grammatical competence was improved, particularly among intermediate and advanced learners. Furthermore, collaborative, narrative writing in hypertext format could stimulate motivation, confidence, and autonomy. The questionnaire and interview data revealed favorable attitudes toward literary hypertext. Therefore, [14] suggests using literary hypertext at every educational level, as it combines linguistics, IT (information technology) and literary skills. Research on the impact of a metacognitive learning strategy on the formal letter writing ability of senior secondary school students was conducted in Sokoto State, Nigeria by [1]. Five research questions, along with five null hypotheses, guided the conduct of the research. Ninety-five (95) students from SS11 in the state served as samples for the research. A quasi-experimental design was used where a pre-test, treatment, and post-test were conducted. Researchers developed a test instrument called the Formal Letter Writing Test

(FLEWT), which was used to collect data for the study. Two intact classes were used as experimental and control groups. The experimental group received instruction on formal letter writing with training on the cognitive strategy of learning. The control group received instruction on formal letter writing using the product approach to essay writing. The statistical tools used in the analysis of the data were mean, standard deviation, and t-test. Findings from the research revealed that students in the experimental group performed better than those in the control group. The researchers therefore concluded that metacognitive strategies can help improve students' formal letter writing ability.

[6] Investigated how the use of literary texts improves students' writing abilities. The researcher conducted the research among second year EFL undergraduate students at Djilali Liabes University of Sidi Bel Abbes, Algeria. Fifty (50) participants, comprised of both males and females, were sampled. The researcher had two groups: the control group and the experimental group. She taught the first group without literary texts on writing skills, while the second group was taught with literary texts. Pre-test and post-test scores were conducted for both groups, respectively. The researcher found out that, students who were taught writing with the use of literary texts performed better in writing, reading, and thinking. She therefore recommended that literary texts should be used in writing classes.

Another piece of research which investigates whether teaching writing through responding to literary texts yields different effects than responding to non-literary texts was carried out by [15]. The participants of the research were sixty (60) third-year hotel and tourism major students. The students were matched according to their previous grades in writing and randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups. The experimental group read the literary texts, short stories, as supplementary reading, while the control group read the non-literary texts as supplementary reading. The teaching methods of these two groups were similar. Students were required to read a supplementary text, discuss it in groups, and write journal entries. The experiment lasted for 16 weeks, from the end of October to the end of February. The writing test was developed by the researcher and was used as the pretest and post-test. Two types of rubrics were employed to measure the students' development in writing and critical thinking.

The TOEFL scoring writing rubric was used to discern the students' development in writing, while the holistic critical thinking rubric by [16] was used to investigate the students' development in critical thinking. T-unit analysis was used in terms of syntax as a part of the writing ability. The development of the overall writing, critical thinking, and syntactic abilities of the two groups of students was assessed by comparing their pretest scores and post-test scores; the dependent t-test was used. To determine whether the two types of reading texts had different effects on students' overall writing and syntactic abilities, the gains between pretest and post-tests of the two groups were compared. An independent t-test was used to test the significance of the difference. The analysis indicated that the writing and critical thinking abilities of the experimental group of students significantly improved. The students in the experimental group perform better in syntax, content, and organization of ideas than the participants in the control group.

The literature reviewed indicates clearly that measures put in place as alternatives for effective writing ability among students have a significant impact in ensuring academic excellence in writing. This present study attempts to focus on the neglected but significant rubrics for writing and how they can be used often in teaching creative writing to enhance students' use of correct expression, organization of ideas, and development of meaningful content in creative writing.

1.11 Research Methodology

The study adopted a quasi-experimental research design. A quasi-experimental research design was chosen because it is a means of generating reliable empirical data upon which conclusions and recommendations would be based. It uses alternative ways of assigning subjects to treatment and control groups. The design deals with such practical problems as how subjects were assigned to experimental and control groups, the way the variables were manipulated and controlled, the way extraneous variables were controlled, etc. Random assignment ensures that any characteristic of the subjects which may be associated with the outcome of interest will be distributed throughout the two groups according to the law of probability.

The study used secondary schools under the Sokoto State Teachers Service Board (SSTSB),

which consisted of 161 secondary schools across six educational zones, which included Bodinga, Goronyo, Gwadabawa, Sokoto North, Sokoto South, and Yabo). The study focused on Senior Secondary School two (SSS II) students in Sokoto, which consisted of 22,000 participants. The justification for using SSS 2 was that the class is not a beginner, nor is it an examination class that may disrupt the desired result from the research work. The study used simple random sampling techniques to select six (6) schools, two (2) schools from each educational zone. The study used a deliberate sampling technique to select a number of schools under the control and experimental groups. The justification for selecting six (6) schools was to give adequate time to the participants for enriching treatments within the stipulated time of the research.

The schools were selected because they have similar characteristics. A simple random sampling technique was used to ensure that every subject had an equal chance of being selected without being biased. The study used (Research Adviser, 2006) to select 364 participants out of the total population of 12,220 from the three educational zones selected. A proportionate sampling technique was used to determine the sample size required per school under study. It entails dividing the population of each school by the total population of the selected zones and multiplying the result by the sample size. The study used the Essay Writing Performance Test (EWPT) to collect data from the participants. It was a self-constructed instrument by the researcher, designed to achieve the appropriate results. The instrument contains one item, the item which is capable of treating variables such as expression, organization, and content. The items of the instrument were deliberately sorted out as appropriate for testing the students on the construct under study [17-19].

The research instrument was validated by experts in the field of Language Education and Curriculum in the department of Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology as well as other experts from the Departments of Educational Foundation, Faculty of Education and Extension Services, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria. Based on the expert advice, some items were modified, rearranged, and reconstructed in order to be in line with research questions and objectives. After the adjustments and corrections, the instrument was adjudged to have content validity.

In order to ascertain the reliability of the research instrument, a pilot test was conducted in which the research instrument was administered to thirty (30) participants (students) of Government Day Secondary School, Dundaye, which was not part of the sampled secondary schools. After an interval of 3 weeks, the same instrument was re-administered to the same participants as a retest method of reliability. Three weeks were used to ensure that participants did not remember how the initial instrument was answered. The scores of the test and retest were correlated and analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC), and the study had a reliability index of 0.76, which made the research instrument reliable for data collection.

1.12 Treatment

During the first week, tests were conducted in the participating schools to gather information about the subjects and the subject matter using the designed instrument as pre-test. This was to serve two purposes: to establish the equivalents of both experimental and control groups and also to establish baseline of the subjects' knowledge before the treatment. The second week was characterized by intensive teaching of creative writing for both groups in the participating schools. Definition of creative writing was examined, features of creative writing and ways of writing good creative essays were equally examined.

The third week of the study was utilized on writing rubrics as treatment for the experimental groups in the schools sampled, taking note on how it could improve correct use of expressions. Some grammatical errors that must be avoided were pointed out. Grammatical structures were equally treated, such as: simple, complex, compound, and various categories of sentences were examined.

The fourth and fifth weeks were used to teach the participants in the experimental groups how ideas could be organized and content developed with the help of writing rubrics. The researcher and his research assistant administered the research instrument to the participants of the secondary schools under study. The researcher, with the help from teachers of the secondary schools selected, arranged the participants according to groups for treatments and administration of tests.

The data was collected according to the following procedures: the researcher administered the instrument to the students first as a pretest, and that was followed by six weeks of treatment to both their experimental and control groups using different packages (the experimental group was asked to answer the written test based on the treatment given). The treatment was followed by immediate administration of the same instrument to the same respective groups as the post-test. The researcher ensured that adequate research instruments were produced according to the number of participants selected. Instruction was given to the students on how to answer the question in order to avoid errors, and the participants were conditioned under strict examination conditions to avoid examination malpractices. A maximum time of fifty (50) minutes was allotted for the participants to answer the research question, after which the researcher and his assistant retrieved the scripts from the participants accordingly. The scripts that were retrieved after the test were marked according to West African Examination Council (WAEC) standards, following the criteria for scoring essays. The eventual scores were collated as data for subsequent analysis.

2. RESULTS

Data collected from the study were presented and analyzed using the selected statistical tools i.e, means and standard deviations. The statistical instrument like (t-test) was used to test the three null hypotheses raised at 0.05 alpha levels of significance. The criterion for decision making was that if the value of alpha exceeds the p-value, the null hypothesis would be rejected, otherwise the null hypothesis would be retained. The analysis of data was done with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software 20.0 versions.

Data obtained from the study were presented and analysed using the selected statistical tools. The null hypotheses were tested using t-test statistical techniques at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The criterion for decision making was that if the value of alpha level exceeds the p-value, the null hypothesis would be rejected, otherwise, the null hypothesis would be retained

- H_{01} : There is no significant difference in content development of students taught using writing rubrics and the students in the control group taught without writing rubrics.

Table 1. T-test Result of Post-Test of the experimental and the control group in content

Variable	Group	N	M	SD	Df	T.cal	P.value	Decision
	Experiment	182	4.47	1.13				
Content	Control	182	2.13	1.14	362	20.05	.000	HO ₄ Rejected

(Alpha value= 0.05)

The result in Table 1 contained the performance of students in both experimental and control groups in content. The Figs. in the table show that the mean score of participants in experimental group was 4.47 while those in control group had a mean score of those in control group was 2.13 resulting in a mean difference of 2.34 in favour of the experimental group. The standard deviations were 1.13 for experimental group and 1.14 for the control group. The t-calculated was 20.05 while the p-value returned was .000 as against alpha value of 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis which stated that there was no significant difference in students' ability to develop content of the experimental group treated with drama text and the control group treated with conventional English text was thereby rejected. Thus, the use of drama text in narrative essay writing was effective in content aspect of narrative writing of junior secondary school students in Sokoto State.

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the organization of ideas of experimental group taught with writing rubrics and the control group taught without writing rubrics.

The data on Table 2 showed the performance of the participants in the experimental and the control groups on content organization of narrative essay writing. The mean scores for the participants in the experimental group were 4.54 while the control group had a mean score of 1.70 respectively with a mean difference of 2.84. The experimental group had a standard deviation of 1.11 while the control group recorded a standard deviation of 1.32. The t-calculated was 23.76 with a p-value of .000. Since the alpha value of 0.05 was greater than the p-value, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in students' ability to organize idea better of the Experimental Group treated with drama text and the Control Group treated without drama text was thereby rejected. Therefore, the treatment given through the use of drama text on narrative writing has improved students' ability to organize idea better in narrative essay writing.

HO₃: There is no significant difference in the performances of students in correct use of expression of the experimental group taught with writing rubrics and the control group taught without writing rubrics.

Table 3 presented the data related to null hypothesis iii. The table showed that the mean score of the experimental group in expression was 8.59 with standard deviation of 1.79. The control group on the other hand recorded a mean score of 3.46 and a standard deviation of 1.97 with a mean score difference of 5.13. The t-calculated was 27.21 with p-value of .000. when compared to the alpha value of 0.05 set for the study, the result indicated that since the p-value is less than the 0.05 apha level of significance, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the expression of the Experimental Group treated with writing rubrics and the Control Group treated without writing rubrics was rejected. Based on this, the use of writing rubrics is considered to have improved the expression aspect of writing among senior secondary school students in Sokoto State.

The following are the summary of the major findings:

- i. The study found out that there was significant statistical difference in the performance of the SS II students in Experimental and Control Groups in content development. Students in the Experimental Group were able to develop content better than the students in the Control Group. The study found out that the use of writing rubrics helps students' ability to develop content better in creative writing.
- ii. The study found out that there was significant difference in the performance of SS II students in the Experimental and the Control Group under the organization of idea. The participants in the Experimental Group were able to perform better than Control Group as a result of the treatment the Group was exposed to. Writing rubrics was found to enhance student's ability to properly organize thought and ideas better in creative writing.

Table 2. T-Test result of post-test of the experimental and the control group in organization

Variable	Group	N	M	SD	Df	T.cal	P. value	Decision
Organization	Experiment	182	4.54	1.11	362	23.76	.000	HO ₃ Rejected
	Control	182	1.70	1.32				

(Alpha value= 0.05)

Table 3. T-Test result of post-test of the experimental and the control group in expression

Variable	Group	N	M	SD	Df	T.cal	P.value	Decision
Expression	Experiment	182	8.59	1.79	362	27.21	.000	HO ₂ Rejected
	Control	182	3.46	1.97				

(Alpha value= 0.05)

- iii. The study found out that the SS II students did not perform as expected under the variable of expression. However, the Experimental Group exposed to the use of writing rubrics recorded a statistical improvement in their use of correct expression. It is therefore in line to draw a conclusion that the use of writing rubrics in teaching writing improves students' use of correct expressions.

3. DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that there was improvement in the performance of the students in the experimental group in their ability to develop content better in creative writing. This is because the use of writing rubrics in teaching creative writing enhances teachers' effort to logically concede ideas to the students' cognitive ability. The findings are in line with the findings of [15], who found that the use of literary texts helps students to gather enough of what they know from the knowledge and experience of what they have read to develop their own ideas in a meaningful context through critical thinking.

Similarly, the second finding indicates that writing rubrics were found to enhance students' ability to properly organize thoughts and ideas in narrative essay writing. An improvement was noticed in the use of different words that link individual sentences and parts of sentences to form larger paragraphs. Events were logically and chronologically presented. This is because the use of writing rubrics in creative writing ensures thoughts and ideas are sequentially organized to enhance students' ability to easily and better understand. This finding agreed with the findings of Maya (2018), who found that the use of rubrics in creative writing enhances students' ability to coherently, aesthetically, and sequentially

organize ideas unambiguously [1]. Also found out that metacognitive strategy facilitated the content organization aspect of formal letter writing ability.

The results of the third finding showed that the use of writing rubrics has improved students' use of correct expression in creative writing. This is because the use of rubrics in creative writing is an invaluable tool for students' improvement in expression. The participants in the experimental group were able to use a range of vocabulary acquired and correct grammatical structures when compared with the participants in the control group. This finding was supported by the findings made by [14], who found that the use of authentic literature as an alternative to improving writing in teaching students' essays has over the years had a positive impact on students' expression. He supported the view that using authentic literature improves students' use of correct expression and grammatical competence.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the study's findings, it is concluded that employing writing rubrics in creative writing classes would help students write better in terms of content development, arrangement of ideas, and use of appropriate expression. Students who are taught utilizing writing rubrics have an edge over students who are taught the same topic using a traditional teaching style. This could be due to the fact that writing rubrics are simple to use and explain; they make teachers' expectations very clear; they provide students with more informative feedback about their strengths and weaknesses; they make the instructional process flexible; they support skill development; they support understanding development; and they promote critical thinking skills.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of the research, the following recommendations are projected:

1. It was established by the study that the use of writing rubrics in teaching creative essay writing has improved students' general performance in creative essay writing among the SSS II students in Sokoto State. In view of this, the Sokoto State Government should, through its Ministry of Education, organize a workshop for all the teachers teaching English language on the use of writing rubrics in teaching creative writing across the state.
2. Improvement was recorded in the proper use of vocabulary and correct expression among the students. It will be a credit to students and teachers if the use of writing rubrics in teaching creative essays is introduced not only at the senior secondary level, but also at the elementary and junior secondary levels, to address language usage deficiencies.
3. It was established by the study that there was an achievement in the proper organization of ideas and the ability to develop content better in essay writing among SS II students. Therefore, teachers teaching creative essay writing in secondary schools should incorporate writing rubrics to buttress how ideas are organized and content is developed in creative essays.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
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