

EFFECTS OF PEER REVIEW STRATEGY ON NIGERIA CERTIFICATE IN EDUCATION STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN DESCRIPTIVE COMPOSITION IN NORTH CENTRAL, NIGERIA

Abigail Chuwang Garridau

Department of Arts Education

Faculty of Education

University of Jos Nigeria.

&

Prof. Timothy O. Oyetunde

Department of Arts Education

Faculty of Education

University of Jos Nigeria.

Abstract

This study investigated the Effects of Peer Review Strategy on Nigeria Certificate in Education Students' Achievement in Descriptive Composition in North Central Nigeria. The study employed the quasi-experimental design of pre-test and post-test. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study included all the all the 517 English major NCE II students in English departments of the only three Federal Colleges of Education in North Central Nigeria which are FCE Pankshin, Plateau State, FCE Kontagora, Niger State and FCE Okene, Kogi State. The sample of this study consisted of two Federal Colleges of Education from North Central Nigeria comprising FCE Pankshin and FCE Kontagora. Ninety-five (95) students drawn from English departments were used as a sample. Fifty (50) students from FCE Pankshin made up the experimental group while the other 45 from FCE Kontagora made up the control group. One instrument was used for data collection titled: Composition Writing Achievement Test (CWAT). Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. On the other hand, analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance. Results of the study showed remarkable significant effects of using peer review strategy to improve composition writing skills of the experimental group. The results of the study revealed that students in the experimental group achieved better than the control group in the ability to use, compose correct sentences, use capital letters appropriately in constructing sentences, write coherent paragraphs and observe subject-verb agreement rules in descriptive composition writing. This was revealed in the higher mean scores of all the three skills tested after treatment using peer review strategy as against those in the control group with lower mean scores. It was therefore recommended that English language teachers can implement the peer review strategy in teaching composition writing to their learners especially those at the tertiary level.

Key Words: Peer Review Strategy, Descriptive Composition, Nigeria Certificate in Education

INTRODUCTION

Composition writing, among other skills, is often considered as the most difficult skill to learn because it requires the acquisition of skills that have mental, psychological, rhetorical and critical dimensions. In addition, students need to adhere to good command of the English language. In this case, written communication is very formal and therefore needs to follow rules of grammar correctly. In addition, students have less experience with written expression. Some students might find it difficult to write compositions because written language takes on many different registers depending on the function of the written word. Asmara (2015) notes that learning to write in the foreign language is often considered one of the most difficult aspects of language learning. This is because they are not used to the writing process. It implies that students need to increase their composition writing skill for many purposes in their lives besides their school achievement. They might deal with many works that contain writing in their different occupations.

Most professional communication such as writing proposals, memos, reports, application letters, preliminary interviews, e-mails, among others are done in writing and are part of the daily life of a college, polytechnic or university student. Effective composition writing skills are therefore central in both higher education and in the world of work that students may find themselves in future. Proper writing shows that students can communicate in a professional manner. Hence, they should know how to express their thoughts about their observations through professional writing. Again, Students' achievement in composition writing can affect their achievement in other subjects. When students are good at composition writing, they could get good grades in other subjects. Zafar (2022) submits that good composition writing skills will help learners to achieve better scores in college. By implication, when students cannot express themselves in writing, they may not be good at subjects like Social Studies, Literature in English, History, Biology, Mathematics, among others. Consequently, because composition writing is indispensable for students generally, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (2020) in its minimum standard states that the main objective of composition at the Nigeria Certificate in Education is to enable students to compose and write efficiently in the English language. In view of the fact that composition writing is important, it is worrisome to note that students' performance in composition writing in both internal and external examinations has been poor. Some students are not able to develop thesis statements correctly, are not able to write coherent paragraphs and are unable to use subject verb agreement rules correctly

due to their low proficiency in composition writing. According to Arju (2016), students at all levels of education have problems with composition writing as they are unable to organise their ideas logically and this affects their performance. One of the serious challenges facing composition writing instruction is that many teachers do not know how to teach it. Some English language teachers still use teacher-centred methods which make students passive listeners, while some teachers scarcely give feedback due to large classes (Polisda, 2017).

Teachers encounter difficulties marking students' scripts during composition writing. Sometimes, teachers' feedback includes underlining wrong expressions with red pen, cancelling some wrong expressions altogether, circling of wrong spellings, inconsistent marking of errors or vague responses on content, without properly guiding learners to write compositions, among others as a result of large classes (Wind, 2017). These affect students' writing ability negatively. In this type of situation, students become frustrated, confused, passive and disappointed at composition writing. According to Sahle, Siawkand Gebremariam (2021), majority of students will be dissatisfied with this kind of feedback they receive because it focuses on criticising and finding flaws rather than building. It has also become relatively difficult for most teachers to give students enough assignments in composition writing because the student ratio is far higher than the teacher ratio. For example, Nigeria Certificate in Education 2 English language students of Federal College of Education Pankshin 2023/2024 session is four hundred. Because of this large population, teachers teaching composition in this college can find it difficult to give students feedback and this can make students to have difficulties in writing compositions.

When learners lack creative ideas and vocabulary, are faced with writing anxiety, have weak structural organisation and dependence on L1, they will perform very low in composition writing. As a result of these challenges, English language teachers and linguists have been debating on the best approach to use in composition writing in order to develop students' composition writing skills. Wind (2017) advocates the use of peer review for teaching composition writing to learners of English as a second language due to its usefulness. According to Wind, this strategy gives students the opportunity to learn from one another, it is interactive in nature and gives opportunity to second language learners to develop their composition writing skills. Similarly, Sahle, Siawkand Gebremariam (2021) also recommend the use of peer review in composition writing in schools and colleges. According to the authors, peer review engages students in their writing process which is a

crucial issue for the development of their L2 writing performance. It is in response to the challenges teachers and students face with the teaching and learning of composition writing that the present researcher was prompted to study the Effects of Peer Review Strategy on Students' Achievement in Descriptive Composition in North Central, Nigeria.

THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on Vygotsky's Socio-cultural theory of Cognitive Development. The theory states that social interaction and collaborative dialogue play a critical role in the development of cognition and learning. As a psychologist, Vygotsky (1978) was the first to examine how children's social interactions influence their cognitive growth. The propounder was convinced that learning is a social process influenced by interactions and discussions among individuals in the communities: peers, adults, teachers and other mentors. Because learning occurs through interactions, Vygotsky encouraged more interactive activities to promote cognitive growth such as productive discussions, constructive feedback and collaboration with others. The concept of the relationship between development and education led Vygotsky to introduce the notion of 'the zone of proximal development' (ZPD) as the gap between actual and potential development. Vygotsky pointed here that interactions with other peers will help learners achieve their full potential.

Literature Review

There are a number of terms that are used interchangeably to refer to peer review such as peer feedback, peer written corrective feedback, peer evaluation, peer revision, peer suggestion, peer assessment and peer response, however, all of them share the same idea where students offer constructive criticism after reading and evaluating each other's work. It is a way of helping students to improve on their writing by providing comments, corrections, opinions, ideas and suggestions and this gives students the opportunities to learn from each other. This form of assessment is made by learners of similar status. According to Elfiyanto and Fukazawa (2021), peer written corrective feedback, peer review, peer editing or peer feedback mean the same thing and this refers to putting students together in groups and then having each student read and react to the strength and weaknesses of each other's papers. The assessor examines the strengths and weaknesses of a particular performance at length and recommends further enhancement.

Peer review is conducted while the students' composition writings are under development. The responses in peer review could be in written and spoken. Written responses allow the peer reviewer to create appropriate responses and the student writer to refer to them after the review session while spoken responses stimulate more ideas and collaboration. Gulya (2023) submits that peer review is a common practice in academic writing, where students exchange drafts of their papers and provide comments and suggestions to each other. This practice can be a valuable source of learning and improvement on composition writing though it also poses some challenges and risks.

In addition, peer review utilises trained peer reviewers to provide their peers with comments regarding their writings in either written or oral form. A key aspect of writing process approach is the importance of seeking and responding to the feedback of others while a text is under development. Feedback on students' drafts may take the form of oral or written comments by peers or the lecturer designed to guide students in their revision. With training and practice, students can fruitfully engage in peer review which can help them develop their critical faculties and understand how other readers respond to their writing.

For advanced or postgraduate students, engaging in peer review can function as a rehearsal for the peer review that occurs in professional academic settings. In order for peer review to be successful, lecturers need to explain and ideally model it, whether students engage in peer review during lecture time or on their own. Peer review can occur within pairs or small groups that may be set up to do one assignment or to work together over an extended period. These groups or pairs could also work together throughout the pre-writing and organising stages of writing to help each other develop plans for writing. In any case, students should provide each other with copies of the text for peers to review in advance. If peer review occurs during lectures, a fair amount of time should be allotted for the process, as it is time-consuming. One option is to go through the process once during a lecture and subsequently for students to meet informally for peer review sessions.

The final stages of writing consist of editing, proofreading and polishing a text. Here, students should attend to the mechanics of writing, including formatting, references and issues of linguistic accuracy. Again students can work in pairs to review each other's work. Students may be encouraged to use computer spelling check programmes but not to limit their review of errors to those noted by the computer. All students may benefit from the information and examples of usage

given in dictionaries and reference books written for non-native English speakers. Peer review that allows students to respond and correct each other's written output may make sense to many language teachers and student writers. This is based on the demand that the teachers should focus not only on the product, but also on the process- the steps taken by students to achieve a final copy.

Using peer feedback as a model in process writing has become popular in teaching English language skills. This is in agreement with the growing focus on peer and collaborative learning that cater for the real processes experienced by students while writing and lead to creativity. This model involves collaborative learning in which students review and evaluate each other's writing and offer each other's with feedback. On the part of teachers, peer review lessens their workload so that they can give their learners enough assignments on composition and also give the students feedback. Peer review refers to the suggestions or comments, questions or inquiries that learners offer each other after reading a draft with the aim of producing a good piece. The learners become editors that comment on and critique each other's drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing. Learners assume roles and responsibilities normally taken on by formally trained teachers or tutors. In other words, peer review refers to engaging learners in the process of sharing their ideas and receiving as well as offering constructive comments and suggestions for improving a piece of writing. In this model of learning, learners have great responsibility for their learning as we are moving from teacher centred to learner-centred approaches to teaching and learning. Liu and Hansen as cited in Farrah (2012) further reiterate that the process of providing feedback on peers' work increases the opportunity of meaningful interaction with peers and maximises the opportunity of sharing new ideas as well as understanding different perspectives on the writing process. It is also believed that peer review has the potential of improving students' perceptions of learning from their classmates and thereby improving viewing their knowledge of writing.

Peer review in composition writing has some advantages as Polisda (2017) comments that it provides an opportunity for the students to experience cooperative learning and cooperative learning can certainly be done due to uniqueness of the brain. The writer further states that teachers can address this uniqueness by allowing students to work with peers to assess their own works. Furthermore, in cooperative learning, the students share and defend ideas to one another and are motivated to increase the learning of others. This sharing and defending ideas leads to cooperation to arrive at one idea, at correction, and at improvement of the students' own writing. In short, peer

review in writing allows students to experience the peer cooperation for the improvement of their own writing. Moreover, peer review is a stress-reduced activity. Students may check, discuss, and evaluate their work with peer students without being afraid of the grade from teachers (Polisda, 2017). In such activities, students are free to share and defend their ideas for the improvement of their writing. If the students make many mistakes, for example, the mistakes will not influence their grade. Therefore, peer review is an enjoyable activity.

Another advantage of peer review according to Polisda (2017), is that it helps students to be self-reviewer by correcting friends' grammatical mistakes. Some grammatical mistakes, for example, word forms, diction, spelling, functional position of words, punctuation and conjunctions, are some common mistakes made by many students and are easily found and are corrected by peer students. With such mistakes readers find it difficult to get the idea of the students' overall writing and the students, therefore, have to learn to reduce them through peer review. Learning to reduce the grammatical mistakes in peer review can be done by finding and correcting friends' mistakes. Finding and correcting peer' work is just like finding and correcting the students' own mistakes. Hence, peer review helps students become proficient-self editors.

Good composition writing requires practice and adequate feedback, which many language teachers have de-emphasised. In addition, students are rarely able to assess the quality of their own writing; they are usually not taught how to evaluate their work and are unaware of the criteria teachers use in grading it. A key aspect of writing process approaches is the importance of seeking and responding to the feedback of others while a text is under development. Feedback on students' drafts may take the form of oral or written comments by peers or the lecturer designed to guide students in their revisions. Peer review or peer feedback develops the students' critical ability. This occurs when students have to read their peers work, reflect about its qualities and formulate constructive and helpful feedback, they have to think critically about what they are reading. Hence, peer review is formative in the sense that it can be utilised by the peer to improve subsequent writing.

Peer review encourages students to be active in classroom activities. According to Flower et al in Huisman, Nadira, Driel and Broek(2017), providing peer feedback is considered beneficial to students' writing as it stimulates them to actively consider the task-specific processes and criteria.

The authors comment that three specific processes come into play when a student reviews a text. First, there is problem detection. Second, there is problem diagnosis, which helps to improve writing when potential revision strategies are not obvious, that is, do not involve relatively straightforward corrections or rewriting. Third, strategies for revision concern actions that follow problem detection and diagnosis. The act of providing peer feedback triggers students to engage in problem detection, and can stimulate them to engage in problem diagnosis and subsequently contemplate solutions and suggest revisions. As a result, students who provide peer feedback gain experience in problem detection, may become more aware of (types of) writing problems, and may discover different revision strategies. Similarly, Patchan and Schunn (2015) explain that feedback processes include students taking different perspectives, comparing others' work to their own and the assimilation of new knowledge, which can be coherently referred to as reflective knowledge building. This shows that students who provide feedback achieve a better understanding of the characteristics of good writing by assessing and commenting on their peers' writings.

Peer review is a key strategy in writing process. According to Alrubail (2015), one of the most powerful elements throughout the writing process is peer response. The author attributes this to the benefit that is inherent in peer review. The author further adds that peer review provides a meta-cognitive process of learning in that both the students and the teachers are able to receive feedback. Teachers will receive feedback on their pedagogical practice. Students benefit from peer feedback in that they are able to teach others about the tasks and provide feedback that they would consider relevant. In seeing that their peer feedback is relevant, students will be more engaged and interested in working to complete the task successfully. Peer review also gives students an opportunity to have their voices heard, and to listen to each other. It is often easier for people to understand concepts from people who are similar in age as they are.

At tertiary level, students often recognise peer review as understandable and helpful because they feel that their fellow students are in the same situation and condition and this can boost their performance. From another point of view, peer review is faster to reach the students because some teachers' feedback is often delayed after submitting a task or test, and sometimes is not provided until the topic has changed. Therefore, even if imperfect review from a fellow student presented almost directly may have much more influence than perfect review from a teacher which may be given many weeks afterward. Hence, practicing peer feedback allows students to receive more

individual comments as well as giving reviewers the opportunity to practice and develop different language skills apart from composition writing.

Richardson (2023) has summarised the benefits of peer review to include helping English language learners to improve their composition writing skills, improve their grades, improve their communication skills, improve their critical thinking skills, learn new ways of thinking and teaches them how to work together on a common task, improve their research skills, improve their grammar skills, improve their spelling skills, improve their vocabulary skills and build their confidence in writing.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of NCE II students' ability to use capital letters when constructing sentences in descriptive composition?
2. What are the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of NCE II students' ability to produce coherent paragraphs in the experimental and control groups?
3. What are the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of NCE II students' ability to observe subject-verb agreement rules in the experimental and control groups?

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of NCE II students' ability to use capital letters when constructing sentences in a descriptive composition in the experimental and control groups.
2. There is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of NCE II students' ability to produce coherent paragraphs in a descriptive composition in the experimental and control groups.
3. There is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of NCE II students' ability to use subject-verb agreement rules in a descriptive composition in the experimental and control groups.

Methodology

Quasi experimental pre-test and post-test non-equivalent control group design was employed in this research. The population of the study consisted of all the 517 English major NCE II

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students in English departments of the only three Federal Colleges of Education in North Central Nigeria which are FCE Pankshin, Plateau State, FCE Kontagora, Niger State and FCE Okene, Kogi State. A of sample of Ninety-five (95) students drawn from English departments were used. Fifty (50) students from FCE Pankshin made up the experimental group while the other 45 from FCE Kontagora made up the control group. The experimental group was taught descriptive composition using the peer review strategy while the control group was taught the same descriptive composition using conventional method. The two groups were given the same pre-test and post-test. The method of data analysis that was employed was descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. On the other hand, analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses formulated.

RESULTS

Answering of Research Questions

Research Question One: What are the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of NCE II students' ability to use capital letters when constructing sentences in descriptive composition?

Table 1 contains the result of analysis for research question 1.

Table 1

Pre-test and Post-test Achievement Mean Scores of NCE II Students' Ability to Use Capital Letters when Constructing Sentences in Descriptive Composition in the Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean	Mean	Mean	
	N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Gain	Difference	Difference
Experimental	50	6.12	2.01	9.38	2.31	3.26	1.51	2.27
Control	45	5.36	1.87	7.11	1.77	1.75		

Table 1 shows the results of pre-test and post-test mean scores of NCE II students' ability to use capital letters when constructing sentences in descriptive composition in the experimental and control groups. The result for the experimental group shows that the pre-test mean score is 6.12 with the standard deviation of 2.01, while the post-test mean score is 9.38 with a standard deviation of 2.31 and a mean gain of 3.26. This indicates that there was an improvement in the students' ability to use capital letters when constructing sentences in descriptive composition after exposure to instruction in peer review. In the control group, there was a mean score of 5.36 in the pre-test with a standard deviation of 1.87 and a mean gain of 1.75. It then means that students in the experimental group had a higher achievement mean score after treatment using instruction in peer review as against those in the control group, with a post-test mean difference of 2.27. This implies that instruction in peer review does increase students' ability to use capital letters when constructing sentences in descriptive composition.

Research Question Two

What are the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of NCE II students' ability to produce coherent paragraphs in the experimental and control groups?

Table 2 shows the result of research question two.

Table 10

Pre-test and Post-test Achievement Mean Score of NCE II Students' Ability to Produce Coherent Paragraphs in Descriptive Composition in the Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean	Mean	Mean	
	N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Gain	Difference	Difference
Experimental	50	7.02	1.78	11.44	2.47	4.42		
							2.84	4.46
Control	45	5.40	1.66	6.98	1.69	1.58		

Table 2 presents the results of pre-test and post-test mean scores of NCE II students ability to produce coherent paragraphs in descriptive composition in the experimental and control groups. The result for the experimental group shows that the pre-test mean score is 7.02 with the standard deviation of 1.78, while the post-test mean score is 11.44 with a standard deviation of 2.47 with mean gain of 4.42 indicating that there was an improvement of students' ability to produce coherent paragraphs in descriptive composition after exposure to instruction in peer review. In the control group, there was a mean score of 5.40 in the pre-test with a standard deviation of 1.66 with a mean gain of 1.58. It then means that students in the experimental group had a higher achievement mean score after treatment using instruction in peer review as against those in control group who were not given the treatment, with a mean gain difference of 2.84 and a post-test mean difference of 4.46. This implies that instruction in peer review does increase students' achievement in ability to produce coherent paragraphs in descriptive composition.

Research Question Three

What are the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores in ability to observe subject-verb agreement rules for NCE II students in the experimental and control groups?

Table 3 contains the result of research question three.

Table 3

Pre-test and Post-test Achievement Mean Score of NCE II Students' Ability to Observe Subject-Verb Agreement Rules in Descriptive Composition

Group	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean Gain	Mean Difference	Post-test mean difference
	N	Mean	SD	Mean			
Experimental	50	7.02	1.78	10.58	2.89	3.56	
							2.1
Control	45	5.76	1.51	7.22	1.38	1.46	3.36

Table 3 presents the results of pre-test and post-test mean score of NCE II students' ability to observe subject-verb agreement rules in descriptive composition in the experimental and control

groups. The result for the experimental group shows that the pre-test means scores was 7.02 with the standard deviation of 1.78, while the post-test mean score was 10.58, with a standard deviation of 2.89 and mean gain of 3.56, indicating that there was an improvement in the achievement of students after exposure to instruction in peer review. In the control group, the mean score was 5.76 with a standard deviation of 1.51 for the pre-test. In the post-test, the mean score was 7.22 with a standard deviation of 1.38 with a mean gain of 1.46. It then means that students in the experimental group had a higher achievement of students' ability to use subject verb agreement rules in descriptive composition after treatment using instruction in peer review as against those in control group, with apost-test mean difference of 2.1 and a mean gain difference of 3.36. This implies that instruction in peer review does increase students' achievement in ability to use subject verb agreement rules in descriptive composition.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

Table 4 shows the result of hypothesis one.

Table 4

Summary of ANCOVA Result on Post-test Ability to Use Capital Letters when Constructing Sentences Mean Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	332.260 ^a	2	166.130	80.489	.000
Intercept	139.144	1	139.144	67.415	.000
Pre-test	210.337	1	210.337	101.908	.000
Group	64.132	1	64.132	31.072	.000

Error	189.888	92	2.064
Total	7075.000	95	
Corrected Total	522.147	94	

a. R Squared = .636 (Adjusted R Squared = .628)

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine if a significant difference exists in the pre-test and post-test ability to use capital letters correctly when constructing sentences in the experimental and control groups. Table 4 shows that $F(1, 92) = 31.07, P < 0.05$. Since the p-value of .000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that, there was a significant effect of instruction in peer review on students' ability to use capital letters in constructing sentences in descriptive composition in the experimental group. The result further reveals an adjusted R squared value of .628 which means that 62.8 percent of the variation in the dependent variable which is students' ability to use capital letters in constructing sentences in descriptive composition is explained by variation in the treatment of instruction in peer review while, the remaining is due to other factors not included in this study. This implies that there is a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of NCE II students ability to use capital letters when constructing sentences in a descriptive composition in the experimental and control groups.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of NCE II students ability to produce coherent paragraphs in a descriptive composition in the experimental and control groups.

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was employed in testing hypothesis two as presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Summary of ANCOVA Result on Post-test Ability to Produce Coherent Paragraphs Mean Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Corrected Model	675.191	2	337.595	141.373	.000
Intercept	99.742	1	99.742	41.769	.000
Pre-test	203.604	1	203.604	85.263	.000
Group	182.195	1	182.195	76.297	.000
Error	219.693	92	2.388		
Total	9158.000	95			
Corrected Total	894.884	94			

a. R Squared = .755 (Adjusted R Squared = .749)

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine if a significant difference exists in the pre-test and post-test ability of NCE II students to produce coherent paragraphs in descriptive composition in the experimental and control groups. Table 5 shows that $F(1, 92) = 76.30$, $P < 0.05$. Since the p-value of .000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. It indicates that, instruction in peer review does improve students' ability to produce coherent paragraphs in descriptive composition. The result further reveals an adjusted R squared value of .749 which means that 74.9 percent of the variation in the dependent variable which is students' ability to produce coherent paragraphs in descriptive composition is explained by variation in the treatment of instruction in peer review while, the remaining is due to other factors not included in this study. Hence, it implies that there is a significant difference in the pre-test and

post-test achievement mean scores of NCE II students ability to produce coherent paragraphs in a descriptive composition in the experimental and control groups.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of NCE II students ability to observe subject-verb agreement rules in a descriptive composition in the experimental and control groups.

Analysis of variance of covariance (ANCOVA) was employed in testing the hypothesis on the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of NCE II students' ability to observe subject-verb agreement rules in a descriptive composition in the experimental and control groups as presented in Table 6.

Table 6

ANCOVA Result on Post-test Ability to Observe Subject-Verb Agreement Rules in Descriptive Composition Mean Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Corrected Model	474.494 ^a	2	237.247	76.721	.000
Intercept	117.333	1	117.333	37.943	.000
Pre-test	207.463	1	207.463	67.089	.000
Group	223.398	1	223.398	72.242	.000
Error	284.495	92	3.092		
Total	8436.000	95			
Corrected Total	758.989	94			

a. R Squared = .625 (Adjusted R Squared = .617)

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine if a significant difference exists in the pre-test and post-test ability of NCE II students to observe subject-verb agreement rules in descriptive composition in the experimental and control groups. It shows that $F(1, 92) = 72.24$, $P < 0.05$. Since the p-value of .000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that, there was a significant effect of instruction in peer review on students' ability to use subject verb agreement rules in descriptive composition in the experimental group. The result further reveals an adjusted R squared value of .617 which means that 61.7 percent of the variation in the dependent variable which is students' ability to use subject verb agreement rules in descriptive composition is explained by variation in the treatment of instruction in peer review while, the remaining is due to other factors not included in this study. Hence, there is a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of NCE II students' ability to observe subject-verb agreement rules in a descriptive composition in the experimental and control groups.

Discussion

The study investigated the effects of peer review strategy on Nigeria Certificate in Education students' achievement in descriptive composition in North Central Nigeria. Composition writing is an important skill that is of great benefit to learners of English as a second language. It makes them to be creative, develops their critical thinking, helps them to organise thoughts, improves their communication skills, expands their vocabulary, makes them to obtain good grades and above all gives them opportunity to get employment. However, students generally face challenges with it in secondary and tertiary levels of education and this results to poor achievement in their education. Before the treatment in this study, the pre-test mean scores in the experimental and control groups were poor. Many students had challenges using capital letters correctly, writing coherent paragraphs and observing rules of subject-verb agreement. After using peer review strategy to train experimental group, their mean scores improved remarkably.

First, there was a significant difference in the achievement mean scores of NCE II students in the ability to use capital letters correctly when constructing sentences in descriptive composition in the experimental and control groups. This finding is in line with Alo and Tibus (2021) who revealed that peer review method improves students' use of capitalisation in composition writing. The present

study is consistent with Polisda (2017) and Bolourchi and Soleimani (2021) who revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group due to the implementation of peer feedback in composition writing.

In addition, the findings revealed that students in the experimental group had a higher mean score in the ability to produce coherent paragraphs after treatment in peer review as against those in control group who were not given treatment in peer review. There was a significant difference in their achievement mean scores. The present finding is consistent with the ones of Alo and Tibus(2021) who revealed that peer review method improves paragraph writing skills where students are able to write their compositions coherently.

Finally, the results showed a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test achievement mean score of NCE II students' ability to observe subject-verb agreement rules after treatment using instruction in peer review as against those in the control group. The finding of this study is consistent with Suryani, Rozimela and Anwar (2019) who argued that students who are taught composition writing using peer feedback have better writing skills, for instance, observing subject-verb agreement rules, than the students who are given teacher feedback. This is because it provides useful feedback and students could revise their own writing by reading others' writing as critical readers.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that peer review strategy improves students' learning of composition writing skills.

Recommendations

Based on the positive effects of peer review on the achievement of students in composition writing, English language teachers can implement the peer review strategy in teaching composition writing to their learners especially those at the tertiary level because of its usefulness in English language teaching and learning.

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