

Relationship between the Performance of Students in English Language and Literature-in-English at Senior Secondary School Certificate Level

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Abstract

English language is an important legacy bequeathed us by the colonial master. It has since become an important subject in school curriculum. Researchers have been keenly interested in its teaching and learning and proffering suggestion for improvement. The relationship between English Language and Literature-in-English as always been a controversial issue. To this end, this research is set to empirically establish the relationship, if any, between the performance of student in English Language and Literature-in-English at senior school certificate level. One senior school certificate results of student in English language and literature in English from seven secondary schools in Ikere Local Government of Ekiti State within five were used. Pearson (r) was used to analyze the data. The results indicated that there was high positive relationship between scores in English language and Literature in English in all selected schools. Conversely there was no significant relationship between the subjects' scores in English Language and Literature in English language in the mixed schools. Likewise, there was positive significant relationship between students scores in English language and literature in English in the boys' school, no significant relationship exist in the girls' school. It is therefore recommended that students should be encouraged to develop interest in literature by reading novels. Teachers should also be interested in the teaching of literature as a integral part of language. The policy makers should make literature a compulsory subject in upper classes as obtained in junior secondary schools.

Introduction

English language can be said to be a Nigeria language in the sense that it plays an important communication role in country. Mahfouz (2003) posits language as a catalyst for a nation's continual existence. It has a medium of social interaction, the language of education and a means of official transaction. Bamgbose (1971) stated that English language is used for the purpose of keeping government records, issuing administrative instructions and writing minutes. It has also remained the language of commerce, business records, contacts, newspapers, radio and television. In social gatherings, English language is often used as a means of communication an expression in such instances like parties, naming ceremonies, weddings, etc.

And according to Olowoyeye and Afe (2005) English also serves as language of nationalism concerned with political integration and efficiency.

Today, it seems students are no more interested in English language. This attitude reflects in the way they go into examination hall unprepared, hence their usual saying "W.A.EC gave me F9". They believe that English language is not their mother-tongue and as a result poses difficulty to them.

English language and literature are interrelated subjects. They are related and joined together like Siamese babies who cannot be separated by any means. English language and literature are subjects in the curriculum in our secondary schools English as a prominent subject is made, compulsory not only because the child needs it to acquire knowledge at certain level of his education but because it is widely spoken all over the country. The implication is that the average Nigerian needs the language to be able to function well in society. Literature is also studied and examined at secondary schools level.

There are various definition given to language by authorities. Scott (1967) saw language as an entity on its own, which is different from anything else we engage in. It is something we participate in, not merely a subject to learn about. He also saw language as part of human behavior. Chapman (1973) opined that language is an observable phenomenon of human activity both in its general principles and in the particular realizations. The entities and structures of language are always so elaborate as to give the speaker the responsibility of making linguistic response to many experiences. Thus, it could be summed up that every language is a model of culture and its adjustment to the world.

Olowoyeye (2004) sees language as a code whereby ideas about the world are represented through a conventional system of arbitrary signals. The speaker and hearer of a language must know about objects and

events in the world. Language is a system because the ways in which the sounds combined by a system of rule. It is conventional because people speaking in a language agree among themselves that certain forms correspond with certain content and can be used in specific ways.

Like language, literature has so many definitions given by experts. Palmer (1968) saw literature has the application of linguistic science but not the science of language itself, but saw it as artificial side of language. He saw literature as having aesthetic value and so is best thought of along with music, painting, and sculpture as one of the fine arts. Literature differs from other arts by virtue of the fact that it employs the use of language while others do not.

Moody (1975), saw literature as something that gives pleasure as well as entertain those who voluntarily attend to it.

Conclusively, literature is the totality of human experience in social and cultural environment. That is to say literature is life and life is literature from the above definition of language and literature, one sees that two subject are interrelated in almost all ways.

The all-encompassing influence of English language, nonetheless, can not be over emphasized. Therefore students should be motivated by all means to be interested and improved in the mastery of subject. Literature which is its correlate could go a long way in boosting the mastery of the subject. Therefore this research is set to ascertain the extent of the influence of literature in English language.

Research hypotheses

In order to analyze the relationships that exist between English language and literature in English, the research is set to test the following hypotheses.

HO1 There is no significant relationship between the performance of students in English language and literature in English in all the selected schools.

HO2 There is significant relationship between the performance of students in English language and literature in English in the mixed school.

HO3 There is no significant relationship between the performance of students in English language and literature in English in the boy's school.

HO4 There is no significant relationship between the performance of students in English language and literature in English in girls' school.

Research Design: This is a correlational study examination on English language.

Population: The population for this research comprises of final year students of SCCE in even secondary school in Ikere Local Government of Ekiti State.

The subject were sub divided into two groups comprising mixed and single (boys/girls).

Procedure for data collection- Since the study was purely based on subject's performance on the standard examination, the researcher went and collected data from the sampled school and at the same time collected subject's scores from the principals of the selected schools.

Procedure for data analysis- The data collected were analyzed using Pearson (r) correlation.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the performance of students in English language and literature in English in all the selected schools.

Calculated r – value between subjects' scores in English language and literature in English is **0.6308** which is far greater than the t - table value **0.296**. Therefore the null hypothesis number 1 (**HO1**) is rejected. The mean obtain in variable **A**; English language (**47.96**) is higher than the mean obtained in variable **B**, literature in English (**31.27**). It could be inferred that the performance of students in English language is better than that of literature in English in the selected schools. This is as shown in table 1.

Hypothesis 2: No significant relationship exists between the performance students in English language and literature in English in all selected schools.

The calculated r - value between subjects' scores in English language and literature in English in mixed school is **0.3351** while the table value is **0.360**.

The table value is greater than the calculated r - value. Therefore **HO2** is accepted, since the r - value calculated (**0.3351**) is less than the table value (**0.36**). There is no significant relationship between the variables. This is as reflected in table 2.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between the performance of students in English language and literature in English in the boys' school.

The calculated r -value between subjects' scores in English language and literature in English boys' school is **0.8478** while the table value calculated is **0.805**. The **HO3** is rejected since the r -value calculates (**0.8478**) is greater than the table value calculated (**0.805**). This shows that there is a positive significant relationship between the variables. This clearly portrayed in table 3.

Hypothesis 4: No significant relationship exists between the performance of students in English language and literature in English in the girls' school.

The null hypothesis number 4 (**HO4**) is for the girls' school is accepted. This is because the r -value calculated (**0.7208**) is less than the table value calculated (**0.805**). This shows that there is no significant correlation between the variable. This is as shown in table 4.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings in this study clearly evinced that literature influences the development of language and vice-versa. More, language is regarded as an important ingredient of literature. The study also further shows the inter-relatedness of the two subjects.

Recommendation: On the basis of the findings, discussion and conclusion, the following recommendations are given to enhance students' performance in both subjects at the senior secondary level.

To Students

It is hereby recommended that students should be encouraged to read novels right away from J.S.S classes, so that they will have interest in literature, which can improve their performance in English language as well as other subjects. They should develop interest in literature and offer it with English language at least up to the fifth year (**S.S.2**) so as to improve their knowledge in English.

To Teachers

Teachers should develop interest in the teaching of literature and see literature as an integral part of language. They should teach both subjects together not as separate subjects, and try to encourage students to develop interest in literature.

For instance literary passages could be used for teaching reading comprehension vocabulary and grammar.

To Parents

Parents should actively encourage their words to study literature. They should not only buy them the necessary texts needed, but also encourage them to read beyond prescribed texts.

To Policy Makers

It is the belief of this researcher that policy makers would make literature a compulsory subject in the curriculum in the upper classes (s.s. 1- s.s. 3) as being done in the Junior Secondary Schools. They should prescribe stimulating texts written by African and Non-African writer as well.

Teacher Training Institutions

Teacher in training school should be taught how properly integrate both subjects in the classroom so that the reciprocal influence found between the two subjects could be gainfully used to enhance students' performance in both subjects.

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Table 1: Relationship between subject's scores in English language and literature in English in all the selected schools.

| Variable | N | X | S.D | R | t-table | Alpha level |
|----------|----|-------|-------|-------|---------|------------------|
| A | 35 | 47.96 | 30.54 | .6308 | .0296 | Very significant |
| B | 35 | 31.54 | 19.84 | | | |

Table 2 – Relationship between subjects' scores in English language and literature in English in the mixed schools.

| Variable | N | X | S.D | R | t-table | Alpha level |
|----------|----|-------|-------|-------|---------|-------------|
| A | 25 | 41.92 | 24.23 | .3351 | .360 | |
| B | 25 | 26.62 | 13.59 | | | |

Table 3: Relationship between students' scores in English language and literature in English in the boys' school.

| Variable | N | X | S.D | r | t-table | Alpha level |
|----------|---|-------|-------|-------|---------|-------------|
| A | 5 | 42.11 | 39.00 | .8478 | .805 | |
| B | 5 | 23.40 | 10.59 | | | |

Table 4: Relationship between subjects' scores in English language and literature in English in girls' school.

| Variables | N | X | S.D | r | t-table | Alpha level |
|-----------|---|-------|-------|-------|---------|-------------|
| A | 5 | 84.02 | 31.45 | .7208 | .805 | |
| B | 5 | 62.39 | 26.48 | | | |

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