

## **Short Research Article**

### **Effects of instruction in tenses on sentence construction, paragraphing and editing in senior secondary students composition writing achievements**

#### **ABSTRACT**

The study examined the effects of instruction in tenses on sentence construction, paragraphing and editing in senior secondary students narrative composition writing achievements in Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State Nigeria. The study answered three research questions and three hypotheses. Quasi experimental (non-randomised control group) research design was employed for the study. The population of the study included all the 959 senior secondary II students offering English in Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State Nigeria and a sample of 90 students from two intact classes. (Experimental group 50 control group 40) participated in the study. Students in the experimental group received six weeks of training on instruction in tenses while those in the control group were exposed to normal conventional teaching. Narrative composition achievement test was adopted by the researchers to obtain baseline information and after intervention information. Reliability of 0.80 was computed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient which was adequate. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (means and standard deviation) (SDI) and analysis of covariance ANCOVA. Results indicated that students have low ability in sentence construction, paragraphing and editing in narrative composition achievement test at baseline. Also instruction in tenses significantly improved students' ability to construct sentences, develop paragraphs and edit narrative composition writing. The study concluded that instruction in tenses has significant effects on sentence construction, paragraphing and editing in narrative composition achievement test.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Writing is a form of communication whose primary purpose is to transmit ideas, feeling and thoughts or to share information. Writing according to Norquist (2016) is an act of transmitting knowledge, ideas and opinions in prints. It involves the orderly presentation of words and meaningful sentences in accordance with the rules of grammar. For writing to be effective, the information must be consistent with the purpose of the writing. Writing is the accurate representation of ideas, thoughts, feelings, wishes and aspirations on paper in an orderly and coherent manner. It is the process of using symbols, letters of the alphabet punctuation and space to communicate the writer's thoughts and ideas in a readable form. Writing is a productive skill, a form of literacy; a means by which students can be assessed. Writing plays a vital role in the school setting as it facilitates instruction in different subjects, gathering of information from different sources and it also used as a basis to test learning and check intelligence (Gowon & Yashim, 2022). Writing means developing ideas into paragraphs to make a comprehensive whole piece of writing in any language, in this case English language.

As one of the four language skills, writing is crucial for students because it enhances the acquisition of the other skills which is one of the primary objectives of language education (NPE, 2014). Oyetunde (2015) corroborated this by asserting that the ability to write is one of the prerequisites for functional and permanent literacy. In this study composition writing is a process of building longer units of writing from smaller elements. These smaller units or writing include different types of words phrases, sentences and paragraphs to have meaningful, sentences which enable students to grammatically and lexically construct and link related sentences to paragraphs to enhance meaning these are important tasks in composition writing. Narrative composition writing achievements refers to the scoring of the student's composition after tests to identify low, average and excellent achievers. Effective composition must come to play through adequate idea generation and organization these ideas into grammatically correct sentences which enable students to grammatically and lexically construct and link related sentences to paragraphs to enhance meaning. These are important

tasks in composition writing narrative composition. In spite of the crucial role of writing in the academic lives of students and even after school, students are not writing effectively both in their internal and external examinations and even other endeavours. Evidence abound that students have serious problems with composition writing because more often than not, learners engage in physical and not cognitive writing. In other words, most teachers employ traditional methods in teaching writing. In traditional method learning is very much seen as under the control of the teacher and is deeply teacher-centred (Richards, 2008).

The consequence of the foregoing is the perennial failure of students in their internal and external examinations conducted by WAEC and NECO. For instance, according to the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) Chief Examiners' report of 2017 to 2022, students' compositions in Nigeria, were unorganized and sketchy, indicating very low mastery of content. This is as a result of students' inability to generate ideas, develop them, organise such ideas using construct meaningful sentences and edit their compositions that would make their writing more comprehensible. The reports further showed that students' compositions are poor due to inadequate exposure to some basic writing skills using the appropriate teaching methods. It is therefore, important for the teachers to have adequate knowledge of different strategies and or methods and their application in order to improve students' learning of composition writing. One of such strategies or approach is instruction in tenses.

Instruction in tenses is a mode of instruction or procedure in which a teacher identifies and isolates specific tenses which are strategic to a particular kind of composition be it narrative, descriptive, argumentative or exposition and carefully teaches them to students for specific period of time with the view to addressing learners' weaknesses in those particular tenses so as to enhance their performance in the use of such tenses and consequently improve on their composition writing. The uniqueness of this mode of instruction is that the learners are taught only tenses step by step for a given period of time and how to apply such tenses in their composition writing. Instruction in tenses is a procedure that helps students to gain

mastery of the tenses taught thus improving on their achievement in composition writing and English language as a whole. Instruction in tenses is meant to improve senior secondary students' achievement in composition writing in Shendam Local Government Area Plateau State, Nigeria when properly and judiciously deployed by the teachers of writing.

### **THE PRESENT STUDY**

To guide the study the following parameters were developed and draw up. The study aimed to determine the effects of instruction in tenses on sentence construction, paragraphing and editing in narrative composition writing achievement of senior secondary II students in Shendam Local Government Area Plateau State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to find out the effectiveness of instruction in tenses on SSII students sentence construction ability when writing composition, ascertain the extent to which students will be able to develop paragraphs when writing composition after exposure to instruction in tenses. Find out the effectiveness of instruction in tenses on students ability to edit their writing composition at the baseline. Based on the objectives of the study the following research questions were raised; what are the levels of students' ability to construct cohesive sentences, organize coherent paragraphs and edit composition writing before and after exposure to instruction in tenses. The following hypotheses were generated for the study; there is no significant difference between the experimental and control groups of students' ability to construct cohesive sentences, write coherent paragraphs and edit composition after exposure to instruction in tenses.

The study was hinged on the cognitive process theory of writing by Hayes and Flower (1981). The cognitive process theory of writing prescribes the process involved for meaningful writing to occur it sees writing as a mental process that needs to be followed step by step. The theory maintains that composition writing is a thinking process grounded in one's cognitive efforts. The theory and the study are related as both of them are expected to enhance students critical thinking skills, promote comprehension, improve problem solving skills boost confidence and encourage continuous learning. The findings of the study are therefore

hoped to be of immense benefit to students', teachers who teach composition writing, guidance counselors and education authorities in Shendam Local Government Plateau State Nigeria.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing as a skill is required by all educated people to function effectively both in school and in their workplaces/professions. It is important in the school curriculum as it helps students to maximize their language learning and significantly increase the rate which one learns (Webbi, 2015). Writing is an important language skill that students should master in their language learning effort. It is an active skill and has always formed part of the syllabus in the teaching of English (Apsari, 2018). Through writing students express their ideas freely without having to face readers directly. Writing is needed in most spheres of human endeavours ranging from school to work place and daily interaction.

Similarly, Magshoudi and Haririan (2013) remarked that writing encourages critical thinking and learning; it motivates communication and makes thoughts available for reflection as students generate ideas and organize thoughts and arguments to support key points and issues in life in a comprehensible manner thus enhancing their cognitive abilities.

Structurally any kind of composition writing has three basic elements; the introduction, body, and conclusion (Mohammed, 2021). The first element which is the introduction clarifies the topic and gives it a good background. The body discusses the main ideas with supporting details in paragraphs. The conclusion according to Abdalla (2021) is the composition element that summarizes the main points discussed in the body. It is aimed at helping the reader recapitulate and remember the main focus of the write-up meaningful composition writing is obtainable through coherent sentence construction, effective paragraphing, and quality editing of the piece of writing.

### Sentence construction

The sentence is the highest unit of expression that gives a complete thought. It starts from the morpheme, word, phrase, and clause (Macaro, 2001). Sentence construction refers to the

way a sentence is arranged grammatically, in writing, sentences are constructed in sequence with meaning flowing from the sentence to another, conveying views and relationships. This requires the proper use of relevant words and punctuations to express a complete thought (Anyebe, 2017). Studies have shown that coherent sentence structure can help to have a framework for clear written expression of our thoughts and communications in writing (Jimenez, 2017). In another study Mastan, Maarof and Embi (2017) recommended the adoption of writing strategy instruction as an essential part of ESL writing Pedagogy. Pinta (2017) Highlighted that both deductive and inductive approach be use in the teaching of verb tenses and more emphasis be given to the use of deductive approach. For enhancement of writing, the researchers noted that this can be achieved by linking words and phrases which help to achieve cohesion and coherence is composition writing.

### Paragraphing

Paragraphing has to do with a unit of thought in a connected composition of sentences that contain the main idea expressed in a sentence known as the topic sentence (Silva, 2003). Paragraphing is the act of expanding the topic sentence which could be through definition, explanation, or illustrations. Thus, a paragraph contains a series of sentences organized coherently and related to a single idea that relates to a broad topic (Mohammed, 2021). In a study conducted by Bukhari (2016), the researcher discovered that learners who were taught composition writing using instruction in tenses improved in sentence cohesion and coherence. Mastan, Maarof and Embi (2017) also found out that writing strategy instruction had significant difference in student writing performance.

### Editing

Editing is a stage in the writing process whereby a writer makes efforts to improve the write-up by correcting errors in words, sentences, and paragraphs to enable them to communicate information as effectively as possible (Oyedele and Chikwature, 2019). Editing can lead to clarification of ideas, re-imaging images, or rethinking of novel approaches to the subject of the written discussion. According to Abdalla (2021), some of the most

effective editing involves tightening and shortening a piece of writing to make it better. Editing helps the writer to look at each sentence carefully and makes sure it is well constructed to convey the meaning it is supposed to convey. Paudel et al. (2019) studied editing as a craft in academic writing and concluded that editing is the most important in making a document formal, objective, accurate, consistent, logical, and meaningful to whoever will use it.

Furthermore, the composition writing achievement of students depends on their level of proficiency in sentence construction, paragraphing, and editing among many elements (Trapman et al, 2018). Despite the high level of competency requires in composition writing, the performance of senior secondary students in the English language, especially the composition aspect at the secondary school level has been poor in Nigeria. WAEC Chief Examiners' Resume Report of 2019, indicated that students' composition in Plateau State Nigeria, were sketchy and unorganized, indicating very low mastery of content. Baseline data have revealed that writing in English as a second language is a difficult task for students and many teachers teach writing without using practical writing strategies (Okeke, 2010). The author further explained that one of the factors responsible for the mass failure of secondary school students in the English language in Nigeria as an academic discipline is as a result of poor strategy in composition writing.

The study is hinged on the cognitive process theory of writing by Hayes and Flower (1981). The cognitive process theory of writing prescribes the process involved for meaningful writing to occur. These include: idea generation, organization, reviewing, editing and goal setting. The theory sees writing as a mental process that needs to be followed step by step. The proponents of the theory maintained that composition writing is a thinking process grounded in one's cognitive efforts. The cognitive theory of writing is governed by four principles. The first one states that composition writing is best understood as a set of distractive thinking process which the writer orchestrates or organises their content during writing. Second, the theory suggests that these distractive thinking even though are hierarchical can be highly embedded within one another. In other words, composition

writing has organizational stages, the stages are however, not linear; they are recursive throughout the composition writing process. Third, the theory declares that the act of composition writing is a goal directed thinking process guided by the writer's network of goals. Fourth, writers create their own goals in two folds, one by generating high level goals and two by generating supporting sub-goals to be developed based on the sense of purpose which can also be refined at times to establish the writer's clear meaning.

The choice of cognitive process theory of writing is because it is appropriate as it will inform and guide the researcher especially in the use of the tenses. This is to enable the writer to produce a coherent and unified piece of writing which embodies generation of adequate ideas, correctness of form, appropriateness of style and unity of theme. The theory and the study are related as both of them are expected to enhance students' critical thinking skills, promote comprehension, improve problem solving skills, boost confidence and encourage continuous learning.

## **METHODS AND PROCEDURES**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study adopted the quasi-experimental (non randomised control group) design. The design consisted of two intact groups; experimental and control groups where only the experimental groups received the intervention (Cohen et al 2007). The quest to avoid the consequences of disrupting the normal academic schedules of the school warranted the adaption of the design. Participants in the experimental group were trained for six weeks on instruction in tenses whereas those in control group were withheld from the intervention.

### **POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

The population for the study comprised nine hundred and fifty (959) senior secondary two students in all the 21 public secondary schools in Shendam Local Government Area, Plateau State in the 2022/2023 academic session. Sample of ninety (90) SSII students in the 2022/2023 academic session in two intact classes in two public senior secondary schools were randomly selected. One school was selected from each of the schools. One of the two selected schools was randomly assigned

as the experimental group (A) and the other as the control group (B), the experimental group was taught using instruction in tenses while the control group was taught using the conventional method.

### **RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

The researchers used the narrative composition achievement test (NCAT) to obtain data from the participants. The instrument was developed according to senior secondary school standard in the intensive English for senior secondary II. Oluikpe, et al 2015 and adopted by the researcher, the instrument was meant to test some specific writing skills which include; sentence construction paragraphing and editing. (NCAT) had two sections A and B, section A consisted of students demographic data such as school name, class, gender and ID number, section B which contained a narrative composition test which required the students to write on the topic “How I spent my las holiday”. In the analytic scale scripts were rated on aspects of writing such as content, grammatical accuracy uses of tenses, spelling, text organisation (coherence and cohesion) punctuation, paragraphing and others. (Galti et al 2018) scores obtained were categorized;excellent, very good, average, fair, and weak.

NCAT was validated by two professionals in the English education unit and one expert in the research test and measurement unit from the university of Jos the Pearson product mount a reliability coefficient of 0.80 was considered adequate (Ugodulunwa, 2008).

### **PROCEDURE**

The researcher initially contacted the school/authority/principals and presented a letter of introduction from the department of Arts education faculty of education university of Jos Nigeria. The letter was to seek the consent of the various school heads gain approval and request to use part of their school resources. Thereafter, the researchers gave a consent letter to the students to fill out and sign for ethical consideration. The approval was obtained before embarking on the study. Initial data was obtained as pre-test using NCAT before intervention equally a post test was obtained using a direct method of administration after six weeks of an intervention program.

Students were guided and directed to complete the instrument independently after reading the introductory letter and instructions. They were instructed to write the NCAT within 40 minutes and return it directly to the researchers or research assistants who were present. The researchers later appreciated the time and efforts of the participants and research assistants. Participants were made aware that their responses will be treated with a serious sense of confidentiality.

### **EXPERIMENT PROCEDURE**

Two research assistants were trained for 3 days and they assisted throughout the study. The experimental group was managed by the researchers, participants in the experimental group were taught using instruction in tenses. The teaching enabled students to go through the process of writing skills in sentence construction, paragraph and editing the training lasted for six weeks. The teachings were conducted during the school hours using the normal two double periods (40 min each) totaling 80 min a week of English language school time table for the intact classes. Before and after the intervention programme participants were given NCAT to write at the same time. The control group was managed by the research assistants the participants were exposed to conventional teaching while instruction in tenses was withheld from them. The control group was taught English language lessons as indicated on the timetable using conventional method. They were taught using the same prescribed textbook used for experimental group. Like the experimental group counterpart, placebo was carried out during school hours using normal two double periods (40 min each) totaling 80 min. week of the English language school timetable for the intact classes. Narrative composition achievement test NCAT was issued to them where they wrote the composition before and after the control group placebo administration.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

Data obtained from the respondents' compositions were analysed using descriptive statistics (means and standard deviation (SD) to measure the levels of sentence construction paragraphing and editing in narrative composition writing skills before and after intervention. Also, analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.005 level of significance. This

tool tested the significance difference in the post test mean scores of sentence construction, paragraphing and editing in composition writing between experimental and control group while controlling the effects of pretest scores.

## RESULTS

Results are presented according to the research questions and hypotheses

Table 1 what are the pretest and posttest achievement mean scores of SSII students in sentence construction when writing narrative composition?

Table 1  
Pretest and Posttest Achievement Mean Scores of SSII Students in Sentence Construction for Experimental and Control Groups

Groups	N	PRE-TEST SCORES		POST-TEST SCORES		Mean Score Difference Within Group	Post-test Mean Score Difference between Groups
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Experimental	50	4.50	2.22	7.32	1.77	2.82	1.97
Control	40	2.88	1.74	5.35	1.90	2.47	

Table 1 above shows pretest and posttest achievement mean scores of SSII students in sentence construction for experimental and control groups. Students in the experimental group had a pretest mean score of 4.50 and a standard deviation of 2.22 and post-test mean score of 7.32 and a standard deviation of 1.77 with a mean difference of 2.82. While students in the control group had a pretest mean score of 2.88 and a standard deviation

1.74 and post-test mean score of 5.35 and a standard deviation of 1.90 with a mean score difference of 2.47. This implied that before intervention the mean scores of students in the experimental and control groups were low, but after intervention, the students in the experimental group had a higher posttest mean score than students in the control group.

Table 2 how different is SSII students' achievement in paragraph development when writing narrative composition in the experimental and control groups? Table 2

Pretest and Posttest Achievement Mean Scores of SSII Students in Paragraph Development for Experimental and Control Groups

Group	s	N	PRE-TEST SCORES		POST-TEST SCORES		Mean Score Difference Within Group	Post-test Mean Score Difference between Groups
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Experimental		50	3.26	2.02	6.5	1.80	3.24	2.02
Control		40	1.83	1.69	4.48	1.81	2.65	

Table 2 above shows pretest and posttest achievement mean scores of SSII students in paragraph development for experimental and control groups. Students in the experimental group had a pretest mean score of 3.26 and a standard deviation of 2.02 and post-test mean score of 6.50 and a standard deviation of 1.80 with a mean difference of 3.24. While students in the control group had a pretest mean score of 1.83 and a standard deviation of 1.69 and post-test mean score of 4.48 and a standard deviation of 1.81 with a mean score difference of 2.65. This implied that before intervention the mean scores of students in the experimental and control groups were low, but after intervention, the students in the experimental group had a higher posttest mean score than students in the control group.

Table 3 what are the pretest and posttest achievement mean scores of SSII students in editing when writing narrative composition in the experimental and control groups?

Table 3

**Pretest and Posttest Achievement Mean Scores of SSII Students in editing for Experimental and Control Groups**

Groups	N	PRE-TEST SCORES		POST-TEST SCORES		Mean Score Difference Within Group	Post-test Mean Score Difference between Groups
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Experimental	50	3.04	1.71	5.06	1.19	2.02	2.06
Control	40	1.68	1.38	3.00	1.63	1.32	

Table 3 above shows the pretest and posttest achievement mean scores of SSII students in editing for experimental and control groups. Students in the experimental group had a pretest mean score of 3.04 and a standard deviation of 1.71 and post-test mean score of 5.06 and a standard deviation of 1.19 with a mean difference of 2.02. While students in the control group had a pretest mean score of 1.68 and a standard deviation of 1.38 and post-test mean score of 3.00 and a standard deviation of 1.63 with a mean score difference of 1.32. This implied that before intervention the mean scores of students in the experimental and control groups were low, but after intervention, the students in the experimental group had a higher posttest mean score than students in the control group.

Table 4 there is no significant difference between the posttest achievement mean score in sentence construction of SSII students in the experimental and control groups in narrative composition.

**Table 4**

**Summary of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) on Posttest Achievement Mean Scores of SSII Students in the Experimental and Control Groups in Sentence Construction**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	86.242 <sup>a</sup>	1	86.242	25.816	.000	.227
Intercept	3567.309	1	3567.309	1067.839	.000	.924
GROUPS	86.242	1	86.242	25.816	.000	.227
Error	293.980	88	3.341			
Total	4118.000	90				
Corrected Total	380.222	89				

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	86.242 <sup>a</sup>	1	86.242	25.816	.000	.227
Intercept	3567.309	1	3567.309	1067.839	.000	.924
GROUPS	86.242	1	86.242	25.816	.000	.227
Error	293.980	88	3.341			
Total	4118.000	90				
Corrected Total	380.222	89				

a.  $R$  Squared = .227 (Adjusted  $R$  Squared = .218)

Table 4 above shows the summary of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) on posttest achievement mean scores in sentence construction of SSII students in the experimental and control groups in narrative composition. Students in experimental group had a post-test mean score of 7.32 and a standard deviation of 1.77 and students in the control group had a pretest mean score is 5.35 and a standard deviation of 1.90 with an  $F$ -value of 25.82 and  $p$ -value of 0.00. Since the  $p$ -value is less than the aprior value of 0.05, therefore there was a significant difference between post-test sentence construction of SS II students in the experimental and control groups. In addition,  $p < 0.05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .227$ , since the  $p$ -value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance with an effect size of 22.7%, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that there was a significant effect of treatment on SS II students in sentence construction. The result further revealed an adjusted  $R$  squared value of 0.218, which means that 21.8 percent of the variation in the dependent variable which is sentence construction is explained by variation in the treatment, while the remaining 78.2% is due to other factors not included in this study.

Table 5 there is no significant difference between the posttest achievement mean scores in paragraph development of SSII students in experimental and control groups in narrative composition.

**Table 5**

**Summary of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) on Posttest Achievement Mean Scores of SSII Students in the Experimental and Control Groups in Paragraph Development in Narrative Composition**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
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Corrected Model	91.125 <sup>a</sup>	1	91.125	27.992	.000	.241
Intercept	2676.681	1	2676.681	822.228	.000	.903
GROUPS	91.125	1	91.125	27.992	.000	.241
Error	286.475	88	3.255			
Total	3200.000	90				
Corrected Total	377.600	89				

a. R Squared = .241 (Adjusted R Squared = .233)

Table 5 above shows the summary of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) on posttest achievement mean scores of SSII students in the experimental and control groups in paragraph development in narrative composition. The Students in the experimental group had a post-test mean score of 6.50 and a standard deviation of 1.80 and students in the control group had a post-test mean score of 4.48 and a standard deviation of 1.81 with a F-value of 27.992 and p-value of 0.00. Since the p-value is less than the aprior value of 0.05, therefore there was a significant difference between post-test achievement of SS II students in paragraph development in the experimental and control groups. In addition,  $p < 0.05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .241$ , since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance with an effect size of 24.1%, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that there was a significant effect of treatment on SS II students in paragraph development. The result further revealed an adjusted R squared value of 0.233, which means that 23.3 percent of the variation in the dependent variable which is paragraph development is explained by variation in the treatment, while the remaining 76.7% is due to other factors not included in this study.

Table 6 there is no significant difference between the posttest achievement mean scores of SSII students in the experimental and control groups in editing in narrative composition.

Table 6  
Summary of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) on Posttest Achievement Mean Scores of SSII Students in the Experimental and Control Groups in editing in narrative Composition

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	94.302 <sup>a</sup>	1	94.302	48.019	.000	.353
Intercept	1443.636	1	1443.636	735.100	.000	.893
GROUPS	94.302	1	94.302	48.019	.000	.353
Error	172.820	88	1.964			
Total	1813.000	90				
Corrected Total	267.122	89				

a. R Squared = .353 (Adjusted R Squared = .346)

Table 6 above shows the summary of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) on posttest achievement mean scores of SSII students in the experimental and control groups in editing in narrative composition. The Students in the experimental group had a post-test mean score of 5.06 and a standard deviation of 1.19 and students in the control group had a post-test mean score of 3.00 and a standard deviation of 1.63 with a F-value of 48.02 and p-value of 0.00. Since the p-value is less than the aprior value of 0.05, therefore there was a significant difference between post-test achievement of SS II students in the experimental and control groups in editing in narrative composition. In addition,  $p < 0.05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .353$ , since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance with an effect size of 35.3%, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that there was a significant effect of treatment on SS II students in editing. The results further revealed an adjusted R squared value of 0.346, which means that 34.6 percent of the variation in the dependent variable which is editing is explained by variation in the treatment, while the remaining 65.4% is due to other factors not included in this study.

## DISCUSSION

The study sought to determine the effects of instruction on sentence construction, paragraph development and editing in senior secondary students' composition writing achievements in Shendam Local Government Area, Plateau State, Nigeria. The results of the data analysis revealed that for students of English to achieve higher posttest mean scores in composition writing the quality of instruction given to them is a significant factor.

Findings from research question one revealed that students who were exposed to treatment had higher posttest mean scores in sentence construction than those who were not exposed to it. This is in line with the findings of Gowon and Yashim (2022) who found that students who were exposed to concept mapping strategy performed better in sentence construction than those that were not exposed to it. Similarly, hypothesis one revealed a significant effect of treatment on SSII students in sentence construction. This is in accordance with Gowon and Yashim (2022) findings which showed a significant effect of concept mapping strategy on students' sentence construction.

Findings from research question two showed that students that were exposed to treatment had higher posttest mean scores in paragraph development than those who were not exposed to it. This is in accordance with the findings of Anyebe (2018), Gowon and Yashim (2022) who found that process approach and concept mapping strategy had significant effects on junior secondary school students' achievement in paragraph development. Also, hypothesis two showed a significant effect of treatment on SSII students' paragraph development. This is in line with Anyebe (2018) findings which showed a significant effect of process approach on junior secondary school students' paragraph development.

Finding from research question three revealed that students who were exposed to treatment had higher posttest mean scores in editing than those who were not exposed to it. This is in line with the findings of Pinta (2017) who found that students who were exposed to communicative approach to teaching English tenses had higher posttest mean scores in their ability to use appropriate tenses. In the same vein hypothesis three revealed a significant effect of treatment on SSII students in editing. This is in line with the findings of Pinta (2017) who found a significant effect of communicative approach on students' ability to use appropriate tenses.

### **CONCLUSION/IMPLICATION**

In composition writing the importance of sentence construction, paragraphing and editing is often undervalued. As a result effective strategies

such as instruction in tenses are required to improve such. According to the findings of the study instruction in tenses is a very effective strategy for improving students' sentence structure, paragraphing and editing skills in composition writing. Students who are exposed to instruction in tenses in composition writing classrooms will be more proficient in cohesive sentence structure, coherent paragraphing and quality editing as they can use the strategy in and out of classroom settings. Secondly, as teachers and students develop confidence in the use of instruction in tenses in composition writing skills or strategy could be transferred to writing in other subject areas in the curriculum.

### **LIMITATIONS**

In Nigeria, we discovered that composition writing achievement is gender dependent our research looked at composition writing irrespective of gender. Researchers can look into this further in the future to see whether there is any gender difference in composition writing success. Again the current study does not take into account Nigeria's different socio-cultural perspectives. The majority of the students evaluated speak English as a second language which has an impact on their English expressions. The socio-cultural aspects on the other hand, must be investigated in subsequent investigations.

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