AN ACADEMIC GUIDE TO RESEARCH AND WRITING SKILLS IN YORÙBÁ LANGUAGE

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Abstract : This paper examines research and writing skills in Yorùbá language. It is aimed at encouraging learners of Yorùbá and explores writing skills in the language. It is designed to show case writing as one of the major language learning skills and prepare learners of the language in the prospect of undertaking a research work in Yorùbá language. Some of the main issues discussed are practical approach to research and writing that will promote the teaching and learning of the Yorùbá language at various levels. Suggestions are made on how teachers can help learners to accomplish their intentions at various levels of learning. The paper concludes that a complementary approach will be required for both product and process oriented research as well as writing skills.

Key Words: Research skill, Writing skill, Yorùbá language, Complementary approach

Introduction

Effective communication is a prerequisite for success at school and colleges and later in a job. Fortunately, good writing and speaking abilities are skills that everyone can learn through continuous practice. Moreover, learning these skills and using them can be fun.

Written communication is more formal in style than spoken communication because the message must be passed across in words alone. Effective writing requires knowledge of grammar and the ability to use words skilfully. A written message can neither make use of any of the nonverbal aspects of communication that are naturally part of speech nor can it take advantage of the immediate feedback available when we are speaking. In that case, writing has to be complete in itself and as such more difficult than speaking.

The main concern of this paper is to guide the writer with practical tips on how to become a good researcher and a better writer in Yorùbá language. It explains how to prepare a research work and suggest a good finishing for a good report through the application of complementary approach.

Yorùbá Language as a Mother Tongue or L1

Yoruba language is one of the selected Nigerian languages considered to be the language of wider communication in the Western part of the country. It serves as a means of communication and self-expression; it also makes every transaction in terms of business, politics, religion, entertainment and education possible among the speakers. As an effective medium of communication, it is important that any writing done meets the various requirements.

The Development of Yorùbá Language Writing

The effort to write in Yorùbá language started with a man called Bowdich in (1817). He printed a book titled "“Mission to Ashante" in (1819). Next to him is a woman by name Hannah Kilham, who also attempted a writing about this same period. She produced some writings in Yorùbá in (1828) in a book titled "Specimen of African languages spoken in the colonies of Sierra Leone". The third person is Clapperton, who published a collection of some words in Yorùbá language in (1829). He is a missionary and a researcher. The fourth man was John Rabban. In his

own case, he went beyond the gathering of few words in Yorùbá, rather he had three different books which were published in the years (1830), (1831) and (1832) respectively.

The fifth person in the group was Edwin Norris who wrote a book titled "Outline of a vocabulary of the principal languages of Western and Central African". The was compiled and published for the use of Niger expedition in (1831). In the book, he pointed out some attestable vowel sounds and consonant sounds in the Yorùbá language such as (a e i o u, ai, au) and (g, j, ng, ch and hh). Henry Townsend and Golmer were the sixth and seventh people who in (1840) determined to get the English bible translated into Yorùbá bible. The link between these two missionaries and Samuel Ajayi Crowther gave birth to the Yorùbá bible. The effort of Bowel in (1858) cannot be left out. In a book titled "Grammar and Dictionary of the Yorùbá language" a couple of the Yorùbá orthography was produced.

However, in (1875), a meeting was summoned by the CMS in Lagos to resolve the differences in the orthography and other aspects of the Yorùbá language that needs a consensus agreement. Since then a lot of review has been carried out by professionals like "Ẹgbẹ́ Akọ́mọ̀lédè àti Àṣà Yorùbá", the journalists, the government at the state and federal level and every concerned learners and lovers of the language in the process of writing Yorùbá language in the modern day till date.

Research: Its Concept

Research has been defined in a number of different ways. In the broadest sense, research includes investigation, experimentation, testing, exploration, examination and scrutiny of any data, information, and fact-findings for the advancement of knowledge (Ajibade, 2003). Research is a process of steps used to collect and analyse information to increase our understanding of topical issues. It consists of three steps: pose a question, collect data to answer the question, and present an answer to the question (Fisher et. al., 2013). Also, research comprises creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications (Panneerselvam, 2013). Research can summarily be defined as the systematic investigation into and study of materials and sources in order to establish facts and reach conclusions. In other words, to conduct research implies that there should be orderliness and procedure in terms of gathering, organising, analysing and interpreting data.

The basic characteristics of a research work include the following: It is generated by a specific research question, hypothesis or problem; it follows a specific plan or procedure; it aims at increasing understanding by interpreting facts and reaching conclusions; it requires reasoned argument to support conclusions and it is based on previous knowledge which it aims to advance, but may also develop further questions calling for further research (Ajibade, 2017). Ajibade expresses further the purpose of a research among which are; to investigate and provide solutions to new or existing problems, to establish or confirm facts, reaffirm the results of previous work, to expand on past work in the field, to explore and analyse more general issues, to construct or create new procedures or system, to explain new phenomenon and to generate new knowledge.

There are different types of research depending on the purpose, the data collected, and how such data are analysed. There is the descriptive research which describes a particular phenomenon, focussing on the issue of what is happening, or how much of it has happened rather than why is it happening. There is exploratory research which takes place where there is little or no prior knowledge of a phenomenon, while explanatory research involves explaining why something happens and predictive research forecasts future phenomena, based on the interpretation suggested by explanatory research (Saliu and Fayẹye (2007). Other categories of research are primary and secondary researches. The primary research involves collection of original data and the secondary involves the use of existing sources of data.

Research Process

According to Ajibade (2017), a research work involves a systematic process that focuses on being objective and gathering a multitude of information for analysis so that the researcher can come to a conclusion. Generally, carrying out a research involves the following stages; selection of topic, literature review, development of theoretical and conceptual framework, clarification of the

research question, gathering of data, data analysis and interpretation, discussion of the findings and drawing conclusions, references and abstract. The abstract section summarizes the papers; stating the topic, the sub topics reviewed, the methodology and the mode of analysis (if the paper is data based). It also mentions the findings and the conclusion. The introduction comprises of the general information about the background of the research work, viewing the problem to be confronted from a general perspective through a specific position. It may also include the scope of the paper, justification for the paper and its significance.

The literature review section gives general information about the background of the study. It provides the theoretical foundation and support for the research work. Subtopics that are related to the main topic must evolve from variables in the main topic. Such subtopics should be addressed with supporting views, opinions, insights and observations from scholars, authors, journal, magazines and newspapers. Such views are not meant to be merely copied down verbatim; rather ideas related to the paper's topic should be gleaned and paraphrased for use.

The methodology section gives a direction to follow in a step- by-step explanation of the process of data collection (if any) and data analysis (if any). It should also mention the ways of analysing data collected. Finding evolve from the results of the analysis are then discussed before a conclusion is drawn, with recommendation made where necessary. The last section, the reference, contains the record and details of the works cited and quoted. In some situations, bibliography is used and this refers to all works used, though not directly cited and quoted. Above all, there is the need for a research proposal as it is the summary of the research to be conducted (Ayodabọ, 2008).

Writing Process

Writing is the ability to express one's self on paper by a reason of discussion, explanation, description and so on. It centres around a subject matter which must be identified by the writer. The writer is left with the responsibility of expressing his or her thoughts in words, phrases, sentences and idiomatic expressions (Oyeyemi, 2006). To Oyinkan (2005), writing is considered to be the most difficult, tasking and demanding of the language skills as the process calls for the writer's presence of mind simultaneously with thinking, organising and writing. This means that writer reads as he writes. In fact, a good writer is recognized to be one who is able to synthesise all major activities involved in effective writings.

Preparing to Write the First Draft for a Research Work

The composition of a research study is normally carried out in three stages: writing the first draft, preparing the revision and proofreading the finished study. Each stage need to be carried out at a single setting (Moses, 2004). After choosing the topic to work on, the next thing is to read extensively and intensively before getting started. It is with a rich knowledge that a good researcher can draw an outline on how to work perfectly on the study. Among the key research sources for a good research work are the library, interviewing people, conducting a survey, using electronic media, visiting museums, art galleries, cultural centres and historical places or societies.

A good research work must be logically structured in such a way that it conducts the reader with a convincing arrangement of points to be followed easily. It should be well organised exhibiting an easy flow of ideas. The first draft of every research work is the beginning of creativity where the researcher must not lose focus of the study; neither must he allow the quantity or quality of information obtained at the stage of investigation to hijack the focus and design of the study. A researcher is not expected to recopy what he has read directly from other sources rather he should present a literature review by injecting his own idea into the work with a lot of paraphrase. It is only where particular author has said something in a very unique way that he may have to quote directly. A researcher is expected to use other people's ideas as reference or base to reinforce his own position (Ayodabọ, 2008).

Furthermore, a quotation that is five or more lines long is set apart from the text, as a block quotation; that is, by extra indention at the left and by single spacing. Block quotations are not enclosed in quotation marks, because the distinctive setup shows that they are quotations. A block quotation is often introduced by a colon. A researcher should always identify his subtitles clearly and address the study clearly. He should avoid the inclusion of unrelated views under each

subtitle rather only related ideas need be put together under a particular subtitle. As he integrates the ideas together from different sources. The researcher should always remember the correct names, the sources, years of publication and pages. At the end of the draft, he need to re-read and ensure that the sentences communicate and address the topic and subtopics (Ayodabo, 2008).

A researcher must make sure that all the problems and issues raised are solved and addressed, with illustrations and justification where necessary. While revising the first draft, a writer should look for parts that are unsatisfactory and trying to improve them; such as aspect of diction that include vagueness, rubbish, jargon and triteness. A good, simple and clear diction is the choice of words that best allows a researcher to communicate his or her intentions well and appropriate to capture and hold the readers' interest. A paragraph usually consists of two or more sentences. The sentences should follow each other for coherence and avoid verbosity and ambiguity. The researcher/writer should choose words that are accurate, clear and free from bias and explain the technical words and scientific terms because a study is meant to be present. Paragraphs should be linked together so that the report becomes a logical and persuasive whole and the content of idea must flow naturally from beginning to the end. He or she should avoid the run together of two or more independent clauses and their separation with a comma as shown in the examples below:

i. Ọlọ́pàá mú Adé, tì mọ́lé (police arrested Ade, locked up)
ii. Ọlọ́pàá mú Adé, Ọlọ́pàá ti Adé mọ́lé (police arrested Ade, police locked Ade up)
iii. Ọlọ́pàá, ti Adé mọ́lé (police, locked Ade up)

Editing and Revising a Research Work

According to Saliu and Oyebanji (2004), easy reading is hard writing. A researcher will need to turn out a number of drafts to produce the best results. Therefore, when the work is ready, the next thing is to read, edit and revise what he or she has pencilled down carefully, keeping in mind why he is conducting the study. He or she checks if the introduction clearly state what the study is about and provide a context for what you want to present. The writer should also check the grammatical correctness of the paper and examine closely the words to know if it said what you mean or mean what you have said. Spelling can mar the entire work, you may need to consult the dictionary and other means to keep your spellings in shape. A researcher in Yorùbá language must not forget the natural rule in Yorùbá such as: no double consonant sound can stand side-by-side in the language; avoid unnecessary sound omission in any case of phonological processes; do not go back to the outdated autography, i.e.

1. The removal of vowel /i/ in some mis-spelt words such as:

old spelling	**new spelling**
aiye	ayé (world)
aiya	àyà (chest)
ẹiyẹ	ẹyẹ (bird)
Taiye	Táyé (name)

2. The misuse of 'an' and 'ọn' words in Yorùbá should be written as pronounced.

3. The words that are wrongly spelt especially in the bible should be written correctly thus:

old spelling	**new spelling**
ọkọ̀rin	ọkùnrin (man)
lẹ́hìn	lẹ́yìn (after)
obìrin	obìnrin (woman)
ọma	ọmọ (child)
láílái	láéláé (never)
ìròhìn	ìròyìn (news)
yíò	yóó/yóò (will)
àmìn	àmì (sign)
ọgbàn	ọgbọ́n (wisdom)
Itan	itọn (thigh)
Ìtọ̀n	Ìtàn (story)
Ẹ̀rọn	ẹran (meat)
Ẹ̀fan	Ẹ̀fọn (mosquito)
Ìjọ̀gbàn	ìjọ̀gbọ̀n (problem)

4. Stop the use of apostrophe on abbreviated words such as:

old spelling	**new spelling**
si'ṣẹ́	ṣiṣẹ́ (doing/working)
rán'tí	rántí (remember)
t'ọ́jú	tọ́jú (take care of)
kọ'rin	kọrin (sing)
kọ́'lé	kọ́lé (build a house)

5. The use of an 'n' after a third person pronoun in the object position which ends with a nasal is recommended:

old spelling	**new spelling**
tan a	tàn án (light it)
pọ́n ọ	pọ́n ọn (back it)
mọ̀ ọ́	mọ̀ ọ́n (know it)

6. To show case nasalised vovel 'an' by repetiing has heard in a word thus:

old spelling	**new spelling**
gan a	gan-an (exact)
ọfọn ọ	òfón-ọ̀n (mouse)

7. To stop the wrong use of the vowel sound 'on' instead of 'òun' in a third person pronoun thus:

old spelling	**new spelling**
on nikan ni	òun nìkan ni (he is the only one)
on náà ń bọ	òun náà ń bọ̀ (he/she is coming)

8. Mark the following sounds with long mark as shown below:

old style	**new style**
ọẹ̀ṣ/oes	oes

9. To use n/l, m/n, ọn/an as allomorph of the same phoneme where necessary:

Bímḿbọ́ (name of girl), Kọ̀ǹkọ̀ (frog), Gọ̀mḿbọ́ (tribal mark),

Oromḿbó/òroǹbó (orange), Ṣọ̀mḿbọ̀ (a type of pepper),

Ibadan (city), Ìran (tribe), Idan/Idọ́n (miracle)

Mò ń bọ̀ (I am coming), ebi ń pa mí (I am hungry) etc.

10. To use 'n' in place of 'ng' in the subject position thus:

old spelling	**new spelling**
ng ò lọ	n ò lọ (I will not go)
ng ò rí wọn	n ò rí wọn (I did not see them)

11. Keeping to the modern spellings of these words:

old spelling	**new spelling**
nwọ́n	wọ́n (they)
nyín	yín (you/yours)
enyin	ẹ̀yin (you)

12. Avoid the reduplication of consonant sound in words such as:

old spelling	**new spelling**
Ọ̀ttà	Ọ̀tà (a town in Lagos state)
Èbúté mẹ́tta	Èbuté méta (a town in Lagos state)
Ìddó	Ìdó (a town in Lagos state)
Oshogbo	Oṣogbo (a town in Oṣun state)
Iléshà	Iléṣà (,, ,, ,, ,, ,,
Offa	Ọ̀fà (a town in Kwara state)
Ọ̀shun	Oṣun (a name of a state)
Ọbbà	Ọbà (a king)
Ommọ	Ọmọ (child)
Ọ̀kkọ̀	Ọkọ̀ (motor)
Mọ̀nmọ́n	Màmá (mother)

13. Avoid the use of long tone on words rather write such words in full thus:

old spelling	**new spelling**
Ãnu	àánú (mercy)
Õtọ	òótọ́ (truth)
nã	náà (that)
báyĩ	báyìí (like this)
ọlọpã	ọlọ́pàá (police)
ẹlẹ́fõ	ẹlẹ́fòǫ́ (vegetable seller)
alãnu	aláàánú (merciful)
õrùn	òórùn (odour)
yĩ	yìí (this)
eléyĩ	eléyìí (this one)
ẹlẹ́rĩ	ẹlẹ́ríì (witness)
bẹ̃	bẹ́ẹ̀ (like that)
omọiyĩ	ọmọ yìí (this child)
rẹ́rĩn	rẹ́rìn-ín (laugh)
àwòrẹ́rĩn	àwòrẹ́rìn-ín (watch and laugh)
wọ́n pè	wọ́n pè é (he was called)
ó pọ̀nọ́n	ó pọ́n ọn (she back her/nim)
mo rí	mo rí i (I saw it/him/her)

14. When there is a phonological process of assimilation of names with falling and rising tone then an additional vowel must be inserted thus:

Oní + àánú to be written as aláàánú (my benefactor)

gbọ́ + òórùn to be written as gbóòórùn (perceive odour)

15. It is in order not to mark the middle tone on vowel sound in words but marking of the two other tones are compulsory.

lọ (go), pa (kill)
wá (come), gbà (take)
dìde (stand up), gbálẹ̀ (sweep), bàbá (father)
ọ̀gẹ̀dẹ̀ (banana), ẹ̀gúsí (melon), olùkọ́ (teacher)
Ọlọ́mọge (young lady), ẹgbẹ́jọdá (uniform)
Olúróngbé (name),
Alágàbàgebè (dubious),

16. To apply appropriate tone on syllabic nasal consonant sounds (m and n) on words to differentiate it from ordinary consonant sounds thus:

Géńdé (strong man)
Pañla (fish)
Bím̀bọ́ (name)
Gòm̀bọ́ (tribal mark)
kọ̀ǹkọ̀ (frog)
Bẹ̀m̀bẹ́ (drum)

17. The words below should be written thus:

Wá + owó to be written as (wówó) not (wá wó).....(look for money)
Mú + àwo to be written as (máwo) not (má wo).....(pick a plate)
Wá + iṣẹ́ to be written as (wáṣẹ́) not (ó wá ṣẹ́).....(search for job)
Kọ́ + ẹkọ́ to be written as (kẹ́kọ̀ọ́) not (o kẹ́ kọ̀ọ́).....(schooling /learning)
Ó wá + ìmọ̀ to be written as (ó wámọ̀) not (ó wá mọ̀)... (seeking for knowledge)

18. Stop the reduplication of vowels in these words.

old spelling	**new spelling**
ọmọ ọ mi	ọmọ mi (my child)
Ọkọ ọ mi	ọkọ mi (my husband)
Ilé e wa	ilé wa (my house)
Ọ̀rẹ́ ẹ̀ mi	ọ̀rẹ́ mi (my friend)

19. Using elimination process when forming new words by combining verbs and nouns that are closely related Kí á máa lo àmì ìpajẹ́ láàárín àpapọ̀ ọ̀rọ̀-ìṣe àti ọ̀rọ̀-orúkọ tí wọ́n jẹ́ alọ́májàá báyìí:

i. tọ + ojú = tọ́jú tàbí tọ́'jú ìwà rẹ (watch your ways)
ii. rán + eti = rántí tàbí rán'tí ọmọ ẹni tí ìwọ ń ṣe (remember the child of whom you are)
iii. ra + aṣọ = raṣọ tàbí r'aṣọ (buy clothe)
iv. kọ + ìwé = kọ̀wé tàbí kọ̀'wé (write a book)

20. These words should not be written together as one word.

old spelling		**new spelling**
Ó ńlọ	to be written as	Ó ń lọ (he/she is going))
Ó ńké	to be written as	Ó ń ké (he/she crying

21. These words should be written as a word or together thus:

Níbo (where)
Níláti (have to)
Ìbá (should have)

22. To separate these words and not be written together as one word.

ta ni	(who)
kín ni / kí ni	(what)
wí pé	(that is)
gẹ́gẹ́ bí	(for example)
ẹni tí	(one that …)
nítorí tí	(because of)
nígbà tí	(when)
nígbà gbogbo	(when ever)
èwo ni	(which one)
ibi tí	(where it is)
nítorí náà	(because of that)
níwọ̀n ìgbà tí	(in as much)
lẹ́yìn náà	(after that)
bí ó tilẹ̀ jẹ́ pé	(even if it is)
èyí tí	(that one)
jẹ́ kí	(let it)
nígbà náà	(then)

23. Keep to the use of speech marks especially the linking hypen thus:

a-dáná-ìjà (war monger)
ògbórí-ẹlẹ́mọ̀ṣọ́ (a brave warlord)
onílé-gogoro (upstair)
o-torí-àmàlà-bá-wọn-gbókù-rọ̀yọ́ (glutton)
ògbórí-ẹfọ̀n (brave hunter)

24. The use of capital letters at the beginning of words, among phrases and sentences where necessary such as:

orúkọ Olọ́run (name of God), orúkọ ìlú (town), àdúgbò (place), orúkọ ènìyàn, ọjọ́ àti oṣù (human beings, days of the weeks, months), ìbẹ̀rẹ̀ gbólóhùn/ìpínrọ̀ (sentence/paragraph), ewì (poetry) etc.

25. Don't use capital letters in-between words.
26. If a word is loaned into the Yorùbá language, all rules must apply. For example;

i. Yàgò fún ìṣùpọ̀ ìró kọ́ńsónáǹtì (avoid consonant cluster)

ii. Ìró kọ́ńsónáǹtì kì í gbẹ̀yìn ọ̀rọ̀ Yorùbá (consonant sound cannot end Yorùbá words)

iii. Ìró àránmúpè kì í bẹ̀rẹ̀ ọ̀rọ̀ Yorùbá. (Yorùbá words do not start with nasalised sounds)

27. Strange letters should be replaced with a similar sound in the language.

Examples are:

English language	**Yorùbá language**
Psychology	Saikọ́lọ́jì
Church	Ṣọ́ọ̀ṣì
College	Kọ́lẹ́ẹ̀jì
Mark	Máàkì
Date	Déètì
Curriculum	Kọ̀ríkúlọ́ọ̀mù
Teacher	Tíṣà
Syllabus	Sílábọ́ọ̀sì

Having talked about the Yorùbá orthography, the next thing is the footnotes and graphic illustrations employed. Footnotes and any graphic illustrations used should be reviewed to ensure that they are not overlooked in the revision and avoid difficulties with spacing in the final version. The main purpose of footnotes is to document sources. It shows whose ideas are drawn. This affords the readers the opportunity of checking the glossary and relevance of quotations or other information used. Bibliography is a list of all the published sources that you have used to prepare your paper. It comes at the end of the paper. It identifies your sources exactly and usually provides more information about them than the footnotes. References are arranged alphabetically; by surname of the author, or if there is no author, by the first word a title or an article. The titles of books and journals are usually presented in italic type.

Conclusion

This paper has considered the academic guide to research and writing skills in Yorùbá language. It has also explored ways by which students can prepare themselves for written work. Students have been guided on the choice of topic to drawing an outline, researching the topic, to the body of a well-structured paper with a beginning, middle and an end. The paper stresses some important tips to good writing i.e. grammatical accuracy, avoiding spelling error, paragraphing, coherence, editing and revising. It also suggested motivation required by writer for an effective writing. It concluded that a good research is that follows the standard process and spells the entire methods from the beginning to the end. However, the adoption of the process varies from one discipline to another.

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