

Exploring Students' Potentials in Writing Argumentative Essay in the Implementation of Yoruba Language Curriculum

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Abstract: Language is a tool meant for communication and it involves writing with other rules. The Yorùbá language curriculum is characterised by the teaching of writing to develop competence in writing Yoruba and promote the richness of the language. Writing is very important in that it serves as a means of giving out information, for expressing one's thoughts and for interaction and it has always been a major part of questions for internal and external examinations across the country. This study explored students' potentials in writing argumentative essay in the implementation of Yorùbá language curriculum. The study reviewed the structure of Yorùbá argumentative essay, this structure includes, selecting a topic, introduction, content, language, organization, orthography and conclusion. The study further examined learners' pitfalls in writing argumentative essays in Yorùbá language curriculum. The study also identified remedies for writing argumentative essay in Yorùbá language. The study concluded that writing argumentative essay in Yorùbá language is one of the means of training students to think critically to be able to generate ideas and navigate their stance within the society. It concluded that teachers are in the best position to guide and model students to write argumentative essay by developing their cognition and writing habit. It was therefore, recommended that teachers should use various teaching methods to teach students how to write argumentative essay in Yorùbá language curriculum, students should keep journals of their writing and revisit it from time to time, likewise, teachers should review their students' essay writing and guide them to improve on their writing.

Keywords: Language, Essay Writing, Argumentative Essay, Yorùbá language, Yorùbá curriculum

Introduction

Language is a tool meant for communication and it involves writing with other rules (Asha 2006). Ayodele (2020) stated that, language is a way of interaction among people while the day-to-day activities of human being evolve round it. Language brings development and through it the nation can be civilised. Jibowu (2003) explained that,

language if properly learned and understood, developed and applied, will facilitate intellectual development, but if ignored, poorly understood and left to develop accidentally, intellectual development stands the risk of retardation and inadequacy. Language plays an important role in human communication, it is prominent in the development of students thinking and reasoning abilities. All these indicate that language is a very important means of communication. Language is responsible for human progress and it is through language that one is able to disseminate information and pass it down from one generation to another. Without language, man would suffer from mental isolation and thought stagnation while meaningful interpersonal interaction would be a mirage. According to Pal (2026), language proficiency enhances critical thinking and problem-solving skills and that, it promotes children mental health, highly regarded in both academics' achievement and active societal engagement. Learning language entails that the students master the language skills.

Language skills are the basic and important activities that learners need to engage in mastery and acquisition of language. The activities include listening, speaking, reading and writing. Ability of learners to demonstrate and master these skills mean such a person has acquired the language perfectly. These skills are essential for effective communication, career advancement and cognitive development, they foster cultural understanding (Pal, 2026). The language skills equally assist learners in consolidating and laying a good foundation for the structure of information that learners want to transmit to audience or the society.

In Yoruba language curriculum, these four skills are to be thoroughly taught by the teachers and learn by learners. The curriculum emphasised that students should be able to communicate effectively by mastering the language skills. This will enable them to be integrated into a sound and healthy society. The curriculum is out to raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others (Ayodele, 2020). One of the aims of teaching Yoruba language is to allow students to communicate orally and literally in the language. The National Education Development and Research (2007) stressed that, the students should be able to acquire ability to think critically, read properly, write adequately, speak fluently in Yoruba language. They should also be able to acquire adequate knowledge on the use of Yoruba language putting into consideration the rules guiding the use of speaking and writing of Yoruba language.

The curriculum is characterised by the teaching of writing to develop competence in writing Yoruba and promote the richness of the language. Writing is a means of communication that involves the representation of a language with symbols. Barnett (2020) stated that writing is the process of using symbols/letters of the alphabet, punctuation and spaces to communicate thoughts and ideas in a readable form. Writing is an act of putting an idea down on paper or a board using certain symbols. It is a means of communication

whereby sounds are used to form words and through words, sentences and phrases are formed. Edeogbon (1992) viewed writing as a way of representing on paper other materials that are spoken, heard or thought about. In the same vein, Oyinloye (2002) explained that writing is a productive skill which is used to communicate one's ideas, feelings and emotions. It is a form of communication where one can air his/her view and express their mind to an audience (Barnett 2020).

Ayodele (2020) explained that writing is an important skill for the development of individual education. She added that writing is also a means of attesting to the knowledge acquired. Writing is very important in that it serves as a means of giving out information, for expressing one's thoughts and for interaction. It is a means where students document their learning and again present it during examination. People write in order to communicate and put their idea across for future generations or for reference. Writing can be used to propagate government policy on Health, on language, Education and Culture. People can write to make an innovation, impress or criticise a situation or policy. Writing is mainly learned by doing.

Writing an essay has always been a major part of questions for internal and external examinations across the country. There are various types of writing such as narrative where writer report an event or something that happened in his presence. Descriptive is the type of essay that the writer uses to describe something for the reader for proper understanding of the concept and he/she try to imagine the situation. Argumentative is a situation where the writer attempts to make the reader to agree with his own position or a view point on certain issue. Argument has been part of people's way of life in the society, it features regularly in daily activities. It enables people to see things and air it the way they see it. It promotes critical thinking because one needs to argue with good and reasonable points to support his view. Spencer & Boyd (2026) explained that, argumentative essay is a genre of essay writing whose purpose is to argue a position. Argumentative writing helps to develop learner's critical thinking, it helps them to be able to develop persuasion skill. It is an avenue to train them to take informed decision which will make people to support his/her position. It improves personal skills, boost communication skill. It is an essay meant to persuade the reader to reason along with the writer, it is also known as debate.

Structure of Yoruba Argumentative Essay

The Yoruba argumentative essay is known as "àròkọ aláńíyàńjìyàn. It generally follows this structure while choosing a topic:

Selecting a Topic/Yíyan àkọlé tàbí orí ọrọ

An argumentative essay is a written response to a question, the response requires an in-depth explanation of a specific topic (Monash University, 2026). The structure of an argumentative essay starts with the topic; writers need to choose the topic to write about

as this will dictate what the writer will discuss in the essay as well as it will give direction to the writer. Students are to select a topic that will engage them and of course, that is debatable, that they will get enough facts to use for their discussion. The writers need to be very careful in selecting the topic. They are to choose something they know about and ensure they meet the required assignment (Gallaudet 2026). Writing topic must be very captivating. It is advised to write the topic all in block letters. If the topic is written in block letter, there is no need to underline, however, if it is written in small letters, the writer will have to underline the topic or skip the immediate space on the writing sheet just to make demarcation between the topic and the body of the essay.

Choosing an essay topic that one has ample knowledge of helps to speed up writing, this is like walking on a path that one is familiar with. According to Grades Fixer (2020), it is not essay to get lost on a road one is familiar with and one often reach the destination fast. Sticking to the topic instead of deviating to a topic that suits one's purpose is an avenue for a clear and enjoyable writing. Many times, a question may come in form of asking the writers personal opinion not that of the examiner, for instance, *Ìgbà òjò ni ilú mi dára ju ìgbà èrùn lẹ*. This is an expression of the writer's opinion, not that of the examiner.

Introduction / Ìfààrà

The introductory part is an opening statement which is meant to explain the background to the topic. It should be a very interesting and brief general discussion on the topic. In the Yoruba language curriculum, in writing an argumentative essay, there is no greeting, this makes it different from debate, no chairman, and no accurate time keeper.

The introductory part should be statements that are fascinating and can facilitate and prepare the mind of the readers on what they are about to read. It is meant to give the essay a focus and reflect the topic of the intending essay. The purpose of an introduction is to tell the audience/reader what the essay is about. A good introduction is necessary because, it allows readers to prepare themselves mentally for the journey they will undergo as they follow the argument through the paper (New Castle 2016). Introduction must grab the attention of the reader.

Content

Content in essay writing refers to the substantive information, arguments, evidence and analysis presented to support a write up (Southern 2021). It contains discussion on the topic. It is the main body of the essay which is arrange in paragraphs. It contains fact gathered together by the writers that will be used to support what he wants to discuss. These facts are logically arranged. Argumentative essay/writing in Yoruba language entails a different course because the writer is expected to discuss the two sides fully and into details. Writer cannot just discuss only one side. Let's take for instance, *Iṣẹ olùkọ dára ju iṣẹ àgbẹ lẹ*

It is necessary that the writer must think to be able to generate facts for clear discussion. Writer must make exclusive discussion on both sides. It is the concluding part that the writer can newly deliver his argument in a well-structured Yoruba language. The most important thing is that, he should have enough and genuine points to devalue his claim on the side that he is not supporting. There is penalty for candidate whose discussion is one side of the topic.

Language: Èdè

Language is essential in essay writing to effectively communicate complex ideas, structure arguments, logically, and build credibility with the reader (Awagu, 2021). There should be display of language and creativity usage of Yoruba language, paying attention to details use of diction, vocabulary and tenses. Good language usage in essays writing is characterised by clarity, conciseness, formality and objectivity. It focuses on precise word choice rather than complex vocabulary aiming to communicate ideas directly to the readers (University of Leeds 2026). Essay should be written in pure Yoruba language such that can be used for daily interaction and conversation. Loans words should also be properly integrated in the sentence, usage of rich vocabulary as it can be used in daily expression.

Using precise vocabulary and strong grammar makes the essay and therefore the argument more credible (Awagu, 2021). Apart from this, the writer is expected to use proverbs and other language expressions. In the view of Kelly (2025), proverbs enhances essay writing by providing concise wisdom, strengthening argument and improving engagement, making them effective tools for demonstrating language proficiency and cultural understanding.

Organization: Ètò

Organization makes an essay creative and more attractive is how it is organized. Karen (2019) stated that, no matter how well you write, no matter how carefully you proof read, your article or story can't live up to its potential if it's not well organised. It is important to organise ideas and facts in paragraphs and each of the paragraphs should be closely knitted together to present a logical reason.

In writing Yoruba argumentative essay, the writer should discuss extensively on first, the side he is supporting, the strengths and the weaknesses in a well organised paragraph. Secondly, the side that he is trying to work against, discussing also the strengths and weaknesses, coming to conclusion, the writer will have to stress more points to emphasis his own side which he want the readers to pitch along with him. Saying it categorically why he is taking this side.

Orthography – Àkọtọ

Yoruba orthography is the usage of standardised and central Yoruba language. This is to ensure smooth and clear reading of the essay. It involves making use of conventional spelling system. It is expected of the writer to make use of proper spelling ensure proper punctuation e.g comma, apostrophes, full stop, where necessary. Application of diacritics, accents, tone marking, dotting of “i ẹ ọ ẹ” is very essential. All these are meant to avoid ambiguity in choice of words. Nordquist (2025) explained that orthography is the practice or study of correct spelling according to established usage. The different tones in Yoruba language is employed to ensure the difference in meaning of words.

the high tone /

the mid tone ~

the low tone \

All these make essay to be very fascinating. Yoruba orthography encourages writers to write as you pronounce words no vowel should be lost, tones are used on vowels and nasalized vowels.

Conclusion / Ìkádìí

Writing a conclusion for Yoruba argumentative writing requires rephrasing the main essay, summarising key points both pros and cons and ending with a strong convincing statement (Janell & Angela, 2026). It requires the writer to summarise all the points earlier raised both for the supporting and the opposing view just in a nutshell. It is in this section that the writer intensifies on his points to remind the readers on the supporting side to draw more understanding on his reasons for choosing the side, bringing the discussion to closure by making sure that the readers align with his own view.

Learners’ pitfalls in Writing Argumentative Essay in Yoruba Language Curriculum

Writing essays has always been part of examination in Nigeria schools even though students are given options. Lesteri, Sony and Mohammed (2017), stated that students often struggle with argumentative writing due to its complex nature. Students’ performance in argumentative essay in Yoruba language continue to be on percentage reduction.

Many of these students use to ignore this particular essay type in an examination since they have options. They often believe that, argument is a very difficult aspect of human life. Tsapakis (2023) explained that for many students, writing an essay can seem like a cruel form of torture that requires an excessive amount of effort to communicate what they know. It is also observed that, many of the students cannot conveniently make their stance from the opposing view.

Dang, Chav and Tra (2020) stated that, in writing an argumentative essay, research, identifying key difficulties in content, structure, psychology and language are widely considered challenging for students. They further stressed that the key problems include.

1. Content and Idea Development – that is, students frequently struggle to generate and develop ideas, resulting in weak or unclear argument.
2. Structuring the essay – that is, organising arguments, logically and coherently.
3. Evidence and support that is, providing sufficient, credible evidence to support claims as a significant challenge.

WAEC (2023) reported and outline certain pitfalls in students' performance in Yorùbá argumentative essay as follows

- Inability of students to write extensively on the chosen topic.
- They wrote below the required number of pages or counted words.
- Failure to use adequate techniques in answering argumentative essay properly that is, they did not balance their arguments.
- Improper use of punctuation marks, inability to use marks appropriately.
- Carelessness as regards the use of modern Yoruba orthography.
- Inability to indicate correctly the question numbers attempted and, in some cases, not indicating at all.
- Inability to spell terms correctly.

Hassen (2025) pointed out some difficulties such as grammatical error, limited vocabulary, spelling mistakes, organizational problems, lack of clarity, punctuation issues, time management, lack of confidence, lack of understanding and many more issues confronting students. Nauldini (2022) stated that, in writing argumentative essay, difficulties might appear when the writer cannot develop the idea from the topic given and it seems hard to provide supportive evidence. He added that, students also do face, cognitive, linguistic and psychological difficulties. WAEC (2022) also reported that, some students write with poor orthography and writing the pros but neglecting the cons.

Ayodele (2020) opined that many students lack confidence and skills to think critically and generate ideas often due to rigid traditional writing instruction. Students illegible handwriting equally contribute to their poor performance in essay most especially in writing argumentative essay. Many students cannot write for examiners to read and comprehend. Many times, points are misinterpreted thereby resulting into poor grades. Durgeshan (2024), opined that, handwriting remain a fundamental skill in education which means if students' writing cannot be comprehended, it will amount to writing nonsense. Also, Lee (2024), stated that, illegible handwriting can make it difficult for teachers to read and fairly assess student's work.

Remedy for writing argumentative essay in Yoruba language.

There are certain guide lines that can assist students of Yoruba language in writing an improved argumentative essay.

Planning: Planning involve making a plan, even though it takes time, during planning, the writer tries to get detail of what to structure, the task and how to express it. At this point, teachers should support the students to be able to think and bring out ideas by using Scaffolding method as a guide. As groups, the teacher can as well use collaborative method so that, the students can brainstorm to bring out ideas as points to develop. There after the teacher guide the students by using mind mapping. Mind mapping is a way to organise ideas logically to make them easier to understand and to recall (Alken & Ferner, 2026). This will enable them to have enough points to write their argumentative essay.

Structuring: Structure involve arrangement into sections, the beginning, middle and closing part. The teacher can as well make use of graphic organiser to guide the students on how to structure and build up the paragraphs consistently and coherently. Another method that teacher can use is PEEL which is point, evidence, explanation, link. This method enhances essay writing by ensuring each paragraph is focused, well-supported and directly relevant to the overall argument (Gardner, 2023). A strong essay structure helps to build your argument and create a logical flow in your writing (Study Smarter, 2026). This will make a good essay component.

Language and Mechanics

Teachers should encourage the students on building vocabulary and grammatical structure, obeying all grammatical rules by using individualised method or peer group to teach as a group to ensure that their construction is alright. Using peer group method will ensure that the brilliant students can assist to strengthen the weak ones to make their own independent writing. Encourage students to make use of new words often in daily activities.

Modeling Essay: Carinevale (2026), stated that, modelling refers to the process through which teachers demonstrate a new skill before having students practice it on their own. It gives the teacher opportunity to build students confidence and try to write on their own with which they display their creativity. In this case the teacher will write to demonstrate an example writing as a draft of the process of writing essay. This provides a starting point and demystifies the writing process (Sarala et al 2015).

Write Often/Frequent Writing

Writing often train and develop the skill of writing and productivity, regular practicing of essay writing is a foundational habit for improving academic essay skills, as it helps develop critical thinking, analytical ability and the ability to structure argument effectively (Imaniah, 2022). Graham (2026) stated that, providing adequate time for

students to write is one essential element of an effective writing instruction. He added that, writing strategies should be taught explicitly and directly through a gradual release of responsibility from teacher to students, he further stressed that, to help students select the appropriate writing strategy, teachers might consider posting strategies on a wall chart in the classroom. Ayodele (2020) stressed that, students need to be more logical, organised and coherence in writing adding that, they need to improve their intelligence in order to gain competence in writing and they can achieve this through their determination and constant writing. With constant practicing, students will master the structure and organisation and other required section.

Review: Teacher should try to review the essay written by their students from time to time. Turku (2023) explained that, it is important that teachers make time to review the output from writing task, to highlight areas where students did well, show them where improvement can be made. In addition to all these, WAEC (2021) report stipulated that, candidate should equip themselves with the rudiments of the language and the correct usage of punctuation marks. Candidate should use appropriate tones and diacritics to marks since Yoruba language is a tonal language. Candidate should endeavor to write legibly to avoid losing marks (WAEC, 2021). Students are to take time to read and understand the prompt before writing an essay to avoid tangential argument. Ayodele (2020) stressed the need for teachers to integrate self-efficacy and constant journal keeping to be able to boost students' logical organisation, coherence and writing competence.

Conclusion

Writing argumentative essay in Yoruba language is one of the means of training students to think critically to be able to generate ideas and navigate their stance within the society. However, if students remain untaught and left to continue to struggle with argumentative essay, the linguistic ability of such students will be distorted. In view of this, teachers are in the best position to guide and model students to write argumentative essay by developing their cognition and writing habit.

Recommendations

Arising from the discussion on this study, it is therefore recommended that:

1. Teachers are to use various teaching methods to teach students how to write argumentative essay in Yoruba language curriculum.
2. Teachers and students should know that planning is very important and that they should not start writing argumentative without plan.
3. Teachers should also encourage their students to write argumentative essay often to perfect their writing skills.

4. Students are to keep journals of their writing and revisit it from time to time.
5. Teachers are advised to review their students essay writing and guide them to improve on their writing.
6. Students are to make use of Yoruba language in their daily activities to be able to develop more vocabularies which will help in their writing.

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