# MORPHOLOGICAL AND GRAMMATICAL (SYNTACTIC) CONTEXTS AS CORRELATES OF STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH ESSAY WRITING IN SOUTH-EAST STATES, NIGERIA

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**Abstract**

This correlation study determined the relationship that existed between the SS 2 students' morphological and grammatical (syntactic) contexts, and their academic achievement in English essay writing in the South-East State, Nigeria. The study population was 79,131, male and female from rural and urban senior secondary schools. Cluster and proportionate to size sampling techniques were adopted to select a sample of 1,500 students. A 50 4-point objective test with items options A, B, C, and D titled MGCCWT in Cloze test format generated data for this study. K-R 20 statistics tested for its reliability to generate indices cluster by cluster with r= 0.81; 0.72 and 0.82, respectively. Four null hypotheses were raised and tested at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson correlation and multiple regression statistics. Findings revealed a significant relationship between students' morphological contexts and grammatical contexts in English essay writing. There was a significant mean difference in the achievement scores of students from rural and urban school locations in morphological contexts, but not in grammatical contexts or English essay writing. Education stakeholders should develop targeted instructional strategies that enhance students' mastery of morphological and grammatical contexts to improve students' learning outcomes in English language essay writing, while teachers vary methods of teaching English essay writing to favour school locations.

**Keywords:** Morphological contexts, Grammatical contexts, Achievement in English essay writing, School location

**Introduction**

English, being the language of the colonial masters, came to Nigeria in the early 18th century through trade, commerce and religion. Its status as Nigeria's lingua-franca and international language cannot be overemphasized. English language equally serves as the centrifugal force that binds the multilingual Nigerians together in politics, commerce, trade, religions, and judiciary. It is the language of social interactions across all levels of education especially from Universal Middle Basic 1 (Primary 4) to any level of tertiary education (NPE, 2013). A good credit pass in English language at Ordinary Level in West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE), National Examinations Council (NECO), or any other national/international examining bodies is a criterion that qualifies one for admission into tertiary institution and degree awarding programmes in Nigeria and across the world (Okoye, 2019). This stands the reason why good mastery of its morphological and grammatical contexts is mandatory for every Nigerian child who learns English as second or foreign language (L2/FL), especially its written form (Dada, 2015; Umoh & Ezenwa, 2020).

In a multilingual state of Nigeria, there are well above 400 indigenous ethnic groups and languages with their multifarious dialects being spoken at various levels by the citizens (Olagbaju, 2020). This, in addition, creates complexities to the problem of linguistic and communicative mother tongue interferences at the levels of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics for which researchers are still seeking solutions (Okoye, 2019).

Good knowledge of the morphological context of a language, according to Dada (2015), develops in the user of the language his innate ability to express competences (communicative and linguistic competences) in language performance. Morphology, according to Anderson, (2010) cited in Marcellus (2023), is simply described as the study of the internal structure of morphemes (words and their semantic building blocks). According to Sunday, Olaoye and Hauwa (2021), there are many ways to show that word structure (morphology) is different from phrase, clause and sentence structures (syntax) which most students in senior secondary schools in this part of the country may not know.

Morphology, according to Giyatmi (2017), is the study of word structure, the way words are formed and the way their forms interact with other aspects of grammar such as phonology and syntax. Morphology, as Qassim (2019) describes it, is the sub-discipline devoted to the study of the distribution and forms of "morphemes", taken to be the minimal combinatorial unit languages used to build words and phrases which should be carefully mastered by students and adequately used in their essay writings. For example, it is a fact about English language morphology that information about whether a sentence is in the past tense occurs at the end of verbs. This fact reduces to a generalization about the distribution of the tense morpheme in English language which is the fact about "morphotactics" (the distribution and ordering of morphemes) in that the (regular) past-tense morpheme is pronounced /t/ after a class of voiceless consonants (walked, tipped, kissed, flogged, slapped, received, etc) and /d/ after a class of voiced consonant and after vowels (gaggled, ribbed, fizzed, played). This is a fact about 'allomorphy" (alternations in the pronunciation of morphemes). Traditionally, then, morphology concerns itself with morphotactics and allomorphy, inflectional and derivational morphological structures. One wonders if secondary school students are being taught these because knowing these will make the building of English word structures easy and their perfect use in writing essays and compositions very excellent (Samaraweera, 2019).

Although the division or decomposition of words and phrases into smaller units seems relatively intuitive, Rastle (2019) has repeatedly questioned the basic assumption about morphemes, with one view, instead of dealing with the distribution and pronunciation of small pieces of language. Learners should be taught to know that morphology is about the form of words, where, for example, kick, kicks, kicking, and kicked, are all forms of the same verb "kick' (Matthews in Omuna, (2024), but are not composed of a sequence of morphemes. Having classroom interactions with senior school students, it stands an embarrassment to discover that most students find it difficult to correctly put verbs in their correct tense formats. It is difficult for some students to know that from this morpheme-less perspective, "kicked" is a form of the stem 'kick', not the combination of kick + past tense, where past tense is realized as /t/. Thus, Omuna (2024) lamentably complains that teachers of English language nowadays shifted their focus on the teaching of morphological and grammatical contexts which are the bedrocks of English as second language learning. This, according to Misir (2017) could be one of the reasons why many of our senior school learners cannot write English essays intelligibly.

Related to English grammatical contexts, the internal arrangement of morphemes both within words and within phrases and sentences, according to Mohalik (2020), is explained by a single syntactic theory, and morphology provides an account of the way in which these morphemes are realized whether inside words or independently arranged in phrases. It is necessary to emphasize the need for Senior Secondary School learners of English to understand the principles behind word building, word formation and their class categories to help them in their language use in English language essay writing.

The difficulties students encounter in making meaningful arrangements of words and phrases in order to create well-formed sentences in their English essay writing cannot be overemphasized. According to Marcellus (2023), syntax is the grammatical structure of sentences. It refers to the format in which words and phrases are arranged to create coherent sentences which many students cannot explain. We now live in an era when cohesion and coherence are no longer emphasized by English language teachers in their teaching and no wonder; most secondary school learners find it very difficult to produce meaningful, well structured sentences in their essay writing. Thus, Klaus (2021) opines that the problem of syntax (proper grammatical arrangement of words, phrases and clauses in their right constituents) has plagued the writing skills of most Nigerian users of English and has left them intelligibly impoverished.

At the level of syntax (grammar), as Ogunsiji and Sunday in Marcellus (2023) stated, a word has no specific constituent until it is used. This is why West African Senior School Certificate Examinations Examiner's Reports on English language (2022) emphasized the need for English language learners to have good mastery of both the morphological and syntactic/grammatical contexts to enhance the learners' opportunity to communicate meaningfully in written format with little or no lexical or structural ambiguities.

Essay writing, according to Houe (2021) and Hinkel (2020), is the highest in the hierarchy and is considered the most difficult skill to acquire that every student is required to possess to enhance his/her personal development in life careers and academics. The ability to write well in English as a second language, according to Misir (2017) and Giyatmi (2017), has paved the path of progress in life careers such as mass communications, law, journalism, teaching, and in other language-based professions. Chandra, Prabha, Raja and William (2021) noted that learning to write well can help students to produce specific writing genres such as essays, summaries and reports. But what is observed among senior secondary school students today, as Barta and Janovsky (2023) opines, gives concern to parents, teachers and other education stakeholders as most students find it difficult to present their ideas in meaningful written formats. This, therefore, has led to poor performance in expression, organization, and the worst, in mechanical accuracy (Khalid, 2019). Therefore, Boh and Abubakar (2021) state that, since these linguistic levels (morphology and syntax/grammar) are related, students should be adequately taught these levels perfectly to help them learn writing skills that will enable them express themselves appropriately and effectively in English essay writing.

School location, as Beers and Nagy in Daniyal (2020) opines, has been considered a key factor that determines the kind of students and teachers that are usually found in a school. More often, qualified teachers of English language are found in government-owned urban schools than in rural schools though this may not determine their commitment to duties and their students' ability to overcome difficulties in English essay writing. Mohalik (2020) reported that there is the perception that rural school students are slow-witted hillbillies with little education and

uninformed view about what goes on in the "real world" outside their environments whereas, those students in urban schools, according to Ajiwogu (2021), and Al-saeedi, (2017), have access to electronic media (television, iphones, radio, internet facilities, inter-school-extra-mural lessons) which most students in rural schools, according to Alessa and Hussein (2023), Adebileje and Aderonke (2020), are not privileged to enjoy. Worse still, these rural schools, according to Adityas, Oktavianti and Prayogi (2021) are deprived of having sufficient number of permanent, qualified English language teachers to teach students the rudiments of English morphology, grammar (syntax) and essay writing very perfectly.

The galloping failure rate of candidates in English language at WASSCE, NECO and other certificate awarding examinations has become an embarrassment, not only to students, but to all education stakeholders. Thus, the researcher sees the need to find out if there is relationship between the students' school locations, good knowledge of the morphological and grammatical contexts and achievement in English essay writing in public senior secondary schools in the South-East States of Nigeria.

**Statement of the Problem**

Writing essays proficiently in English language for most secondary school students is a herculean task. The difficulty glaringly manifests in students' poor academic achievement in the core subject (English Language) which determines the extent to which an individual learner can achieve in his or her academic pursuits. English Language teachers are often portrayed as unattractive grammar- mongers whose only pleasure in life is to point out the faults of others most especially in the uses of English language morphemes and grammar. For the most part, within the classroom, any mention of morphology, grammar/syntax or essay writing causes the students moments of discomfort. English Language morphology and grammar/syntax are rule-governed, and the rules must be mastered and followed very strictly before one can be seen as having overcome its morphological and grammatical difficulties. Many teachers have tried to make essay writing a non-threatening, imaginative and useful activity within the English curriculum while most parents endeavour to provide school materials within their economic reach for their wards, yet the problem still persists. Most of what students write is a mere junk of incomprehensible essays. One particular concern has been with persistent students' lack of morphological and grammatical (syntactic) contexts in relation to English essay writing.

Essay writing skills are life-long skills that transcend the academic environment. Poor essay writing skills noticeable among students will affect their chances in life and their chosen professions. Could it be that students perform poorly in essay writing because of their inability to have sufficient mastery of the morphological and grammatical (syntactic) contexts? Or, is the problem of student's inability to achieve better in English essay writing gender based? Could this problem be linked to students' school location? These stand the reasons for this study.

**Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses are drawn and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

**H0$_1$**: There is no significant correlation between the achievement scores in morphological contexts and achievement scores in English language essay writing of senior secondary school 2 students in South-East States, Nigeria.

**H0₂:** There is no significant correlation between the achievement scores of senior secondary school 2 students in grammatical (syntactic) contexts and achievement scores in English essay writing.

**HO₃:** There is no significant correlation among the achievement scores of senior secondary school 2 students in morphological contexts, grammatical (syntactic) contexts and in English essay writing.

**Ho₄:** There is no significant correlation between the achievement scores of senior secondary school 2 students (from schools located in urban and rural areas) in morphological contexts, grammatical (syntactic) contexts and English essay writing.

## Methodology

This study focused on the relationships that exist among the morphological contexts, grammatical (syntactic) contexts and senior secondary school students' achievement in English essay writing in South-East States, Nigeria while school location is the moderating variable. The geographical scope of this study is all secondary schools in the entire South-East States, Nigeria that cover the five States: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo State.

The population of the study was 79,131while 1,500 (male and female senior secondary school 2 students from Abia, Anambra and Imo States formed the sample size for the study. Cluster, proportionate to size, percentage and simple random sampling techniques were adopted A 50 4-point objective test items with options A, B, C, and D titled GCCWT (Grammatical (Syntactic) Contexts and Controlled Writing Test) in Cloze test format was used to generate data for this study. The instrument was validated while Kuder and Richardson (K-R 20) statistic was used to test its reliability indices that yielded r= 0.82; and 0.85 respectively. Four nul hypotheses guided the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance while Pearson correlation and multiple regression statistics were employed to analyse data.

## Results

**Test of Hypotheses**
**HO₁:** There is no significant correlation between achievement scores of students in morphological contexts and achievement in English essay writing in the South-East States, Nigeria.

**Table 1: Relationship between Morphological Context and Students' Achievement Scores in English Language Essay Writing**

|  |  | Morphology Context | English Essay Writing |
|---|---|---|---|
| Morphology Context | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .379** |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
|  | N | 1500 | 1500 |
| English Essay Writing | Pearson Correlation | .379** | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |  |
|  | N | 1500 | 1500 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 shows the relationship between morphological contexts and students' achievement in English essay writing in South-East States. The correlation indicates that the coefficient of the students' morphological context and academic achievement in English Essay Writing among secondary schools is significant at $p < .05$. There is positive relationship exit between the variables (r = 0.379**; p<0.05). Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected. A general overview shows that students' morphological context significantly predict achievement of students in English Essay writing among secondary schools. Therefore, it was concluded that there is significant relationship between morphological contexts and students' achievement in English essay writing in South-East State, Nigeria.

**HO2:** There is no significant correlation between the achievement scores of senior secondary school 2 students in grammatical (syntactic) contexts and achievement in English essay writing in South-East States, Nigeria.

**Table 2: Relationship between Grammatical (Syntactic) Contexts and Students' Achievement Scores in English language Essay Writing**

|  |  | Grammar | English Essay Writing |
|---|---|---|---|
| Grammatical Contexts | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .501** |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
|  | N | 1500 | 1500 |
| English Essay Writing | Pearson Correlation | .501** | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |  |
|  | N | 1500 | 1500 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 shows the relationship that exists between grammatical (syntactic) contexts and students' achievement in English essay writing in South-East, Nigeria. The correlation indicates that the coefficient of the students' grammatical context and academic achievement in English Essay Writing among secondary schools is significant at $p < .05$. There is positive relationship exit between the variables (r = 0.501**) and the relationship observed was also significant. Hence, there is significant relationship between grammatical contexts and academic achievement in English Essay Writing among senior secondary school students in South-East states, Nigeria. This implies that students' grammatical contexts enhance their achievement in English essay writing in senior secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria.

**HO3:** There is no significant correlation among the achievement scores of senior secondary school students in morphological contexts, grammatical (syntactic) contexts and in English essay writing in South-East States, Nigeria.

**Table 3a: Model Summary and Coefficients of the Multiple Regression Analysis for the Composite Contribution of Morphological and Grammatical Contexts on Students' Academic Achievement in English Essay Writing**

| R = .525, | R Square = .275, | | Adjusted R Square = .274 | | Std. Error = 1.689 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Regression | 1623.512 | 2 | 811.756 | 284.452 | .000 |
| Residual | 4272.077 | 1497 | 2.854 | | |
| Total | 5895.589 | 1499 | | | |

*Dependent Variable: Achievement in English Essay Writing*
*Predictors: (Constant), Morphological Contexts, Grammatical Contexts*

**Table 3b: Coefficients of the Multiple Regression Analysis for the Relative Contribution of Morphological and Grammatical Contexts on Achievement of students in English Essay Writing**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| | (Constant) | 4.929 | .202 | | 24.460 | .000 |
| 1 | Morphology Contexts | .205 | .029 | .177 | 7.026 | .000 |
| | Grammatical Contexts | .436 | .026 | .416 | 16.505 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Essay Writing
Source: Field Survey, 2023

Tables 3a and 3b revealed significant results ($F_{(2, 1497)} = 284.452$, p < .05). The further showed that morphological contexts and grammatical contexts accounted for 27.4% of the variance in academic achievement in English essay writing among secondary schools (Adj. $R^2 = .274$). The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant composite contribution of morphological contexts and grammatical contexts to the prediction of academic achievement in English essay writing. Grammatical contexts was the strongest predictor of academic achievement in English essay writing (Beta = .416, t = 16.505, p < .05). This was successively followed by morphological contexts (Beta = .177, t = 7.026, p < .05).

**HO4:** There is no significant correlation between the achievement scores of students from schools located in urban and rural areas and their achievement in morphological and grammatical (syntactic) contexts and English essay writing in South-East States, Nigeria.

**Table 4: Relationship between the achievement scores of students from schools located in urban and rural areas and their achievement in morphological and grammatical (syntactic) contexts and in English essay writing**

| | | Rural/Urban Area | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Variables | Morphological Contexts | Grammatical Contexts | English Essay Writing |
| **Urban/Rural Area** | Morphological Contexts | 1.00 | .553** | .455** |
| | Grammatical Contexts | .440** | 1.00 | .607** |
| | English Essay Writing | .334** | .431** | 1.00 |

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)*
Source: Field Survey, 2023

Results in table 4 were significant. Hence, the null hypothesis which stated that there are no significant relationship between the mean scores of students from schools located in urban and rural areas and their achievement in morphological and grammatical (syntactic) contexts and English essay writing in South-East States, Nigeria was rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis leading to the conclusion that there were significant and positive relationships between the mean scores of students from schools located in urban and rural areas and their achievement in morphological and grammatical (syntactic) contexts and English essay writing in South-East, Nigeria. The strongest relationship was between students in rural area grammatical contexts and achievement in English essay writing ($r = .607**$, $p < .05$). This was successively followed by significant positive relationships between morphological contexts and English essay writing ($r = .455**$, $p < .05$), and there exist significant relationship between morphological contexts and grammatical contexts($r = .553**$, $p < .05$). In the same vein, there was significant relationship between students in urban area (morphological contexts and English essay writing($r=.440**$, $P< 0.05$) followed by grammatical contexts and English essay writing ($r=.334**$, $P< 0.05$) while significant relationship was further observed between morphological and grammatical contexts ($r = .431**$, $p < .05$). This means that the significant relationship observed between morphological contexts, grammatical contexts and achievement in English essay writing was based on the school.

**Discussions**
**Relationship between Morphological Context and Students' Achievement Scores in English Language Essay Writing**
The findings of this study agree with the findings of Daniyal, (2020); Al-saeed, (2020) and Samaraweera, (2019) whose studies have found an effect of morphological contexts on word reading, reading comprehension, and essay writing. Additionally, this study reveals that the intensive mastery of morphological contexts can improve learners' abilities in written language. This agrees with the findings of Omuna, (2024) and Mohalik, (2020). This study also agrees with Klaus, (2021) who suggested that, by employing morphological rules during sentence generation, morphological knowledge may help with both spelling and word production during student essay writing. These findings were later supported by Houe, (2021) longitudinal study, in which primary school students with better scores on morphological contexts measures were found to perform better in measures of reading comprehension, spelling, and writing than those students with lower scores in morphological contexts.

Collectively, learners with poor morphological contexts are more likely to have difficulty in reading, spelling and writing. The findings of the study agree with the studies of Hinkel, (2020), and Rastle, (2019) who maintained that morphological knowledge is an important tool to help with students' written language skills. Substantial evidence exists demonstrating that morphological skill contributes to improvements in children's word reading, vocabulary, and comprehension. However, the findings of this study slightly disagree with Qassim, (2019) and Giyatmi (2017) who opined that male students have better knowledge of English morphological contexts than female students. The findings of this study also partly support Al-saeed (2020) that the awareness of how to process meanings from the meaning of different units (e.g., affixes and roots versus concepts, phrase, sentences, and paragraphs) may also explain the association between morphological awareness and the development of ESL learners' writing ability.

**Relationship between Grammatical (Syntactic) Contexts and Students'   Achievement Scores in English language Essay Writing**
The findings of this study agree with Misir, (2017), Mohalik, (2020) and Ajiwogu, (2021) who offer valuable insights for educators and curriculum developers, emphasizing the pivotal role that grammatical contexts play in fostering effective communication through written expression.  Practical implications of these findings agree with Barta and Janovsky, (2023), and Mercellus (2023) who opined that it may include the development of targeted instructional strategies focusing on enhancing grammatical knowledge to improve overall achievement in English essay writing. Additionally, this study partly agrees with Adityas, Oktavianti and Pravogi (2021) who stated that syntactic teaching contributes to the broader understanding of linguistic elements and their influence on writing proficiency, thereby informing future research endeavour and educational interventions in the field of language education.

Furthermore, this current study agrees with Qassim, (2019), Misir (2017) who asserted that grammatical (syntactic) knowledge has a significant effect on ESL learners' writing quality. This equally agrees with the findings of Olagbaju, (2020); Okoye, (2019) and Al-saeedi, (2020). Khalid, (2019) who studied the relationship between syntax and writing ability of English-speaking students and the findings supported the view suggested by the current correlation data that syntactic awareness may help with the fluent expression of a more complex relationship among ideas, leading the ideas to be supported clearly. Grammatical competence is likely to play a significant role in composition writing tasks as this agrees with Alessa and Hussein, (2023). Good knowledge of the grammatical contexts of English language should help students in the mastery of the fundamentals of English as second language. This study also supports the findings of Oyekanmi, (2022) and Boh and Abubakar, (2021) who both opined that employing appropriate mechanical and conventional rules of English grammar will help students to produce clearer written texts and more effective message delivery through writing.

**Relative Contribution of Morphological and Grammatical Contexts on Achievement of students in English Language Essay Writing**
The findings of this study agree with the findings of Giyatmi (2017) and Okoye (2019). This detailed distinction emphasizes the importance of considering specific linguistic aspects such as morphological contexts in understanding gender-based variations in academic achievement. It also agrees with the study of Agandaa (2018) and Mahmud (2018) who raise questions about the factors contributing to the equality observed in English essay writing scores. Future research could delve into these factors to better inform educational practices and interventions

aimed at narrowing achievement gaps in different language-related domains among students in the South-East States of Nigeria.

Furthermore, the findings agree with Sunday, Olaoye and Hauwa, (2021), Umoh and Ezenwa, (2020);Chandra, Prabha, Raja and William, (2021) who suggested that, on the average, male and female students perform similarly in both grammatical (syntactic) contexts and English essay writing, thereby challenging any assumptions of gender-based disparities in academic achievement in these specific linguistic domains.

These insights also slightly agree with Adebileje and Aderonke, (2020); and Okoye, (2019) who both stated that this can inform educational policies and interventions by emphasizing the need to focus on other potential determinants of academic success beyond gender in the South-East States of Nigeria. In addition, the findings support Eunson, (2020) and Singh et al. (2017) who conclusively opined that grammar knowledge helps students in correcting mistakes and in improving the quality of written texts.

**Relationship between the achievement scores of students from schools located in urban and rural areas and their achievement in morphological and grammatical (syntactic) contexts and in English essay writing**
The findings of this study partly agree with the findings of Adityas, Oktavianti and Pravagi (2021) who stated that higher proficiency in morphological and grammatical aspects is associated with higher achievement in English essay writing among students due to their school locations. The findings also agree with the studies of Eunson (2020) and Mohalik (2020) who both observed good mastery of the morphological and grammatical contexts of English has practical implications for educational interventions, highlighting the importance of emphasizing morphological and grammatical competencies to enhance overall proficiency in English essay writing due to school locations in the South-East States of Nigeria.

**Conclusion**

Writing essays proficiently in English language, for most senior school students, is a herculean task. The difficulty glaringly manifests in students' poor academic achievement in the core subject (English Language) which determines the extent to which an individual learner can go in his or her academic pursuits. An investigation of the factors influencing achievement in essay writing is therefore a worthwhile venture. This research systematically investigated the intricate relationship between morphological and grammatical (syntactic) contexts and the academic achievement of senior school students in English language essay writing in the South-East States of Nigeria. Findings revealed significant insights into the interplay of linguistic elements and academic achievement in English language essay writing. The positive relationships identified between morphological contexts and English essay writing, as well as grammatical contexts and English essay writing, highlight the importance of these two linguistic components in shaping students' proficiency in written expression.

Furthermore, the detailed examination of urban-rural disparities in linguistic achievements provides a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted factors that influence academic outcomes. The findings not only demonstrate the significance of morphological and grammatical competencies but also challenge preconceived notions regarding potential variations in achievement based on learners' school location. The identified predictors, morphological and grammatical contexts, account collectively for a considerable proportion of

the variability in students' English language essay writing achievement, emphasizing the need for targeted educational interventions.

As South-East Nigeria continues to develop its educational landscape, these findings can guide curriculum development and teaching strategies. Tailoring interventions to address specific linguistic needs, taking into consideration urban-rural dynamics, has the potential to enhance overall achievement in English language essay writing. The implications extend beyond the immediate context of this study, urging educators and policymakers to adopt a holistic approach to language education, recognizing the intricate relationship between linguistic elements and students' academic achievement in English essay writing.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:
1. Researchers and teachers should develop targeted instructional strategies that focus on improving students' mastery of morphological contexts to improve students' essay writing ability.
2. Government and other stakeholders should implement interventions aimed at strengthening grammatical competencies in English essay writing. This may involve tailored instructional approaches, workshops, or resources that emphasize morphological and grammatical structures to enhance overall writing proficiency for both students in rural and urban school locations.

3. English language teachers should implement strategies to strengthen students' achievement in both morphological and grammatical contexts which are the predictors of students' achievement in English essay writing.
4. And above it all, students should make extra efforts to have good mastery of the morphological and grammatical contexts of English language to enhance them better achievements in English language essay writing irrespective of their different school locations.

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