

Continuous Assessment And Examination Scores In Communication In English In A Tertiary Institution Of Learning

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Abstract

The study examined the level of academic performance of part one students in GST 103 and GST 104 in Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa. It also investigated if there is any significant relationship between the CA and Examination scores of Part one students in the two courses in the study areas. This is with a view to improving the academic performance of students in Communication in English courses in the study area. The study employed Ex-post facto design. Census method was employed as the entire population was used for the study. The population of the study was 1,162 for GST 103 and 1,104 for GST 104. They are part I students' of 2020/2021 academic session across the three Schools in Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology in Okitipupa. GST 103 is titled Communication in English I offered in the First Semester while GST 104 is titled Communication in English II offered in the Second Semester. Secondary data used were scores of both Continuous Assessment and Examination Scores for GST 103 and GST 104 which were analysed for the purpose of this study. The results showed that the level of academic performance of part one students in GST 103 and GST 104 were moderate at 73.2% and 74.2% respectively. The results also showed that there was significant relationship between CA and Examination scores of Part one students in GST 103 ($r=0.779$, $p < 0.05$) in the study area. There was also significant relationship between CA and Examination scores of Part one students in GST 104 ($r = 0.851$; $p < 0.05$) in the study area. The study concluded that a combination of Continuous Assessment and Examination scores are good predictors of academic performance of students in Communication in English, implying that both components are valuable in evaluating student learning outcomes in this subject.

Keywords: *Continuous Assessment, Examination Scores, GST 103, GST 104, Part One Students*

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I. Introduction

In all higher institutions of learning in Nigeria, some courses are compulsory and must be offered in part one, one of such courses is Communication in English. In some universities, it is called Use of English. Communication in English has two parts, part I is offered in First Semester or Harmattan Semester while part II is offered during the Second Semester or Rain Semester depending on the term used by different institutions. The teaching and learning of Communication in English courses are fundamental for any other disciplines offered in the higher institutions of learning. Most emphasis in Communication in English focuses on different aspects of the English language, given its role as Nigeria's official language for administration and education. No wonder, literacy in English language is pivotal to all human development in Nigeria and anyone who wishes to be relevant in the Nigerian policy as well as the global world should learn English by all means (Njoku, 2017). Notably, pursuing higher education abroad typically requires proficiency in English, making it a crucial aspect of academic pursuits. Assessing Communication in English plays a vital role in the teaching and learning process, as it enables feedback to be given to both students and teachers, facilitating improvement (Dennis, 2012). Assessment is a central element in the overall quality of teaching and learning (Aladenasi, 2010). The increasing importance of assessment is viewed by Adeyemi (2008) as not only necessary for pupils, but for the educational system as a whole. Assessment may be defined as any method used to better understand the current knowledge that a student possesses. It follows that teachers need to regularly assess the effectiveness of the learning experiences they have organized in order to enable the students achieve the stated objectives of the lesson. In the opinion of Greaney (2001), assessment is defined as any procedure or activity that is designed to collect information about the knowledge, attitude, or skills of the learner or group of learners. Assessment is therefore a process through which the quality of an individuals' work or performance is judged (Onibumwa, Adigun, Irunokhai, Sada, Jeje, Adeyemi and Adesina, 2018).

Assessment could be formative or summative. Formative assessment is done during the course as the teaching and learning is in progress; this is called continuous assessment. The place of Continuous Assessment cannot be jettisoned in any educational enterprise as it serves as a means of improving learners' learning and development. According to Ferdissa (2006), Continuous Assessment is an integrated and prominent part of teaching and learning process at all levels of education where institutions or individuals are able to verify that students have achieved the learning outcomes and standard stated for different programmes and courses. The above definition corroborates Awofola (2013) who described Continuous Assessment as continuous updating of judgment about performance of students in relation to specific criteria which allows cumulative judgment to be made about performance upon these same criteria at any time. This means that multiple assessments of a student's performance are conducted over time, and all these evaluations are taken into account to provide a comprehensive and accurate representation of the student's progress and abilities at a specific point in time. In other words, it is not just a single test or examination that defines a student's performance, but rather a collection of various assessments, assignments, and evaluations that give a more complete picture of their strengths, weaknesses, and overall academic standing. It even enables the students to realize their academic state and whether or not to be studious.

A continuous assessment strategy refers to the different tools and procedures used in the classroom to understand the academic achievement levels of learners in terms of their knowledge, attitudes and values (Onihunwa, et al., 2018). Assessment strategies are deliberate and structured plans designed to evaluate learning outcomes. Continuous Assessment, in particular, adopts a holistic approach, considering multiple facets of learning. It encompasses the cognitive domain, which includes knowledge acquisition, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Additionally, it considers the affective domain, covering attitudes, values, emotions, and social skills. The psycho-motor domain is also taken into account, focusing on practical skills, physical abilities, and motor skills. By considering these three domains, Continuous Assessment provides a thorough understanding of learners progress, extending beyond mere academic knowledge to encompass essential skills and attitudes that foster overall development. It involves the use of a variety of assessment instruments which may include tests, projects, assignments, quizzes, presentations, group discussions and so on. The National Policy on Education (2014) equally emphasized the need for an accurate assessment of learners' abilities from time to time in order to enhance the global competitiveness of the products of the Nigerian educational system. It is not surprising that the National Universities Commission approved minimum standard (2004) provided for continuous assessment of students for regular end of year semester examination.

In most of the institutions of learning in Nigeria, 40% of the total scores of students is made up of Continuous Assessment while the remaining 60% of the total scores form the examination scores. In Nigeria's education system, student learning outcomes are formally evaluated through a combination of continuous assessment and final examinations. Continuous assessment involves ongoing evaluations throughout the academic period, monitoring students' progress and understanding. This is complemented by final examinations, which provide a comprehensive evaluation of students' mastery of the curriculum at the end of a course or academic level. This dual approach ensures a thorough appraisal of students' knowledge, skills, and competencies, providing a complete picture of their academic achievement. As earlier stated, continuous assessment is an essential formative evaluation technique with 40% weight in the total examination scores of a course in education. The final examination results determine students' level of achievement and provide basis for decision on the level of students' progress and provides feedback to students on their performance during the semester (Bichi and Musa, 2015), continuous assessment is likely to influence their examination preparation and effort. Buttressing this assertion, Pudaruth, Moloo, Chiniah, Sungkur, Nagowah, and Kishnah, (2013) conducted a study on assessing the impact and correlation between continuous assessments scores and final examinations' scores of Computer Science modules at the University of Mauritius, their findings revealed a high correlation between the scores obtained by students in their continuous assessment and examination scores. Consequently, it is their belief that students heavily relied on the grades earned through continuous assessments as a means to bolster their overall examination scores. This perspective suggests that students may be leveraging the continuous assessment component to compensate for or enhance their performance in the final examinations, potentially inflating their overall scores. This viewpoint implies that the weighting of continuous assessment in the overall evaluation may be influencing students' strategies and approaches to their academic work.

Statement of the Problem

There is no doubt that specialists in English Language have expressed dismay at students' linguistic and communicative incompetence (Jire-Alao, 2023; Olakunle and Fakeye, 2023) which are likely to be attributed to the seemingly falling standard in our educational system as well as faulty teaching at the foundational level. It is therefore apparent that without communication competence in English, opportunities for

a better life remain elusive. Furthermore, in Nigerian higher institutions, the English language course serves as a foundational requirement that underpins all other disciplines, and passing it is mandatory. Given its fundamental nature, excelling in this course is vital, and performance in both continuous assessments and examinations plays a significant role in determining students' overall grades. It is against this backdrop that the impact of continuous assessment on examination scores becomes particularly relevant, making it a worthy focus of study, as it has the potential to significantly influence students' overall performance in the course and, by extension, their academic trajectory.

Objectives of the study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between continuous assessment and examination scores in Communication in English at Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa, Ondo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. determine the level of academic performance of Part one students in GST 103 in Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa, Ondo State;
- ii. examine the level of academic performance of Part one students in GST 104 in the study area;
- iii. investigate the relationship between continuous assessment and examination scores of Part One students in GST 103 in the study area; and
- iv. investigate the relationship between continuous assessment and examination scores of Part One students in GST 104 in the study area.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of academic performance of Part One students in GST 103 in Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa, Ondo State?
2. What is the level of academic performance of Part one students in GST 104 in the study area?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between continuous assessment and examination scores of Part One students in GST 103 in Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa, Ondo State.
2. There is no significant relationship between continuous assessment and examination scores of Part One students in GST 104 in the study area.

II. Methodology

The study employed Ex-post facto design which implies that emphasis is placed on previous events and present condition. Here, it is not possible to select, control and manipulate the factors necessary to study cause and effect relationship directly. Census method was employed as the entire population was used for the study. The population of the study was 1,162 for GST 103 and 1,104 for GST 104. They are part I students' of 2020/2021 academic session across the three Schools, as at the time of the study in Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology in Okitipupa. The Schools and Departments are indicated below:

School of Science

- i. Department of Biological Sciences (Botany, Microbiology and Zoology)
- ii. Department of Chemical Sciences (Industrial Chemistry and Biochemistry)
- iii. Department of Physical Sciences (Physics and Geophysics)
- iv. Department of Mathematics Sciences (Mathematics, Computer Science and Statistics)

School of Engineering

- i. Department of Mechanical Engineering
- ii. Department of Civil Engineering
- iii. Department of Electrical Electronic Engineering

School of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources

- i. Department of Wildlife and Natural Resources Management
- ii. Department of Food Sciences and Technology
- iii. Department of Crop, Soil and Pest Management
- iv. Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension
- v. Department of Animal Health and Production
- vi. Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture Technology

GST 103 is titled Communication in English I offered in the First Semester while GST 104 is titled Communication in English II offered in the Second Semester. Secondary data used were both Continuous Assessment Scores and Examination Scores for GST 103 and GST 104 which were analysed for the purpose of this study.

III. Results

Research Question One: What is the level of academic performance of Part one students in GST 103 in Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa, Ondo State?

In order to answer this research question, data collected on the Part One students in GST 103 considering the total scores in both CA and examinations scores were subjected to descriptive analysis having calibrated the level as follows:

- 0%-39% = Low
- 40%-69% = Moderate
- 70%-100 = High

The summary of the result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of the level of academic performance of Part one students in GST 103 in Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa, Ondo State

S/N	Level	Range	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	0%-39%	077	6.6
2	Moderate	40%-69%	850	73.2
3	High	70%-100%	235	20.2
2	Age			
Total			1162	100.0

N= 1162

The findings, as presented in Table 1, provide insight into the academic performance of Part One students in GST 103 at Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa, Ondo State. A descriptive analysis of the data reveals that the students' performance in GST 103 was moderate, with an overall score of 73.2%. This suggests that, on average, students demonstrated a fair grasp of the course material, but there is room for improvement to achieve higher levels of academic achievement. The moderate performance could be indicative of various factors, including the effectiveness of teaching methods, student engagement, or the difficulty level of the course content. These results underscore the need for further examination of the factors influencing student performance in GST 103.

Research Question Two: What is the level of academic performance of Part one students in GST 104 in Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa, Ondo State?

In order to answer this research question, data collected on the Part One students in GST 104 considering the total scores in both CA and examinations scores were subjected to descriptive analysis having calibrated the level as follows:

- 0%-39% = Low
- 40%-69% = Moderate
- 70%-100% = High

The summary of the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of the level of academic performance of Part one students in GST 104 in Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa, Ondo State

S/N	Level	Range	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	0%-39%	075	6.8
2	Moderate	40%-69%	819	74.2
3	High	70%-100%	210	19.0
2	Age			
Total			1104	100.0

N= 1104

The results, as outlined in Table 2, provide a detailed overview of the academic performance of Part One students in GST 104 at Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa, Ondo State. According to the descriptive analysis, the students' academic performance in GST 104 was moderate, with a score of 74.2%. This indicates that, on average, students demonstrated a satisfactory understanding of the course material, although there is potential for improvement to attain higher levels of academic achievement. The moderate performance could be attributed to various factors, including the quality of instruction, student

motivation, or the complexity of the course content. Notably, the 74.2% score suggests a slight improvement compared to the performance in GST 103 (73.2%), highlighting a marginal increase in academic achievement. These findings highlight the need for further investigation into the factors influencing student performance in GST 104 and potential strategies to enhance academic outcomes.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between continuous assessment and examination scores of Part one students in GST 103 in Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa, Ondo State.

In order to test this hypothesis, data collected on continuous assessment and examination scores of Part one students in GST 103 were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical tool. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of the relationship between CA and examination scores of Part one students in GST 103 in Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa, Ondo State

Groups	N	Mean	SD	r	Sig.(2-tailed)	Remark
CA scores	1162	25.28	7.87	0.779	.000	Significant
Exams scores	1162	34.01	11.71			

($r = 0.779$; $p < 0.05$)

The results, as presented in Table 3, reveal a significant correlation between Continuous Assessment (CA) scores and examination scores of Part one students in GST 103 at Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa, Ondo State. The analysis yielded a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.779, which is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. This indicates a strong positive relationship between CA scores and examination performance. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between CA and examination scores is rejected. The findings suggest that CA scores are a strong predictor of students' examination performance in GST 103, implying that students who perform well in CA tend to perform well in the examination. This highlights the importance of CA in evaluating student learning outcomes and predicting academic success in GST 103. The strong correlation underscores the value of regular assessments in monitoring student progress and identifying areas for improvement.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between CA and examination scores of Part one students in GST 104 in Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa, Ondo State.

In order to test this hypothesis, data collected on CA and examination scores of Part one students in GST 104 were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical tool. The result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of the relationship between CA and examination scores of Part one students in GST 104 in Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa, Ondo State

Groups	N	Mean	SD	r	Sig.(2-tailed)	Remark
CA scores	1104	18.57	10.74	0.851	.001	Significant
Exams scores	1104	32.28	14.78			

($r = 0.851$; $p < 0.05$)

The analysis of data presented in Table 4 revealed a statistically significant correlation between Continuous Assessment (CA) scores and examination scores of Part One students in GST 104 in Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa, Ondo State. The correlation coefficient (r) of 0.851 indicates a strong positive relationship between the two variables, with p -value less than 0.05, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant. Given this finding, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between CA and examination scores is rejected. The strong correlation between CA scores and examination performance suggests that CA scores are a reliable predictor of students' examination outcomes in GST 104 in the study area. This implies that students who perform well in CA tend to perform well in the examination, underscoring the importance of regular assessments in evaluating student learning outcomes. The findings highlight the value of CA in identifying areas where students need improvement, enabling targeted interventions to enhance academic success. Furthermore, the results suggest that CA scores can be used to forecast students' likely performance in the examination, allowing for early identification of students who may require additional support. Overall, the study's findings emphasize the and informing strategies to improve student outcomes in GST 104.

IV. Discussion Of Findings

The findings of the study indicated that the academic performance of Part one students in GST 103 and GST 104 was moderate at 73.2% and 74.2% respectively in Olusegun Agagu University of Science and

Technology, Okitipupa, Ondo State. This indicates that while students are performing reasonably well, there is still room for improvement. The moderate performance could be linked to various factors, including their grasp of the English language, considering the subjects' nature. These results might not be unconnected with the submission of Njoku (2017) that language literacy is pivotal in Nigeria's educational landscape and beyond. Proficiency in English is key for academic success in Nigerian institutions and a prerequisite for global communication and higher education worldwide. Effective communication in English, both written and spoken, is a foundational skill for students. To address these implications, Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology could implement English language support programmes tailored to students' needs, integrate more interactive communication exercises in GST courses, and encourage students to engage with resources promoting English proficiency. These strategies could potentially improve students' performance in these courses.

Findings also showed that there was significant relationship between continuous assessment and examination scores of Part One students in GST 103 ($r=0.779$; $p<0.05$) as well as in GST 104 ($r=0.851$; $p<0.05$) in Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa, Ondo State. The result implies that CA scores are a strong predictor of students' examination performance in these courses. The strong positive correlation suggests that students who perform well in continuous assessments tend to perform well in examinations, highlighting the importance of consistent effort and assessment throughout the academic session. These findings are at variance with the submission of Ukwueze (2012) that no significant correlation was found between the web-based continuous assessment and pen-and-paper examination scores of undergraduate and graduate students. He attributed this to irregularities associated with web-based assessments in open and distance education. The difference in findings might stem from assessment methods (traditional versus web-based) or context (conventional versus open and distance education). The implications are clear: CA scores can predict examination performance, enabling early support for struggling students; consistent engagement is key; and assessment methods impact outcomes. Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology could emphasize continuous assessment, monitor and support low-scoring students, and consider assessment methods' impact. Universities balancing continuous assessment with exams might consider blending formative and summative assessments, ensuring CA tasks are meaningful, and using technology to support evaluations.

However, the results agreed with the findings of the study conducted by Pudaruth, et al. (2013) on assessment of the impact and correlation between continuous assessments scores and final examinations scores of Computer Science modules at the University of Mauritius. The results from their study revealed that there is generally a high correlation between the scores obtained by students in their continuous assessment and examination scores. To them, the result confirmed that students relied a lot on the scores obtained in their continuous assessments in order to beef up their examination scores. Also, the findings align with Aina and Adedo (2013) study, which found a significant relationship between students' CA scores and final grades in electromagnetism physics. Additionally, Olufemi's (2014) research supports this, revealing a significant relationship between Junior Secondary school Continuous Assessment Scores and overall performance in the Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination. These converging findings emphasize the importance of continuous assessment in predicting and influencing examination outcomes. The consistency across different contexts and subjects underscores the value of regular assessments in evaluating student performance. This reinforces the need for universities like Olusegun Agagu University of Science and technology to prioritize continuous assessment and provide support for students struggling with CA components.

V. Conclusion

The study's conclusions highlight two key findings regarding Part One students at Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology. Firstly, the students' academic performance in GST 103 and GST 104 courses was moderate, indicating a mid-level achievement that suggests room for improvement. This moderate performance underscores the need for targeted interventions to enhance students' understanding and engagement with the course material. Secondly, the study confirms a significant relationship between continuous assessment scores and examination score in both GST 103 and GST 104. This strong correlation implies that CA scores are a reliable predictor of students' examination performance, reinforcing the importance of consistent assessment and student engagement throughout the academic session. Hence, the study established that continuous assessment significantly influences the overall performance of undergraduate students in Communication in English courses.

VI. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. There should be absolute transparency in continuous assessment (CA), as CA scores significantly predict future academic performances of undergraduate students.

2. Continuous assessment should be made compulsory for all undergraduate students. This would emphasize the importance of consistent engagement and assessment throughout the courses, potentially improving overall academic performance.
3. Students should have access to their CA scores. This would allow them to identify strengths and weaknesses, make necessary adjustments, and prepare effectively for examinations. Access to CA scores can empower students to take ownership of their learning.

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