



students conscious of their own reactions to texts and give them the sense that experienced readers have when they read. In such classes, the instructors may raise the topic of the reading material that the students are supposed to read and invite them to write about the topic before reading the material. This not only helps the students to understand and analyze the text better, but enables them to approach the reading from a position of authority.

On the whole, as White (2003) explained, the interdependence of reading and writing implies that teaching these two language processes cannot be separated. Just as writing a text involves reading it, reading a text necessitates writing a response to it, and, according to Spack (1988), if students are to become better writers, they should become better readers.

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Data collection was done at the end of the semester. Both groups were given a topic and were asked to write a paragraph using one of the techniques taught during the term. Their papers were then corrected for further analysis.

Data Analysis

As the data were collected in the form of writing paragraphs, it was necessary to consider the number of raters, reconciliation of the differences between ratings, and the scoring technique to be used. Papers were scored by two independent raters. The differences between ratings were reconciled by averaging the two scores. Besides, the holistic scoring technique was used to score the papers. After the two sets of scores were averaged, the mean and the standard deviation of both groups were computed as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

	Experimental group	Control group
Mean	14.57	13.53
S.D	2.12	1.97

After that the Standard Error of Difference between the means was computed ($SED=0.45$).

Finally a t-test was performed to find the significance of the differences between the experimental and control groups. Since the t-observed value for the writing test ($df=76, p=0.05, t=2.3$) is higher than the value of the t-critical, it is possible to declare the verification of the hypothesis safely and conclude that there is a significant relationship between reading experience and writing ability. (Table 2).

Table 2

T – observed	2.3
T – critical	2
d. f	76
Level of significance	0.05

Conclusions and Implications

This study focused on the relationship between reading experience and writing ability. The findings support the idea that instructional approaches that view writing as a linear, static skill with their only focus on correctness and form, can be inappropriate for EFL students. It is also indicated that if learners are exposed to reading, that reading can be regarded as comprehensible input which will be displayed in the learner's writing; it can even provide the learners with ideas to be used by them in writing their own texts.

Besides, our reading courses can make the best background for the learners' writing. As our writing textbooks usually include reading materials, the students may be provided with, in reading courses, materials consisting of assignments which call for written responses. As Zamel (1992) stated. "Because the process of writing shares much in common with the process of learning, it gives rise to the generation and reconceptualization of ideas that may not have been possible otherwise. The heuristic nature of writing allows one to discover and consider one's stance, one's interpretation, one's immediate reactions to a text Moreover, it makes these responses to a text overt, concrete, and tangible "(p.470). Therefore, the application of writing strategies in reading classes can make

Method

subjects

The subjects of the present study were 78 female undergraduate students. They were majoring in English Translation at Islamic Azad University, Tehran, South Branch. The subjects were selected from among one hundred twenty-four students who had passed "Writing One" and "Writing Two" courses and were enrolled in "Paragraph Writing" course designed to help students develop writing ability. In order to choose the subjects with similar level of language proficiency, they were given a TOEFL test as a pretest which considered of 40 grammar items, 30 vocabulary items, and 30 reading comprehension items. Those students whose language proficiency scores were at most one standard deviation above or below the mean were selected as the subjects of the study. The subjects were homogeneous regarding sex, age (20 to 25), nationality (Iranian), and level of language proficiency. Half of the sample was randomly assigned to a control group and the rest to an experimental group. Both groups were taught by the same instructor.

Materials

Since the study was carried out to investigate the influence of reading experience on writing ability, the textbook used in both groups was the same. But in addition to the textbook, the students in the experimental group were provided with extra reading passages in line with the instruction. To do so, Arnaudet and Barrett (1990) was selected as the source material to be used in both classes. Regarding the content of the course which was "Paragraph Writing," six chapters of the book including instruction, process, chronology, cause

and effect, and comparison and contrast were taught to the subjects in both groups. Each lesson consisted of a model paragraph developed on the basis of the technique taught. At the end of each lesson, there were suggested topics for writing.

Besides all these, in the experimental group Colin's (1998) book was used to provide the students with more reading materials related to what they learned from their textbook.

Procedure

With regard to the writing courses the subjects had passed, it was presupposed that they knew the grammatical points at the sentential level. In both groups, during the beginning sessions, different parts of a paragraph including the topic sentence, supporting, and concluding sentences were taught by giving examples for each. After each technique in writing paragraphs was taught, students were given topics to write paragraphs by making use of the techniques taught. Paragraphs were corrected and returned to the subjects. Those students who had problems in one of the areas of development. Organization, unity, coherence and grammar, were assigned to rewrite their paragraphs.

In the experimental group, besides all the above-mentioned stages, students were provided with three extra sample readings for each type of paragraph. They were asked to read the paragraphs at home, and then in the next session these paragraphs were discussed regarding the type of the paragraph, sentence structure, and transition signals used. It is worth mentioning that in this group students were asked to write paragraphs as homework only after all three paragraphs were discussed in the class.



basis for the writing of different genres.

Also reading and writing behaviors were examined during the reading or composing process itself. Atwell (1981) examined the role of reading in the composing process of 10 traditional college students of above average writing ability and of 10 students who needed remedial writing instruction. Students were asked to write with and without the texts they were writing in view. It was known that under both conditions better writers produced more coherent and organized texts. The better writers, having their texts in view, did more rereading than the those with lower writing ability. Even without their texts in view, better writers composed more coherent and organized texts which indicated their greater reliance on mental planning.

As a result of studies on the impact of reading on writing, it is hypothesized that writing competence, i.e., “the abstract knowledge the proficient writer has about writing” (Krashen, 1984,p.20), develops if the learners do a lot of reading for interest and/or pleasure. It is also evident that good writers are able to call upon a

lot of tactic knowledge of conventional or formal features of reader-based prose.

Literature can also play an important role in composition courses. In fact, reading, composing, and responding to literature are similar processes in that they all focus on the process of meaning making. In a composition course whose reading content is literature, the kind of interpretation students learn to do, in order to make inferences, to formulate their own ideas, and to look closely at a text for evidence to support generalizations, teaches them to think critically. In this regard, Belcher and Hirvela (2003) propounded the role of literary texts in the L2 classroom and described various methods of using literature to teach writing to L2/FL learners.

All studies mentioned so far have investigated the interrelationship of reading and writing in first and second languages. However, the importance of the issue and the need for improving teaching writing methods in our classes motivated the researcher to carry out the present study with the focus on the influence of increasing reading experience on writing ability in EFL paragraph writing classes.

استفاده از هر تکنیک آشنا شوند. برای جمع آوری اطلاعات، در پایان ترم از هر دو گروه پس آزمون یکسانی به عمل آمد. تحلیل داده‌ها با استفاده از آزمون t انجام شد. نتایج این تحلیل بیانگر وجود ارتباط معنی دار میان خواندن و نوشتن است. به عبارت دیگر، دانشجویانی که در این راستا مطالعه‌ی بیش تری داشتند، در پس آزمون نتایج بهتری کسب کردند. **کلیدواژه‌ها:** یادگیری، پاراگراف نویسی، توانایی نوشتن، تجربه‌ی خواندن.

Abstract

Research on the relationship between reading experience and writing ability supports the contribution of reading experience to better writing by EFL students. Therefore, the present research aimed at investigating the impact of a certain teaching method upon the development of writing ability. The subjects were seventy-eight female undergraduate students of English Translation at Islamic Azad University, Tehran South Branch, enrolled in "Paragraph Writing" course. The study was carried out in a semester long period. The subjects were divided into a control and an experimental group. In the control group the techniques of paragraph writing were taught and the students were given topics to write different types of paragraph. In the experimental group, besides the teaching of techniques, students were provided with extra reading materials. The data was elicited through a paragraph writing test at the end of the semester. Data analysis was done through performing a t-test. the results of the analysis revealed a significant relationship between reading experience and writing ability. That is, the learners who were exposed to reading, developed a better writing ability and could get higher scores on the test.

Key Words: Writing ability, reading experience, paragraph writing, action research, learning.

Introduction

Writing as skill has always been under careful attention. Linguists with different approaches have proposed various ways to teach writing to L2/FL learners. But during the 1970s and 1980s, writing theory and research witnessed a change which was based on a shift in linguistics theory and the application of text analysis in the study of spoken and written discourse.

The new linguistic theory dealt with the processes readers and writers go through to comprehend and be comprehended. Zamel (1983) pointed out that composing is "a non-linear, exploratory and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning" (p.169). She also noted that it was through the shift from "product"

to "process" that researchers could gain insight into how to teach composition. This shift from investigation "what students write" to the "composing process" led to a lot of studies on the relationship between reading and writing in both first and second languages in which, according to Carrel and Conner (1991), reading was considered as "an act of composing parallel to writing" (p.320).

In the same relation Shuying (2002) used the process genre approach to help the learners integrate their writing with reading. In this approach, not only the linguistic knowledge but also the writing genre, the schematic stressed. He believes that with such a teaching process the learners will be able to achieve multilevel understanding of the reading materials and a sound

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The Relationship of Reading Experience and Writing Ability in EFL Writing Classes

چکیده

تحقیقاتی که تاکنون پیرامون ارتباط میان خواندن و نوشتن انجام گرفته اند، نشان می دهند که هرچه زبان آموزان زبان خارجی را بیش تر بخوانند، آن را بهتر نیز خواهند نوشت. بسیاری از محققان معتقدند، مهارت نوشتن را باید یک «روند» دانست و نه یک «محصول نهایی». توجه به «روند نوشتن»، به جای توجه به «آنچه زبان آموزان می نویسند»، محققان آموزش زبان را برآن داشته است، تحقیقات بسیاری در زمینه ی ارتباط میان خواندن و نوشتن در زبان مادری و زبان دوم انجام دهند. برای مثال، شاینگ، با بهره جستن از مهارت خواندن، زبان آموزان را یاری می کرد تا بهتر بنویسند. در روش وی، متن هایی که برای خواندن به زبان آموزان ارائه می شد، نه تنها به لحاظ دانش زبانی، بلکه از نظر «نوع نوشتار»، «ساختار» و «مهارت های نوشتن» نیز مورد تأکید و بررسی قرار می گرفتند. شاینگ بر این اعتقاد بود که با این روش زبان آموزان به درک چندگانه ای از متن ها دست می یابند که خود اساس توانایی «نوشتن با استفاده از تکنیک های متفاوت» است. علاوه بر این، استفن کرشن نیز در نظریه ی خود پیرامون رابطه ی میان خواندن و نوشتن اظهار می دارد: «دانش انتزاعی که نویسنده درباره ی نوشتن دارد، در صورتی بهبود می یابد که نویسنده بسیار زیاد بخواند.»

در این اقدام پژوهی کوشش شده است تا از طریق به کارگیری روشی معین در درس پاراگراف نویسی، این امر مورد آزمایش قرار گیرد. بدین منظور، تعدادی از دانشجویان رشته ی مترجمی زبان انگلیسی در دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی تهران، واحد جنوب، از طریق پیش آزمون انتخاب و به دو گروه کنترل و آزمایش تقسیم شدند. در گروه کنترل، دانشجویان پس از یادگیری هر تکنیک یک پاراگراف می نوشتند. در گروه آزمایش، علاوه بر اعمال روش فوق، متن های دیگری نیز در اختیار دانشجویان قرار می گرفت تا در کنار یادگیری تکنیک ها با نمونه های بیش تری در