

Impacts of the Extensive Reading Texts on the Writing Performance of Iranian EFL Pre-university Students

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ABSTRACT---- *Both reading and writing skills play essential roles in second/foreign language teaching and learning. The objective of the present study is to investigate the impacts of extensive reading on the writing performance of Iranian EFL pre-university students. To achieve the aim of the study, 48 students were randomly chosen from pre-university students, 24 of whom were ascribed to experimental group and the other half assigned to the control groups. Data of the study were collected within a six-month period via a pre-test and post-test designed for comparable groups. The control group was treated by the regular teaching of an English teacher with the direct supervision of the researcher; however, the experimental group was treated by the researcher. An independent sample t-test was used as a statistical test. Findings of the study showed that the experimental group outstripped the control group, resulting in null hypothesis rejection. This indicated that the extensive reading may have a significant positive effect on EFL learners' writing performance.*

Keywords--- Extensive reading, Writing performance, Iranian EFL pre-university students, Reading skill, Writing skill

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is considered as an essential language skill and an exceedingly complex action that is necessary to learn for everyone. Reading is not uniquely a single skill but a mixture of several skills and procedures in which the readers interact with printed words for content and pleasure. Writing, speaking, grammar, vocabulary items, spelling, and other language sub-skills can be taught through reading. Moreover, Zainal and Husin (2011) pointed out that reading involves several intricate skills that must be met so as to make the reader successful. For instance, skillful readers identify the purpose of reading, manage the reading with the purpose in mind, use tactics that have confirmed fruitful to them in the past when reading similar texts for similar purposes, check their understanding of the text in light of the purpose for reading, and adapt their tactic use, if needed. Zainal and Husin (2011) also stressed that writing is the acquired procedure of forming experiences into text, permitting the writer to discover, extend, illuminate and communicate feelings and thoughts. It entails the development of thinking abilities. As Applebee (1984) and Emig (1977) argued, writing is the externalization and remarking of thinking, and to count writing as detached from the intentions and viewpoints of the writer is not to address composition as a reflective device for meaning making. Writing is an influential means of communication by which students learn better to express themselves. Teaching and learning to write in any language is an essential area that influences students' performance and language learning. Likewise, learning to write in English as a foreign language has been an indispensable professional educational issue that serves numerous educational purposes and meets certain learning needs upon which the foreign language learners' progress depends.

According to Parks and Thatcher (2000) "English writing plays vital, cross-cultural, and traditional roles in business, work places, and governmental actions throughout the world geography". Writing has been called the fundamental of education and has been described as an important path of language learning. Leki (2003) believes that writing plays a key gate-keeping role in career improvement. Generally, learning to write reflects a proof that one has really mastered a language. Furthermore, EFL learners face problems because of their defective command of vocabulary and grammar with which they convey their ideas and opinions. They incline to struggle with fluent written expressions because of their limited vocabulary and insufficient knowledge of grammatical structures (Al-Meni, 2008). Therefore, many EFL educators have uninterruptedly sought beneficial ways to facilitate the writing process and improve learners'

writing performance, and using extensive reading texts may provide that. Tsai (2006) stressed the importance of linking writing and reading in college EFL courses. Tsai stated that teachers of English as a foreign or second language have managed to teach writing and reading independently from each other. Nevertheless, writing and reading share similar features and learners are more likely to benefit from the teaching program that makes writing and reading activities go hand-in-hand in such a way that complete each other. Implementing this concept in real teaching conditions would not be a problematic challenge when EFL writing teachers consider students' requirements, are conscious of the advantages of the reading/writing linking, and wisely devise teaching practices.

As long as the separation of writing and reading teaching in EFL settings makes students perceive reading as a decoding procedure and writing as only a task of composing grammatically correct essays, it is particularly vigorous for EFL teachers, through the reading/writing linking, to provide students with ample occasions and resources to help them become reflective writers and readers. More importantly, students should be taught in such a way to understand that both writing and reading are indivisible activities with communicative purposes. Just by doing so students will be able to develop language proficiency via writing and reading activities, and improve these two literacy skills in a significant way. Furthermore, a number of researchers have highlighted the role of extensive reading in language learning in general and writing skill in particular. First, it can provide comprehension input. Krashen (1982) maintained that reading leads to language acquisition in case particular prerequisites are met. Attracting material and a relaxed tension-free learning situation would be of these. Second, it can improve reader's general language competency. Grabe (1991) stressed the significance of extensive reading in supplying learners with rehearsal in automaticity of word identification. Third, it enhances the students' exposure to the language that readers receive, which is viewed as significant to their capacity to acquire new forms from the input. Elley (1991) reviewed a quantity of studies which indicated quick progress in language development compared with readers' regular program. There was a range of influence from reading aptitude to other language skills. Fourth, it can expand the vocabulary knowledge. Based on Nagy and Herman's (1987) claim, children between grades three and twelve (above grade level) learn up to 3000 words a year. Fifth, it can lead to the development of the writing presentation. Stotsky (1983) and Krashen (1984) indicated the positive impact of reading on learners' writing skill. Sixth, it can unite formerly learned language. Finally, with extended texts, confidence is helped to be constructed. Kembo (1993) pointed to the worth of extensive reading in advancing learners' confidence and ability in confronting these longer texts. Thus, it can be pointed that extensive reading in foreign language learning and teaching not only improves reading proficiency but also the general language proficiency as well. Zamel (1992) stated that "writing development always includes reading development".

While various ways of applying extensive reading exist in educational context, Day and Bamford (2000) presented a good guideline for theorizing extensive reading in a teaching/learning procedure. According to them, the top ten principles are: the reading material is easy; a collection of reading material on a broad range of topics need to be accessible; learners select the material they want to read; learners read as much as possible; the purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding; reading is its own prize; reading pace is usually faster rather than slower; reading is silent and individual; teachers direct and lead their students; and the teacher is a role model of a reader. Even with the rising number of research supporting the use of extensive reading for developing second language proficiency (e.g. Elley and Mangubhai, 1983; Tudor and Hafiz, 1989; Hafiz and Tudor, 1989; Elley, 1991; Pilgreen and Krashen, 1993; Cho and Krashen, 1994; (1995a); (1995b); Constantino, 1994), a number of teachers are yet doubtful of how efficient it is. Therefore, in this study the researcher investigates whether Iranian EFL Pre-university students' writing performance could improve with extensive reading treatment.

From the present researchers' personal experiences and observations, many pre-university English teachers complain about EFL students' incapability to organize their ideas logically, their lack of suitable information to cover the assigned topics, their poor vocabulary, their structure and spelling mistakes, and their writing patterns. Moreover, Iranian EFL Pre-university students also complain about being unable to write professionally. The researcher also notice that most students get low scores in their writing exams. Therefore, the need arises to investigate this problem. The researcher also suggests a technique to develop students' writing ability. He believes that using extensive reading may have a significant role in helping students develop their writing skill. Furthermore, the researcher notices that most students unconsciously ignore the supportive role of reading in writing. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the impacts of reading on the students writing performance.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Newly many research papers were conducted to determine the usefulness of extensive reading strategy in universities and schools. Although the effect of extensive reading on writing performance receives considerable emphasis in

English as a first language, EFL teachers traditionally discourage it. The researcher reviewed some of the studies which were most related to the topics of the present study. Beach (1984) studied the effect of reading ability on 60 seventh-grade students' narrative writing quality. The findings of the study indicated that reading ability had an effect on the quality of personal incident writing. Schneider (1985) examined how re-reading functions in the composition process of six college students – three skilled writers and three unskilled ones. In fact, he tried to describe how reading and writing processes interact during composition. It was found that re-reading has an important function in helping writers shape the meaning of their written pieces.

Janopoulous (1986) studied the relationship between reading for pleasure and second language writing competence. The findings of the study showed a meaningful correlation between pleasure reading and students' proficiency in written English. Murdoch (1986) investigated the effect of integrating writing with reading on developing and improving students' writing achievement. The findings showed that if writing with its mechanics were integrated into activities or exercises based on reading texts, students would no longer view writing as an unpleasant task, but as a natural part of language learning. Moreover, it was found that students' writing performance substantially improved. Shahan and Lomax (1986) suggested three models explaining the writing-reading relationship. Their models contain the interaction of writing and reading, reading-to-write, and writing-to-read. They used path analysis to investigate the impact of reading on writing. The results showed that the reading-to-write was superior to the other two models.

Hafiz and Tudor (1990) investigated the impacts of an extensive reading program and accuracy of using lexical items on Pakistani primary school pupils' second language learning. They found that the students had statistically significant expansions in their vocabulary base and writing and the influence of extensive reading program supported the idea that students learn to write through reading. It was suggested that teaching composition via the integration of writing with other language skills could make writing tasks more effective and purposeful. Zaher (1990) investigated the effect of a proposed unit based on the integration of the writing skill with other language skills, mainly with reading. It was found that there was a tangible increase in the students' use of varied types of structures while writing after the treatment as compared to their writing performance before the implementation of the proposed unit. In other words, it was found that the students confined themselves mainly to simple structures and a limited number of compound and complex structures on the pre-test, while after the treatment, the students' use of compound and complex structures in writing increased significantly. Thus the findings of the study supported the hypothesis that teaching writing through integrating language skills would help students improve their writing performance.

Grabe and Kaplan (1996) suggested that reading activities will be of a great assistance to improve and promote too many writing activities at the beginning and advanced levels. They stated that the outcome of a reading activity serves as input for writing, and writing heads students to further reading sources and references. They also indicated that there is a need for students to read texts and analyze them logically, which is considered as a key component in their academic writings. Mason and Krashen (1997) investigated the effectiveness of a one-semester reading program on Japanese university students' linguistic competence, reading and writing skills. The findings of the study revealed statistically significant gains and positive attitudes in the students' reading ability and writing skill. Bell (1998) stressed that reading extensively offers teacher worldwide engagement in a concentrated and encouraging reading program to direct students along a passage to be independent and resourceful in their reading and language learning, and furthermore to be well-improved and naturally-respondent to form texts, thoughts and ideas in writing.

Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) indicated that voluntarily pleasurable reading has empirically proved to bring about positive impacts on developing writing skill. They confirmed, regardless of students' ages and levels, that written texts actually derive partly from self-initiated and self-selected reading texts. Wong (2001) defined literacy as the ability to read and write. Therefore, he introduced an extensive reading program in Hong Kong to motivate students to read and thus enhance their English proficiency. He suggested that general reading skills are strengthened through more effectively connection between reading and writing. Helal (2003) studied the effect of a proposed self-access reading program in the light of the integration between reading and writing in developing the writing performance of Egyptian freshmen students. It was observed that the reading program was efficient in developing the writing performance of the experimental group. Smith (2003) concluded that when children read more narrative texts such as short stories, fiction books, and poems, they would raise their concern over structure and function of expository texts. He also claimed that topical bibliography and commentary could incorporate expository texts into school curriculum, which are considered a rewarding experience and a primary function for students to enhance their expository writing.

Bakir (2004) studied the effectiveness of using extensive reading in improving the attitudes towards learning English and writing performance of Palestinian tenth grade students. Students in the experimental group practice reading extensively as a pre-writing activity while, students in the control group were exposed to the regular textbooks.

The findings of the study ensured the effectiveness of using extensive reading in improving students' writing performance and their attitudes towards learning English. Hany (2007) investigated the influence of using the reading for writing approach on improving the writing aptitude of Egyptian EFL learners and their attitudes towards writing. This small scale research empowered students to improve their writing skills and their attitudes towards writing, with no statistically meaningful differences between males and females. The study verified the effectiveness of the reading for writing approach as a possible device for enriching the writing skill of Egyptian EFL learners and their attitudes towards writing. Shen (2009) surveyed the effects of a reading-writing linking project on the freshmen EFL college students who studied English as an obligatory subject. The results of the study showed that the learners' mastery developed not only in critical thinking but also in linguistic progress as well as in personal growth. Reading helped the EFL learners to progress their writing with the stimulus, vocabulary, structures, and prior experience (schema). It was also found that the reading-writing linking had a positive effect on the EFL college students' reading metacognitive awareness (i.e., rechecking what they have read), as well as their reflection of personal values and experience transaction. The findings of the study suggested that writing and reading need to be combined in teaching since they are not detached skills, but mutually strengthened in EFL classroom.

Yoshimura (2009) investigated the impacts of linking writing and reading and a checklist to direct the reading procedure on EFL learners' learning about writing. In this study, ways of reading which are expected to promote the progress of writing ability were checked and operationalized into checklist questions for EFL reading instructions. The findings of the study showed that joining writing and reading has positive effect and that the checklist helps students count genre and effectively incorporate the writing and reading procedures. Theoretical justification and research indication from L1, ESL and EFL supports the associations of writing and reading as well as the benefits of motivating students to read as much as possible to improve their writing aptitude. Kirin (2010) reported a 15 week reading experiment with a group of Thai EFL learners who were motivated to read and, by the end, were sub-divided for statistical analysis based on their reading volume. Designated 'high' and 'low' groups, this signified the amount of their exposure to comprehensible input. All participants enhanced their writing abilities which were measured every five weeks through the complete involvement with simplified reading books. The findings of the study showed that the high ability learners' writing improved, while low ability learners' writing abilities did not advance despite extra reading engagement over the four months of the experiment.

Alkhalwaldeh (2011) examined the awareness among Jordanian Eight grade students of the relationship between EFL reading comprehension and writing and the associated impact on writing ability improvement. The descriptive findings of the study demonstrated that the effect of reading on writing was revealed in the provision with vocabulary needed for writing, general ideas and background knowledge to write compositions together with the connecting words and using the reading text to check spelling. The findings of the study also showed that high achieving students scantily referred to the reading text while low achieving counterparts excessively relied on it. It was also found that there was a positive influence relating to paragraph promotion and the structure of the topic as well as start and end of the composition. Moreover, analysis of covariance revealed significant differences between the above two groups in writing skill achievement ascribed to the effect of reading comprehension. The study finally encouraged using the reading text as a model by students to benefit from in their writing.

De Rycker and Ponnudurai (2011) examined which of these two presentation modes, viz., interactive online reading or print-based reading, support current ICT-iterate generation of Malaysian students write better argumentative essays. They found that 61% of all essays are 'good', while 39% assayed as 'average' to 'poor'. They also found that the interactive online reading context generates superior task performance and that it also produces respectively more essays with a 'good' thesis statement. Both findings are statistically meaningful. Erhan (2011) analyzed the impacts of the supportive integrated reading and composition technique and the traditional reading and writing pedagogical methods for primary school students. It was found that a statistically meaningful difference exists between the writing and reading abilities of the experimental and control groups in terms of academic achievement and retention. This difference was uncovered in favor of the supportive integrated reading and composition technique. Zainal and Husin (2011) studied the impacts of reading on writing performance among faculty of civil engineering students. The results indicated the positive impacts of reading on students' writing. Generally the results of this study indicated that reading and writing are connected to each other. It is effectively help students in writing in several ways. Based on the literature, the researcher found out that numerous studies were conducted and several extensive reading texts were introduced in the Western countries, while very few ones were carried out in Iran to investigate the role of extensive reading in developing the students' achievement in writing. All of the reviewed studies showed a strong relationship between reading and writing. The present study is similar to the reviewed studies in the general aim to investigate the impacts of extensive reading on the writing performance of Iranian EFL pre- university high school students. However, the impacts of extensive reading on Iranian EFL Pre-university students have not received much attention in the literature. Therefore, this fact empowered the researcher to focus the

attention of the study on the impacts of extensive reading on the writing performance of Iranian EFL Pre-university students.

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is mutual for teachers to use different techniques in the language class to help their students improve their language skills. The use of extensive reading to improve the writing attainment is widely recommended in the educational literature and its role in the foreign language classroom has been the concern of many teachers and scholars (Abou Baker, 1996; Khater, 2002; Helal, 2003; and Bakir, 2004). In the present situation of research-based practices, numerous educators may be doubtful about permitting the use of a new educational device until the effects of that device have been evidently confirmed through quantitative research. The present study investigates the impacts of extensive reading on the writing performance of Iranian EFL Pre-university students, which is an issue previous studies conducted in Iran, did not tackle fully. To the best knowledge of the researcher, this is the first attempt to determine whether or not Iranian EFL Pre-university students' writing performance significantly improves when they are exposed to the extensive reading texts. Therefore, it is hoped that:

- The students will be able to produce meaningful writing paragraphs, essays, letters, reports, short stories, articles, compositions, and summaries, and the reading program may help to determine students' progress in previously mentioned skills as well as their mastery of the writing sub-skills such as thesis statement, relevance, coherence, cohesion, exposition, quantity, unity, wording, and grammaticality.
- It will help researcher engaged in the educational procedure gain insights into extensive reading and its impacts on writing skill and seek to improve it overtime.
- It may encourage additional research, which in order, may lead to the improvement of the field of extensive reading and its impacts on writing skill in general and language teaching and learning in particular.
- It will help teachers to better understand the issue and integrate it into their classroom routine in general and in the writing class in particular.
- The findings of this study may be able to open the minds of the students towards the significance of reading to advance their writing performance.
- The findings of the study may be able to help the students to see the problems in writing that they may encounter if they do not get used to read and could motivate them to read more.

This study aims to find out the impacts of extensive reading text on the writing performance of Iranian EFL pre-university students.

4. METHOD

4.1. Research Question

The present study attempts to answer the following question:

Is there a substantial difference between the achievement of the control group and that of the experimental group owing to the behavior?

4.2. Research Hypothesis

This study attempts to test the following hypothesis:

Using extensive reading has no optimistic effect on the writing performance of Iranian EFL pre-university students.

4.3. Instrument and Procedures

The present study was carried out with Shariati Pre-university students following a randomized control-group pretest-posttest design. The participants were randomly assigned to two groups. Each group was then assigned at random to either the experimental group or the control group. The management consisted of two levels: the method of the extensive reading program and the traditional method alone. The experimental group undertook the first level of treatment while the control group undertook the second level of treatment. The experimental group students were exposed to the extensive reading program four 50-minute periods a week for two months of the experiment. However, the control group students were not exposed to the extensive reading program during the course of the treatment. Both groups were subjected to a writing pretest immediately before beginning the experiment and the same test was administered as a post-test instantaneously after it. The sample of the study consisted of 48 students who were chosen randomly through the random sampling techniques in the statistical package of SPSS. Then, 48 students were randomly chosen from Pre-university students, 24 of whom were ascribed to experimental group and the other half assigned to the control groups. To answer the question of the study, the researcher prepared an extensive reading program and a writing test. The extensive reading program consisted of four units. Each unit had four lessons including reading and writing activities to be performed by the students and are pertinent to their needs and abilities after practicing various reading topics. The program included narrative, descriptive, scientific, and expositive texts. The researcher selected the material on the basis of the students' level. It is hoped that by proposing students the opportunity to be situated among reading materials selected from different fields of knowledge, the present program may improve the writing performance of Iranian EFL pre-university students. In brief, the program is designed to help the students to understand and engage in this active reading process more effectively so that they can become good writers. The program consisted of an introductory classroom period and four units each unit took two weeks, this means eight 50-minute periods. Therefore, the program took 32 classroom periods over a period of two months. Furthermore, the preliminary classroom period was used to introduce students to the program, its aims, and the writing skills they are going to develop. The importance of using intensive reading programs in developing the writing skills was also explained. Moreover, each student in the experiment group received a copy of the program. Students were asked to write a short essay explaining why star college athletes are better known and more popular than top students, and show what impacts this situation has on college life. Concerning the rating of the students' writing, the researcher used the following checklist to evaluate the students' writing performance: (a) thesis statement, (b) relevance, (c) coherence, (d) cohesion, (e) exposition, (f) quantity, (g) unity, (h) wording, (i) grammatically. The total score was 45, 3 points for each skill. Two English language teachers rated the students' writings. The two raters were asked to evaluate each of the nine writing skills separately, then the overall marks were calculated. To ensure the reliability of scoring of the writing test, three raters from the correlation was calculated. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Writing test inter-rater reliability

The inter-rater Correlation	Correlation	Significance
Inter-rater correlation between the first and second rater	0.96	0.01
Inter-rater correlation between the first and third rater	0.97	0.01
Inter-rater correlation between the second and third rater	0.96	0.01

Table.1 shows that the writing test inter-rater reliability is statistically significant (0.93) at 0.01.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The broader aim of the present study was to evaluate the impacts of extensive reading texts on the writing performance of Iranian EFL pre-university students. This section represents the findings of the study, the discussion of the findings, and the recommendations. The question of the study examines the impact of extensive reading text on Iranian EFL pre-university students' writing performance. It compares the extensive reading program method with the traditional method. The researcher hypothesized that the students who were treated through the extensive reading text would show better performance in writing than those who were treated through the traditional method. This hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance. The data were gathered during a pretest-treatment-posttest design for the corresponding groups and analyzed via the statistical package SPSS. An independent t-test was carried out to determine achievement of the two groups on the pretest. Table 2 represents the results.

Table 2: Results of the t-test of the means of the achievement of the two groups on the pretest

	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	Sig.
Pre-test	Control Group	24	12.71	3.35	1.21	0.233
	Experimental Group	24	11.48	3.53		

Table 2 shows that the difference between the achievement of both groups on the pre-test is not statistically significant at $\alpha = 0.05$. Thus, as there is no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups on the pre-test, the two groups were assumed equivalent. Another independent sample t-test was conducted to determine whether or not there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups' achievement on the post-test. Table 3 shows the results.

Table 3: Results of the t-test of the means of the achievement of the two groups on the post-test

	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	Sig.
Post-test	Control Group	24	13.92	2.82	-2.058	0.045
	Experimental Group	24	23.32	1.88		

Table 3 shows a statistically significant difference at $\alpha = 0.05$ between the performance of the control group and that of the experimental group on the posttest all for the experimental group. It shows that using the computer in English language teaching to pre-university students has a positive impact on students' performance. The mean score of the control group on the post-test was 13.92 while that of the experiment group was 23.32. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that the difference between the performance of the control group and the experimental group on the pretest was not statistically significant, to eliminate initial differences, a one-way ANCOVA was carried out. Table 4 shows the results.

Table 4: Results of the test between subjects impacts

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Means of Squares	F	Sig.
Pre-test	56.677	1	56.677	22.653	0.000
Group	123.681	1	123.681	49.433	0.000
Error	95.075	38	2.502		
Corrected Total	273.512	40			

Table 4 indicates a statistically significant difference between the control group and the experimental group on the post-test. The achievement of the experimental group, measured by the difference between the pre-test and the post-test, was meaningfully better than that of the control group.

The findings of this part of the study are consistent with studies conducted by Beach (1984), Schneider (1985), Janopoulous (1986), Murdoch (1986), Hafiz and Tudor (1990), Zaher (1990), Grabe and Kaplan (1996), Mason and Krashen (1997), Bell (1998), Ferris and Hedgcock (1998), Wong (2001), Helal (2003), Smith (2003), Bakir (2004), Hany(2007), Shen(2009), Yoshimura (2009), Kirin (2010), Alkhalwaldeh(2011), De Rycker and Ponnudurai (2011), Erhan (2011), and Zainal and Husin (2011). All of these studies showed that using extensive reading in English language instruction in general and in improve their writing skill in particular. They also found that extensive reading does offer students certain educational benefits. Moreover, the findings of the study are in line with the hypothesis of that study as it was found that the extensive reading text has a positive impact on Iranian EFL Pre-university students' performance in writing. The researcher demonstrates that the difference in the performance of the students was assigned to using the extensive reading text in the writing classes. The experimental group participants significantly improved their writing performance in a period of two months. The progress attained by the control group participants, nevertheless, was not statistically meaningful.

With comparing the outcomes accomplished by the two groups, the researcher concluded that the improvement attained by the experimental group may be ascribed to the way they render instruction the extensive reading text. Furthermore, the differences between the two groups may be attributed to many other reasons. First, using the extensive reading text in the writing classes is a novelty. This novelty may have encouraged the students to deal with it enthusiastically, which may have been reflected in better writing achievement. Second, reading many different texts and doing many reading and writing activities helped the students develop healthy reading and writing habits and at the same time paved the way to promoting the writing performance through the consistent exposure to the meaningful content of the texts. The conditions provided by the extensive reading text promoted total attention that led to greater understanding of the content, which in turns led to improving writing performance. Third, instructing students through the extensive reading text motivated them to exploit the skills they learned when composing an essay on a particular topic which certainly leads to improve their writing performance. Fourth, it is sure that Iranian EFL pre-university students knew enough about writing skills and its sub-skills, but they lacked the opportunity to put them into real practice. Once they were taught the definitions of each skill and its sub-skills, and were provided with enough activities and encouragement, they were able to apply them successfully. Fifth, using the extensive reading text was effective in motivating the students to read a wide variety of texts and to write a great number of essays on different topics, which in turns, improved their writing performance. Sixth, the program was useful in motivating the students to read on different genres (narrative, descriptive, scientific, and expositive texts) which increased their writing proficiency. Seventh, the reading passages the students exposed to offered them a good opportunity to see how a main idea is developed through out a passage. Moreover, they offered the students a range of vocabulary to be used later on in their writing. Besides, the students were able to collect necessary ideas and information for writing through reading the passages. Finally, integrating reading and writing with relevant topics was an important factor because the students realized the relationship between writing and reading, which minimized the feeling of boredom and kept them active all the time.

This supports that of Grabe and Kaplan (1996) who suggested that reading activities will be a great assistance to improve and promote too many writing activities at the beginning and advanced levels. They also stated that the outcome of a reading activity serves as input for writing. Zamble (1992) stressed that the teaching of reading and writing cannot be torn apart nor can be arranged in linear order so that one necessarily

precedes the other. Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) also indicated that voluntary-pleasurable reading has empirically proved to bring about positive impacts on developing writing skill. In light of the findings of the present study, the researcher can say that the use of extensive reading inside the classroom tends to make learning more interesting. Extensive reading texts can promote motivation. Moreover, the findings of this study suggested that integrating extensive reading texts into writing instruction, was effective for enhancing students' performance and provided a positive learning experience.

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