

A Study on the Effectiveness of the Approach of Reading-Writing Integration to Improve EFL Students' English Writing Skills

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Traditionally, English reading and writing have been taught as two separate and independent subjects by some English teachers. Recent years, however, have seen a significant rise in teachers' efforts to combine the teaching of English writing with reading nationwide. While consensus exists about the pivotal role of reading in writing effective essays, to what extent, and in what ways, reading activities can help strengthen students' writing skills have yet to be identified. Many teachers and students are mindful that how well their pupils can write depends on how much they have read, but very few can strategically adopt this approach in their teaching of English writing in general in maximizing its positive effects. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the following two questions: To what extent, and in what ways can the "reading integration" approach benefit ESL students' writing performance? What are the possible issues faced by students in writing an essay? In this study, 100 students from the authors' online English writing workshop were selected. Their writing scores were observed and analyzed through the pre- and post-test essays using different strategies, namely the traditional approach and the read-to-write approach. A questionnaire was also elicited to learn about students' attitudes toward English writing. The findings revealed a significant rise in participants' writing quality as a result of greater exposure to reading. The results provide compelling evidence that reading has an indispensable role in second language learning, in this case, in boosting writing performance and motivating students to read extensively at the same time.

Keywords: read-to-write approach, English writing, experiment, EFL learners

Introduction

Students, particularly ESL learners, are well informed that it is mutually beneficial, if not necessary, to associate writing with reading. However, they are not able to use this strategy which integrates reading and writing in their language learning process, much less successfully apply it into other language skills training. Teachers are also to blame on this matter, because most of them consider writing tasks to be a mere tool for practicing and reinforcing specific grammatical and lexical variety and accuracy, whereas essay content, ideas, and organization carry little weight. Since both reading and writing are difficult to tackle, teachers often design their courses in separation, which goes against the notion that these two skills often go hand in hand. This is further evidenced by what an examination paper encompasses: reading comprehension and writing are always

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divided into two sessions.

Making matters worse, teachers in general tend to pay more attention to students' listening and speaking skills, while only requiring their pupils to finish a writing task without any instant, effective feedback. When students hand in their work, all they need to do is cross out some grammatical and lexical mistakes and give essay scores. This makes both teachers themselves and students downplay the importance of writing as "a complex process of exploring one's thought, discovering ideas and generating meaning" (Flower & Hayes, 1980: 21-32).

The fear and apathy towards writing are also at play when it comes to students' overall poor writing performance. Putting content and organization aside, students still suffer from their limited vocabulary and poor grammar. Richards and Renandya (2002) claim that writing is the most difficult skill to master for second/foreign language learners (ESL/EFL), as the difficulty of mastering writing stems not only from generating and organizing ideas but also from transforming these ideas into readable text. Grabe (2009) and Ahn (2014) believed that among language learning skills, writing has been consistently referred to as a complicated skill particularly for non-native speakers of English because they are not exposed to the English environment compared with English native speakers. All these show that writing in a foreign language is an intelligently demanding task, which explains why some students are afraid of it, and some others apathetic towards it.

The teaching of writing no longer stands in separation from other language skills. Reading is one way of generating ideas in a process approach to writing (Kennedy, 1994). It also allows them to employ reading to store and generate useful ideas. In a 1988 study of professors' assessment of non-native speaker academic compositions, Santos (1998) found that university professors grade more harshly on content deficiencies than they do on language quality; they are much more lenient with errors of linguistic form. This study is significant as it highlights the fact that teachers and students should have the right attitudes towards writing; it is only about changing words and expressions throughout a whole essay; it is also where innovative ideas and minds blossom. Therefore, it is impossible for students to improve their ability to write effective compositions without reading (Kennedy, 1994).

The reading-writing integration pedagogy not only changes the way students view English writing, but also guides them to employ the reading strategy to engage successfully in other language learning activities. Good and effective writing requires sufficient reading.

Two features characterize this experimental study. Firstly, writing courses based on the connection between reading and writing were first developed for native English writers, in which students will read articles covering the essay topics and then write compositions. The number of EFL composition textbooks of this nature is comparatively small. Thus, this area requires more attention.

Secondly, despite a number of studies on the influence of reading on writing, these studies lacked solid statistical and evidential support—students' essays were not assessed according to any universally agreed-upon criteria. Most of them focused too much on sentence and vocabulary skills. In this study, task achievement, coherence and cohesion, lexical resources, and grammatical accuracy, four criteria of the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) are used to ensure the analysis is both content- and syntax-based.

It is hoped that the results of this study justify the effects of reading-writing integration technique in honing students' writing skills. It is also predicted that the findings of this study can have some educational implications for those who struggle to teach writing courses, and hopefully help those who struggle to write an essay achieve greater English proficiency and ease their learning process.

Literature Review

Studies on the Influence of Reading on Writing

Many researchers have studied the integration of reading and writing to benefit students' literacy skills (Ito, 2011). While many first language (L1) researchers and professors have shed light on the relations between reading and writing, only a few studies have investigated this in second language (L2) writing tasks. Nonetheless, a fair number of studies in the field have been conducted, which gives empirical evidence for the mutual influence of reading and writing in L2 language study. Zhanfang Li and Chunhong Yang believed that this interrelation was crucial, and they further argued that teaching reading and writing simultaneously is beneficial to better Chinese EFL students' reading and writing ability. In a similar vein, Plakans and Gebril (2012) held that the advantages of teaching reading and writing abound. They suggested that the reading materials, or source texts, can be something students mined for ideas. These texts could also help them respond to these ideas with personal opinions. Finally, the source texts could be utilized as language bank where students could apply the words and phrases into their writing. Esmaceli (2002) found the finding pivotal, because if reading and writing could be taught together rather than in isolation, student's academic ability could be enhanced. Yoshimura (2009) found out that connecting reading and writing affect EFL learners' writing performance positively, and both language skills complement each other, with reading affecting the subsequent writing stage by providing valuable language input, and vice versa. In relation to the efficacy of the method, Tuan (2012) tested and analyzed the responses from 63 participants, and in doing so, found a revealing insight into the connection between reading and writing. In other words, reading can provide good models for writing. Murcia and Olshtain (2000) state that: Many writing courses and certainly most autodidactic strategies in writing involve utilizing well-written passages from literature, or articles from prestigious publications, as models for their own writing. Thus, many writing lessons begin with text analysis, looking at them as models for writing or using some of the element to help improve their writing quality. These finding were crucial as they highlighted the interconnections between reading and writing, and provided valuable inspiration for students as well as instructors about practicing writing and course design.

However, despite greater attention, in many L2 academic contexts, teachers tend to pay varying degrees of attention to reading and writing instruction. Although reading and speaking is emphasized in most second-language contexts, writing does not enjoy the same emphasis. Kroll (1993) expressed his concern regarding the reading and writing disconnect when he stated that most English instructors teach reading separately from writing. Hirvela (2004) argued that this was pivotal, because in a writing class, reading is largely omitted by both students and teachers. He added that a simple reason for this phenomenon is that the teachers do not have sufficient and required knowledge to interrelate reading with writing in writing courses.

In addition, one of the areas that are negatively affected by the results coming from the disconnection between reading and writing skills (Shuying, 2002; Hirvela, 2004) is writing, which has been considered by many EFL/ESL students as a difficult task to master (Heffernan, 2006). In order to address this issue in the literacy context, the present study was aimed at examining the effectiveness of integrating reading and writing skills in ESL students' writing by relying on the reading-writing reconnection theory by Horning and Kraemer (2013). According to this theory, reading can and should be used as an effective method to teach/learn writing effectively in high schools and universities.

However, in previous research, a simple recognition of the correlation between reading and writing seems inadequate as a measure of the interconnection among their skill development. To bridge the gaps, a universally

agreed-upon set of criteria is essential in this regard. Therefore, while acknowledging that good readers make good writers, it is vital that we measure the improvement of each literacy skill at the beginning and the end of the adoption of the read-to-write approach.

Theoretical Basis of the Reading-Writing Integration Method

Krashen's input hypothesis. The input hypothesis, developed by the linguist Stephen Krashen in the 1970s and 1980s, suggests that language acquisition only occurs through exposure to materials learners can understand, despite them not understanding all the words and structures in it, a concept also known as comprehensible input. However, Krashen also suggests that this comprehensible input should be one step above the learner's current language level, represented as "i+1", in order to allow learners to continue to progress with their language development. According to his language acquisition theory, exposing learners to this kind of input helps them acquire language naturally, rather than learn it consciously. In order for the input to be optimal and effective, Krashen argues that the input process should cater to a set of requirements, namely several characteristics, that allow the acquisition stage to be as fast as possible. An activity that fits none of them could be of no or little avail. There are four features of ideal input, and the following will discuss each of them.

First is the comprehensibility. A prerequisite for language acquisition is that learners need to at least understand the message. Otherwise, it would be of no use. As for using the read-to-write approach, if the learner does not understand the input materials, he/she will not be able to write. Therefore, the material should neither be too simple nor complicated, because if that is the case, learners will either feel demotivated and stuck in their comfort zone, or tend to focus on the form of language and ignore its communicative value, a "zero" input that serves no useful purpose.

The second characteristic is that the input material ought to be interesting and/or relevant so that the learner will focus on the meaning rather than on form. However, Krashen also states that this requirement is difficult to satisfy, in that some exercises are not designed for "acquisition", and that in most academic contexts, many language courses are compulsory for students' academic studies, not for the sake of language training.

The third requirement for ideal language input involves ungrammatical sequence. The arguments against deliberate input of grammatical elements are manifold. For starters, teaching grammar to students amounts to assuming all learners are at the same stage, which is not necessarily the case, and the "i+1" mode may fail to take effect on every learner. In addition, there may not be enough exposure to the grammatical structures for learners, who will have difficulty understanding that structure. Furthermore, if learners focus too much on grammatical structure, their ability to communicate ideas, the core of language learning, will suffer, and in turn, the language input materials can hardly be interesting, as stated above. Finally, it follows an unnatural order of language acquisition, which would not have the desired results. Given enough comprehensible input, however, argues Krashen, it can resolve these issues.

The final point concerns quantity. Although people have yet to assess how much comprehensible input is enough to achieve a higher level of proficiency, we do know that the current situation leaves much to be desired. The question of how much input remains unanswered due to a lack of research, but it is clear that we are not giving learners enough input they need for them to continue improving. It could have been better if we provide more available, level-appropriate, and sufficient input, i.e., i+1 for them.

Arguably, be it first or second language acquisition, they cannot be separated from language input, and there is no language acquisition without input. The same is true for English writing. By gaining comprehensible input

from reading, learners are able to produce more desirable output, and reach more advanced levels. Given the problems faced by senior high school students in China, only by combining reading and writing strategically and extensively, using the read-to-write approach can students' English writing ability be effectively improved.

Swain's output hypothesis. In the field of second language acquisition (SLA), theories abound about the effective ways for learners to acquire new languages. In the early 1980s, SLA was dominated by input, and research and studies on language output were scarce. Merrill Swain (1985) put forward comprehensible output based on Krashen's input hypothesis. In his study of a French immersion program in Canada, he found that after students received a fair amount of comprehensible input, they were able to speak or write fluently, but far from accurately as their French peers, despite them scoring similarly in listening and reading comprehension tests. He believed that it was to teachers' benefit to "push" the students to pay heed to grammatical accuracy. Comprehensible input and output complement each other in second language acquisition.

Swain further points out there are three main functions of comprehensible output: (1) The noticing/triggering function; (2) The hypothesis-testing function; (3) Meta-linguistic function of input, which will be discussed as follows.

Firstly, the noticing/triggering function is that, when learners are attempting to speak or write something in the target language, they may recognize some of their gaps and problems which prevent them from expressing the meaning precisely they wish to convey. This awareness triggers cognitive processes in which learners will generate linguistic elements which are new for them, or which consolidate their current level of knowledge. They may also notice that what native speakers would use is different from their own, and act accordingly to bridge the gap.

The second function is the hypothesis testing function. From the learner's perspective, this means output can be a "test run" that reflects their hypothesis of how to speak or write in the target language. More importantly, students are more likely to "self-correct" their output when pushed to do so, thus producing it successfully. This function is important as it enables students to speak and write correct and idiomatic language, and illustrates the need for learners to seek feedback actively through hypothesis testing.

The third function is called metalinguistic function of output. It means learners can use language to reflect on language, in order to facilitate their L2 learning. They analyze the target language by using the existing knowledge, which deepens their understanding of language form, function, and meaning, and then enables them to internalize it.

In summary, SLA is a process in which the target language is constantly hypothesized and tested. Output provides an outlet for learners to put the target language production to the test. Language input and output are complementary, interrelated in a way that can be transformed with each other under certain circumstances. Both of them play an equally important role in second language acquisition. Producing language has vital and significant functions in S2/L2 learning and teaching, which need to be explored in the future.

Methodology

Research Questions

The purpose of this experimental study is to investigate two main questions:

- (1) What are the possible issues faced by students in writing an essay?
- (2) To what extent, and in what ways can the "reading and writing integration" approach benefit ESL students' writing performance?

Participants

In this experimental study, 100 students from the authors' online English writing workshop were selected. Although these participants come from different high schools in Jiangsu province, their level of English proficiency is much the same. Their writing scores were observed and analyzed through the Test 1 and Test 2 essays using different strategies, first the traditional approach, and then the read-to-write approach, in order to spot the variations in scores affected by different approaches.

Essay scores are given by three experienced teachers who have an over five-year experience in English writing assessment. Two of them have a BA, and one an MA in English teaching.

- Test 1: The pretest was conducted in the first week, after the students were given instructions about the essay prompt below.

Some experts believe that it is better for children to begin learning a foreign language at primary school rather than secondary school. Do the advantages of this outweigh the disadvantages?

This is a typical IELTS academic writing task 2 argumentative essay, in which students are required to assess whether the benefits of letting children learn a new language at primary school as opposed to secondary school outweigh its drawbacks. Apart from the essay instructions, students were not allowed to refer to any resources, i.e. reading materials, newspaper articles, scientific research, etc., which means that they had to complete the task based on their own current knowledge and language skills.

The overall score of this essay was 100, and participants were asked to finish this task within 40 minutes in class to create an exam-based environment that avoids plagiarism.

- Test 2: Moving on to Test 2, the students were asked to write another argumentative essay below.

The best way for a government to solve the problem of traffic congestion is to provide free public transport 24 hours a day, seven days a week. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Unlike the Task 1 section, where students were given no more than the essay prompt, Task 2 section featured the read-to-write approach, including two steps: pre-writing and while-writing.

Step 1: Pre-writing

Before they wrote, the teachers gave the students five articles to read, all of which are from *The Economist*, *The Guardian* and are closely connected with the writing topic. In reading these five articles, students were required to note down anything that they thought could help them write more effectively, such as useful ideas, reasoning strategies, good lexical chunks, and grammatical structures, to name just a few. In this process, they gained valuable ideas and lexical resources to benefit their writing process.

After they finished reading themselves, teachers had a role to play: guiding students as to how to apply those into their writing. Besides, teachers provided a sample analysis of the texts to better help students understand the articles, including structures of the texts, new words and expressions, and the main idea of each article. This ensured that students could use these reading materials to their advantage.

Step 2: While-reading

Having gained enough “language bank” to assist their writing, students moved on to the essay writing section. First, they were told to discuss in groups about what they had learned from the reading materials assigned by the teacher, sharing ideas on how they would approach the task. Second, they went on to the “essay planning” section, in which they drew outlines on the given task, organized the supporting points either from the reading materials or from their own experience to complete the plan. Finally, they finished their own piece independently in 40

minutes, the same amount of time as in Test 1, in class.

The Scoring Process

One hundred writing papers of each topic, i.e. 200 essays in all, were submitted in Microsoft Word doc/docx format to guarantee that the students' handwriting did not affect the way the teachers evaluated those essays. The three teachers were then requested to evaluate 200 essays, employing the same essay writing rubric. The essay writing rubric was designed based on the criteria of a well-written essay from the perspective of IELTS writing task 2.

Table 1 below shows the four different aspects from which teachers assessed the essays. Each constitutes 25% of the overall band score (100).

Table 1

The Four Different Aspects From Which Teachers Assessed the Essays

Criteria	Explanation
Task response (TR)	Plan each argument well in advance; keep the structure and the logic clear.
Cohesion and coherence (CC)	Logically organize information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout. Use a range of cohesive devices appropriately.
Lexical resources (LR)	Pay attention to word choice; use a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings.
Grammatical range and accuracy (GRA)	Use a wide range of structures; have good control of grammar.

Questionnaire Design

A questionnaire was sent out to students to gather information on their attitudes toward essay writing and perceptions of the elements of a successful essay. Questions were divided into two parts; each part served a particular purpose:

The first three questions were designed to get an overview of how important students think of writing skills, and how frequently they practice their English writing: never practice, practice only when required, and to know whether writing is a challenging task for them.

The next three questions were designed specifically at students' understanding of the components of a well-written essay. Questions were based on the four main scoring criteria of IELTS Writing task 2: (1) task response, (2) coherence and cohesion, (3) lexical resources, (4) grammatical range and accuracy.

Results and Discussion

The Analysis of Writing Tests

Table 2

Essay Scores for Test 1 and Test 2

Test	Test 1 (100 students' samples)	Test 2 (100 students' samples)
Average score	70.22	79.45

From Table 2, we can see that the students scored significantly higher in Test 2, where the read-to-write approach was adopted, increasing by nearly 10 points. This means that the adoption of this teaching procedure does have educational benefits for students' writing improvement.

Figure 1 and Table 3 below give information about the changes in the number of problems in students' essays in Test 1 and Test 2, and four scoring criteria by category.

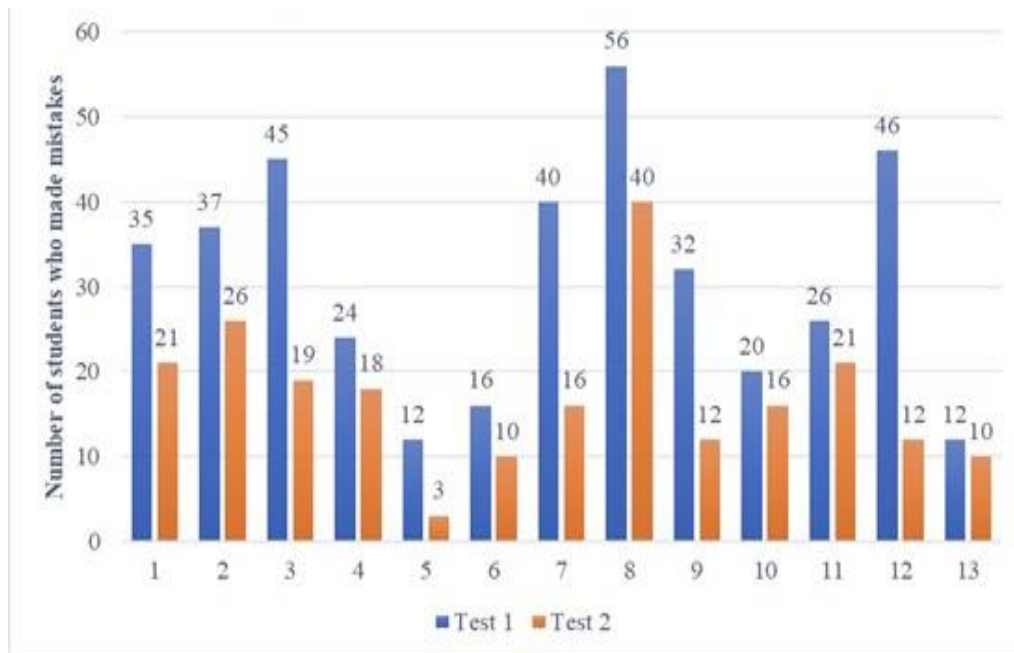


Figure 1. Issues in Test 1 and Test 2.

Table 3

Issues of Students' Essays

Criteria	No.	Issues
Task response (TR)	1	Fail to address all parts of the task
	2	Position is not always clear
	3	Ideas are limited and not sufficiently developed
Coherence and cohesion (CC)	4	Have a tendency to inadequate, inaccurate use, or overuse of cohesive devices
	5	May not write in paragraphs, or paragraphing may not be enough
	6	Ideas are not arranged coherently and there is no clear progression in the response
Lexical resources (LR)	7	Use a limited range of vocabulary, but this is minimally adequate for the task
	8	Attempt to use less common vocabulary, but with imprecision and inaccuracy
	9	Errors in spelling and/or word formation stand out, to the degree that causes strain for the reader
Grammatical range and accuracy (GRA)	10	Use a limited range of structures
	11	Make frequent grammatical errors
	12	Punctuation is often faulty
	13	Errors can cause strain for the reader

Analysis of task response (TR). From Figure 1, 35 out of 100 submitted essays failed to address all parts of the task, meaning that writers did not fully understand the question and only address the issue partially. A similar proportion (37%) of students did not have a clear and firm position throughout. However, the biggest problem concerned ideas development: nearly a half of the participants were not able to respond to the question with relevant, extended, and well supported ideas; their essays were like a “shopping list”, where they crammed whatever point they thought might be useful into one paragraph, causing a lack of focus.

However, if we look at the results in Test 2, we can see that there was a marked improvement in students' ability to interpret the task, to hold a strong position, and to present a well-developed response to the issue. In spite of the fact that approximately 1/5 of the students did not perform well in regard to task response, this figure

saw a noticeable decline, to 21%, 26%, 19%, respectively. This means that after the read-to-write approach was administered, students fared better in terms of task response.

Analysis of coherence and cohesion (CC). In Test 1, 24 students used cohesive devices incorrectly, such as “firstly”, “secondly”, “furthermore”, “besides”, “finally”, etc. A smaller percentage of students, 12% and 16%, respectively, wrote insufficient paragraphs and arranged paragraphs incoherently. This figure also dropped in Test 2, in which an even smaller number of students failed to achieve CC, especially with paragraphing, because it suggests that reading materials had a greater impact on managing paragraphing skills.

Analysis of lexical resources (LR). Compared to TR and CC, LR was a more serious concern. A limited use of topic vocabulary and inaccurate usage of words predominated, ranging from 40 to 56 in Test 1, although the former saw a decline in Test 2, which means that students withdrew many useful expressions from the reading materials and applied them into their writing. The same was not true for the latter, however, which fell only minimally. This means that while students generally understood the significance of learning new words and phrases from the English articles, they had yet to have a good control of them. Spelling and word formation mistakes were also greatly reduced.

Analysis of grammatical range and accuracy (GRA). Students in general seemed to have a poor knowledge of grammar. 20 students initially could only use basic simple sentences, causing many sentence fragments that reduced readability. 26 students made grammatical mistakes in every sentence in a while, and only a minority of the sentences were error-free. In extreme cases, such mistakes could severely distort the message, making the reader unable to understand the meaning. Punctuation is another source of worry, but saw remarkable improvement in Test 2.

Despite there being little improvement in students’ demonstration of grammatical structures, there were still fairly good results.

Quantitative Analysis

Question 1: Do you think English writing is important? If so, why?

When asked whether English writing is crucial to one’s academic and professional skills, all 100 students (100%) gave a positive answer. They were then asked to evaluate the importance of writing from different aspects. Figure 2 below presents the reasons why they regard writing as an important language skill.

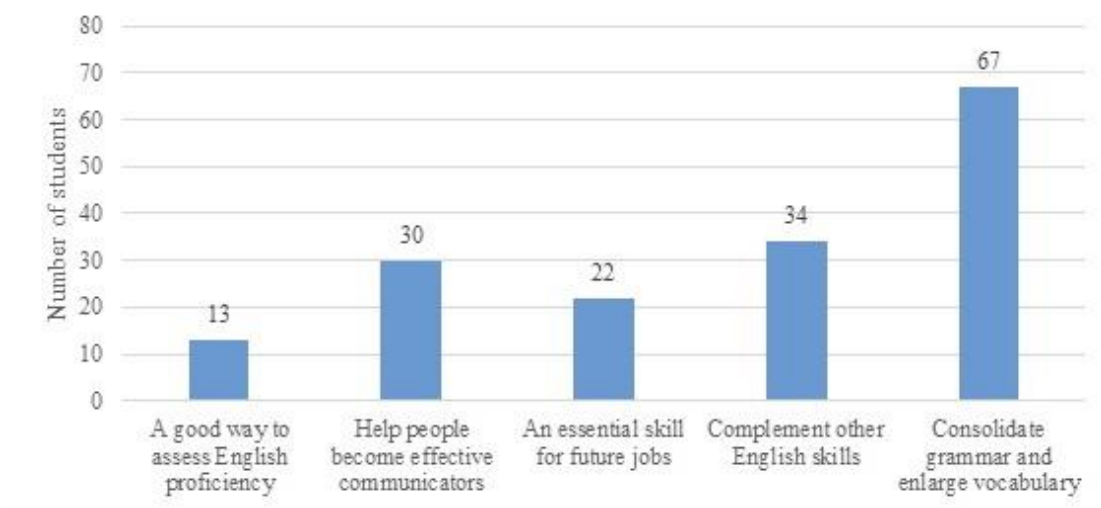


Figure 2. Reasons why English writing is important.

From Figure 2, a large majority of students (67%) believed that writing can help them reinforce their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. About one third of them considered writing to be useful for making them effective communicators and developing other language skills, 30% and 34% to be exact, respectively. 13% of the students claimed that practicing English writing is a good way to evaluate one's English proficiency, versus 22% of them who regarded it as an essential skill for future careers. Clearly, most of the students argued for the language benefits English writing can offer, but proportionally fewer of them related this skill to the future workplace.

Question 2: How often do you practice English writing?

Figure 3 below shows how frequently students practice English writing.

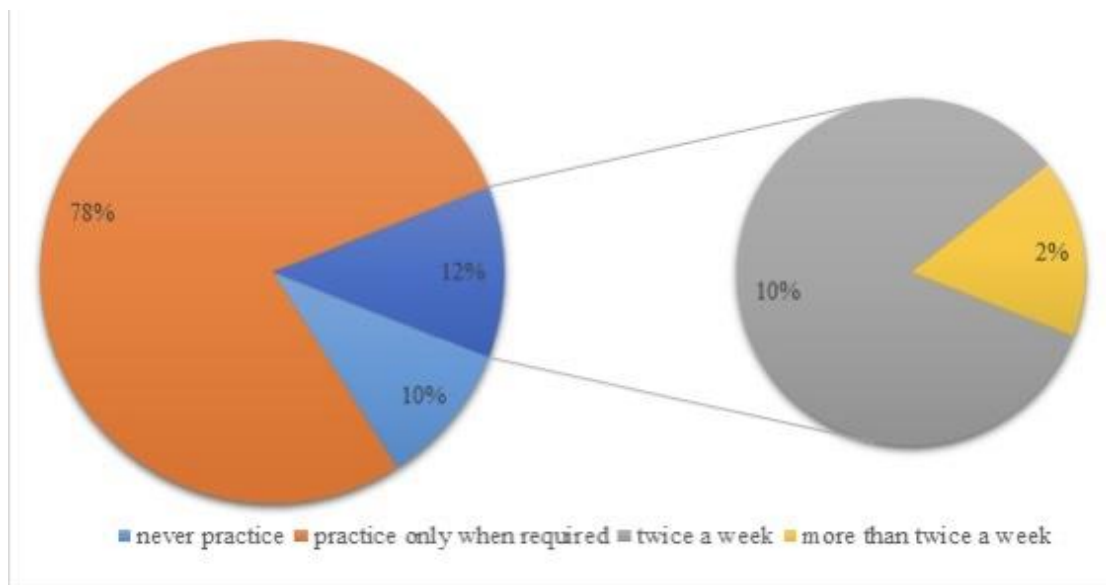


Figure 3. Frequency of practice.

Overall, nearly 80% of the students practice English writing only when they are assigned to do so. By comparison, the number of students who voluntarily and frequently do writing practice is much lower, with only a small fraction of them writing essays twice and more than twice a week, at 10% and 2%, respectively. Ten out of one hundred never practice outside class. Viewing Figures 2 and 3 together, it is noticeable that although students have the consensus that English writing is an essential academic and professional skill, relatively few of them are willing to do any practice. This indicates that self-practice in L2 writing is insufficient, which merits attention.

Question 3: Do you think that writing is hard?

According to the results, all the students agree upon the notion that writing is indeed hard for them. Obviously, teachers and students should make a concerted effort to learn how to compose a well-written essay from different perspectives, and tackle each of them using relevant reading input materials.

Question 4: What criteria do you think are the most important for a good essay?

This question is based on the four criteria of IELTS writing assessment, which is designed to discover how students view the components of an essay. Results are shown in Figure 4 below.

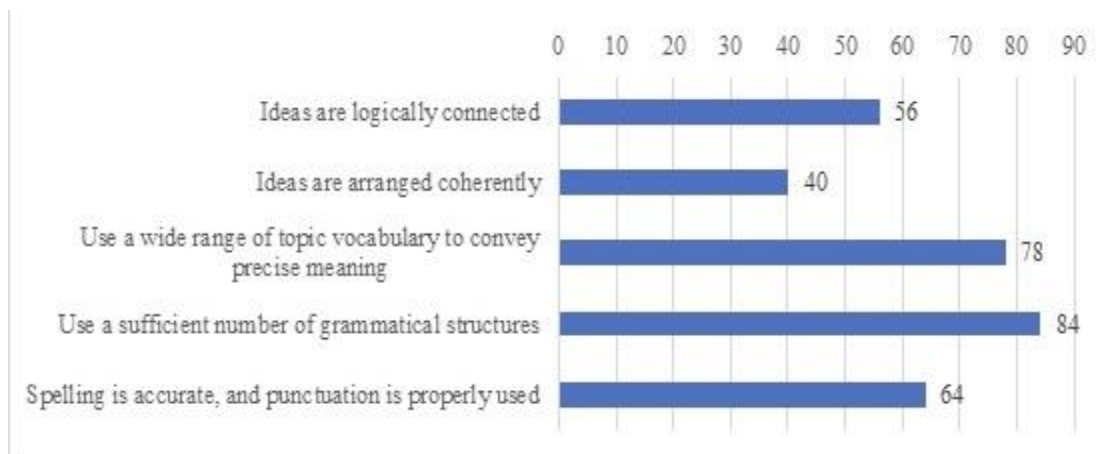


Figure 4. Students' perception of the criteria for a successful essay.

Clearly, “use a sufficient number of grammatical structures” is considered the No. 1 criterion, at 84%. “Use a wide range of topic vocabulary to convey precise meaning” ranks second (78%). As regards the other two aspects that deal with ideas and progression, 56% and 40% of those surveyed choose them as the most important criteria. Finally, 64% of students prioritize spelling and punctuation accuracy, putting them in the fifth place.

From Figure 4, it seems that students regard language quality as more important than others, which nonetheless suggests that misconceptions about what makes a good essay are still prevalent among the students, because the five criteria given above are placed in the order of importance.

Question 5: Which parts do you find English writing particularly difficult?

Figure 5 below gives a breakdown of the difficulties that students find with English writing.

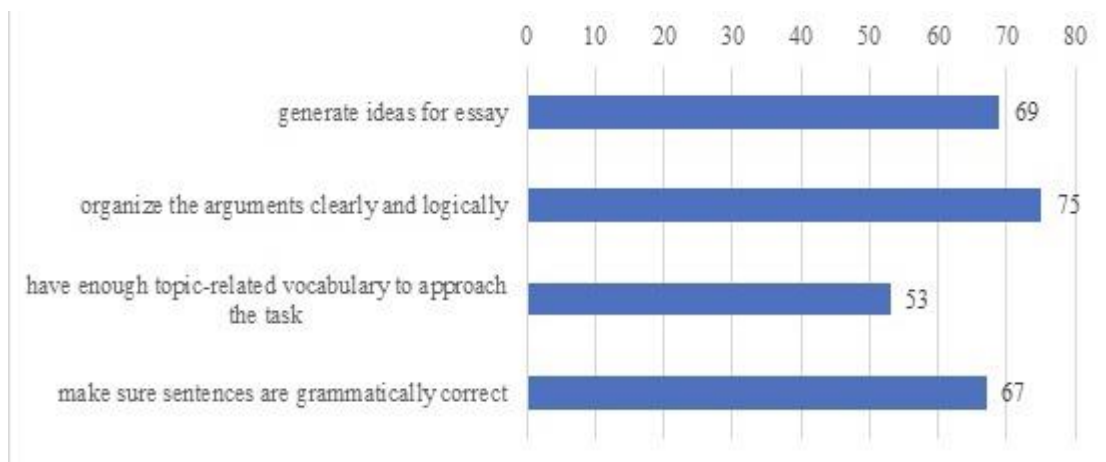


Figure 5. Degree of difficulty faced by students in essay writing.

Generally, students have roughly the same problems in terms of all the four parts when approaching a writing task. However, it is interesting to note that, combining Figures 4 with 5, the statistics show contradictory results. As is shown in Figure 4, most students give greater weight to language than to content, but it can be seen from Figure 5 that a proportionally larger number of students have more problems in generating ideas (69%) and having logical connection (75%) than in vocabulary (53%) and grammar (67%). This shows that in real contexts, writing has more to do with ideas and logic than words and structures.

Question 6: What should you do to improve your English writing skills?

Presented below is what students feel about what they should do to enhance their writing ability.

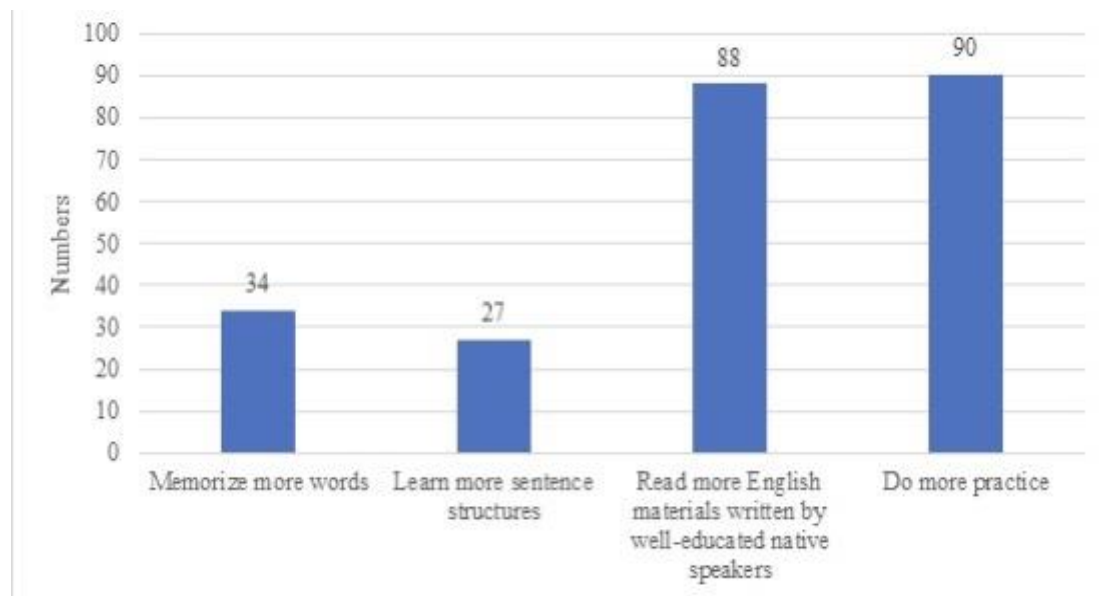


Figure 6. Measure to hone writing skills.

Under the intervention of the read-to-write approach, an overwhelming majority (88%) of students believe that, in order to hone their writing skills, reading more materials written by native English speakers should be high on the agenda. Frequent practice also plays a huge part, with 90 out of 100 students choosing this as a way to improve their writing.

It is also worth mentioning that students have come to realize that only learning new words and grammar does little help to their writing improvement, as seen from the graph.

Conclusion

Major Findings

This experiment used a new writing teaching approach, i.e. the read-to-write integration, to find out whether the teaching approach is applicable to senior high school students' English writing and whether it can improve their writing quality. The following is the summary of findings.

Before the intervention of read-to-write approach, there were a great number of issues in their writing. After the experiment, however, scores increased remarkably, and the issues identified before were more or less reduced. This testified that combining reading and writing has a positive impact on EFL learners' writing performance. Besides, it is also safe to conclude that reading relevant texts can benefit their subsequent writing in four respects: task response, coherence and cohesion, lexical resources, and grammatical range and accuracy. The biggest influence is on task response and lexical resources.

The results of questionnaire survey generally suggested that high school students were apathetic toward English writing and did not want to spend more time practicing it after class. They tended to regard writing as a sole requirement they had to fulfill. Also, many students mistakenly believed that writing had more to do with grammar and vocabulary, which in fact should be directed towards other aspects: ideas, logic, and flow.

Nevertheless, their attitude towards writing had obviously changed and their writing incentive had been significantly strengthened.

Pedagogical Implications

According to previous studies, reading and writing are two skills that are closely and tightly connected to each other (Yoshimura, 2009). The improvement of one leads to the development of the other. However, there are some students and even teachers who are not aware of this relationship to facilitate language learning (writing, specifically) yet. Further, there seems to lack empirical support for this proposal. Thus, the present study addressed this gap in literature and literacy context by investigating the effect of reading-writing integration on the writing performance of 100 high school students studying in China, and shed light on the proposed ways of connecting reading and writing in English writing curriculum design.

I hope that the results of this study confirm the positive efficacy of instruction through reading passages for the enhancement of students' writing ability. It is also predicted that the findings of this study can assist students' learning English as a foreign language to enrich their ability to write by employing more reading while composing a text. Students can be encouraged to read more through several intervention strategies such as giving them their favourite topic to read, selecting interesting reading passages for them to read, and asking them to integrate reading to writing.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study is the length of time to teach the intervention to the participants. In this study, the intervention took three to four weeks. However, it can be extended, for example, to one semester, if better or more valid results are expected. In so doing, we can ensure that students form the habit of reading more extensively and practice more frequently, instead of leaving them untouched.

Another issue that should be considered as a limitation of this study is that although there are many other methods to improve students' writing performance, this study only focused on one aspect of reading, i.e. integrating reading and writing to develop students' literacy skill as the best technique to teach/learn writing effectively. Further studies might be undertaken in testing other ways such as the use of reading strategies, reading aloud techniques, or reading with fun for students' writing enhancement.

Thirdly, the sample size is rather small, and only consists of two tests, which should be noted here. It could have been more convincing and valid, for example, when investigating a larger number of participants.

This study is also restricted to EFL students from China. Future studies can change the context and examine the effects of reading to writing on EFL students from other countries such as Japan and Korea.

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