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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING AND WRITING IN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF PERFORMANCE, PERCEPTIONS AND STRATEGY USE

SALAHELDIN ADAM AHMED ELDOUMA.

FBMK 2005 8

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By

SALAHELDIN ADAM AHMED ELDOUMA

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2005

DEDICATION

To my affectionate mother Zahra', my wife Hanan and our loving sons Khattab and Ammar, I dedicate this work.

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of doctor of Philosophy

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SALAHELDIN ADAM AHMED ELDOUMA

September 2005

Chairman: Professor Chan Swee Heng, PhD

Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication

This study investigated the relationship between reading and writing in terms of the performance, perception and strategy use of university ESL students. The subjects of the study were students of English language from the Faculty of Education at Sudan University of Science and Technology. The subjects attempted two reading tests and two writing tests to provide indicators of their performance that potentially reflected the reading and writing connection. They also responded to a structured questionnaire that investigated their perceptions about the connection between what they read and what they wrote to shed light on their affective responses towards the connection deemed important to foster language growth.

From the subjects, 12 students were chosen based on the good reader/writer and poor reader/writer criterion and were asked to recall in writing two reading texts. They were also interviewed to investigate ESL learner strategy use in making this connection.

The findings of the study showed that there was a relatively high degree of correlation between the students' reading and writing performance (r=0 .741; p = .000). The findings also showed that the relationship between reading performance and writing performance differed according to the learners' levels of language proficiency which supports the bidirectional hypothesis.

On the whole, the participants also showed positive attitudes towards integrating reading and writing skills. In response to the questionnaire, the students reported making connection between what they read and what they wrote by making notes/summary of what they had read, developing topics of their reading into paragraphs and using the main ideas of their reading texts to help them in their writing activities. However, the findings also showed that the culture of 'always-practising' good strategies appears to be underdeveloped among Sudanese tertiary students. Therefore, it is argued that further effort is needed on the part of instruction to help students improve the use of good reading and writing strategies.

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The analysis of the recall protocols also revealed that good writers recall better compared to good readers. Therefore, good writers are better readers in terms of recall compared to good readers. Accordingly, it is argued on the basis of the recall efforts that a good writer is more likely a better reader compared to a good reader being a better writer which further supports the results of the reading and writing performance tests as well as the analysis of the students' responses to the questionnaire.

Furthermore, the students' interviews showed that all the interviewees practised some common strategies when reading and writing. Good/poor readers and good/poor writers prepared themselves for reading by checking the title and pictures first. However, good readers, poor readers and poor writers seemed to have similar plans for reading, whereas good writers had a clearer plan to approach reading (skimming for main ideas, scanning for details or reading the introduction first, among possible often strategies). There were however also no clear techniques used by the interviewees to generate ideas for their writing.

The research shows a close connection between the constructs of reading and writing. It supports the contention that writing is generally the better indicator of reading ability. The findings point to work that can be done to nurture greater success in reading and writing abilities and to exploit the connections for the benefits of ESL language students.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
Sebagai memenuhi kepeluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

PERKAITAN ANTARA PEMBACAAN DAN PENULISAN DALAM BAHASA INGGERIS SEBAGAI BAHASA KEDUA DI DALAM KONTEKS PRESTASI, PERSEPSI DAN PENGGUNAAN STRATEGI

Oleh

SALAHELDIN ADAM AHMED ELDOUMA

September 2005

Pengerusi: Profesor Chan Swee Heng, PhD

Fakulti: Bahasa Modern dan Komunikasi

Kajian ini mengkaji tentang hubungkait antara pembacaan dengan penulisan dari segi prestasi, persepsi dan strategi yang digunakan oleh pelajar bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua pada peringkat universiti. Subjek kajian terdiri daripada pelajar-pelajar bahasa Inggeris Fakulti Pendidikan, Universiti Sains dan Teknologi, Sudan. Mereka mengambil dua ujian bacaan dan ujian penulisan dan skor ujian-ujian tersebut digunakan sebagai petunjuk prestasi mereka untuk menentukan hubungkait antara pembacaan dengan penulisan. Subjek juga dikehendaki menjawab soal-selidik berstruktur. Informasi yang didapati daripada kaedah soal-selidik ini dapat memberi gambaran tentang respon afektif subjek mengenai hubungkait antara pembacaan dengan penulisan yang dapat membantu pengembangan bahasa.

Dua belas orang pelajar telah dipilih sebagai subjek berdasarkan kriteria pembaca atau penulis yang baik dan pembaca atau penulis yang lemah. Mereka diminta mengingati semula (secara bertulis) isi penting dua teks bacaan. Subjek tersebut juga ditemuduga untuk mengenal pasti strategi yang digunakan mereka.

Dapatan kajian menunjukkan terdapat korelasi yang agak tinggi bagi prestasi pelajar untuk ujian bacaan dan penulisan ($r= 0.741$; $p= 0.000$). Dapatan kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa terdapat perbezaan antara prestasi pelajar dalam ujian bacaan dengan prestasi mereka dalam ujian penulisan. Perbezaan prestasi ini bergantung pada tahap kemahiran pelajar. Dapatan ini sokong hipotesis dua hala kajian.

Secara amnya, subjek juga memaparkan sikap yang positif terhadap penggabungan kemahiran membaca dan menulis. Analisis data soal-selidik menunjukkan yang para pelajar melaporkan bahawa dalam percubaan untuk mengaitkan apa yang telah dibaca dan ditulis, mereka mengambil nota dan membuat ringkasan tentang apa yang telah dibaca, membina perenggan untuk setiap isi penting yang dilenal pasti, dan menggunakan idea utama dalam teks bacaan untuk membantu aktiviti penulisan mereka. Walau bagaimanapun, dapatan kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa budaya 'sentiasa mengamalkan' strategi yang baik

kurang dipraktikkan di kalangan pelajar Sudan pada peringkat pengajian tinggi. Oleh itu, adalah disarankan agar aspek ini dapat ditekankan dalam pembelajaran supaya dapat membantu pelajar mempertingkatkan penggunaan strategi bacaan atau penulisan yang baik.

Analisis protokol mengingati semula juga menunjukkan bahawa penulis yang baik dapat mengingati semula isi teks dengan lebih berkesan atau baik daripada pembaca yang baik. Sehubungan ini, dapatlah dinyatakan bahawa penulis yang baik adalah juga pembaca yang lebih baik dari segi mengingati semula berbanding dengan pembaca yang baik. Dapatan ini menyokong keputusan yang diperolehi daripada prestasi pelajar dalam ujian bacaan dan penulisan serta keputusan yang diperolehi daripada analisis data soal-selidik.

Tambahan pula, dapatan daripada temuduga pelajar menunjukkan bahawa kesemua pelajar mengamalkan strategi yang umum apabila membaca dan menulis. Pembaca yang baik atau lemah dan penulis yan baik atau lemah menyediakan diri mereka untuk latihan dalam ujian bacaan dengan memeriksa tajuk dan gambar yang terdapat dalam teks bacaan. Walau bagaimanapun, pembaca yang baik serta pembaca dan penulis yang lemah mempunyai rancangan yang sama untuk ujian bacaan, manakala penulis yang baik mempunyai rancangan yang lebih

jelas (contohnya meluncur idea utama, mengimbas isi secara terperinci atau membaca dahulu perenggan pengenalan adalah sebahagian daripada strategi yang sering digunakan). Walau bagaimanapun, tidak terdapat teknik yang nyata yang digunakan oleh subjek untuk menjana idea dalam penulisan mereka.

Kajian ini menujukkan hubungkait yang rapat antara konstruk bacaan dengan penulisan. Ia menyokong kenyataan yang mengutarakan bahawa penulisan, secara umum adalah petunjuk yang lebih baik bagi keupayaan membaca. Dapatan kajian mengutarakan cadangan agar usaha dapat dibuat untuk mempertingkatkan keupayaan membaca dan menulis serta mengeksploitasi hubungkait antara kemahiran membaca dengan menulis untuk manfaat pelajar bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua.

ACKNOLOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to my supervisory committee members: Professor Dr. Chan Swee Heng, Associate Professor Dr. Mohamad Faiz Abdullah and Associate Professor Dr. Wong Bee Eng. I acknowledge their insightful comments and suggestions, their invaluable assistance and guidance throughout this work. The thanks I offer to them are heartfelt expressions of gratitude.

My thanks are also due to all the teaching staff and students of the English Language Department and my colleagues at the English Language Unit of Sudan University of Science and Technology whose accomplishments are testimony to the success of this research. I am thankful to: Al-Aqqad Al-Haj Adam (Head Department of English Language Unit), El-Fateh Balla, Abdul Kareem Hassan kakoum, Salah Hassan Mohammed Ali and Isma'el Mohammed Hamid Rushwan and all those who contributed time and talent to help achieve this work. I thank them all.

My gratitude also goes to my wife Hanan who has been patient throughout my study, uncles Abdurrahman Mohammad Eldouma and Bashir Ibrahim Eldouma, my brothers: Mohammed Adam and Dr. Abdul Haleem Adam and my sons Khattab and Ammar.

I certify that an Examination Committee met on 15th September 2005 to conduct the final examination of Salaheldin Adam Ahmad on his Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled "Relationship between Reading and Writing in English as a Second Language in the Context of Performance, Perception and Strategy Use" in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

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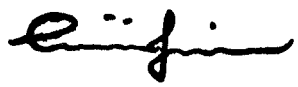

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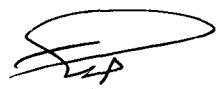
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.



SALAHELDIN ADAM AHMED ELDOUM

Date: 18/11/2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
DEDICATION		ii
ABSTRACT		iii
ABSTRAK		vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		ix
APPROVAL		x
DECLARATION		xii
LIST OF TABLES		xvi
LIST OF FIGURES		xvii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS		xviii
CHAPTER		
I	**INTRODUCTION**	1
	English Language in the Sudan	1
	The Role of English Language in the Sudan during the Colonial Era	2
	Educational Policy for English Language since 1990s	5
	English Language Unit	8
	Department of English Language	8
	Background to the Study of Reading and Writing Connections	11
	Statement of the Problem	15
	Research Questions	19
	Objective of the Study	20
	Theoretical Framework	21
	The Directional Hypothesis	21
	The Non-directional Hypothesis	23
	The Bi-directional Hypothesis	25
	Significance of the Study	28
	Scope of the Study	28
	Constructs of Reading and Writing	29
II	**LITERATURE REVIEW**	34
	Reading	34
	Reading Comprehension and Schema Theory	37
	Reading Methods	42
	Skimming	43
	Scanning	44
	Reading as a Thinking Process	46

	Writing	48
	The Product Approach	49
	The Process Approach	51
	Unity and Coherence	58
	Reading and Writing Relationships	59
	Meaning Connections of Reading and Writing	72
	Connected Knowledge of Reading and Writing	75
	Informational Knowledge of Reading and Writing	75
	Structural Knowledge of Reading and Writing	75
	Transactional Knowledge of Reading and Writing	76
	Shared Knowledge of Reading and Writing	77
	Reading and Writing as Collaborative Events	78
	Language Connection of Reading and Writing	79
	Instructional Connection of Reading and Writing	81
	Reading and Writing as a Composing Process	83
	Reading and Writing Pedagogy	89
	Reading and Writing Strategies	93
	Reading Strategies	93
	Writing Strategies	97
	Research on Reading and Writing Relationships	98
	The Influence of Reading on Writing	98
	The Influence of Writing on Reading	109
	Immediate Written Recalls	112
	Conclusion: Similarities and Differences between Reading and Writing	114
III	**METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION**	120
	Methods and Approaches	120
	The Subjects	121
	Materials and Instruments	122
	Reading Performance Tests	124
	Multiple-Choice Questions	125
	True-False Questions	126
	Short-Answer Questions	126
	Writing Performance Tests	128
	Students' Questionnaire	128
	Reading-Writing Connections	129
	Reading and Writing Strategies	130
	Case Study	131
	Immediate Written Recalls	132
	Learner Strategy Interviews	133
	Data Analysis Procedures	134
	Analysis of Reading Performance Tests	134
	Analysis of Writing Performance Tests	135

	Analysis of Immediate Written Recalls	136
	Analysis of Students' Questionnaire	138
	Criteria of Identifying Different Levels of Language Proficiency	139
	Criteria of Identifying Good Readers/Writers and Poor Readers/Writers	144
	The Pilot study	147
	Reading and Writing Performance Tests	147
	Piloting the Questionnaire	153
IV	**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**	156
	Part 1	156
	Reading and Writing Performance Tests	156
	Relationship between Reading and Writing Performance of Students at Different Levels of Language Proficiency	164
	High Intermediate Level	165
	Low Intermediate Level	167
	Good Readers/Writers and Poor Readers/Writers	170
	Students' Responses to the Questionnaire	171
	Reading/Writing Activities and Perceptions	172
	Students' Responses to Reading Strategies	181
	Students' Responses to Writing Strategies	192
	Conclusion on Similarities and Differences between Reading and Writing and Suggestions	199
	Part 2	206
	Immediate Written Recalls	206
	Recall Protocols of Good Readers and Poor Readers	214
	Recall Protocols of Good Writers and Poor Writers	218
	Learner Strategy Interviews	224
V	**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**	236
	Summary and Conclusions	236
	Implications of the Study on ESL Teaching	244
	Recommendations	249
BIBLIOGRAPHY		251
APPENDICES		270
BIODATA OF THE AUTHOR		313

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Variables, Instruments/Data Sources and Measurement	123
2	Students' Reading and Writing Scores (Pilot, First Test)	149
3	Students' Reading and Writing Scores (Retest)	151
4	Mean Scores of Students' Reading Tests and Writing Tests	152
5	Paired Samples Statistics of Reading and Writing Tests	158
6	Paired Samples Test of Reading and Writing Tests	159
7	Relationship between Students' Reading and Writing Scores	159
8	Linear Regression Model 1: The Effect of the Students' Writing Scores on Reading Scores	160
9	Linear Regression Model 2: The Effect of the Students' Reading Scores on Writing Scores	160
10	Paired Samples Statistics of Reading and Writing Tests of High Intermediate	165
11	Pearson Correlation of Reading and Writing Scores of High Intermediate	166
12	Nonparametric Correlation of Reading and Writing Scores of High Intermediate	167
13	Paired Samples Statistics of Reading and Writing Tests of Low Intermediate	167
14	Pearson Correlation of Reading and Writing Scores of Low Intermediate	167

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15	Correlation Coefficient of the Students' Reading and Writing Scores on IELTS	170
16	Time Spent on Reading Activities	173
17	Reading Materials	174
18	Browsing the Internet	174
19	Frequency of Reading and Writing Activities	175
20	Reading and Writing Courses	178
21	Students' Responses to Reading and Writing Connections	180
22	Students' Responses to Reading Strategies	187
23	Students' Responses to Writing Strategies	196
24	Weighted Idea Units Recalled from Text 1 by Good Readers	209
25	Weighted Idea Units Recalled from Text 2 by Good Readers	210
26.	Weighted Idea Units Recalled from Text 1 by Poor Readers	211
27	Weighted Idea Units Recalled from Text 2 by Poor Readers	212
28	Weighted Idea Units Recalled from Text 1 by Good Writers	214
29	Weighted Idea Units Recalled from Text 2 by Good Writers	215
30	Weighted Idea Units Recalled from Text 1 by Poor Writers	216
31	Weighted Idea Units Recalled from Text 2 by Poor Writers	217

32	Average of the Students' Recalls of the Two Reading Texts	220
33	Interview Responses: Comparing Good Readers and Poor Readers	225
34	Interview Responses: Comparing Good Writers and Poor Writers	229
35	Jacobs et. al.'s (1981) Scoring Profile	282
36	Students' Reading and Writing Performance Scores	284
37	Students' Scores on IELTS	287
38	Reading and Writing Performance Scores of High Intermediate	290
39	Reading and Writing Performance Scores of Low Intermediate	291
40	Reading Strategies	302
41	Writing Strategies	304

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Integrative Model of the Reading Process	41
2	Stages of Reading and Writing	86
3	Reading and Writing Connections	88

LIST OF ABREVIATIONS

ESL	English as a Second Language
NES	Native English Speaker
TOEFL	Teaching of English as a Foreign Language
ELSU	English Language Service Unit
ETIC	English Teaching Information Centre
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims mainly at introducing the study by providing information on the status of the English language in the Sudan, briefly discussing the reading and writing connection hypotheses, stating the problem of the study, framing research questions and defining the reading and writing constructs that are central to the study.

1. 1 English Language in the Sudan

In most countries of the Sub-Saharan region of Africa, each country is described as multilingual and multicultural in the sense that its people speak several languages according to their ethnic groups. Sudan is one of these countries where over 100 languages and dialects are spoken (Ayik, 1995).

English language was introduced to the Sudan by the British rulers who made it the official language of administration. The purpose of the English language during the Colonial period in northern Sudan (1989-1956) was to create a class of English speaking clerks and translators who could act as intermediaries for the British officials (Sandell, 1982). The use of English was limited to a small section of the educated elite. In offices all over the

Sudan, English was used, but it was generally restricted to the sphere of work. At home and in social contexts, Arabic was used if no English person was present. Unlike the North where both Arabic and English were used, the South began with an administration wholly run in Arabic which gradually changed to English. Beginning from the intermediate level[1], all the school subjects were taught in English except for religious studies.

1. 2 The Role of the English Language in the Sudan During the Colonial Era

As mentioned earlier, English was introduced to the Sudan via the British rulers who made it the official language of administration. The main subjects in the middle and secondary education were in English and it was the language of instruction at Gordon Memorial College (Mohammed, 1992). However, the main factors underlying the instrumental direction of English in the Sudan, according to Mohammed (1992), were:

1. English was looked upon as a unifying factor for the society that was coherently linked through well-established cultural, tribal, religious and historical ties.
2. As the majority of the ordinary people of the Sudan were not educated, they stayed out of reach of the English language influence. This was the reason behind the fact that the British

[1] Until 1970 the school system provided four (4) years of primary, four (4) years of intermediate and four (4) years of secondary schooling.

government was keen in sending British administrators who could speak Arabic.

3. Though it was introduced as the official language, English was not strictly the sole language of administration. Arabic was used and the important government documents appeared in two versions: Arabic and English.
4. The primary aim of education during the colonial era was to produce junior staff to help the British administrators in running the country.
5. The medium of instruction at the elementary and middle schools was Arabic. English was the medium of instruction only in secondary and tertiary education.

The twenty years following independence witnessed considerable changes in the educational scene in Northern Sudan. Many of these happened in response to political attitudes and actions rather than to educational needs. Nevertheless, English remained the language of instruction at the secondary schools up to 1964 (Sandell, 1982). The main reasons were:

1. English was the official language of the Sudan after the Anglo-Egyptian conquest.