



EFFECTS OF EXTENSIVE READING ON EFL LEARNERS' WRITING PERFORMANCE

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Abstract:

Extensive Reading (ER) is considered as a good learning technique to enhance every skill in language learning. It is considered to assist the improvement of other skills of language learners especially English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. This study is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of ER on EFL learners' writing performance and to identify the EFL learners' attitude towards the effects of ER on writing performance. The study recruited a group of 59 non-English majors at a public university in Vietnam. The participants were divided into two groups, i.e., experimental group and control group. The participants in the experimental group were assigned extensive reading materials as their homework to support their learning of writing meanwhile the participants in the control group were guided to write without the support of extensive reading materials. To check the differences of the participants' writing ability before and after the intervention, pre-test and post-test were employed. A questionnaire was also delivered to the experimental group after the treatment. The results from the tests revealed that ER supported EFL learners in their writing performance. The experimental group had more significant enhancement. The results obtained from the questionnaire also indicated that the EFL learners had positive attitudes towards the use of extensive reading materials provided in their writing learning process.

Keywords: extensive reading, EFL learners, attitude, writing performance

1. Introduction

To achieve a certain proficiency in a language, language learners need to study the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among the four skills, writing is considered the most difficult skill to be mastered because of its complexity (Hapsari, 2011) and it cannot be acquired naturally as other skills (Raimes, 1983). According to

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Dang (2019), writing is commonly known as the most difficult skill but it plays a crucial role in language production. Similarly, Omar (2019) addressed that writing aims to express facts, ideas, feelings and thoughts to others, however it is not an easy task for EFL learners. Before starting to write, learners need to be taught how to organize sentences, paragraphs and ideas coherently (Harmer, 2007). Writing involves the development of ideas, linguistic expression and experience with a variety of writing topics. EFL learners are incomplete at acquiring grammar and vocabulary and other components in writing which make them difficult to express their thoughts and ideas when writing (Al-Mansour & Al-Shorman, 2014). Therefore, language teachers have to work hard to help their students enhance their writing skills. ER is one of the most widely accepted teaching techniques in EFL setting. Many scholars have proposed the use of ER to support EFL learners' writing skill. Al-Mansour (2014) found that EFL learners improve their writing performance thanks to extensive reading because of its rich potential to provide an authentic model of language use. Also, Ouafi (2019) asserted that extensive reading affected positively on EFL learners' writing performance. Park (2016) demonstrated that an extensive reading approach positively affected students' writing performance in extensive reading class and that the students could improve content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanism in their writing.

In the age of globalization and international trade, English plays a crucial role in all fields in Vietnam. Indeed, for many years, English has been considered as a compulsory subject in almost educational institutions in Vietnam's training program to meet the increasing demand for quality human resources for the country. Vietnamese need to improve English writing performance not only for education but also for better career and business. However, in most of the writing classes in Vietnam, students are passive in their writing skill. A lot of activities were implemented to improve students' writing skill but these ones are still not effective enough to encourage learners for this skill (Nguyen et al., 2011). Most of the teachers of English in Vietnam often claim that it is difficult to teach their students the writing skill. In fact, the learners are said to be challenging to carry out the writing tasks or activities that the teacher assigns. In addition, the EFL learners' writing papers have been found to be poor in ideas and the diversity of language use. Therefore, we hope that our findings will assist English learners to feel motivated in writing classes with the application of ER, make them feel less worried about their writing papers and produce a quality writing paper.

The current study aims to explore the effectiveness of ER on EFL learners' writing performance. The study is guided by two research questions as follow:

- 1) What effects does extensive reading have on EFL learners' writing performance?
- 2) What are students' attitudes towards the effects of extensive reading on writing performance?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definitions of Extensive Reading

ER has been defined by several authors in the fields of education and psychology, especially in language learning. The term Extensive Reading (ER) was originally derived from Palmer in 1917 (as cited in Day & Bamford, 1998, p. 5). Day et al. (1998) stated that ER is known as reading a large amount of books and lots of other materials that are appropriate to learners' linguistic competence. Richards and Schmidt (2002) defined that ER is the way to read a large amount of reading materials to understand the general content of what is read (p. 193). ER means reading longer text with simple language to "understand overall" of a text than studying linguistic components (Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Yamashita, 2004). Similarly, other researchers addressed ER as independent reading with large quantities of book and material to get information or "for pleasure" (Renandya et al., 1999).

2.2 Related Findings Regarding the Relationship Between ER and Writing Proficiency

Nuttall (1996) illustrated that ER not only enriches learners' vocabulary, enhances their reading speed, but also strengthens grammar, builds their writing skills, and shapes their reading habits. Many researchers have emphasized the advantages of integrating reading with writing in English classes in recent studies. According to Graham and Hebert (2010), the integration of ER with writing activities may encourage students to write about a text they have read and helps them draw connections with what they read, know, understand and think. Moreover, students will have more opportunities to learn L2 vocabulary, grammatical structures and rhetorical characteristics of texts by connecting reading and writing (Tsai, 2006). Al-Mansour (2014) emphasized the effectiveness of ER on EFL learners writing proficiency and believed that ER could be an authentic model for EFL teachers to apply. Salehi et al. (2015) conducted a study to examine the impacts of ER on the writing performance of Iranian EFL pre-university students. The results showed that the experimental group outstripped the control group and indicated that ER had a significant positive effect on EFL learners' writing performance. It was found that the Iranian EFL students who have limited vocabulary and inadequate knowledge of grammatical structures could have been improved with the assist of ER. Another study of Hany (2007) illustrated that reading could be a feasible tool for enhancing the writing ability of Egyptian EFL learners. Alkhaldeh (2011) examined the awareness among Jordanian eighth grade students of the relationship between EFL reading comprehension and writing skill development. The findings of the study demonstrated that reading provides these subjects more vocabulary, ideas, and structures to write compositions better. To find out the connection between reading and writing, Yoshimura (2009) conducted a study to investigate the effects of connecting reading and writing and the effects of a checklist to guide the reading process. Therefore, the students in experimental group were given a reading task with a checklist, while students in control group were given a reading task without the checklist. The findings of the study showed that reading a related text contributes to the improvement of EFL learners' writing performance and

the checklist which helps learners integrate background knowledge and textual knowledge gives a slight influence on the learners' writing performance.

Ouafi (2019) aimed to find out the potential effect of ER upon students' writing performance. The samples were 30 intermediate Algerian students at the University of Algiers. The results of this investigation proved that ER affected positively the participants' writing performance. To seek out the impact of ER on writing, Lee and Hsu (2009) did the study to investigate whether ER could improve a group of Taiwanese vocational college students' writing ability. The findings indicated that using ER in the experimental group improved the students' writing skill. Park (2016) conducted a study to explore how effective an ER approach on EFL writing performance at a US University. The participants were freshmen oversea students who came from Asian countries such as Japan, China and Korea. The results showed that the experimental group performed better in their post-test writing papers which indicated that the group supplemented with ER improved more than the other group in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanism. Sakurai (2017) implemented a study to investigate the effects of the amount of ER on letter writing ability at a private university in Japan. The participants of the study were 157 first and second-year non-English majors. The results revealed that the amount of reading had a statistically significant difference in terms of vocabulary and grammar. Moreover, findings suggested that students who read more would enhance their lexical and grammatical use in their writing products. In Vietnamese context, Vu (2020) did the research to investigate the effects of ER on EFL learners' writing performance and motivation. This study focused on analyzing the students' writing performance and their motivation affected by ER. The findings showed that the participant had a slight improvement in her writing skills in terms of organization and vocabulary. The results also indicated that ER motivated her to learn writing. She could improve knowledge of language and be confident to write her own writings after she acquired new ideas, expressions and organization via ER.

All the mentioned studies above have revealed that ER can be used as a tool to improve writing ability of EFL students. In this study, the authors also investigate the effectiveness of ER on the EFL students' writing ability.

2.3 Aspects of Language Attitudes

According to Garrett et al. (2003), language attitude obtains three components such as cognitive, affective, and behavior. Cognitive aspect is formed through thoughts. Affective aspect is related to the feelings that people have about a language, whereas the behavior aspect presents how people consciously or unconsciously behave toward a language.

Weden (1991) stated that there were three aspects of attitudes namely, cognitive, affective and behavioral. Firstly, a cognitive aspect involved the beliefs and ideas or opinions of language learners about the knowledge and their understanding during the learning process. The affective one was considered as the emotional one was related to the feeling and emotions of people towards the objects which they like or dislike. Finally, the behavioral aspect referred to the way individual behaves and reacted towards an object in particular situations.

Ianos (2014) affirmed that constructs as beliefs, affect, and behavior were considered as parts of attitude. Therefore, attitudes are comprised of three components: affective component which would be positive or negative feelings toward the attitude object; cognitive component was beliefs about the attitude object and finally, behavioral one was the actions and responses to the attitude object.

In this study, the researchers investigated the participants' attitudes based on the three components: cognitive, affective, and behavior.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Participants

The participants involved in the study were 59 non-English major students at a Vietnamese public university who came from two classes. The sample population was divided into two groups: the experimental group (35 students) and the control group (24 students). Their English proficiency was pre-intermediate level with *Pet Objective* (Hashemi & Thomas, 2010) being used as the main coursebook. These two classes were recruited to be participants as they were taught by the researchers. The curriculum for training general English for non-English majors at this university requires them to take four courses from level 1 to level 4. The four skills of English are integrated in these courses. In this context, these students had completed three first levels before taking part in this study.

3.2 Instruments

To answer the research questions, the researchers employed a pretest, a posttest, a questionnaire and ER materials as main instruments. The two writing tests (pretest, posttest) and the questionnaire were used to collect the data for this study. The writing tests were employed to measure EFL learners' writing performance while the questionnaire was utilized to investigate EFL learners' attitude towards the use of ER. 16 ER materials supplied to the participants in the experimental group as their homework readings were selected from other books such as *Interchange 2B*, *Interchange 3*, *Interchange 3A*, *Interchange 3B* ([Jack C. Richard et al., 2005](#)). The researcher decided to choose these reading texts because the topics were similar to the ones in their course book.

3.2.1 The Writing Tests

A pre-test and post-test were used to examine EFL learners' writing performance. The writing topics of these tests were taken from the writing parts of the Preliminary English Test for schools 1. The test format was chosen because it was believed to be appropriate to the participants' English proficiency level. The two writing tests shared the same task requirements and aimed to measure the EFL learners' ability to produce an English paper in two tasks within 50 minutes (task 1: writing an email; task 2: writing a story with a suggested opening). The pre-test was given in the first class of the course and the post-test was given after eight weeks of instruction.

The writing assessment rubric for B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages employed as the marking scale with four components: content, communicative achievement, organization and language use (grammar and vocabulary). A 20-mark scale was used to mark the papers in which 5 marks were given for each criterion of the four. The scale for scoring the tests as the format of the tests were taken from B1 Preliminary (PET) writing of Cambridge.

To ensure the validity of the scoring, two other teachers who also teach the same course of English at the university were invited to rate the participants' papers. The scores of the pre-test and post-test of the two groups were used to explore how ER affected the EFL learners' writing performance. The mean scores of these two tests revealed the degree of the EFL's writing improvement after the intervention. To evaluate the significance of this study, a Pair sample t-Test was conducted to compare the scores of the two tests.

3.2.2 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered to 35 EFL learners of the experimental group after the post- test. The questionnaire was designed based on related materials in the literature review including 23 items in total (22 closed-ended questions and an opened-question). The first 22 items which were scaled questions based on the five-point Likert scale including (1) = SD (Strongly Disagree), (2) = D (Disagree), 3 = N (Neutral), (4) = A (Agree), (5) = SA (Strong Agree). The first part (8 items) aimed to ask about affective attitudes, the second one (10 items) investigated cognitive attitudes and the final one (5 items) was asked about the behavioral attitudes. The Descriptive Statistics Test was employed to analyze the data collected from questionnaires with the hope that the participants' beliefs toward the effects of ER on the EFL learners' writing performance could be explored.

3.3 Research Design

This study adopted a mixed method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative design to examine the effectiveness of ER on EFL students' writing performance. A questionnaire was used to explore EFL learners' attitude towards the implementation of ER on writing performance.

Both groups had the same pre-test at the beginning of the course and the same post-test at the end of the course. During eight weeks of the study, EFL learners from both the groups were instructed with the same writing topics. However, the participants in the experimental group had chances to access to more ER materials while the control group was guided to write without the support of ER materials. The EFL learners had a writing lesson each week and the topics for training were taken from the course book (Objective PET). The progress of EFL learners' writing performance after intervention was examined by comparing the results of the pretest and posttest.

3.4 Research Procedure

The treatment lasted within eight weeks with eight class meetings of writing. The procedure of data collection is comprised of five phases. In the 1st phase, the researchers

delivered pretest to both the groups with their consent. The pretest is given to examine the students' writing performance before any intervention or experiment; hence no instructions were given to the groups. In the 2nd phase, the researchers uploaded ER materials as their assignments to E-learning course of the experimental group. In the 3rd phase, both groups were given the post-test. The questionnaire was designed and piloted in the fourth phase. In the fifth phase, the questionnaire was delivered to the EFL learners in the experimental group one week after they had taken the post-test. Finally, all data were synthesized as results and discussion with the assist of SPSS version 22.0.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

4.1.1 Results from the Tests

A. The EFL Learners' Writing Performance within the Two Groups

The Descriptive Statistics Test and the Paired Sample t-Test were run to compare the mean scores of the EFL learners' writing performance within the control group and the experimental group before and after the study. The data are presented in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: The EFL learners' writing performance within the two groups before and after the study

Group	Group	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t	sig
Control	Pre	24	9.95	2.44	1.76	-5.739	.000
	Post	24	11.71	2.24			
Experimental	Pre	35	10.04	2.65	3.05	-8.362	.000
	Post	35	13.09	2.48			

As can be seen in Table 4.1, a change in writing performance of EFL learners in the control group between the pretest and posttest was observed. The mean score of EFL learners' writing performance of the control group after the study (M=11.71) was higher than that of the same group before the study (M = 9.95). This mean difference was statistically significant (t = -5.739, sig.=0.00). It could be concluded that the participants' writing performance of the control group was enhanced after the study.

Table 4.1 also shows that EFL learners' writing performance in the experimental group changed after the study. The mean score of EFL learners' writing performance of the experimental group after the study (M= 13.09) was higher than that of the same group before the study (M= 10.04). This mean difference was significantly different (t = -8.362, sig. = .000). The data brought to the conclusion that there was a significant enhancement in EFL learners' writing performance in the experimental group after the study.

Thus, it could be concluded that the EFL learners' writing performance enhanced in the two groups, but the EFL learners in the experimental group seemed to greatly outstrip those in the control group. This leads us to analyze further in the next sub-section.

B. The EFL Learners' Writing Performance between the Two Groups

To examine the effectiveness of ER application, the Independence Samples t-Test was used to compare the mean scores between the two groups. Table 4.2 below described the results of these tests.

Table 4.2: The EFL learners' writing performance between two groups before and after the study

Writing tests	Group	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t	sig
Pre	Control	24	9.95	2.44	0.09	0.14	0.89
	Experimental	35	10.04	2.65			
Post	Control	24	11.71	2.24	1.38	2.22	0.03
	Experimental	35	13.09	2.48			

As can be seen in Table 4.2, before the research, the mean score of the experimental group (M = 10.04; SD= 2.65) was a little higher than that of the control group (M = 9.95; SD=2.44). However, this difference was not significant and statistically meaningless, which proved that the initial level of the EFL learners' writing performance between the two groups was the same (t=0.14, sig.= 0.89 > 0.05).

Table 4.2 also indicated the mean scores of EFL learners' writing performance of the experimental group (M = 13.09; SD=2.48) was much higher than that of the control group (M = 11.71; SD=2.24) after the treatment. The data showed that there was significantly different (t = 2.22, sig. = 0.03 < 0.05) between the mean scores of the two groups. It could be concluded that there was a significant enhancement in EFL learners' writing performance in the experimental group after the study.

C. EFL Learners' Writing Performance on the Specific Features between the Two Groups

To compare the mean scores of the four specific features between the two groups before and after the study, an Independent Samples t-Test was run.

Table 4.3 below presents the data comparing the mean scores of the four features between the two groups before the study. The results revealed that there was no difference in each specific feature in the pre-test between the two groups (sig. > 0.05).

Table 4.3: Comparison for the four specific features between the two groups before the study

Features	Group	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t	sig
Content	Control	24	2.71	.78	.070	.359	.721
	Experimental	35	2.78	.71			
Communicative Achievement	Control	24	2.47	.75	.017	.085	.933
	Experimental	35	2.48	.76			
Organization	Control	24	2.18	.66	.030	.155	.877
	Experimental	35	2.21	.77			
Language use	Control	24	2.59	.61	.022	.118	.906
	Experimental	35	2.57	.77			

As shown in Table 4.4 below, the EFL learners' writing performance in the experimental group (M =3.59, SD=.66) in terms of *Content* was much better than that in the control group (M =3.18, SD=.69); $t=2.303$, $sig=.025$. In regard with *Communicative Achievement*, the mean score of the experimental group (M = 3.21, SD=.72) was slightly higher than the control group (M=2.98, SD= .61), however, this mean difference (MD=.24) is not statistically different ($t=1.307$, $sig=0.20 >0.05$). In terms of *Organization*, the two groups did not show much difference (experimental group (M=2.84, SD=.66); the control group (M=2.56, SD= .62); $t=1.605$, $sig=0.11 >0.05$). Finally, when looking at *Language use*, the two groups experienced a much difference. While the control reached (M=2.99, SD=.66) the experimental obtained (M=3.45, SD=.70); $t=2.552$, $sig=.013 <0.05$. Of the four features, the EFL learners in the experimental group made higher progress in *Content* and *Language Use* than that of the control group. Unfortunately, the EFL learners between the two groups showed indifference in the mean scores in terms of *Communicative Achievement* and *Organization* after the study. In summary, although the overall mean score of the experimental group after the post- test were found higher than that of the control group, only *Content* and *Language Use* experienced great progress.

Table 4.4: Comparison of the four specific features between the two groups after the study

Features	Group	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t	sig
Content	Experimental	35	3.59	.66	.41	2.303	.025
	Control	24	3.18	.69			
Communicative Achievement	Experimental	35	3.21	.72	.24	1.307	.20
	Control	24	2.98	.61			
Organization	Experimental	35	2.84	.66	.27	1.605	.11
	Control	24	2.56	.62			
Language use	Experimental	35	3.45	.70	.46	2.552	.013
	Control	24	2.99	.66			

4.1.2 Results from the Questionnaire

4.1.2.1 The Reliability of the Questionnaire

Table 4.4: Reliability of the questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.947	22

The questionnaires were fully completed by the experimental group of 35 students. The result shown in Table 4.4 indicates that the questionnaire employed in this study was reliable with significantly high Cronbach Alpha's coefficient of .947 for 22 items in total. The details of the findings are discussed in depth in the following sections.

A. Affective Attitudes

Table 4.5: Descriptive statistics of affective aspect of language attitude

Items	Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I feel writing is more interesting.	4.14	0.845
2	I feel writing is easier.	3.80	0.901
3	I feel more confident to submit my writing paper	3.69	0.832
4	I feel more active and motivated when I write.	3.83	0.822
5	To improve my writing skill, I would like to have more extensive reading materials.	4.23	0.69
6	I feel that extensive reading materials aren't helpful at all.*	2.86	1.309
7	I think students should be encouraged to have extensive reading to improve their writing skill.	4.09	0.853
	Overall mean	3.81	

(*): Reverse items

As shown in Table 4.5, the overall mean score of the affective attitude towards ER is rather high ($M=3.81$). This proves that the participants are aware of the use of ER and believe that their writing skill can be improved. Particularly, most of the participants in the experimental group believe that their writing skill can be improved with more ER materials supplied ($M=4.23$, $SD=0.69$). This can be explained that the participants know the importance of reading and believe that reading can assist their writing. They show a highly positive perception towards ER and believe ER helps them reduce their anxiety in writing class. Most of them feel writing is more interesting ($M=4.14$, $SD=0.845$), feel writing is easier ($M=3.80$, $SD=0.901$) and feel more confident to submit their writing paper ($M=3.69$, $SD=0.832$). It can be explained that they usually feel anxious or uninterested in their writing class due to the lack of topical knowledge. Moreover, the number of students who believe that ER are not helpful is not high ($M=2.86$, $SD=1.309$). This can be concluded that almost the participants enjoy ER and believe it could improve their writing ability.

B. Cognitive Attitudes

Table 4.6: Descriptive statistics of cognitive aspect of language attitude

Items	Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
8	I can have more ideas to write.	3.54	1.094
9	I can arrange ideas logically.	3.80	.933
10	I can use linking words better in writing email and story.	3.74	1.010
11	I can use connective devices flexibly (such as firstly, secondly, thirdly, but, etc.) in writing email and story.	4.00	.728
12	I can use more appropriate words in my writing products.	3.97	.747
13	I can avoid repetitive words.	3.91	.742
14	I can avoid spelling mistakes because I am continuously exposed to many familiar words.	4.00	.767

15	I can use more grammatical structures when writing email and story.	3.86	.912
16	I can reduce my grammatical errors.	3.86	.944
17	I can use more appropriate sentence structures in writing after learning extensive reading.	4.00	.840
	Overall mean	3.87	

Table 4.6 indicates that the cognitive attitude of the EFL learners towards the influence of ER is rather high with $M=3.87$. These results reveal that EFL students hold quite strong beliefs about ER and consider its usefulness in their writing ability. Especially, the participants believe that they can use connective devices effectively, avoid spelling mistakes and use sentence structures better after reading ER materials frequently ($M=4.00$, $SD=0.728$; $M=3.97$, $SD=0.747$ respectively). The participants also agreed that they could have more ideas to write when being provided ER materials with quite high mean score ($M=3.54$, $SD=1.094$).

C. Behavioral Attitudes

Table 4.7: Descriptive statistics of behavioral aspect of language attitude

Items	Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
18	I am able to write better.	3.89	.932
19	I would like to have more writing assignments to practice.	3.91	.919
20	I think extensive reading materials help me improve my critical thinking skills.	4.14	.772
21	I can edit my writing product by myself better.	3.86	1.033
22	I am able to make myself pay attention during my writing lessons.	3.86	1.061
	Overall	3.93	

In general, the mean score of the cognitive aspect of attitude towards ER is quite high ($M=3.93$). As can be seen in Table 4.7, the respondents showed a strongly behavioral attitude towards the effect of ER on writing performance. They think that they can write better with the support of ER ($M=3.89$, $SD=.932$), they would like to have more writing assignments to practice ($M=3.91$, $SD=.919$). Importantly, they think that ER materials can improve their critical thinking skills with the highest mean score ($M=4.14$, $SD=.772$). In addition, with the support of ER materials, they can edit their writing papers by themselves better ($M=3.86$, $SD=1.033$).

4.2 Discussion

The results for the first research question were in accordance with the study conducted by Hafiz and Tudor (1989), Park (2016), Sakurai (2017) and Ouafi (2019) who agreed that using ER materials has a positive impact on EFL learners' writing performance because these supplementary materials are considered to be essential for EFL learners and could improve their writing ability. Although the results from the pre-test and post-test showed that both groups gained their writing performance, the experimental group had more

significant development – the mean scores in the two groups before and after the treatment were (M=10.04, M=13.09) for the experimental group and (M=9.95, M=11.71) for the control group. These results indicated that the participants in the experimental group outstripped the control group.

The results of the present study also revealed a statistically significant difference of EFL learners' writing performance within each group. Of the four features, the EFL learners in the experimental group made big progress in *Content* and *Language use*. This means that their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar (Language use) was improved after being supplied more materials to read. In addition, their ideas in the writing papers (Content) were found plentiful. These findings are roughly similar to those results of the study conducted by Salehi et al (2015) that was proven the knowledge of vocabulary and grammar of the participants improved with the support of ER during their writing learning process. The findings also aligned with those found by Alkhawaldeh (2011) who examined these subjects more vocabulary, ideas, and structures to write compositions.

The findings also agreed with Sakurai (2017) who found that ER helped the sample students improve their lexical and grammatical knowledge. Also, the findings contribute to the prior research findings by Ouafi (2019) which found that ER affected positively on students' writing performance. In addition, these findings also supported the study of Hafiz and Tudor (1989) who discovered that learners had strongly gained vocabulary base and had more ideas to write through applications of the ER program. The current study indicated that the two groups gained their English writing performance, however, the experimental group had more significant enhancement – the mean scores for writing performance gain in the two groups before and after the intervention were (M = 10.04, M = 13.09) for the experimental group and (M = 9.95, M = 11.71) for the control group. These results showed that the participants in the experimental group outperformed the control group.

The results of the present study also revealed a statistically significant difference of EFL learners' writing performance within between the two groups. Of the four features, the EFL learners in the experimental group made more progress in *Content* and *Language use* after the study. In other words, the EFL's performance in the experimental group gains much better after the intervention.

With regard to the second research question, the data collected and analyzed from the questionnaire proved that the students participated in the experimental group had a positive attitude towards ER which was used as helpful supplementary materials during their writing learning. They realized that reading and writing were interdependent skills that need to be combined in their learning. The learners also reported that after practicing they used variety of grammatical structures, had more ideas, were able to use connective devices effectively and used appropriate words in their own writing products. The findings from the questionnaire was aligned with Ouafi (2019)'s study which indicated that EFL learners have positive attitudes towards the effectiveness of ER on writing performance. Many students engaged in reading ER materials though they were not in the habit of reading a lot in English and they felt enjoyable and interesting.

5. Conclusion, Limitations, Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The present study was designed to examine the effects of ER have on EFL learners' writing performance. Besides, it also explores learners' attitudes towards the effect of ER on writing performance. The findings of the study revealed that EFL learners' writing performance of the experimental group gained more improvement than that of the control group. The data also showed that after the intervention program the EFL learners in the experimental group made some progress in their writing performance on some specific features meanwhile the control group EFL learners' writing performance on specific features was not significantly different. In other words, ER affected EFL learners' writing performance in terms of Content and Language use. In addition, after the research, EFL learners not only could develop more ideas, use vocabulary and grammatical structures more appropriately in their writing papers but also were able to write more coherent English texts. Moreover, they showed more interests to reading and writing skills. Especially, the EFL learners would like to have plenty of ER materials related to other topics assigned with the hope that their writing ability could be enhanced. In brief, ER provided benefits to the EFL learners' writing performance and the EFL learners held strong beliefs towards ER.

5.2 Limitations

The first limitation of the research was its small sample size with only 35 participants recruited to the experimental group. We believe that with a larger sample of students the results will be more persuasive. In addition, some of the reading materials provided for the participants were not fit the EFL learners' taste or writing topics which could not improve all aspects of their writing performance. Therefore, if they had been given more reading texts which were related to their writing tasks, they should have been stimulated their background and topical knowledge and had more ideas in their papers. Moreover, the study was conducted in a quite short time span (within 8 weeks), so it could be not enough for the participants to practice reading and writing. Better results would be explored if the study was carried out in a longer time. Finally, the answers from EFL learners' questionnaires may contain a limitation as there was no opportunity for the researchers to interview these learners. Therefore, an assumption is made that the data taken from what they say might be much more optimistic than the reality of their experience.

5.3 Recommendations

Though some positive findings were explored in this study about the influence of ER on EFL learners' writing performance, more research is recommended to further investigate this area. These may include participants' gender and age groups. Since the participants of this study were all adult EFL learners who were studying at tertiary level; further studies can be done with participants of other age groups for instance young children or teenagers to analyze the impact of ER on their language learning. Furthermore, the

participants were selected with mixed-gender classes, the results might not be generalizable to other categories. In this study mixed gender participants were under investigation; therefore, further research needs to be done with groups of male or female participants. In this particular study, the impact of ER on EFL learners' email and story writing performance was under investigation due to the limited period of time of the course and the limited English level of the participants, however, further research is needed to investigate the impact of ER on other genres of writing, for example, argumentative essays or cause and effect essays. The last point to mention in this part would be the suggestion for further research on the impact of using ER on other skills rather than writing. The researchers can also investigate the impact of using different approaches of different skills.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interests for this study.

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