

Effects of Integrated Reading-and-Writing Practice on EFL Learners' Perceived Efficacy of Reading and Writing

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Abstract

Efficacy can influence behaviors and actions in EFL learning. Thus, researching how this important human aspect can be maintained should be a matter of concern. Skills integration is an approach that is in a state of becoming. Hence, this study dealt with whether an integrated reading-and-writing approach changes EFL learners' perceived efficacy about their reading and writing. Two groups were randomly selected for the treatment. In order to examine how students self-rate their efficacy beliefs about their practice and performance of reading and writing, questionnaires that deal with reading, writing and learning these two skills simultaneously was administered before and after the treatment. A one-way MANOVA was performed to investigate students' practiced and perceived views differences about the aforementioned variables. The results evidenced that there was statistically significant difference in all the three variables. This implies that the practice of integrated reading-writing can enhance the EFL learners' self-efficacy beliefs.

Keywords:

Integrated-approach, efficacy, reading, writing

Introduction

Since communication is necessarily bidirectional, it entails a speaker-listener or writer-reader bond. Therefore, Pysarchyk and Yamshynska (2015) claim that it is less likely to teach or learn one language skill in absolute isolation. Despite this reality, Anderson and Briggs (2011, p. 546) write, "educators often teach reading and writing as separate, sequential processes, with reading coming first; this denies children the opportunity to construct shared, powerful, strategic operations". The issue of skills integration was overlooked and skills were treated as distinct entities for years. The essence of the integrated teaching of reading and writing came to prominence in the 1980s and 90s. Yet, Pysarchyk and Yamshynska (2015) state that relations between EFL reading and writing remain largely unexplored with some sort of debate.

With this regard, Westwood (2008), Kucer (2005), McGinley & Tierney (1988); Shanahan and Lomax, (1986) claim that students need to be instructed to realize that both reading and writing are acts with communicative purposes and are inseparable. On the other hand, Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000) and Rosenblatt (1988) warn that reading and writing are closely correlated is beyond dispute, but it is important to note that the correlations between reading and writing are far from perfect. This implies that regardless of their relation, differences between them also should not be overlooked. However, except this remarkable statement Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000), and Rosenblatt (1988) admit the ideas here above and follow below about the interconnection of reading and writing.

Whatever differences may be there, their common ground cannot be minimized. With this concern, Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000) assert that there are four basic types of shared knowledge that both readers and writers must use. The first is metaknowledge (pragmatics) that is knowledge about functions and purposes of reading and writing, knowing that readers and writers interact, monitoring one's

own meaning making (metacomprehension) and word identification or production strategies, and monitoring one's own knowledge. The second is knowledge about substance and content (prior knowledge, content knowledge gained while reading and writing) which deals with semantics, vocabulary meaning, and meaning created through context of connected text.

A third one is *knowledge about universal text attributes* which includes three subcategories, each with two or more kinds of knowledge. First, readers, to read words, must learn to deal with letters and phonemes and how they combine. Writers, likewise, must learn about letters and sounds if they are to spell accurately. Second readers and writers must learn to recognize and produce meaningful syntactic orderings of words and how to use punctuation. Third text format, which includes syntax of larger chunks of text, such as story grammars, and more general forms of text organization such as graphics. This includes a wide range of information such as understanding of the relations between pictures and print, directionality, structural organization of text, or formatting features such as paragraphing, and graphical structuring.

A fourth kind of superordinate knowledge is *procedural knowledge and skill to negotiate reading and writing*. This refers to knowing how to access, use, and generate knowledge in any of the areas previously mentioned, as well as the ability to instantiate smooth integration of various processes. Procedural knowledge can include both relatively automatic processes as well as intentional strategies

Connecting reading and writing is an entwining pathway through which an eye, mind, and hand of a reader and writer interact. With this concern Tierney and Pearson (1984) argue that when we compose, we learn by doing, by witnessing what we have done, and by representing experience symbolically; and that writing is thinking made tangible, thinking that can be examined because it is on the page, not in the head invisibly floating around.

Kucer (2005) in his part claims that cognitive interrelationships between the reading and writing which traditionally were viewed as opposite processes is less real because both skills are parallel or complementary processes. They both are engaged with meaning searching, meaning generating, meaning integrating, active use of linguistic and cognitive resources, using background knowledge, building background knowledge, context dependent, use revision of meaning, and goal oriented. In both processes, meaning is continually in a state of becoming (Langer & Flihan, 2000, p. 118).

Eisterhold's (1990) hypothesizes three theoretical models of reading writing connections. The first one is 'the directional model' which hypothesizes reading and writing share similarities of structural components so that the structure of whatever is acquired in one skill can then be applied in the other, but transfer process moves one-way only one direction: either in reading-to-writing or writing-to-reading mode; where reading to writing is the commonest one.

The second, 'the non-directional model' assumes that reading and writing derive from a single underlying cognitive proficiency thus improvement in one domain causes improvement in the other; both skills can transfer in either direction as in an interactive model. If reading and writing are both constructive processes, constrained by some underlining competence, then they must be related.

The third model is 'the bi-directional model', which is the most complex and comprehensive of the three models which claims that reading and writing are not only interactive but also interdependent. In this view what is learned at a certain stage of development can be qualitatively different from what is learned later. Because reading-writing relationship is a constellation of interrelated process that utilize a number of knowledge bases, the existence of such multiple relations and the possibility of change in their relation with development should be considered.

Shanahan and Lomax (1986) on their part compare and evaluate three theoretical models that deal with the reading and writing relationship. These theoretical models are reading-to-writing model, writing-to-reading model and the interactive model. In the reading to writing model, an overall process is initiated by reading, and then reading and writing are put into the process as a case may be; meaning that they are in need to build a representation of the texts they are reading in order to build a representation of their own text. The writing to reading model assumes that writing affects reading, but reading exerts little or no influence upon writing. In an interactive model each process is altered by the other. As the reader slips into the role of writer and the writer into that of the reader, the need to test and transform a source text is brought to the fore (Flower et al, 1990: 6). We read to write, because reading informs our own writing process and vice versa.

Allied with integration, efficacy is a fundamental conception that constantly interacts with learning. Efficacy beliefs influence how people think, feel, motivate themselves, and act. Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations (Albert Bandura, 1995:2). Social Cognitive theory of Bandura is composed of four orchestrated processes of goal realization: self-observation, self-evaluation, self-reaction and self-efficacy.

According to Bandura, there are four Sources of efficacy beliefs. The first one is mastery experiences as they provide the most authentic evidence of whether one can muster whatever it takes to succeed. Successes build a robust belief in one's personal efficacy, whereas failures undermine it. The second is the vicarious experiences provided by social models. Seeing people similar to themselves succeed by perseverant effort raises observers' beliefs that they, too, possess the capabilities to master comparable activities and the reverse is true. Social persuasion is a third way of strengthening people's beliefs that they have what it takes to succeed. People who are persuaded verbally that they possess the capabilities to master given activities are likely to mobilize greater effort and sustain it than if they harbor self-doubts and dwell on personal deficiencies when problems arise. The fourth source of efficacy belief is which people rely partly on is their physiological and emotional states in judging their capabilities. They interpret their stress reactions and tension as signs of vulnerability to poor performance. In activities involving strength and stamina, people judge their fatigue, aches, and pains as signs of physical debility.

Bandura provides four major processes which efficacy beliefs regulate human functioning through. They include cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection processes. Though they may demand different processes, they usually operate in concert, rather than in isolation, in the ongoing regulation of human functioning. Ascribing self-efficacy to learning, Bandura claims that efficacy beliefs play a vital role in the development of self-directed lifelong learners. Students' belief in their capabilities to master academic activities affects their aspirations, level of interest in intellectual pursuits, academic accomplishments. If failures weaken students' sense of efficacy they become anxious about scholastic demands. But if their perceived efficacy is unshaken by failures, they remain unperturbed and promote self-regulated learning. *Strength* of perceived efficacy is measured by degrees of certainty that one can perform given tasks (Zimmerman, 1995, p.203). Thus, the main objective of this study is to investigate effects of integrated reading and writing on EFL learners' efficacy beliefs about their reading and writing performance.

Methods

Participants

Participants of this study were grade eleven students of Yemane Senior Secondary School. This quasi-experimental study constituted two intact groups: one treatment group and one comparison group using simple random sampling. Both groups had 46 participants each, which accounts a total of 92 participants.

Materials

There was a teaching material designed for treatment. It had five passages: two narrative and three expository types. Besides, a questionnaire was used as a data gathering tool in this study. It was adapted from Amel (2015), Li (2014), Kucer, (2005) and Elbow, & Belanoff (2000) and pilot tested for reliability and validity before being implemented for this study. This tool consisted of general information about the respondents' awareness and self-assessment about their reading comprehension and writing skills, as well as their beliefs about their efficacy in handling these skills through integrated learning. The first part entertained issues related to reading comprehension; the next part dealt with writing; and the third part was about integrating these two concepts through reading-writing-integrated approach.

Procedure

Then pre intervention questionnaire that deals with the learners' self-assessment or self-rating about reading comprehension and sentence writing was given to both sections. This was followed by con-

ducting experimental treatment activities through reading-writing-integrated approach with the experimental group only, while conventional method with the comparison group who got opportunities practice of comprehension and writing but not through an integrated approach. Then post treatment questionnaire was administered to determine the differences between the two groups.

In this study, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used for analysis because there is one independent variable and three dependent variables. With this regard, Field (2005) claims that MANOVA is used instead of multiple ANOVAs to minimize family-wise error rate, and MANOVA can tell us the relationship between dependent variable, which ANOVA cannot. Thus One-way MANOVA was used to analyze the data. According to Pallant (2016), there are seven prominent assumptions to be considered while using MANOVA. These assumptions (sample size, normality, outliers, linearity, homogeneity of regression, multicollinearity and singularity, and homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices) were checked ahead. In accordance with fulfillment of these assumptions, analysis was computed on SPSS version 22.

Results

Analyses of Pretreatment Questionnaire

The questionnaire has three sections that deal with reading, writing and integrated reading-writing. The questionnaire addresses learners' overall response about their efficacy beliefs regarding practice and respective performance of reading and writing. The composite findings from the respondents' self-rating are analyzed as follows.

Table1: *Pretest Questionnaire mean and standard deviation*

| Descriptive Statistics | | | | |
|--|--|-------|----------------|----|
| | Comparison and Treatment Group Members | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
| Reading Comprehension Questionnaire Pretest | Control group | 76.07 | 26.915 | 46 |
| | Experimental group | 78.59 | 27.952 | 46 |
| | Total | 77.33 | 27.317 | 92 |
| Sentence level Writing Questionnaire Pretest | Control group | 68.22 | 23.929 | 46 |
| | Experimental group | 66.96 | 24.287 | 46 |
| | Total | 67.59 | 23.984 | 92 |
| Integrated Reading-Writing Questionnaire Pretest | Control group | 57.15 | 20.174 | 46 |
| | Experimental group | 56.76 | 20.480 | 46 |
| | Total | 56.96 | 20.216 | 92 |

Table 2: *Pretest Questionnaire multivariate test*

| Multivariate Tests ^a | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|-------|--------------------|---------------|----------|------|---------------------|
| Effect | | Value | F | Hypothesis df | Error df | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
| Group | Pillai's Trace | .046 | 1.424 ^b | 3.000 | 88.000 | .241 | .046 |
| | Wilks' Lambda | .954 | 1.424 ^b | 3.000 | 88.000 | .241 | .046 |
| | Hotelling's Trace | .049 | 1.424 ^b | 3.000 | 88.000 | .241 | .046 |
| | Roy's Largest Root | .049 | 1.424 ^b | 3.000 | 88.000 | .241 | .046 |

a. Design: Intercept + Group

b. Exact statistic

Table 3: Pretest Questionnaire Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

| Tests of Between-Subjects Effects | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------------|----|-------------|---------|------|--------------------------|
| Source | Dependent Variable | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta ² |
| Corrected Model | Reading Comprehension Questionnaire Pretest | 146.261a | 1 | 146.261 | .194 | .660 | .002 |
| | Sentence level Writing Questionnaire Pretest | 36.565b | 1 | 36.565 | .063 | .803 | .001 |
| | Integrated Reading-Writing Questionnaire Pretest | 3.522c | 1 | 3.522 | .009 | .927 | .000 |
| Intercept | Reading Comprehension Questionnaire Pretest | 550097.783 | 1 | 550097.783 | 730.671 | .000 | .890 |
| | Sentence level Writing Questionnaire Pretest | 420255.696 | 1 | 420255.696 | 723.059 | .000 | .889 |
| | Integrated Reading-Writing Questionnaire Pretest | 298452.174 | 1 | 298452.174 | 722.289 | .000 | .889 |
| Group | Reading Comprehension Questionnaire Pretest | 146.261 | 1 | 146.261 | .194 | .660 | .002 |
| | Sentence level Writing Questionnaire Pretest | 36.565 | 1 | 36.565 | .063 | .803 | .001 |
| | Integrated Reading-Writing Questionnaire Pretest | 3.522 | 1 | 3.522 | .009 | .927 | .000 |

a. R Squared = .002 (Adjusted R Squared = -.009)

b. R Squared = .001 (Adjusted R Squared = -.010)

c. R Squared = .000 (Adjusted R Squared = -.011)

The statistical output displayed non-significant difference between comparison and treatment group on the combined dependent variables, $F(3, 88) = 1.42$, $p = .241$; Wilks' Lambda (Λ) = .95; partial eta squared (η^2) = .05 from the pretest statistical analysis.

To address the difference (if any) in each variable, the results for the dependent variables were considered separately using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .017. Regardless of the adjustment, there was statistically non-significant difference in all cases, that is, reading comprehension self-rating, $F(1, 90) = .19$, $p = .660$, partial eta squared = .002. An inspection of the mean scores indicated that there was no significant difference reported regarding reading comprehension self-rating ($M = 76.07$, $SD = 26.92$) for comparison group and ($M = 78.59$, $SD = 27.95$) for treatment group. Likewise, there was no observed statistical difference between the two groups in self-rating of sentence level writing, $F(1, 90) = .06$, $p = .803$, partial eta squared = .001. The mean for treatment group in writing was ($M = 66.96$, $SD = 24.29$) and that of the comparison group was ($M = 68.22$, $SD = 23.93$). Besides, self-rating about Integrated reading-writing, $F(1, 90) = .01$, $p = .927$, partial eta squared = .000 which revealed non-significant statistical difference. Mean score for treatment group ($M = 56.76$, $SD = 20.48$) and that of the comparison group was ($M = 57.15$, $SD = 20.17$). In short, there was no significant statistical difference reported between the treatment group and comparison group in all the three sections of the questionnaire during the pretest.

Analyses of Post-treatment Questionnaire

Posttest questionnaire was conducted to examine students' views and practices of reading and writing. Likewise, it checked if the treatment boosted learners' practice of reading and writing integratively. In other words, the questionnaire consisted three sections: reading, writing, and integrated-reading-writing. Students self-rated how they felt and practiced the issues mentioned here. Analyses of the responses are as follows.

Table 4: Posttest Questionnaire mean and standard deviation

| Descriptive Statistics | | | | | |
|---|--|---------------|--------|----------------|--------|
| | Comparison and Treatment Group Members | | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
| | Reading Comprehension Questionnaire Posttest | control group | | 86.24 | 25.250 |
| experimental group | | | 106.02 | 23.980 | 46 |
| Total | | | 96.13 | 26.430 | 92 |
| Sentence level Writing Questionnaire Posttest | control group | | 79.83 | 23.388 | 46 |
| | experimental group | | 92.02 | 22.646 | 46 |
| | Total | | 85.92 | 23.700 | 92 |
| Integrated Reading-Writing Questionnaire Posttest | control group | | 61.89 | 20.030 | 46 |
| | experimental group | | 73.61 | 21.481 | 46 |
| | Total | | 67.75 | 21.478 | 92 |

Table-5: Posttest Questionnaire multivariate test

| Multivariate Tests ^a | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|-------|--------------------|---------------|----------|------|---------------------|
| | Effect | Value | F | Hypothesis df | Error df | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
| Group | Pillai's Trace | .187 | 6.747 ^b | 3.000 | 88.000 | .000 | .187 |
| | Wilks' Lambda | .813 | 6.747 ^b | 3.000 | 88.000 | .000 | .187 |
| | Hotelling's Trace | .230 | 6.747 ^b | 3.000 | 88.000 | .000 | .187 |
| | Roy's Largest Root | .230 | 6.747 ^b | 3.000 | 88.000 | .000 | .187 |

a. Design: Intercept + Group

b. Exact statistic

Table-6: Posttest Questionnaire, Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

| Tests of Between-Subjects Effects | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------|----|-------------|----------|------|--------------------------|
| Source | Dependent Variable | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta ² |
| Corrected Model | Reading Comprehension Questionnaire Posttest | 9001.087 ^a | 1 | 9001.087 | 14.846 | .000 | .142 |
| | Sentence level Writing Questionnaire Posttest | 3420.880 ^b | 1 | 3420.880 | 6.456 | .013 | .067 |
| | Integrated Reading-Writing Questionnaire Posttest | 3157.837 ^c | 1 | 3157.837 | 7.321 | .008 | .075 |
| Intercept | Reading Comprehension Questionnaire Posttest | 850177.565 | 1 | 850177.565 | 1402.230 | .000 | .940 |
| | Sentence level Writing Questionnaire Posttest | 679228.533 | 1 | 679228.533 | 1281.789 | .000 | .934 |
| | Integrated Reading-Writing Questionnaire Posttest | 422285.750 | 1 | 422285.750 | 979.039 | .000 | .916 |
| Group | Reading Comprehension Questionnaire Posttest | 9001.087 | 1 | 9001.087 | 14.846 | .000 | .142 |
| | Sentence level Writing Questionnaire Posttest | 3420.880 | 1 | 3420.880 | 6.456 | .013 | .067 |
| | Integrated Reading-Writing Questionnaire Posttest | 3157.837 | 1 | 3157.837 | 7.321 | .008 | .075 |

a. R Squared = .142 (Adjusted R Squared = .132)

b. R Squared = .067 (Adjusted R Squared = .057)

c. R Squared = .075 (Adjusted R Squared = .065)

The statistical output evidenced that there was a significant difference between the comparison group and treatment group based on the combined dependent variables, $F(3, 88) = 6.75$, $p = .000$; Wilks' $\Lambda = .81$; partial eta squared = .19.

Response scores for the dependent variables were treated separately using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .017 to reduce the risk of a Type 1 error. This adjustment was made because the dependent variables are three, and it would have been 0.025 if it were two. Even with the adjusted alpha level, there was yet statistically significant difference across all the dependent variables, that is, reading comprehension self-rating, $F(1, 90) = 14.85$, $p = .000$, partial eta squared = .142. Examined output of the mean scores indicated that there was a significant difference reported regarding reading comprehension self-rating ($M = 86.24$, $SD = 25.25$) for comparison group and ($M = 106.02$, $SD = 23.98$) for treatment group. There was also significant statistical difference between the two groups in self-rating of sentence level writing, $F(1, 90) = 6.46$, $p = .013$, partial eta squared = .067. Mean for the treatment group in writing was ($M = 92.02$, $SD = 22.65$) and for the comparison group was ($M = 79.83$, $SD = 23.39$). Moreover, self-rating about Integrated reading-writing disclosed, $F(1, 90) = 7.32$, $p = .008$, partial eta squared = .075 which proofed a significant statistical difference with the mean score for treatment group ($M = 73.61$, $SD = 21.48$) and ($M = 61.89$, $SD = 20.03$) for the comparison group respectively.

Discussion

This study examines whether the integrated reading-and-writing practice enhances English as a foreign language learners' perceived efficacy about their reading and writing. In order to examine how students self-rate their efficacy beliefs about their practice and performance of reading and writing, they have filled out questionnaires that deal with reading, writing and learning these two skills simultaneously before and after the treatment. A one-way between-groups multivariate analysis of variance is performed to investigate students' practical and perceived views differences about the aforementioned variables. The questionnaire consists three dependent variables that deal with reading comprehension, writing and integrated-reading-writing. The independent variable is an integrated approach. Testing of MANOVA assumptions has been conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity. There are no serious violations noted with this regard.

In the pre-intervention questionnaire, there no statistically significant difference is observed between the two groups in all aspects of the questionnaire. Besides, their mean score for self-rating in all cases is below the average. That is, for reading comprehension, an average score is greater than 77.5. However, mean scores for the comparison group and treatment group are slightly below average (see table-1). Besides, their self-rated efficacy belief on writing is below average and this is true for integrated reading and writing. From this, it can be implied that the respondents' self-efficacy before the treatment is low and this may hamper their practice as well as performance of these respective skills. Reading and writing are the two mainstay skills in an EFL context. EFL learners more read and write than they speak and probably listen in English. Their progress is more frequently assessed through reading and writing than is through listening and writing. Thus, having poor performance in reading and writing also may impair their overall academic success. This in turn erodes efficacy of EFL learners. Such reciprocity altogether stagnates their learning.

The same questionnaire is administered during post treatment with these two groups to examine if any difference as a result of the treatment. The computed results from MANOVA evidenced that there is statistically significant difference in all the three variables. There are some research findings that are consistent with the findings of this research. Ayele (2012) conducted his study on the effects of parenting styles on efficacy and achievement and he found they have direct effect on each other. Schunk, and Swartz's (1993) finding also evidences that modeling is an effective means of teaching for writing achievement and raising of self-efficacy. Besides, Schunk, and Rice (1991) proved that self-efficacy and comprehension skills have direct effect on each other.

It can be said that the efficacy difference between the two groups is as a result of the treatment because the material being used for treatment is the same. The only difference is the approach used for intervention that is conventional approach to the comparison group, whereas integrated approach to the treatment group. This in turn proves that an integrated reading and writing practice can enhance the EFL learners' self-efficacy beliefs at least in their reading and writing. This is because reading and

writing have reciprocal effect on each other and thus the more we practice them simultaneously, the better they complement each other and the more learning is enhanced. Within this interwoven and intricate process, EFL learners' efficacy is one of the major factors that can influence and be influenced. However, it should be known that efficacy does not develop or vanish in a simple linear fashion. With this regard, Zimmerman (1995) notes that self-efficacy involves judgments of capabilities, efficacy beliefs are multidimensional, self-efficacy measures are context-dependent, self-efficacy measures, related to their strength dimension, rather than normative or other criteria. Though beyond this study, it is also crucial to see how efficacy and integrated approach affect EFL learners' reading and writing performance.

Conclusion

This study dealt with how an integrated reading writing approach changes EFL learners' perceived efficacy about their reading and writing. In order to examine how students self-rate their efficacy beliefs about their practice and performance of reading and writing, they filled out questionnaires that deal with reading, writing and learning these two skills simultaneously before and after the treatment. A one-way between-groups multivariate analysis of variance was performed to investigate students' practical and perceived views differences about the aforementioned variables. In the pre-intervention questionnaire, there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups. Besides, their mean score for self-rating in all cases was below the average. The computed results from MANOVA in the post treatment questionnaire evidenced that there was statistically significant difference in all the three variables. From this it can be concluded that the practice of integrated reading-writing can enhance the EFL learners' self-efficacy beliefs.

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