

Making Reading an Essential Step for a Successful Writing

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Abstract

It is often known that in the process of learning a language students start with a receptive understanding of the new terms. Afterwards, they move to productive use such as building reading skills that can contribute to developing writing competence. This research paper aims at exploring learners' attitudes towards reading and writing skills. Another significant purpose of this research paper is to investigate the major problems that encounter second-year students during their reading and writing production. To achieve those objectives both qualitative and quantitative approaches have been used to survey this work. The researchers relied on two research instruments in this study. The results obtained display that reading has a great impact on writing. Learners are aware of the significance of extensive and intensive reading in developing their writing competence.

Keywords: approaches, attitudes, competence, production, reading, skills

ملخص:

غالبًا ما يكون معروفًا أنه في عملية تعلم لغة ما ، يبدأ الطلاب بفهم تقبلي للمصطلحات الجديدة. بعد ذلك ، ينتقلون إلى الاستخدام المنتج مثل بناء مهارات القراءة التي يمكن أن تسهم في تطوير الكفاءة الكتابية. تهدف ورقة البحث هذه إلى استكشاف مواقف المتعلمين اتجاه مهارات القراءة والكتابة. الغرض المهم الآخر من هذه الورقة البحثية هو التحقيق في المشكلات الرئيسية التي تواجه طلاب السنة الثانية أثناء إنتاجهم للقراءة والكتابة. لتحقيق هذه الأهداف تم استخدام النهجين النوعي والكمي لمسح هذا العمل. اعتمد الباحثون في هذه الدراسة على أداتين بحثيتين ، أظهرت النتائج التي حصلوا عليها أن للقراءة تأثير كبير على الكتابة. يدرك المتعلمون أهمية القراءة المكثفة والمكثفة في تطوير كفاءتهم الكتابية ، وقد تم اقتراح بعض الاقتراحات والتوصيات لتحسين تعلم وتعليم كلتا المهارتين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المناهج ، مواقف ، الكفاءة ، الإنتاج ، القراءة ، مهارات

1.Introduction

Reading is comprehension. While reading, good readers think about what they're reading. To make sense of the text, they draw on their personal experiences and understanding of the world, as well as vocabulary, linguistic structure, and reading skills. Regular informal assessments throughout the school year supply teachers with information that might assist them in identifying each student's specific strengths and limitations. By the 1980s, the theory had shown specific linkages between language skills processes. According to Ferris and Hedgcock (2005, p.31), reading becomes the basis of writing because the information acquired through reading contains print-encoded messages as well as clues about how the messages are grammatical, lexical, semantic, pragmatic, and rhetorical constitute, combine to make the message meaningful. Hirvela (2004) contends that reading supports writing through "meaningful input" (p. 20). It was mentioned that readers write (in the form of marginal notes or outlines) and that writers must read (their notes and different drafts and some other resources). Reading has been described as a form of composition. According to Tuan (2012), the correlation between reading and writing helps EFL students improve their writing skills. However, despite the fair amount of studies that have been conducted in this field, Horning and Kraemer (2013), still believed that even in the United States, where English is spoken as a first language, connecting reading and writing to facilitate learning is not paid sufficient attention by instructors.

2. The Connection between Reading and Writing

Reading and writing skills were (and are still) taught independently in the past. Reading and writing are more linked than we imagined, according to research conducted over the previous ten years. Reading and writing have a similar link to the chicken and the egg. It does not matter which came first; what matters is that one cannot exist without the other. The relationship between reading and writing is critical for a child's literacy development. Reading impacts writing the majority of the time. Reading teaching is most effective when paired with writing instruction, according to major English/Language Arts professional organizations, and vice versa. According to studies, children who read a lot as children grow up to be better writers as adults. Reading a variety of genres can help children learn language structures that they can later use at their work. Furthermore, reading has a lot of advantages for young individuals. At the

same time, writing exercise helps children improve their reading abilities. This is especially true for young children who still are learning phonemic awareness and phonics. (Word knowledge is built up from sound "chunks") when children learn to read and write new words. Similarly, children's phonics skills, or their ability to connect sounds to form words, are reinforced when they read and write the same words. Practice in the process of composing their writings helps older children analyze the ones they read. They can use their understanding of how they choose to use specific language, text structure, or subject to better comprehend how a professional author constructs his or her texts.

2.1 Development of Specific Writing Skills

An intensive genre study can help students improve their reading and writing skills. The use of texts helps to improve writing skills. Showing and discussing examples that demonstrate the skill successfully through the selection of a variety of texts is one of the most effective strategies to assist students to develop specific writing skills. As a result, crafting intriguing introductions, reading and analyzing them with the teacher is an important phase in the writing process. It provides opportunities for students to practice writing. They can either compose new works or revise existing pieces using the writers' methodology.

2.2 The Significance of the Shift from Reading to Writing

The writing teacher can improve the effectiveness of the writing course by providing the appropriate stimuli, such as various texts, support and feedback, and structures. At that point, students will be able to critically think about and analyze the texts. The models are used to organize and connect concepts, which can demonstrate how different points of view are established. The responsibility of the teacher is to ask students to point out the important characteristics of the type of writing. The majority of the time, reading is taught sequentially.

2.3 Study of Genre

Some effective methods for fostering literacy development include immersing kids in a specific genre. Teachers should choose a genre that is important to a grade level's curriculum or that students are particularly interested in. They should begin with the basics of reading and writing. As a first step, children should read and discuss high-quality examples of works published in the genre with adults, concentrating on the genre's structure and language as well as other basic reading abilities such as phonics and comprehension. They should be allowed to write in the genre in which they are writing. To allow youngsters to shift between reading and writing in the genre, this process should be recursive.

2.4 Academic Literacy

This is appropriate because they seldom happen in isolation, but rather as part of a larger field of activity. Reading and writing go hand in hand. In truth, the two are inextricably linked. Writers write for their work to be read, and a writer without a

reader is wasting his or her time. As a result, reading and writing are mutually beneficial. Most of the time, what we read has an impact on our decision-making and prompt selection. A good writer will write what he has written, while a good reader will read and reread what he has written, attempting to clarify and adjust it. Reading is a receptive talent in which the reader decodes and analyzes the meaning of the receptive information to comprehend it. It is the procedure for deciphering the meaning of a written text. Furthermore, reading is a complex skill that requires interaction between the reader's past knowledge, the text's information, and the reading framework. Many professionals have provided their interpretations of what it means to be a good reader. Reading is defined as "the process of acquiring and comprehending information stored in language form via the medium of print" by Urquhart and Weir (1998). This means that the information conveyed by the text is decoded and interpreted using the printed text's grammatical points, vocabulary items, and figurative language structure. Reading, on the other hand, was defined as "a dynamic process in which information from the text and the reader's knowledge interact to enable him to construct meaning before, during, and after reading. Reading, according to Day, is the process of deducing meaning from a printed text. To achieve text comprehension, a process that involves an interaction between text information and the reader's background knowledge is used to recreate meaning. Reading can also be seen as a guessing game in which the reader tries to piece together the information or message conveyed by the writer as best as possible. Grabe's definition of reading is as follows:

"Reading is an active comprehension process in which students must be taught ways to read more effectively, such as defining expectations, guessing from context, making inferences about the text, skimming ahead to fill in the context, and so on (Grabe, 1991). To put it another way, reading is the interaction between the reader and the text that leads to automaticity. Readers must employ tactics such as skimming, guessing, and inferring to absorb the message. Furthermore, in any language lesson, it is the most effective instrument. Reading is also seen as a means of cultivating and enhancing one's knowledge of a foreign language and culture.

3. Reading Styles

There are four forms of reading, according to Patel and Jain (2008).

3.1 In-Depth Reading

Intensive reading is typically thought of as a classroom activity in which students concentrate on details and analysis. It necessitates that pupils pay close attention to the

text. The purpose of intensive reading is to gain knowledge and a complete comprehension of a subject of the written text. Students must concentrate on a little amount of material while reading under the supervision of their professors in this type of reading. In addition, there are four main characteristics of focused reading. Making deductions and being sensitive to figurative language and emotional tones are all part of understanding implication. Comprehending the text's apparent sense or factual surface meaning. Relating the reading material to the reader's previous knowledge and experience. Understanding the connections between ideas in the reading text, as well as the links between paragraphs. Furthermore, intensive reading is a method of engaging with text under the supervision of the instructor. The majority of second-year EFL students at Saida University's Dr. MoulayTaher do a lot of reading. They make an effort to read and comprehend the material, even if they lack some reading methods and linguistic expertise because they occasionally come across unfamiliar lexical items and idiomatic expressions that can obstruct their reading phase. This shows that EFL students understand the importance of intense reading in expanding their vocabulary and improving their reading skills. Teachers also play an important role in the intensive reading process because they are the ones in charge of the classroom and are more likely to choose authentic resources that are appropriate for their students' levels and requirements. Furthermore, they are more likely to design effective reading activities and provide opportunities for their students to ask questions, use dictionaries, and so on. In other words, teachers are fully aware of the benefits and significant influence of reading ability, and they encourage their students to read to improve their language skills.

3.2 Extensive Reading

It simply refers to the outside reading students make on their own, without taking any guidance or help from their teachers. According to Nuttall, there is a contradictory definition to describe the term of extensive reading; some associated it with the number of materials while others use it to mention scanning and skimming activities. Further, Nuttall(1982) illustrated extensive reading as “reading for fluency”(p. 23).

Moreover, extensive reading aims to boost learner confidence and entertainment. In this respect, he believed that extensive reading has an extreme valuation in which it confirms the significance of the students' knowledge to large amounts of affecting and expressive L2 material. Therefore, this will make a useful impression on the students' command of a second language. However, most second-year EFL learners at Dr. MoulayTaher do not use extensive reading and this is one of the causes of reading difficulties. They are not

interested and motivated to practise reading. Additionally, the lack of vocabulary knowledge, the absence of an extensive reading program, and the lack of teachers' help and guidance can be other reasons behind students' poor reading. Therefore, to read extensively, learners should carry out a positive attitude towards this approach, which makes them motivated to read more materials. Consequently, their vocabulary knowledge will be improved and they become fluent readers. More importantly, they will develop their writing performance and learning abilities. Beth Burk's website argued that close reading is a critical determinant of a text, which focuses on meaningful details or patterns to increase a thoughtful, profound comprehending of the text's meanings and framework. It guided the reader's attention to the text itself. Likewise, Brummett (2010) denoted that reading is a disciplinary and mindful reading of an object with a range of vision to a deeper understanding of its message. Usually, that understanding is joined with others in the shape of critical analysis or criticism.

3.4 Critical Reading

Melbourne university website described critical reading as following "it means implementing critical thinking to a printed text by interpreting and analyzing what you read". To put it differently, it is the procedure of making evaluations in reading. The significant basis for critically interpreting or judging a text is attempting to understand the author's arguments and thoughts, the reader should then examine to recognize the effectiveness and the qualifications in the writer's pieces of evidence to confront any expectation the authors might have shaped.

There are many different views concerning the definition of reading strategies. These last are more beneficial techniques, which have a great influence on the learning process. In this sense, the following reading strategies were submitted such as skimming, scanning, predicting, interfering, self-monitoring, and guessing the meaning of the new words

4.1 Skimming

Skimming is the most useful technique used by the readers to pick up the main idea rapidly. This strategy involves glancing through the text to get an overview of the content. For instance, one does not want to read the whole passage or article. Consequently, he/she makes a glance through the papers to acquire the main information. In other words, skimming is a method of reading in which students are required to move their eyes quickly

over the text for a gist. It is an effective way of reading that is useful for getting a general overview of the content.

4.2 Scanning

According to Grellet (1981), scanning is a reading technique that needs to look for a piece of particular information without reading or comprehending the whole passage, it is simply searching for a certain word or idea. In most cases, you know what you want to look for. As a result, your focus is located on finding a specific piece of information or an answer that serves your needs. In addition, scanning involves moving your eyes over the text rapidly for the sake of getting the required information. Certainly, scanning is an effective reading strategy that is used to seek specific data (Test Wise Word Association, 2006).

4.3 Predicting

According to psychologists, prediction indicates the application of the previous experience about the object and related with the new one in the written text. This means that the reader employs his prior knowledge and combines it with the new material, before starting reading any text, the readers subconsciously inquire themselves about what they know concerning the topic. The prediction technique involves thinking about what will happen in the following text, which implies that they use personal experience, pictures as well as headings to predict before they start to read. Accordingly, prediction is a very functional strategy to expand the readers' activation of their previous knowledge. It plays a crucial role in the reading process.

4.4 Inferring

Knowing how to make an inference is very significant in reading. When reading; the learners are required to guess the meaning of a new word or phrase and use their previous knowledge to make inferences about the text. Furthermore, inference refers to what you "read between the lines". That is to say, the writer wants the reader to draw the same logical conclusion the author has implied. He also demonstrated that inference is a reading technique, which requires the readers to use their previous knowledge and schema to draw conclusions and form a unique interpretation from the text.

5. Communicating through Writing

Writing is an essential process in improving the communicative capacity. Writing has a great influence in promoting the acquisition of communicative knowledge. Furthermore, the EFL student will be able to express his ideas and thoughts and to communicate using

conversation modes of the English language such as, informing, persuading or arguing, narrating or describing....etc. Indeed, the student will be able to explain himself, his peers, and his learning to his classroom instructor as well as his society. Therefore, the chain of communication will be moved from one generation to another.

5.1 Writing as a Help to Learning and Academic Progress

Writing skill is a very beneficial instrument for EFL learning and academic development. Initially, students practise writing as a tool to gain knowledge in their classroom. For instance, writing can be used as a technique to perform the acquired language or as a way to practice at home (Barras, 2005). Additionally, writing can foster collaborative learning (elbow, 1998). In other words, writing is used to grasp the content of various subject areas, to obtain sub-skills; use the language elements such as words, grammar, spelling, punctuation....etc. significantly, writing is used to attain in teaching students strategic communication with peers.

In addition, Graham and Hebert (2010) stated that the national commission on writing declares that writing is an absolute determiner of students' learning. Therefore, the success of an EFL student is persistent by his efficiency of writing since most of the subjects are examined about writing. This means that tests are almost free from writing answers that tend to influence the students' fulfilment and scores. Therefore, writing skill plays a vital role in learning and academic success.

5.2 Writing as a Help to Thinking

Writing is a very significant tool in enhancing the students' thinking competencies. Writing improves the learners' intellectual capacities. It enables us to change and examine thoughts, ideas, and experiences that the brain builds. Moreover, writing is substantial for enhancing the ability of sub-mental skills particularly, interpretation, criticism, reflection and summary. From this perspective, Hedges (2010: 64) argued that writing forces learners to focus and adjust their thoughts, and ameliorate their capacity to analyze, criticize, and summarize. This implies that writing enables students to foster and increase profound learning strategies. Certainly, writing is more essential since it is a thinking means and supports the improvement of a language. From a broader perspective, writing is a thinking tool. It is a tool for language development, for critical thinking and extension. To transmit thoughts and information in a precise and comprehensible manner needs suitable written language.

5.3 Types of Writing

Exchanging information and ideas with others is generally guided by various goals or purposes. Writers may want to express their emotions, feelings, and knowledge or want simply to explain ideas and thoughts. Thus, four different purposes lead someone to write a piece and these are known as the four types of writing. Knowing the aspects of each type may help the student to choose the appropriate one in the appropriate situation or context.

5.4 Expository Writing

Usually, this type of writing is used to explain things, places, people, relationships or an idea. Besides, expository writing is used to provide information about different subjects. In this type of writing, the writer gives real information concerning a certain topic instead of expressing his or her personal opinion orally. It is one of the most common types of writing and is used in textbooks and how-to articles.

5.5 Narrative Writing

The main purpose of narrative writing is to tell a story but in a written form. The story could be either a real or fictional story. It is considered as one of the easiest writing types for reading and the most complicated type of writing to write since it needs many skills to write a story in such a way in it involves the reader in the world of the story. Writing stories require writing skills and creative thoughts to transmit to the reader.

5.6 Persuasive Writing The main purpose of this type of writing is to convince the reader. It involves the opinions and personal points of view of the writer. In addition, Persuasive writing provides airtight proof of what the writers believe and what they think. The writer should have known about the other side of the subject or topic so that he can present the strongest information and ideas to counter it. He should also be able to improve a well-described and debatable topic.

5.7 Descriptive Writing: The descriptive essay means to describe things such as places, events, characters etc. in detail. It is like creating or drawing a vivid picture in the minds of readers to enable them to share the writer's sensory knowledge. Through words, the writer tells you how it feels like, looks like, smells like, and sounds like. Descriptive writing does the job of relating the outer world with the inner world.

6. Strategies for Improving the Writing Skill:

According to Wood (2008), having a good piece of writing requires making clear and meaningful sentences; seeing that students must be helped to create and express their thoughts within a comprehensible and suitable manner. With this regard, some techniques must be taken into consideration to enhance the learners writing performance, and they can be named as follows:

6.1 Selecting the Appropriate Type and Topic

Writing is considered as the result of reading since writers compose about the basis of what they have read before. Indeed, through reading, students can grasp new words, new ideas as well as acquire new language styles which enables them later to produce a good piece of writing and enhance their languageabilities. The reason behind choosing the questionnaires rather than any other research procedure is that questionnaires are anonymous in addition; students feel comfortable and free to answer and express their ideas about the given questions concerning the research topic.

The teacher must give reasons for his learners that collecting and noting down their knowledge concerning the topic without carrying about spelling, grammar and sentence structure will be an effective strategy to free students' minds and more importantly, to boost fluency in producing thoughts.

6.3 Reading and Writing Interrelationship

A large number of researchers agreed that reading and writing are factually connected and interrelated skills, according to Olness (2005) and Tsai (2006) who considered both reading and writing as similar processes through which the reader or the writer interact with a text. As it has been observed in the classroom experience, good readers tend to be good writers (Williams, 2003). Besides, these two language skills are intertwined and strictly correlated. Graham and Herbert (2010:9) believed that writing is usually recommended as a means for developing reading. Indeed, the relationship between reading and writing is a very strong one and people who are generally good at one will be good at the other. Further, both disciplines are essential for acquiring or learning a new language. Tierney and Pearson (1983) stated that to understand the relationship between reading and writing, one must view writing and reading as building one meaning construction (cited in Tsai, 2006). Moreover, Stotsky (1983) made her exploratory study concerning reading and writing, this study stated that there is a strong relationship between these two skills. It concluded that there are

connections between reading and writing skills. Better writers are better readers and better writers read more than poorer readers as well as better readers tend to construct good and well-developed sentences rather than poorer readers.

The students' structured questionnaire includes fifteen (15) questions that are either closed questions requiring students to choose yes / no answers or to pick up the appropriate answer from the number of choices and justify their answers. The questionnaire is divided into three main parts. The first part contains three questions (1-3) it is concerned with general information about the learners. The second part consists of six (6) questions (4-9) which are devoted to collecting data about the reading skill and its impact on their writing ability. The third part consisted of six questions (10-15) which are designed for gathering data about the writing skill and the students' writing issues.

Options	Number	Percentage
Very skilled	01	2.5%
Skilled	11	27.5%
Average	25	62.5%
Poor	03	7.5%
Total	40	100%

The results show that the majority of the respondents (62.5%) claim to have an average level of English. Others (27.5%) show that they are skilled in English. Some others (7.5%) affirmed that they are poor in English. While the least percentage (2.5%) state that their level in English is very skilled. This means that the student's English level is good.

Table 2. *Percentage of student's achievements' in different skills*

Options	Number	Percentage
1. Listening	12	30%
2. Reading	04	10%
3. Speaking	11	27.5%
4. Writing	04	10%
1+3	06	15%
All skills	03	7.5%

According to the results shown in the table above, (30%) of the informants are attentive in their listening skills. Besides, (27.5%) answered that it was speaking. While for reading (10%) it was the same percentage as writing (10%). 15 percent go for both listening and speaking. Moreover, the percentage (7.5%) which is around three (3) students reported that they are attentive in all the skills.

Question5: do you practise reading inside the class?

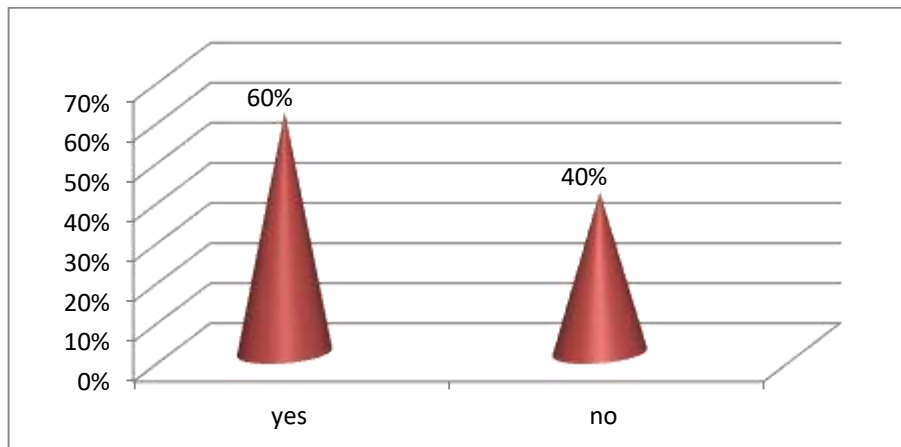


Figure 01. The students' attitude towards reading intensively

Among the forty respondents, twenty-four of them (60%) reported that they practise reading inside the classroom, i.e. they read intensively. While (40%) which is around sixteen (16) informants claimed that they do not practise reading inside the classroom, which implies that they are not interested in reading.

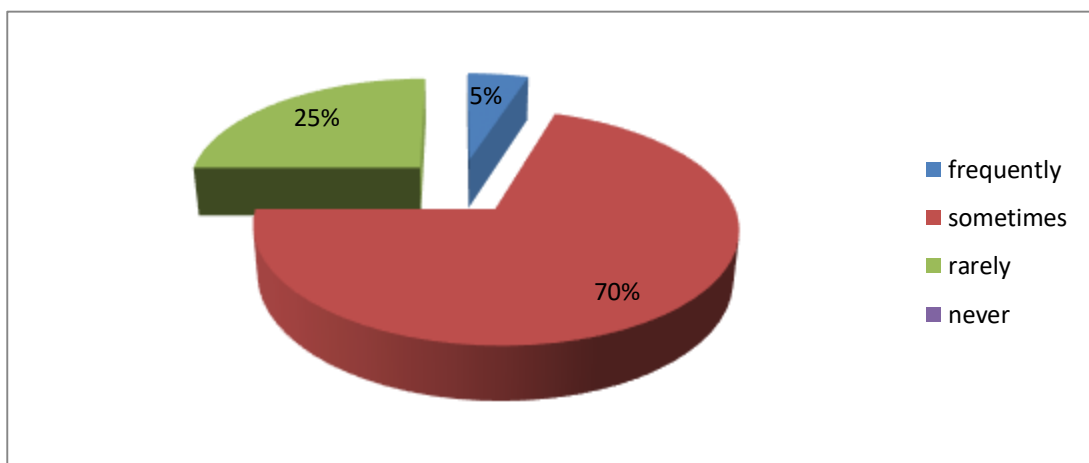


Figure 02. The degree of reading

The results tabulated above revealed that most of the candidates (70%) sometimes read in English and (25%) of the states that they rarely read. While (5%) is for those who are frequent readers.

Table 03. The students focus while writing

Options	Number	Percentage
Vocabulary	14	35%
Grammar	12	30%
Punctuation	03	7.5%
1+2	11	27.5%

From the table above, (35%) of the informants' responses indicate that they focus on the use of vocabulary and items. And (30%) of participants state that they give great attention to the grammatical aspects when writing. While (27.5%) of the learners assert that they concentrate on both vocabulary and grammar. The remaining percentages (7.5%) of them declare that they focus on punctuation. The results obtained from the students' questionnaire reveal that the majority of second-year EFL students were interested to read in English (65%) that is to say, that they are interesting to learn foreign languages and the English language, in general, to improve their skills and enrich their linguistic repertoire. The current level of the students also allows us to rely on them in investigating this study since more than half of them indicates that their level in English is between average and skilled (25+11) as shown in question 02. In addition, the third question of the students' questionnaire shows that most of the participants were interested in listening skills (30%) since it extended their knowledge and enables them to discriminate between sounds. On the other hand, (27.5%) of the informants have declared that they are attentive in speaking skills because they use them to communicate and express their ideas and thoughts. Many students claim that they use reading as a tool to develop their vocabulary since they have deficits with vocabulary and its appropriate use. While others indicate that through reading, they can learn grammar and acquire new vocabulary and concepts because reading enriches their background and enhances their language skills. In question 10, (42.5%) of the participants state that they are satisfied with their writing level; that is to say, they have enough linguistic background and are capable of using writing mechanics. However, the majority of them (57.5%) declare that

they are not satisfied with their writing performance this is pointing out to the improper development of analytical and cognitive skills or the lack of writing practice.

6.4 Negative expectations-frustrating-unsuccessful experiences

Building the learners' writing capacities is an important step at the university level that enables learners to communicate and express their ideas and thoughts. Likewise, there is a strong agreement among researchers that reading and writing are mutually connected as they improve each other. In this vein, EFL teachers should choose interesting reading materials, and use effective strategies to implement them in their classes to boost learners' vocabulary knowledge that will help them later to increase their writing performance. In this research paper, the researcher tried to investigate the importance of reading to teach writing. This study attempted to explore how the reading skill affects the students' writing performance and aimed at demonstrating the students' attitudes towards reading and writing skills. In addition to that, this research tended to shed light on the major difficulties that hinder EFL learners to achieve their reading and writing phases. As for the dissertation layout, this research involved three chapters; the first one started with a theoretical framework, which dealt with the main concepts related to reading skills in the first section and the writing in the second section. The second chapter is the practical side in which it explained the research aims, instruments, and methods. It also elucidated the research design, data analyses and the interpretations of the main results. As for the third chapter, it intended to provide some suggestions and recommendations for EFL teachers and students to develop and facilitate the teaching/learning instruction of reading and writing skills. Moreover, the researcher used two research instruments for the sake of collecting data. The researcher used classroom observation and two questionnaires one was submitted for EFL students and the second was for the teachers. This data collecting instrument was addressed to second-year English students at the department of Dr. MoulayTaher University of Saida. Therefore, these tools were examined and interpreted to prove or disapprove the research hypotheses, proposed by the researcher. The obtained results confirmed the hypotheses that were designed by the researcher. Indeed, the findings revealed that through extensive reading learners improve their writing performance; they will have the ability to write a clear piece of writing. Moreover, both teachers and students showed their awareness of reading and writing connection and they expressed positive attitudes towards the importance of the two skills since they influence each other and leads to better language developments. In addition to that, students need great exposure to language through extensive and intensive reading to boost their writing achievements. The findings also revealed that the

major problems that hinder the students writing are the lack of vocabulary knowledge, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and other features that influence their writing competence. The study also displayed that the absence of training and practice created considerable problems among EFL learners and decreases their language enhancement. Finally, the researcher confronted some limitations while doing her investigation and accomplishing her study. These limitations such as the researcher's illness, and the lack of the internet recently in addition to the practical side took a long time to examine.

7 Conclusion

Just as reading is connected with learning, it is connected with writing. This skill is used in many ways to record information to organize ideas to reflect on what is learned and state and explain ideas. What a person writes reflects on how a person reads. Reading and writing are two allied disciplinary partners. Since reading and writing are closely related. By reading, students would learn organizational patterns. Both skills for enhanced language arts instruction has been found to lead to cross-learning opportunities. Students may lose interest if they do not find the plot quickly. So, they tend to read for it.

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