UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**THE EFFECTS OF READING ON WRITING:
A STUDY ON SIXTH FORM STUDENTS OF
SEKOLAH MENENGAH TINGGI KAJANG**

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By

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DEDICATION

To my dear late father Choul Turuk, who made all the sacrifices to make me who I am today. May Almighty God rest his soul in Eternity.

The Effects of Reading on Writing: A Study on Sixth Form Students of Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Tinggi Kajang.

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December 1999

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A quasi-experimental study was conducted to test the hypotheses that teaching reading and writing integratively in the ESL classroom enhances students' intellectual processes and their syntactical maturity in writing more than the teaching of these two skills separately. The subjects of this study comprise 43 Form 6 students of Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Tinggi Kajang, a high school in the suburb of Kuala-Lumpur, Malaysia. Out of a total of six classes, two classes were randomly selected, one Science class and the other an Arts class. Each group was left intact in their own class. In both classes, English was taught as a subject. The subjects were given writing tests before the start of the study. Then the two classes were clustered randomly assigned into experimental and control group. The experimental group was taught reading and writing integratively while the control group was taught reading and writing separately. At the end of the study the two groups were post-tested. The

findings showed that the integrative teaching of reading and writing enhances students' syntactical maturity in writing (t =2.110, df = 36, p < 0. 05). The findings also showed that integrative teaching of reading and writing enhances students' intellectual processes in writing. The study suggested that reading and writing should be taught integratively in ESL classrooms.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukan kepada senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi untuk ijazah Master Sains.

KESAN PEMBACAAN KE ATAS PENULISAN: SATU KAJIAN KE ATAS PELAJAR TINGKATAN ENAM DARIPADA SEKOLAH MENENGAH KEBANGSAAN TINGGI KAJANG.

Oleh

Mamour Choul Turuk Kuek

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Pengerusi: Encik Jayakaran A/L Mukundan

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Kajian quasi-eksperimen ini dijalankan untuk menguji hipotesis bahawa pengajaran pembacaan dan penulisan secara bersepadu di kelas Bahasa Inggeris akan mengembangkan proses intelektual pelajar serta kematangan sintaksis penulisan berbanding dengan pengajaran pembacaan dan penulisan secara berasingan. Subjek kajian ini adalah 43 pelajar Tingkatan 6 di Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Tinggi Kajang, sebuah sekolah di luar bandar Kuala Lumpur. Daripada enam buah kelas, dua kelas telah dipilih secara rawak, satu kelas aliran Sains dan satu kelas aliran Sastera. Setiap kumpulan tetap didalam kelas masing-masing. Di kedua-dua kelas, Bahasa Inggeris diajar sebagai satu mata pelajaran. Subjek kajian ini diberi ujian penulisan pra-kajian. Kemudian, kedua-dua kelas ini dimasukkan dalam kumpulan secara rawak

kepada kumpulan eksperimen dan kumpulan kawalan. Kumpulan eksperimen diajar pembacaan dan penulisan secara bersepadu manakala kumpulan kawalan diajar pembacaan dan penulisan secara berasingan. Di akhir kajian, kedua-dua kumpulan diuji. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan pengajaran pembacaan dan penulisan secara bersepadu meningkatkan kematangan sintaksis penulisan pelajar. Dapatan kajian ini juga menunjukkan pengajaran bersepadu pembacaan dan penulisan dapat meningkatkan proses intelektual dalam penulisan (t = 2.11, df =36, p > 0.05). Kajian ini mengesyorkan bahawa pembacaan dan penulisan patut diajar secara bersepadu di dalam kelas Bahasa Inggeris.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Background of the Study

The issue of how to enhance second language students' abilities to read and write effectively is one of the major issues faced by most English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers. Throughout the history, different language teaching methods were developed addressing this issue from different perspectives. However, all the attempts failed to get an efficient and effective lasting solution to this question. Today a new buzz term: *Reading and Writing Connection* is soaring the horizon of the ESL profession. It is now looked upon as a new outlet for the development of ESL intellectual abilities and hence their abilities to read and write effectively. These abilities are essential keys of success in ESL learning environments.

Historically, in the audio-lingual approach, reading and writing were perceived as different skills. Language learning was based on behaviorist

objectives: modeling and practicing the correct structure. Error was not tolerated. Readings in the ESL writing classrooms were only used as linguistic models for rhetorical patterns and content material for writing assignments. Although it might be said that students in the audio-lingual writing classrooms read, actual composing was not taking place. Such assignments always ignore students' interest and often require them to write on a subject they neither know nor care about. These assignments put students into unnatural positions for any writer. In fact what they were doing was only learning English by studying grammar in accurate contexts.

Influenced by the process approaches to writing that was widely used in the teaching of native speakers' [NS] composition classes, ESL writing classrooms started to change. Teachers became reluctant to continue using readings as models. They began to focus on writing as a communicative act emphasizing the importance of students' writing processes and their communicative intentions. Along with this change came the recognition of the extent to which reading can be, and in academic settings always is, the basis for writing (Braine, 1989; Budd, 1989; Horowitz, 1986).

While teachers and researchers in ESL reading classes were examining and implementing their findings of schema theory, ESL writing teachers and researchers were working independently in the related areas of discourse communities. They were investigating the relationship between writers and the

readers. Despite the fact that research in reading and writing progressed independently, the findings have echoed each other. Both found that writers and readers share some cognitive processes. Both writing and reading are processes of making meaning, both involve similar patterns of thinking and similar linguistic habits, both are multifaceted complex processes that involve many sub-skills, and both depend on individual past experience (Carrel, 1988; Horowitz, 1988; Janopoulos, 1986; Sternglass, 1986a, 1986b). Furthermore, both writers and readers activate schemata about the language content and form of the topic, and both lead to the exploration of those schemata in discovering meanings (Carson & Leki, 1993). These findings which emphasized the positive relationship between reading and writing have led some of the ESL researchers and teachers to claim that reading and writing are inextricably linked and both are complementary halves of literacy skills (Belanger, 1987; Eskey, 1986; Krashen, 1984; Stotsky, 1983).

As a result of such findings the term: *reading-writing connection* or *integrating reading and writing in the classrooms* came into being. Though research findings suggested the importance of integrating reading and writing in the classrooms, some other implications emerged regarding its application. The questions that emerged in the surface was which one should follow or precede the other? Should reading precede writing in the classroom or should writing come first? What should be the practical nature of such integration? To answer these questions Kroll (1990) summarized the research outcomes into three hypotheses.

The first hypothesis is that the reading writing connection is *directional*, which is, reading and writing share structural components and whatever structure acquired in any of them can easily be applied in the other. According to this hypothesis the transfer of structural information proceed only in one direction (reading-to-writing or writing-to-reading). The most common directional hypothesis is the reading–to-writing model. The claim here is that reading influences writing and that writing knowledge is not particularly useful in reading.

The second hypothesis is *the non-directional hypothesis*. In this interactive hypothesis, reading and writing are believed to derive from a single cognitive process. Unlike directional hypothesis the transfer in the non-directional hypothesis can occur in either direction since there is a single cognitive proficiency underlying both reading and writing. Therefore improvement in one domain will result in improvement in the other domain.

The third hypothesis is the *bidirectional hypothesis*. This is the most complex hypothesis. It includes the claims that reading and writing are interactive, but also at the same time they are interdependent as well. In this view what is learned at one stage of development can be qualitatively different from what is learned at another stage of development. Here exist multiple relationships as well as the possibility that the nature of the reading-writing relationship might change with the stages of the student's development (Shanahan & Lomax, 1986).

Each of these hypotheses offers a different focus for the reading-writing relationship and each focus offers the second language writing teacher a valuable perspective on reading-writing interactions in the writing classroom. But despite the research findings, which emphasized the reciprocal effect of these two skills, ESL classrooms are only beginning to consider how to effectively integrate reading and writing. Most of the researches mentioned earlier were done in First Language (L1) classes. The Second Language (L2) classes have received little concerns. Although there are many similarities between L1 and L2 writers there are also some differences that teachers should be aware of (Briere, 1966; Cummins, 1981; Krashen, 1984). L2 as a distinct field of study needs to establish its own researches.

Therefore this study investigates the first hypothesis: the directional hypothesis. It attempts to investigate whether connecting reading and writing will enhance ESL students' intellectual abilities and their syntactical maturity in writing. The study assumes that the integration of reading and writing activities might prepare ESL students to fulfill the expectations of the academic discourse community thus, preparing them for a more successful academic life (Folman, 1988; Johns, 1991; Swales, 1990).

Statement of the Problem

The ability to think effectively, evaluating ideas from different perspectives is becoming increasingly important in today's world. Reading and writing are interrelated processes. In many college courses, teachers expect students to write critically and grammatically correct passages. Students should use writing to demonstrate not only what they understood when they read, but that they are able to interpret, evaluate and respond critically to it. This ability is essential for second language students if they have to succeed in their higher education. Unfortunately, ESL students are denied such ability by the separate teaching of language skills. The method of teaching language skills separately denies ESL students the ability to write in a mature manner. Kroll (1993) advocates integrating reading and writing and suggests " reading-like-a writer" approach to reading.

The essence of any education system is to help students transfer the skills learnt in the school to other related fields outside school. Any method that does not facilitate such transfer is worthless for today's world. This is exactly the situation with the separate teaching of language skills. It does not facilitate the transfer of skills gained in one language domain to another. Moreover, the method encourages blind memory of language forms and features. Such kind of learning does not help students to think critically and evaluate what they learn. And since no one can give what he/she does not possess, discrete teaching of language skills

is inadequate to enhance students' creativity and their intellectual processes because it does not subscribe to the cognitive aspects of language.

Therefore, if ESL students should be prepared to read like writers and write like readers, reading and writing should be taught integratively in ESL classrooms. Writing is a way of reading better because it requires the learner to reconstruct the structure and meaning of ideas expressed by another writer. Research and practice on reading and writing have been providing more and more evidence that literacy acquisition could be achieved through teaching these two skills together. Through reading students will gain a lot of vocabulary, ideas and insight into different genres and through writing they will apply these skills into their writing. In the academic arena students read to write and write after reading. Thus if ESL students are to be initiated into the academic discourse community reading and writing should be taught integratively (Batholomae, 1990).

The ability to think critically and creatively and to reason logically is becoming crucial in today's education. There is no longer room for cultivation of abilities to learn things by heart. It is now the era of intellectual employment. It is time for ESL institutions to adapt new methods that will develop their students' intellectual abilities and prepare them to deal with complex tasks that involve complex thinking so that they can cope with the demands of today's world. Teaching reading and writing integratively may do that.

The Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate whether teaching reading and writing together promotes students' intellectual processes and improves their syntactic maturity in writing.

Specifically, this study seeks:

1- To investigate whether teaching reading and writing together enhances students' intellectual processes.

2- To investigate whether integrating reading and writing helps students' to produce more syntactically mature writing.

The Hypotheses of the Study

The hypotheses that will be tested in this study are:

1- The intellectual process performance of students who are taught reading and writing integratively will be significantly higher than the intellectual process performance of students who are taught reading and writing separately.

2- Students who are taught reading and writing integratively will produce better syntactically mature writing than students who are taught reading and writing separately.

Significance of the Study

Chomsky's (1966) rejection of the claim that language is learned via habit formation has brought a significant contribution to the theory of language learning. His emphasis on human language use as a creation of new forms, using the knowledge of abstract rules " generated", and on the cognitive aspect of language learning provided a new insight into how language is learnt or acquired. As a result, the whole audio-lingual paradigm (pattern practice, drilling and memorization) was called into question. These new ideas have prompted many researchers to carry out more research on the study of the cognitive aspects of human language.

This study is one of the attempts to explore students' cognitive abilities by investigating whether teaching reading and writing together promote students' intellectual processes and improves their syntactic maturity in writing. The findings of this study may help teachers in enhancing ESL students' intellectual processes and their syntactical maturity in writing. This in turn may upgrade their proficiency in English and particularly their abilities to read and write effectively. The findings may also encourage education systems that are still using the traditional method of teaching English language to adopt this new approach and thus give better opportunities to their students.

Limitations

The first limitation is The Intellectual Measurement Scale used in this study. One of the shortcomings of this instrument is that it does not give accurate differences between two students who for instance, get the same score, but one uses all the six intellectual processes while the other uses only some of them. Another limitation of this instrument is that it does not go beyond the surface in analyzing students' patterns of thought in writing. This last limitation also applies to T-Unit.

Delimitation

This study investigates only whether teaching reading and writing integratively enhances students' intellectual processes and improves their syntactical maturity in writing. Some reference has been made to students' critical thinking and creativity. This was done to further indicate other dimensions of teaching reading and writing together, but they are not part of the objectives being investigated in this study.

Definition of Terms

Narrative Mode

It refers to the relating of an experience. This experience may be in the past (past narration) or it may be a typical experience (what people usually do) or it may be an experience going on at the moment (present narration). The logical arrangement of ideas and sentences in narration is chronological (according to time order).

Intellectual Processes

Intellectual processes or *intellectual strategies* refer to the writer's increased conscious use of certain cognitive and affective processes during pre-writing stage of composition. These intellectual processes as described by Odell (1977) are: focus, physical context, sequence, change, contrast and classification. A description of these strategies according to Odell tells us what decision the writer has actually made in exploring and presenting a particular subject. Instruction in the use of these processes can result in writing that is mature, more carefully thought out and more persuasive. To measure the intellectual processes, count how often the student has used these six intellectual processes in a piece of writing. More frequent use of these processes indicates writer's competence in writing.