The Effect of Noticing through Extensive Reading on Iranian EFL Learners’ Proper Use of Relative Clauses in Writing

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Abstract — The current study was an attempt to investigate the effect of noticing through extensive reading on Iranian EFL learners’ proper use of relative clauses in writing. To perform this, 60 intermediate EFL learners were selected from Bahar Institute in Sari, Iran based on convenience sampling. Then, the two intact classes were randomly assigned to one experimental and one control group. For the purpose of the study, the experiment was conducted during one semester in 10 sessions. During the study, one short story book titled "Reading and Writing" was employed. The pretest and the posttest in this research were the same including the writing task. The same tests (identical to the pretest with a different topic) were used in two occasions before and after the treatment. At the first session, a writing test was administered to both groups to evaluate their writing ability before the treatment. During the treatment, each session, both groups were asked to read the short story which included relative clauses. In the experimental group, the learners were also required to circle the relative clauses and mention the reason they had been used. In the control group, the learners read the same story without noticing the relative clauses. After the end of the treatment, another writing test was employed as posttest to compare the performance of the groups after the treatment. As the statistical analyses revealed, noticing through extensive reading can significantly affect the learners’ proper use of relative clauses in writing. The results of this study point to a probability that noticing through extensive reading can have a positive effect on Iranian EFL learners’ proper use of relative clauses in writing. The teachers and syllabus designers can consider this method in their tasks.

Keywords: Noticing, Relative Clause, Extensive Reading, Grammatical Accuracy

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is considered as a vital skill in the process of language learning. According to Bereiter, Burtis and Scardamalin (1988) and Fischer, Immordino-Yang, Stern, Battro and Koizumi (2007), writing as a process of several complex cognitive tasks is regarded as one of the most difficult language skills to master. This might be due to the fact that this skill can be described as the accumulative and final harvest of gaining and acquiring other skills such as reading, listening, and speaking. As a productive skill, writing can represent an obstacle in the process of L2 development since it requires that formal, content, and cultural schemata are obtained and presented appropriately, cohesively, and accurately (Alqadi & Alqadi, 2013). Developing students’ writing skill is considered to be one of the most important tasks which EFL learners need to foster throughout their schooling. Therefore, helping learners to master writing skill and enabling them to write appropriately is one of the fundamental objectives of English language teaching. Harmer (2004) contended that “writing leads to learning because it reinforces language use; it gives learners time and the opportunity to think about the language rules, and receive precise feedback” (p. 34). In order to teach and improve the learner’s writing skill, it is suggested to integrate writing and reading.
Several types of reading may occur in language classroom. One way in which these may be categorized, as suggested by Brown (1981), can be classified as oral and silent (Intensive & Extensive). The first distinction that can be made is whether the reading is oral or silent. Here, we are not going to deal with oral reading, only silent one is considered which encompasses extensive and intensive reading. Powell (2006) states that the term “extensive reading” was originally coined by Palmer (1917) to distinguish it from “intensive reading” (The careful reading of short, complex texts for detailed understanding and skills practice). Hedgcock (2003) suggest that extensive reading promotes various types of the needed schemata necessary for writing. They believe that having the types of background knowledge through reading, extensive reading is not only helpful to L2 production but indispensable to it. Escribano (1999) states that through reading we have the opportunity of being exposed to well-organized and well-written pieces of writing which help us to improve our language abilities and to build writing schemata. Noticing through extensive reading is believed to pave the way towards reaching the objective of having a better writing.

1.1. Related Studies

Alotaibi (2016) studied the learnability of English relative clauses of Kuwaiti EFL learners. Based on the results, it was recommended that teachers of English as a second or foreign language need to acquaint EFL learners with the NPAH, showing them the various types of relative clauses and the process by which they are formed. Learners should also be informed of any syntactic operations that may play a role in forming relative clauses in English like pied piping and prepositional stranding.

Bao (2015) explored the reasons why senior high school students find it difficult to choose relative words and how to improve this situation. 73 senior high school students were the participants of the study. They were given a test on using relative clause. Also, Questionnaire on these 73 students and 30 teachers were collected. After collecting and analyzing the tests papers and questionnaires, using quantitative and qualitative methods, the author finds the main causes of the learners’ selecting wrong relative words stem from: students pay much attention to form and apply rules mechanically; ignoring meaning and context of the language; students’ grammar knowledge is not comprehensive and systematic and learners may neglect or forget some grammatical points; students lack necessary basic English grammar and vocabulary knowledge resulting in the difficulty in understanding the meaning of the Consequently, teachers should pay more attention to the learners’ English basic knowledge, teach grammar in a systematic and comprehensive way, encourage students to apply proper learning strategies, find ways to improve the input and output of English and train students to think in English mode.

Ashraf and Zeraatkar (2014) investigated EFL learners of Birjand to examine the effect of reading short stories on EFL learners reading skill. This study was done on a population of 40 students. The learners were divided into two groups including an experimental and a control group. For a period of four months which was a semester, the experimental group was taught through reading short stories as an assignment dedicated to each session. In contrast, the control group was taught via the schools’ regular program. The results revealed that reading short story improves the reading skill. It is revealed that reading short story improves the reading comprehension ability. Reading short story involves the students in class discussions, led to higher self-confidence, increased interest in reading, and developed vocabulary and syntactic knowledge. In this manner, reading practice is useful in educating and learning reading skill.
Sahragard, Kushki, and Ansaripour (2013) investigated the application of corpora in teaching grammar, in the case of English relative clause. They investigated whether implementing corpora on English relative clauses would be useful for Iranian EFL learners or not. Two writing classes were held for intermediate-level participants. A record of 15 writing samples related to each participant was kept in the form of portfolio. After diagnosing the errors of both groups (experiment and control), they were instructed on the use of English relative clauses. Experimental group was introduced using the corpora as printed materials. Instead, the other group was instructed by explicit definition, discussion, and exemplification. After that, both groups’ portfolios were returned and they were asked to self-correct their misapplied relative clauses. Results showed that corpora can be an effective tool to increase the frequency of the target features in order to make learners notice the features and thus their learning process becomes more convenient.

Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman (2014) examined the effect of an extensive reading program on the writing performance of Saudi EFL Universities. So, they randomly selected 48 students from King Saud College of Languages and Translation. They divided the participants into two groups: an experimental and a control group. The control group was taught by the regular teacher with the direct administration of the researchers. In the experimental group, the effect of extensive reading program was investigated on the writing performance of the learners. As the results showed, the performance of the experiment group was much better than the control group. Therefore, the extensive reading program may have a significant positive effect on the writing performance of the learners.

Adas and Bakir (2013) searched a new solution for writing problems of Arab EFL learners. They claimed that blended learning as an approach can be helpful to enhance the learners’ writing abilities. Through their study, they tried to employ blended learning along with traditional methods in order to improve Palestinian students’ writing skills. The findings showed significant differences in learners’ achievement scores. The students in experimental group used a topic sentence, capitalization and punctuation marks much better than what they did at pretest. Also, their writing was improved in the spelling, grammar and coherent paragraphs.

Shabani and Salek (2013) investigated the effect of reading experience on writing ability of Iranian EFL students. They chose 20 female language learners of a private institution in Ilam. The participants were divided into an experimental and a control group. Control group was taught by techniques of paragraph writing and they were asked to write a paragraph. Experimental group was supported by extra reading material in addition to writing techniques. Both groups were asked to write a paragraph at home through seventh session. They collected data and analyzed them through t-test. The findings suggested that reading experience have no effects on elementary level students.

Meraji and Sadighi (2013) examined the relationship between reading and writing proficiency of Iranian EFL learners. So, 47 students were selected and divided into two groups. The control group was taught using school book while the experimental group was taught by school book and also three short stories. Findings showed that the experimental group outperformed in writing compared to the control group. Using questionnaire, the course design is also evaluated. According to the research findings, almost 79.17 percent of the learners had found the course beneficial. Besides, the teacher was satisfied with the course program too. As the teacher suggested, the study considers reading short stories as an effective means of improving writing ability of the learners.
2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Writing like speaking is a communicative instrument used to interact with others in different contexts. Learning writing skill is almost the most difficult task for the learners. Many significant weakness points can be viewed in the EFL Learner’s writings. The EFL learners usually have difficulty to employ suitable vocabularies and complex grammatical structures in their writings (Chunenaichaichon, 2011).

Extensive reading has generally been recognized as an influential element in grammatical accuracy and writing skill as a whole (Krashen, 1984). The researchers (Instructors of writing courses at Al al-Bayt University, 2011-2013) noticed that EFL learners face a difficulty in paragraph writing. This difficulty emerges from the fact that most of them don’t write paragraphs in English at schools. Most of them confront difficulty in organizing ideas, using correct structure, employing English writing styles, and finding suitable vocabulary to express these ideas (Alqadi & Alqadi, 2013).

Seeking for an influential element in writing skill at one hand and considering the probable positive effect of noticing through extensive reading on writing, on the other hand, were assumed as the major reasons based on which the present study was conducted.

Considering the conducted studies in this field (Day & Bamford, 1997; Powell, 2006; Yamashita, 2013), to the best of researcher’s knowledge, no study has been performed to investigate the effect of noticing through extensive reading on Iranian EFL learners. In nutshell, this study is believed to get a more critical look at the effectiveness of noticing through extensive reading in writing skills.

Integrating reading and writing may lead to learners’ writing vocabulary and grammar development since they will get familiar to many new words and grammatical structures in the texts. With respect to the stated problem and considering the effectiveness of noticing through extensive reading in writing skill, this study attempts to provide a further investigation to assess the degree of impact of noticing through extensive reading on Iranian EFL learner’s proper use of relative clauses in writing. In order to achieve the purpose of this study, the following research question was proposed:

RQ: Does noticing through extensive reading have any statistically significant effect on Iranian EFL learner’s proper use of relative clauses in writing?

The significance of the present study emerges from the belief that it, hopefully, provides experimental evidence and supports to the proposition that noticing through extensive reading (as a free and pleasure type of reading) may improve the EFL learner’s ability to use relative clauses properly (and writing skill as a whole) and help them to overcome some of the difficulties they face specifically when writing accuracy is emphasized.

3. METHOD

3.1. Participants

This study was conducted in Bahar English Institute in Mazandaran province, Sari City. The participants comprised of 60 intermediate Iranian EFL learners whom had passed Sari (2003) homogeneity test of the institute. Since the learners passed the placement test of the institute, they were all at the same level of proficiency. The participants were divided into two groups of an experimental with 30 Iranian EFL students and a control group with 30 Iranian EFL students. The participants were the members of two classes encompassing female learners that their age
ranged from thirteen to sixteen. The participants were selected based on convenience sampling design.

3.2. Instruments

*Writing section of PET (as pretest and posttest)*

Two formal instruments were used to gather data, and the results were computed statistically. The two formal instruments were student writing samples, written without any feedback or revision, which served as pretest and posttest. Both writing samples were given as a composition. The pretest was given to students at the first session, prior to the start of the treatment. The participants were asked to write a descriptive composition on a topic provided by the researcher before the treatment. The purpose of pretest was to determine whether or not the participants were homogeneous in their writing ability. At the end of instructional period, the researcher asked the participants to write a composition parallel to the one used at the time of pretesting. The purpose of the posttest was to compare the performance of the experimental and control groups after the treatment. In both cases, the students were asked to do descriptive writing, with “describe a good teacher” and “describe a good day” as the topics for the pretest and the posttest. The two writing topics were selected because they were as similar as possible without using the exact same topic. The participants' writings were evaluated and scored by two raters for the matter of inter-reliability of the tests, and the correlation coefficients between the two raters were calculated. Both raters were English teachers with M.A. in Applied Linguistics and had experience in the field of English instruction and translation. The rating scale used to rate the pretest and posttest of present study was The Writing Rating Scale of PET. It was the one provided by Cambridge under the name of General Mark Schemes for Writing. It comprises four aspects of writing including cohesion and coherence, compositional organization, grammar and spelling, and vocabulary.

3.3. Teaching Material

The other instruments used for the study included two books, Grammar in Use, as a reference for teaching relative clauses, and Reading and Writing book, which contains short stories for intermediate level.

3.4. Research Design

Since random sampling method could not be used in this study due to various constraints, the method used for the current study was a quasi-experimental one. Intact group method was used because it was not possible to assign students randomly to classes. In fact, they were placed in classes based on the placement test of the institution. In the present study, proper use of relative clauses in writing was the dependent variable, and noticing and extensive reading were the independent ones. Independent variable is the main variable which was investigated, i.e. the one which was selected, manipulated, and measured by the researcher. Dependent variable was observed and measured to determine the effect of the independent variable. In order to meet the result, the treatment group was manipulated by the researcher using the short stories in a specific way.

3.5. Research Procedure
Azizzadeh Asl

60 intermediate EFL learners were selected from Bahar institute in Sari based on convenience sampling. Since the learners passed the placement test of the institute, they were all at the same level of proficiency. That is, they were already homogenized. Both groups were taught by the same teacher. For doing the treatment, the language classes were held during 10 sessions and met twice a week at 90-minute duration. For the purpose of this study, our experiment was conducted during one semester.

First of all, the participants were assigned to one experimental and one control group. At the beginning of the instructional intervention, learners of both groups were asked to write a composition on a descriptive topic. They were asked to describe a good teacher. The purpose of the pretest was to determine whether the population of the study was homogeneous in terms of writing ability or not. The instructional intervention consisted of 10 sessions of 45 minutes each. Both groups were taught relative clauses on the basis of same course book titled Grammar in Use (2009). The length of time devoted to the treatment was exactly the same in both groups but the tasks totally different. The experimental group did notice the relative clauses through extensive reading by circling them and mentioning the reasons they have used, while control group just followed the extensive reading program. The first session served as the introductory session for both groups to create a positive impression and to motivate learners to participate actively. In this session, the learners of both groups were informed of the objectives of the course, the importance of writing skill, the procedures, and the expectations of the teacher.

At the first session, a writing part of a PET as a pretest was administered to both groups to evaluate their writing ability before the start of the research. The writing tasks were also evaluated and scored by two raters using Writing Scoring Scale of PET. The teacher/researcher and her colleague who is also a teacher rated the writings. The mean score of the two sets of scores was considered as the final score. Then the teaching of relative clauses was done for both groups. They were taught through the book titled Grammar in Use (2009). After teaching this grammatical structure and empowering the students' grammatical knowledge, the researcher entered the next phase of the study which was extensive reading.

Each session, students of the both groups were asked to read the short stories and write a paragraph about the main idea of the story. The purpose of the study included the stories provided in the Writing and Reading book by Quintana (2003). Forty five minutes of each session was allocated to the treatment. The students were asked to read each section in 15 minutes, and then another 15 minutes was allocated for writing the summary. In the experimental group another task was determined. The students were also required to circle the relative clauses of the texts and mention the reasons they have used. Doing so, the students were noticing the structure while reading the story.

In extensive reading program, reading purposes focus on pleasure, information, and general understanding. In this manner, there are no exercises, no questions about the words, and no dictionaries. During the treatment sessions, while students did their tasks, the teacher walked around to ensure that everyone did well. She provided assistance whenever needed. In control group which was taught by the same book, the tasks were limited to reading the stories and writing the paragraph about the main idea of the text. The students were asked to read the short determined parts in 15 minutes and write a summary in one paragraph in the next 15 minutes allocated. No circling the grammatical structure and no mentioning the reasons why they have used.

After ten sessions of treatment, another writing test was administered. The second writing test (task 2) as posttest was administered to both groups. They were asked to write a
composition on a descriptive topic which was parallel to the one used at the time of pretesting. Both groups were required to describe a good day. The writings were rated by two raters as before. The results were analyzed to check any possible improvement in the proper use of relative clauses in writing.

3.6. Data Analysis

The data obtained from the present study was put into statistical analysis using t-test to examine the difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups, a repeated measured t-test for the scores of writing after reading short stories, Pearson product moment correlation to measure the inter-reliability of two sets of scores submitted by two raters, normality curve, and histogram. To determine the writing achievement of the learners, their writings were rated by two raters. Using the two raters, the inter-reliability of two sets of scores (related to pretest and posttest) computed through Pearson product moment correlation of coefficient indicated the reliability of the scoring.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Analysis of the Writing Pretest

A writing test which was one of the instruments of this study used as a pretest to evaluate the students' current level of writing and would enable the researcher to investigate the possible impact of the treatment on the improvement of the experimental group's proper use of relative clauses in writing. All the students' papers were scored by two raters (the first rater was the researcher herself and the second rater was a colleague) according to the general mark scheme for the PET exam. The inter-rater reliability of the scores was calculated by means of the Cronbach-\(\alpha\) formula (0.96 for the control group and 0.97 for the experimental group) (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Inter-Rater Reliability of the Translation Pretest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach-(\alpha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because of the high consistency between the two raters, the average of the scores given by the two raters to each paper was considered as the ultimate score of each participant in each group. Table 2 provides the descriptive statistics of the writing pretest for both groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Writing Pretest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Statistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the skewness analysis, as shown in this Table 2, revealed that the assumption of normality was observed in the distribution of the pretest scores of the two
groups (0.36 for the control group and -0.61 for the experimental group, all falling within the range of -1.96 and +1.96). Figure 1 shows the normality of the writing pretest scores.

Figure 1. Histogram of the writing pretest scores

Figure 2 shows the mean difference of the control and the experimental groups on the writing pretest.

Figure 2. The mean scores of the two groups on the writing pretest

In order to check if there was any significant difference between the two groups, an independent t-test was carried out to help making sure the initial existing difference was not of a significant importance and there was equality between the two groups. As table 3 shows since the probability associated with the F-observed value (.102) was higher than the significant level of .05. Therefore, it was safely concluded that the two groups were homogenous in terms of their variances. With $t (58) = .136$ (two tailed) and $p= .893$, it was concluded that the difference between two groups was not significant at the outset of the study.
Table 3: Independent Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>.136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>55.44</td>
<td>.893</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hence, it was concluded that the two groups were homogeneous in term of their writing ability prior to the treatment.

4.2. Investigating Research Hypothesis

After one semester, a parallel writing posttest was administered to measure the effects of the treatment at the end of the study. Same as the pretest, all the students' papers were scored by two raters according to the general mark scheme for the PET exam. The inter-rater reliability of the scores was calculated by means of the Cronbach-α formula (0.97 for the control group and 0.96 for the experimental group) (Table 4).

Table 4: Inter-Rater Reliability of the Translation Posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cronbach-α</th>
<th>N of Raters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because of the high consistency between the two raters, the average of the scores given by the two raters to each paper was considered as the ultimate score of each participant in each group. Table 5 provides the descriptive statistics of the writing posttest for both groups.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of the Writing Posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15.76</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>.115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20.95</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>-.074</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of the skewness analysis, as shown in this Table 5, revealed that the assumption of normality was observed in the distribution of the pretest scores of the two groups (0.26 for the control group and -0.17 for the experimental group, all falling within the range of -1.96 and +1.96).

Figure 3 shows the normality of the posttest scores. 

![Histogram of the writing posttest scores](image)

**Figure 3. Histogram of the writing posttest scores**

Figure 4 shows the mean difference of the control and the experimental groups on the writing posttest.

![Bar chart of the mean scores](image)

**Figure 4. The mean scores of the two groups on the writing posttest**

An independent $t$ test was run to compare the mean scores of the two groups on the writing posttest. As it is evident in the Table 6, although the probability associated with the F-observed value (.022) was lower than the significant level of .05, two groups were not homogenous in terms of their variances; nevertheless, the probability associated with the $t$-observed value (.000) was lower than the significant level of .05 and it can be concluded that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups on the writing posttest.
Table 6: Independent Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>5.53</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>-7.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>-7.75</td>
<td>49.84</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By comparing the mean scores of the two groups, it can be seen that the experimental group's mean score was higher than that of the control one. So the null-hypothesis as noticing through extensive reading doesn’t have any statistically significant effect on Iranian EFL learner’s proper use of relative clauses in writing was rejected.

4.3. Paired Samples T-test between the Pretest and the Posttest of the Two Groups

To reemphasize the impact of the noticing through extensive reading on proper use of relative clauses in writing, a paired sample $t$-test was also conducted for the mean achievement (gain scores) of the both groups on the pretest and posttest. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Paired Samples Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre Control</td>
<td>14.65</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.146</td>
<td>.574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Control</td>
<td>15.76</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.067</td>
<td>.560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre Exp.</td>
<td>14.55</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2.530</td>
<td>.461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Exp.</td>
<td>20.95</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.997</td>
<td>.364</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 presents the descriptive statistics for the performances of the two groups on the pretest and posttest. To check progress at each group, two paired samples $t$-test were run.
Table 8: Paired Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 Post C – Pre C</td>
<td>1.116</td>
<td>1.236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2 Post EX – Pre EX</td>
<td>6.400</td>
<td>2.226</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Table 8, both groups had significantly improved their proper use of relative clauses in writing.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In line with the expectations, the noticing through extensive reading lead to higher EFL learner’s proper use of relative clauses that is likely to help to improve writing of the participants. The finding of this study might lend partial or complete support to the work conducted by Kirin (2010). Based on this work, theoretical rationale and research evidence from L1, ESL and EFL supports the relationships between reading and writing as well as the advantages of encouraging students to read as much as possible to enhance their writing ability.

The results of the writing posttests indicated that noticing through extensive reading was effective in improving learners’ grammatical knowledge and writing ability as a whole, as it led to a better performance of the learners in the experimental group. An independent sample t-test was run and showed that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups and the students in the experimental group performed much better. In other words, the participants who were exposed to this technique more enhanced grammatical accuracy and writing skill. Therefore, the null hypothesis of the present study was not supported.

The findings of the present study is in line with the ideas of many researchers like Krashen who believe that extensive reading is an effective tool to improve writing ability of the learners. As Krashen (1984) asserts, writing competence derives from large amounts of self-motivated reading for pleasure or interest. It is reading that gives the writer feel for the book and texture of reader-based prose. Reading and writing, processes of comprehending and composing, is reinforced by each other. Reading can provide learners with the opportunity of obtaining ideas and information in writing. According to Krashen (1984) reading is the appropriate input for acquisition of writing skills as it is generally assumed that reading passages will somehow function as primary models which writing skills can be acquired. Krashen (1984), as the most influential theorist who supports extensive reading as a way to improve writing competence, also asserts that “writing ability is not learned but is acquired via extensive reading in which the focus of the reader is on the message, i.e. reading for interest and pleasure” (p. 23).
However, noticing through extensive reading has not been fully explored and much more research needs to be done in this area. Clearly, however, it can be a very useful teaching strategy when used effectively and in conjunction with other instructional methods.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the effect of noticing through extensive reading on Iranian EFL learners' proper use of relative clauses in writing. Having administered the research, obtained results revealed that noticing through extensive reading had a significant impact on EFL learners' proper use of relative clauses in writing. Therefore, the research null hypothesis was rejected. The strong link between language by eye (reading) and language by hand (writing) has been recognized and studied (Berninger, Vaughan, Abbott, Begay, Byrd, Curtin, Minnich, & Graham, 2002). One of the claims is that reading is “really writing” (actively creating meaning), and writing is “really reading” (passively finding what culture and history have inscribed in our heads). And weakness in reading often stems from neglect of writing (Krashen, 1984). Therefore, the significance of combining reading and writing has been emphasized most of the times.

Language teachers throughout the world continually are looking for the ways of improving the learners' language abilities. Several studies have confirmed that reading more is connected to improved writing skills (e.g., Lee & Krashen, 1996). Specifically, extensive reading has been advocated for language learning (e.g. Susser & Robb, 1990; Day & Bamford, 2002). Also, Schmidt’ Noticing Hypothesis (2001), which claims argues that the process of noticing enables the conversion of input to intake, has been influential and is now regarded as “a mainstream SLA construct” (Yoshioka, Frota & Bergsleithner, 2013, p. 7). Given that students noticed the determined grammatical structure through extensive reading had a better performance, the findings confirm the positive effect of noticing through extensive reading on grammatical accuracy and writing as a whole.

7. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the present study can also have implications for teachers, learners, and syllabus designers.

Implications for teachers. The present study could have some certain pedagogical implications for teachers such as understanding the importance of using extensive reading for learners the that may affect all skill of language including writing and reading ability (Brecke & Jensen, 2007). As another implication of the study, we can refer to this fact that the findings may help teachers in Iranian universities to recognize the importance of reading tasks in the writing classrooms, as the results point to the positive impact of reading on the improvement of students’ writing skills. Grammatical accuracy is one of the important aspects of writing. One of the most syntactic structures to master is relative clauses. Teachers have been attaching great importance to the teaching of relative clauses, but unfortunately the results are not satisfactory. Results of the present study would be a good reference for Iranian teachers to rely on.

Implications for learners. While exposure to language input is believed to contribute to language enhancement in general, awareness of what is being read also plays a crucial role in improving of ones writing ability. As findings of the present study show, noticing through
extensive reading can help the learners to improve their grammatical accuracy and consequently writing ability as a whole.

Syllabus designers. Syllabus designers and material developers may wish to improve the quality of the materials with proper tasks. They can also take advantage of the present study. They can integrate reading and writing tasks when they are aimed to improve the writing skills of the students, therefore, saving them from using less effective materials for this purpose.

7. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
Due to the methods of selecting participants, context of the study, research design, and teaching methods, it is not possible to strongly support any generalization and the researcher suggests using random sampling design. Consequently, as always, further research is required to give more comprehensive and transparent answers to research questions.

In this study, the effect of employed technique on writing skill was considered. Another study could be conducted to learn about its effect on other language skills. The present study had the limited number of participants. The same study is repeatable for a larger population. Moreover, the comparison between the results of this study and other studies with different design is also recommended. Only female teens participated in this research; it would be interesting whether gender or age is also a factor. In addition, other area rather than relative clauses in writing should be checked. A further investigation can be done to repeat this study in other pedagogical places, such as high schools, institutes and universities. Also, this study focused on Iranian Intermediate EFL Students. A similar study can be performed focusing on other students with different proficiency levels. At last, the setting which was chosen for this study was one English institution in Sari. The same procedure could be used in other settings, for example, schools and universities.

9. LIMITATIONS
Like any other research study, the current investigation undergoes a number of limitations in what follows. The participants who represent Iranian EFL learners were female, as the researcher did not have the required permission to work with males. They were recruited from one English language institute in only one city of Iran (Sari), and the researcher decided to work with the participants who had different levels of intermediate (low, mid, high) general English proficiency.

REFERENCES


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