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The Role of Extensive Reading in Improving EFL Students' Writing Skill

**A Case Study of Third Year LMD Students of English at
Biskra University**

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of Master Degree
in Sciences of Language**

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Dedication

I gladly dedicate this work to:

The most precious people to my heart, to the ones who gave birth and meaning to my life, to the persons who gave me strength and hope

To the King and the Queen of my life

My dear father Mohammed and my beloved mother Fatima.

May Allah bless them.

To my beloved sisters Zahia and Meriem.

To my dear brothers Adel and Yazid.

To the little princes Elhocein and Mohammed Amine

To the ones who encourage and help me

SAIDI Youcef and GASMI Smail .

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Abstract

It is common in the language classroom that the ability to produce effective written productions is among the most valuable requirements that students aim to accomplish from language study. This present study aims at exploring the role of extensive reading in improving EFL students' writing skill and the benefit that may be reached through supporting the reading-writing relationship. In order to investigate the hypothesis which claims that effective foreign language writing could be better achieved when learners read extensively, the descriptive method is used based on administering two questionnaires for both students and teachers. The students' questionnaire is administered to a sample of third year LMD students of English at Biskra university (N=52) selected randomly from two groups out of ten in order to know students' awareness about the role that extensive reading provides to develop their writing skill. The teachers' questionnaire is distributed to a sample of written expression teachers (N=6) at the department of English at Biskra university for the sake of finding out their attitudes about the existing relation between extensive reading and writing development and the extent to which they support their students to read extensively to achieve proficient level in writing. The results from students' questionnaires demonstrated the role of extensive reading in accomplishing effective written productions. Moreover, the obtained results from teachers' questionnaire support the idea that reading extensively carries a significant contribution in enriching students' vocabulary and enhancing their writing level in general. Thus, based on these results, the research hypothesis confirms that extensive reading is an effective solution to improve students' writing skill and resolve different language deficiencies. Accordingly, our research findings suggest a reconsideration of the status of extensive reading in learning a foreign language due to the significant role that it has on students' writing level improvement.

List of Abbreviations

L1: First Language.

FL: Foreign Language.

N: Number of respondents.

NL: Native Language.

SL: Second Language.

SLL: Second Language Learning

FLL: Foreign Language Learning.

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Summary

General Introduction

Introduction

Writing is among the most important skills that learners of English as a second or foreign language need to develop. It is a powerful means of communication by which students learn better to express themselves. Teaching and learning to write in any language is an essential area that influences students' performance and language learning. Moreover, learning to write in English as a foreign language has been an essential, professional and educational issue that serves various educational purposes and meet certain learning needs upon which the foreign language learners' progress depends. Writing has been called the core of education and has been described as an important path of language learning. It gives foreign language learners a sense of command over the language being taught and allows them to discover more about how this language works.

As far as written language is concerned, reading is also an important skill that plays a significant role in improving readers' language proficiency. Besides, choosing the most appropriate approach for teaching writing, written expression teachers need to consider the role of reading widely and in large quantities or as it is called extensive reading in improving learners' writing skill. Learners as well need to recognize the importance of extensive reading in ESL/EFL either to develop their abilities in both skills or to extend their knowledge. Learners are challenged because of their incomplete command of grammar and vocabulary with which they express their thoughts and ideas. They tend to struggle with fluent written expressions because of their limited vocabulary and insufficient knowledge of grammatical structure. Therefore, many researchers have investigated the reading-writing connection and the impact that extensive reading has on learners' writing skill.

1. Statement of the Problem

Writing is one of the four macro skills which needs special attention, especially in foreign language classes because it is considered as the most difficult skill to be acquired or taught. Richard and Renandya (2002: 303). Despite the attention given to writing as a skill in foreign language classes, students still have problem with this skill. Algerian learners of English as a foreign language at Biskra university encounter difficulties in developing their

writing skill. The limited use or need to write in English outside the classroom has lessened the opportunity to develop such skill. Therefore, the need arises to investigate this problem that faces EFL learners.

In trying to overcome this limited practice of writing, written. expression teachers see that learners' poor writings may be caused by many factors mainly the lack of reading in the foreign language. Thus, they enhance their students to read more in order to develop their written productions and to improve their writing ability.

Consequently, we aim through this research to state the role of extensive reading in improving students' writing skill.

2. Significance of the Study

It is common for teachers to use different techniques to help their students to improve their language skills in general and writing skill in particular. Concerning foreign language teaching, the research attempts to reveal the significant role of reading in the development of learners' writing skill by using extensive reading to inform writing compositions among university students. It tries to motivate students making them aware of the importance of reading skill and enhance them to read large quantities of books in order to gain information and enjoy texts.

Therefore, the students will be able to produce meaningful writing paragraphs, essays, letters, compositions, and summaries. It also help teachers to better understand the issue and integrate it into their classroom routine in general and in the writing class in particular.

3. Aims of the Study

This study aims at:

- Introducing the impact of extensive reading on learners' written productions.
- Examining the relationship between reading as a receptive skill and writing as a productive one.
- Raising learners' awareness toward the reading –writing relationship.
- Promoting the importance of reading instruction during the writing class.

- Enriching learners' vocabulary through extensive reading to produce better productions.

4. Research Questions

- Are both teachers and learners aware of the role of extensive reading on the development of learners' written productions?
- Do learners benefit from reading to develop their style and enrich their vocabulary during writing?
- Do teachers motivate their students to improve their writing performance through reading?
- Do teachers play a key role in raising learners' awareness toward the reading-writing relationship?

5. Research Hypothesis

According to what have been mentioned in the above questions we hypothesized that:

If EFL learners become more aware of the role that extensive reading plays in the development of writing skill and teachers ring the bell by iterating the notion "read more", students' proficiency in writing would increase.

So, effective foreign language writing could be better achieved when learners read extensively.

6. Research Methodology

6.1. Method of investigation

To reach the research desirable aims, we have relied on qualitative and descriptive methods that are less time consuming. However, they provide reliable and comprehensible picture about the concerned problem.

6.2. Research tools

For gathering the data needed, we have depended on:

- **Semi-structured questionnaires:** A questionnaire is a data-gathering tool that requires from the respondents to answer proposed questions related to the research problem. This research have been conducted through administering two questionnaires for both students and teachers. The students' questionnaire have been handed to third year English students at Biskra university, we wanted to look for their awareness, views about the role of extensive reading in the development of the writing level. The teachers' questionnaire have been distributed to written expression teachers to know to what extent they are aware of the reading-writing connection and how they use their experience and techniques in involving reading tasks to ameliorate the writing level.

6.3. Population: the population that have been involved in this study wasthird year LMD students of English at Biskra university, during the academic year 2015/2016, in addition to the written expression teachers at the English department at Biskra university. The population has been intentionally chosen on the basis that this level suits better this study where students had already received both formal instruction and experienced writing in English during first and second year. Moreover, third year students are exposed to write more about free topics at this level where they need more vocabulary and different styles to accomplish better productions.

6.4.Sampling: since it is difficult to deal with the whole number of population, our sample is composed of two out of ten groups (N=52) of third year EFL students and six written expression teachers. Both students' and teachers' samples were selected randomly.

7. Structure of the Dissertation

The present study consists of two main parts: theoretical and practical with a total number of three chapters. The theoretical part which overviews the related literature is composed of two chapters and the practical part which describes the field work consists of one chapter.

Chapter one is composed of two sections. The first section provides a brief review about the reading skill giving its definition, the process of reading and reading

comprehension. In addition, it includes models, phases and effectiveness of reading. This chapter also includes reading in second and foreign language introducing the differences between both processes. The second section will be devoted to extensive reading. It comprises the definition, principles and benefits of extensive reading. Moreover, it deals with comparing extensive and intensive reading, strategies and goals of extensive reading.

The second chapter addresses the major issues related to the writing skill to set about its definition, introducing writing in second and foreign language and giving reasons for teaching writing. Furthermore, it will introduce the main aspects of effective writing and presents the major approaches to teaching writing. We will also concentrate on the reading-writing relationship in second/foreign language context and the contribution that extensive reading provides to in the writing skill development.

Chapter three deals with a detailed analysis of data gathered about investigating the role of extensive reading in improving students' writing skill. It focuses on interpreting and analyzing students' and teachers' questionnaires for accepting or rejecting the hypothesis.

Chapter One: The Reading Skill and Extensive Reading

Section One: The Reading Skill

Introduction

Reading is an important language skill and a highly complicated act that everyone must learn. Reading is not a solely single skill but a combination of micro skills and processes in which the readers interact with printed words and context. It is considered by many people as a pleasurable free time activity that broadens ones knowledge and deepens their ideas. Hence, reading is a vital skill either in first language (L1) or in second/foreign language (SL/FL). This chapter highlights the major perspectives of reading and the importance of extensive reading in learning SL/FL. It consists of two sections. The first section introduces briefly the reading skill. First, we will try to identify reading with reference to the specialists that looked at the reading process in the light of the discoveries made in this filed. Reading comprehension will also be presented aiming at explaining the cognitive processes underlying the reading process. Besides, we will describe the reading models that have been advocated by researchers in the field. This chapter also includes phases of reading presenting the main activities to achieve better comprehension of the reading task, and we will discuss the effectiveness of reading and how it plays a salient role in learning a SL/FL. Further, we will give a brief review about reading in SL/FL introducing differences between L1 and L2 reading. The second section will shed light on extensive reading. We will clearly clarify the notion of extensive reading as it is identified by different scholars. Also, we will try to provide the principles, benefits and strategies of extensive reading. Moreover, a distinction between intensive and extensive reading is introduced trying to understand both types and how they are utilized. Later, focus will also be put on the main goals of extensive reading towards enhancing learners' proficiency.

1.1. Definition of Reading

Reading is an important language skill in learning a foreign language. Giving a clear straightforward definition of reading is not an easy matter. Many theorists and researchers

have attempted to define reading based upon different research purpose(s). The essence of reading has long been investigated, yet no single research could be exhaustive and comprehensive enough to include all aspects of the actual reading.

Gough and Hoover (1996:3) define ‘reading’ as a twofold process: decoding and comprehension. For Gough and Hoover (ibid.):

Decoding and comprehension [...] are the two halves of reading [...] for neither decoding in the absence of comprehension, nor comprehension in the absence of decoding, leads to any amount of reading. [...] Literacy - reading ability – can be found only in the presence of both decoding and comprehension.

Decoding is “the word recognition process that transforms print to words” (Kamhi and Catts, 2002: 45), and comprehension means “understanding the message that the print conveys” (Nation, 2005: 41). The reading process starts with a visual activity being performed by the reader. First, the reader recognizes the language s/he is reading in. Then, the brain processes the information and gives it logical significance.

Word recognition is a prerequisite condition for effective reading to take place. Adams (1990:102) asserts that “decoding the words of the text separately is important to build an overall understanding of the text”. Hay and Spencer (1998:222) state that:

Word recognition is an essential component in the mastery of reading and considerable evidence suggests that the major difficulty confronting the beginning reader is the development of rapid, automatic word recognition skills Efficient readers use a variety of orthographic data to recognize word units, such as individual letters, letter clusters, morphemes, word stems, and word patterns.

Word recognition leads to the process of activating and constructing meaning at the next level of reading: comprehension processes. Goodman(1967) as cited in Carrell and Eisterhold (1983), contends that successful reading is not based only on simple decoding of script symbols, but it is established on more solid grounds constituted of a number of reading comprehension strategies for extracting meaning from any type of text, including also context cues and linguistic forms. Furthermore, Smith(1994) claims that reading is much more than simply recognizing written symbols, and then matching them to corresponding sounds; “reading is a matter of making sense of written language rather than decoding print

to sound”(Smith,1994:2). Besides emphasizing the concept of meaning and its role in reading. Smith (1994) also describes understanding as a basis rather than an outcome of successful reading. He claims that readers will not be able to comprehend any passage if they do not bring to the activity their understanding of the world, experience and prior knowledge.

Reading was also regarded from a psycholinguistic point of view. Goodman (1967) as cited in Carrell & Eisterhold (1983:554), looks at reading as an activity in which the reader processes information and tries to make decisions that will be confirmed, disconfirmed or refined. Consequently, reading is regarded as an interactive process that takes place between the reader’s mind and the printed text. In the light of this approach to reading, he defines reading as a “psycholinguistic guessing game” in which “the reader reconstructs , as best as he can , a message which has been endowed by a writer”. Accordingly, after being considered a passive activity for a long time, reading has become a process of deliberate thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader.

1.2. The Process of Reading

Understanding the process of reading is probably important to an understanding of its nature, but at the same time, it is evidently a difficult thing to do. Since reading is” a complex organization of patterns of high mental process” (Gates, 1949:3), its analysis requires the ability to describe “very many of the most intricate workings of the human mind (Huey, 1968:8). The process of reading simply refers to the activities that occur during the act of reading. Alderson (2000:3) affirms that “the process is what we mean by ‘reading proper: the interaction between a reader and the text’”. As reading the text, the reader engages in different activities from decoding the printed symbols on the page to assigning meaning to those symbols and assuming the relationship between them. Furthermore, the reader is thinking about what she/he is reading, reflecting on her/his views. Alderson (ibid) has characterized the process [as being] dynamic, variable and different for the same order on the same text at different times or with different purposes in reading. Moreover, he views the process as normally silent, internal and private.

1.3. Reading Comprehension

Researchers and teachers in the field of reading argue that the principle aim of the reading process is to understand print materials. Reading is considered as a dynamic activity and a cognitive process of decoding symbols in order to construct meaning. It is a complex interaction between the text and the reader which is shaped by the reader's prior knowledge, experience and attitude. Although many definitions can be attributed to reading comprehension, attaining the text's meaning is what the reader aims at regardless of being a native language (NL), SL, or FL reader.

Understanding is the essence of the reading process as Nuttal (1982:22) confirms, "understanding is central to the process of reading... [It] must be the focus of our teaching". Consequently, decoding the prints on the page cannot be adequate to comprehend the text. Comprehension is resulted from the interaction between the text's input and the reader's preexisting knowledge (Smith, 1985) or schema that is "networks of information stored in the brain which act as filters of incoming information" (Alderson, 2000:17).

In addition, Smith (1985) explains that comprehension should be regarded as basis for successful reading instead of being its logical outcome. He claims that comprehension "is not a quantity, it is a state – a state of not having any unanswered questions" (Smith, 1985: 83) , which links comprehension to his principle of prediction as a prerequisite for successful reading comprehension. In addition, Snow (2002:11) describes reading comprehension as the process of "simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language". This definition expresses the value of the text, and at the same time it draws attention to text's deficiency to achieve comprehension on its own meaning does not exist on the page. Likewise, three components for comprehension can be identified: "the reader, the text and the activity" (ibid). There is an active interrelationship between these three elements to achieve successful understanding.

Firstly, the reader uses his/her cognitive capacities, motivation and different kinds of knowledge. The reader "constructs different representations of the text that are important for comprehension" (Snow, 2002:14). Secondly, the text which has a surface encoding refers to the word in the text; representations of meaning; and models of mental representations implanted in the passage. A passage may be easy or difficult. These two notions depend on the content of the text, the vocabulary used, linguistic and discourse structure, and genre (Snow, 2002). Finally, the reading activity which is performed to achieve a particular

purpose, which is influenced by a number of motivational factors such as interest. While performing this activity, the reader uses some linguistic and semantic processes, besides decoding.

According to Snow (2002), the result of reading is also a feature of the activity, and it depends on the reader's purpose and the changes that may happen to it during the activity.

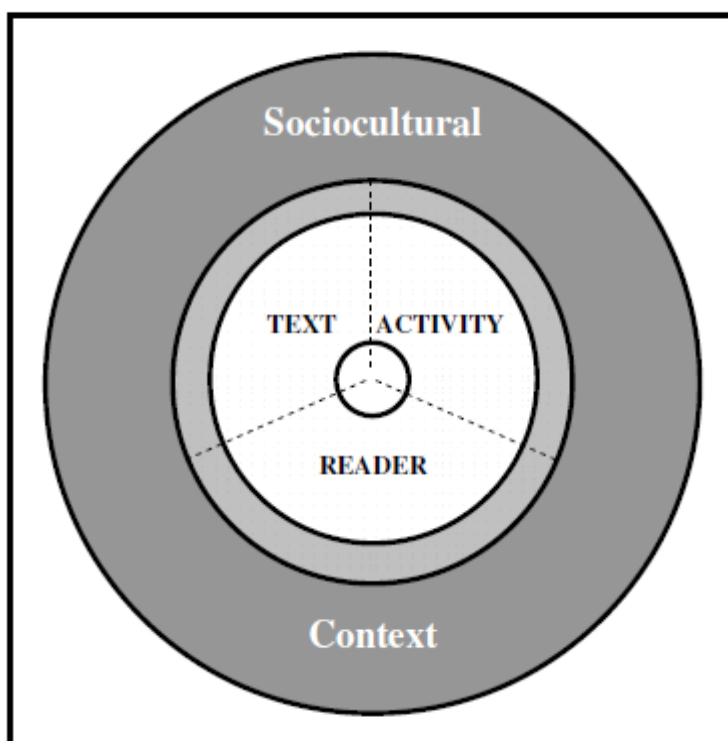


Figure 1.1: The components of Reading Comprehension (Snow, 2002: 12)

All three components are interacting in a socio-cultural context that is made up of external factors such as how society and culture consider readers and reading, social and cultural contexts, limitations and constraints to reading. This view maintains that meaning exists in the thinking process of the reader that arise during a transaction with a text. Comprehension is, thus, influenced by the text and by the reader's prior knowledge that is brought to the process (Anderson & Pearson,1984) .

1.4. Models of the Reading Process

Some researchers have tried to explain reading mechanisms and examine the process by which readers approach the text meaning; therefore, they establish explicit models that

tend to clarify the process by which readers realize meaning construction. The term model is defined as “a systematic set of guesses or predictions about a hidden process”. (Davies, 1995: 57). These models are classified into three types where they differ simply in the emphasis each model make on particular aspects and their role in the process of reading. The bottom-up models that focus on the text as a point of departure to reach text meaning where readers are considered as passive decoders, the top-down models that take the reader as a starting point where readers are considered as an active encoder and the interactive model which is a compromise of the two aforementioned models.

1. 4.1. The Bottom-up Models

The bottom-up models are “serial models, where the reader begins with the printed word, recognizes graphic stimuli, decodes them to sound, recognizes words and decodes meanings” (Alderson, 2000:16). Therefore, reading is considered as a process of exact identification of letters, words, and ultimately sentences. According to bottom-up processing, the focus is on how the reader starts from the bottom and moves upward to construct the meaning of what has been decoded . The bottom-up models are promoted by educators who view reading as a set of subskills that must be mastered by students and integrated to the extent that children use them automatically. Stepwise, they first must learn to recognize letters, then words and finally words in context. When they combine a high level of accuracy with speed and proceed to read aloud with good expression, children are exhibiting automatically (Samuels, 1994).

According to Grabe (1991), readers are passive recipients of textual information. During the decoding process, understanding the hierarchal, linguistic structures of the language promises reading comprehension. The focus is never the meaning of the whole text, but detailed linguistic forms – from phoneme to lexical syntactical levels. They are also known as text-driven models of comprehension, which are based on issues of rapid processing of text and word identification and the reader’s ability to recognize words in isolation by mapping the input directly on to some independent representational form in the mental lexicon.

Furthermore, Gough (1972) as cited in Hudson (2007: 35) assumes that the bottom-up models focus on how readers extract information from the printed page, claiming that readers deal with letters and words in a relatively complete and systematic manner. He describes the

reading process as a letter -by- letter series where readers are supposed to treat all letters in their visual field and decode them into phonemic units before assigning meaning to any stretch of these letters, thus emphasizing word recognition rather than comprehension.

From the bottom-up viewpoint, therefore, reading is a process of decoding written symbols into their aural equivalents. It is a text-centered move in which texts are the containers of rules and codes to be deciphered. Hence, the bottom-up processes are basic prerequisites for reading since the ability of starting reading is related to the accurate identification of letters. However, these models neglect the reader's prior knowledge and experience that he brings to the text that are part of the reading process with a significant role in meaning construction. This, leads to the emergence of the top-down models that attempt to overcome the shortcoming of the bottom-up models.

1. 4.2. The Top-down Models

The top-down models are linear models where readers process from higher-level conceptual encoding to lower-level perceptual information, which operates in the opposite direction from bottom-up processing. Thus, reading was regarded as an active act in which the reader is the focal point of that act (Alderson, 2000).

In top-down models, the learner's prior knowledge is activated, which is capable of enhancing learner's language learning and making possible reading comprehension. Carrell (1988) argues that a lack of content schemata activation would lead to insurmountable processing difficulties with second language readers. He has even argued that a high degree of background knowledge can overcome linguistic deficiency. Therefore, the reader is no more seen as a passive participant who depends heavily on the linguistic input presented on the page but rather as someone who is actively engaged while reading (Grabe and Stoller, 2002). The top-down model suppose that the reader begins by predicting the meaning relying on his/her background knowledge and experience (the top) and moves down to the text to confirm his/her predictions.

Goodman (1976:498) describes reading as "a psycholinguistic game, involving an interaction between thought and language". The reader's expectations and anticipations shape the meaning of the text depending on textual cues that confirm, refine or refute the text meaning. Hence, "readers guess or predict the text's meaning on the basis of minimal

textual information and maximum use of existing, activated knowledge “(Alderson, 2000: 17). He also views the construction of meaning of a text as a “cyclical process of sampling, predicting, testing, and confirming”.

Besides Goodman, Smith (1994) supports the top-down nature of the reading process. According to his view, reading is extracting meaning from script. It is not a passive mechanical activity in which the reader match written symbols to sounds; “reading is rather purposeful, rational and dependent to the prior knowledge and expectations of the reader” (Smith, 1994:2). He stresses the limitation of the visual system in accumulating the information during the process of reading. Instead, he values the use of the context and the reader’s schemata in the construction of meaning

Nevertheless, the lack of interaction between the distinct processing stages of both bottom-up and top-down models, which are strictly serial models, leads to the emergence of interactive models as an immediate remedy ,which views reading as a product of both bottom-up and top-down processing.

1.4.3. The Interactive Models

The interactive models refer to the dynamic relationship between bottom-up and top down-models, decoding and interpretation, and the interaction between reader and text. It was first proposed by Rumelhart (1977) who claims that the reading process starts by taking up cues to meaning from the page by eyes and ends with the construction of meaning. He views the skilled readers as being able to use both sensory and semantic information. These models described the reading process as cyclical rather than serial (linear) in nature.

Carrell (1988:12) asserts that “reading is a receptive language process ... in that it starts with a linguistic surface representation encoded by a writer and ends with meaning which the reader constructs”). Such a cognitive view of reading puts both the reader and the text at the heart of the reading process. In reading, automatic word decoding is the prerequisite for meaning construction to come; afterwards, readers decode a message that a writer has encoded into a text. An accurate and successful word decoding upgrades readers to the stage of connecting information with prior knowledge, so as to reach textual meanings (Bamford&Day, 2004).

Mc Cormick (1987; in Dechant, 1991:28) suggests that the reader carries out word identification and predictions at the same time. Furthermore, both higher-level and lower-level processes simultaneously help each other. Stavonich (1980; in Samuels and Kamil 2002:212) explains the parallel processing of information in interactive models as follows:

Interactive models of reading appear to provide a more accurate conceptualization of reading performance than do strictly top-down or bottom-up models. When combined with an assumption of compensatory processing that a deficit in any particular process will result in greater reliance on other knowledge sources, regardless of their level in the processing hierarchy.

In short, reading is viewed from different perspectives depending on a specific model. The following table (table 01) summarizes the beliefs defining bottom-up, top-down and interactive belief systems.

| | Bottom-up Beliefs About Reading | Top-down Beliefs About Reading | Interactive Beliefs About Reading |
|--|--|---|---|
| Relationship of word recognition to comprehension | Believe students must recognize each word in a selection to be able to comprehend the selection. | Believe students can comprehend a selection even when they are not able to identify each word. | Believe students can comprehend by identifying words quickly and accurately. |
| Use of information cues | Believe students should use word and letter-sound cues exclusively to identify unrecognized words. | Believe students should use meaning and grammatical cues in addition to letter-sound cues to identify unrecognized words. | Believe students process letter-sound and meaning cues simultaneously to identify unrecognized words. |
| View of reading | Believe reading requires mastering and integrating a series of word identification skills. | Believe students learn to read through meaningful and authentic activities in which they read, write, speak, and listen. | Believe students learn to read by developing skills and strategies in meaningful contexts. |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Units of language emphasized instructionally | Emphasize letters, letter- sound relationships, and words. | Emphasize sentences, paragraphs, and text selections. | Emphasize letters, letter- sound relationships, words sentences, paragraphs and text selections |
| Where importance is placed instructionally | View accuracy in identifying words as important. | View reading for meaning as important. | View accurate and word identification as contributing to meaningful reading. |
| Assessment | Think students need to be assessed on discrete skills. | Think students need to be assessed on the kind of knowledge constructed through reading. | Think students need to be assessed on the basis of their performance in meaningful contexts. Assessment informs instruction. |

Table1.1: Defining Bottom-up, Top-down and Interactive Beliefs about Reading (Vacca et al., 2006:39)

From the table above, the three reading models are summarized from multiple perspectives, trying to manifest the characteristics of each model including: relationship of word recognition to comprehension, use of information cues, view of reading and units of language emphasized instructionally.

1. 5. Phases of Reading

Reading in language classrooms is an active process which is interactive and mostly directed by teachers. Teaching reading requires its own specialization where teachers use different techniques to make reading activity much meaningful. Thus, it can be handled in three phases to manage the task in a much proper and effective way. These three phases are pre-reading, while- reading and after reading phases. They are all necessary parts of reading which have to be put into consideration in order to develop students' reading skill.

1. 5.1. Pre-Reading (warm-up, into, before reading)

Pre-reading activities prepare the students for the context of the reading passage. It helps readers to use their background knowledge about the topic and activate necessary schemata (Carter and Long, 1991). Hence, it improves students' interest on the topic and motivate them by making a bridge between the reading passage and the learners' background knowledge and interests. In this phase, learners may be asked to find answers to given questions based on the text, give their personal opinions about the topic or predict the continuing text (Varaprasad, 1997). Pre-reading activities include discussing author or text type, brainstorming and reviewing familiar strategies. This phase helps the reader to select criteria for the central theme of a story or the major argument of an essay.

1.5.2. While- Reading (during, through reading)

While- reading exercises aid students to use their own inferring and judging abilities as well as helping them to develop their linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge. It reminds the student of the importance of vocabulary for contextual clues for meaning and guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words. This stage aims to improve students understanding of the writer's purpose, the language structure and the logical organization in the reading text. So as to comprehension for the reading text content will be realized. Brown (1994) suggests some strategies which are recommended to be applied during reading: skimming, scanning, modeled reading, making connections, visualizing, inferring, synthesizing, pause and prediction. During this phase, students read consciously using their own inferring and judging abilities. They consider syntax and sentence structure by noting the grammatical functions of unknown words, analyzing reference words and predicting text content. Reading for general information (skimming) as well as reading for specific pieces of information (scanning).

1.5.3. Post-Reading (after, follow-up, beyond reading)

Post reading exercises aid students to use their acquired knowledge in similar reading as well as helping them to integrate their reading skill with the other language macro skills. Such practice directs the learner to make use of key words and structures to summarize the reading passage, extract the main idea of a paragraph or a reading text and interpret

descriptions. Follow-up exercises take students beyond the particular reading text in one of two ways: by transferring reading skills to other texts or by integrating reading skills with other language skills (Phillips, 1985).

Since reading is a matter of understanding not just sounding out words, the three phases of reading play a major role in enhancing students' comprehension. Such exercises lead the teacher to assist communication between the writer and the reader.

1.6. Effectiveness of Reading

Reading is an important way of gaining information that should be effective to achieve its purpose. Reading should not be seen as passive activity, but an active process that leads to the development of learning. Reading for learning requires a conscious effort to make links, understand opinions, research and apply what you learn to your studies. By reading effectively the student learns how to question and survey the text he is reading to gain a better understanding of the subject. Carrell (1998) argues that in order for an effective reader to locate and understand bias in texts, they must be able to activate prior knowledge and efficiently use their available schema, have strong reading skills and differentiate between both thinking styles and text styles. For Gillett et al. (2009:60), "effective reading means reading purposefully, efficiently, interactively and critically".

1.6.1. Purposeful Reading

Reading for writing needs to be purposeful. The students need to engage their mental abilities while reading. The way they read something will depend on their purpose. During an effective reading, the reader will generate questions that direct him to the aim of reading this topic. Reading with purpose will maximize the chance of learning because when readers do not know their purpose of reading, they lack the fundamental information needed in order to make decisions about how to approach the text and how to interpret information. In such reading situation, questions should be raised from the reader to enlighten his path: "Why am I reading this text? What do I want to get from this text? And how can this help me with my task?" (Gillett et al., 2009:60). Knowing the purpose for reading an assigned text affects how successful a reader might be with each of those goals. First, distinguishing important information from less important information that is determined by the extent to which this

information helps the reader to achieve the purpose of reading. Second, Approaching texts more strategically using many ways to read a specific text. For instance, a reader can skim or scan a text relying on text's charts, graphs or through word for word. Third, Monitoring comprehension, more proficient readers monitor the extent to which they are experiencing success with a text . But without knowing the goal for the reading assignment, it is difficult to determine what success look like. (Conner and Farr, 2009:56).

1.6.2. Efficient Reading

Efficient reading is about reading in a way that allows the reader to understand the writer's message without spending too much time in the process. It is also about reading with a clear purpose in mind so that the reader only reads material that is relevant. Efficient reading starts with choosing a strategy to suit the kind of text a learner has to read because his purpose in reading and the nature of text to be read will determine his strategy. This means reading selectively and not wasting time on texts or parts of texts that are not relevant to student's purpose. As Gillett et al. (2009:61) assume that in order "to survive in higher education, students need to read efficiently, that is reading only what they need to read by using contents pages, indexes, summaries and reviews. These could be helpful questions for the reader: Do I need to read this? Will it help me? Which parts can I leave out?" .Hence, efficient reading starts with choosing a strategy to suit the kind of text a learner has to read because his purpose in reading and the nature of text to be read will determine the suitable strategy. Therefore, efficient reading is realizing a high degree of comprehension developing specific strategies suitable for particular and selected texts.

1.6.3. Interactive Reading

Reading is an interactive process, it is a two-way process. Gillett et al. (2009) argue that as a reader you are not passive absorbing all the facts which your eyes pass over, but you have to be active. Thus, the reader uses both his eyes and brain developing his mental abilities to achieve effective reading. This means the reader constructs the meaning using his knowledge of the language, his subject and the world continually predicting and assessing. Such questions need to be arisen: "What do I know about the topic? What do I want to know from this text? What is the source of the text and how do such sources present information?"

What do I know about texts in my field? What language is used in such texts?”(ibid: 62). The student needs to be active all the time when he is reading and uses all information that is available. Therefore, a reader before he starts reading, he tries to actively remember what he knows and does not know.

1.6.4. Critical Reading

Critical reading involves presenting a reasoned argument that evaluates and analyses what the reader has read. It involves a deeper examination of the claims put forth as well as the supporting points and possible counterarguments. Being critical; therefore, means advancing the reader’s understanding and being engaged within the text asking himself such questions: “What is the author trying to say? What is the main arguments being presented? Is there a clear distinction between fact and opinion? Does the text provide different points of view? And What evidence is used to support arguments?”(Gillett et al., 2009:62). Critical reading involves understanding the content of a text as well as how the subject matter is developed. It requires the reader’s evaluation of arguments in the text distinguishing fact from opinion and evaluate the evidence given to support the various points. Hence, a text is read to achieve comprehension, analysis and interpretation.

1.7. Reading in Second/ Foreign Language

In second language learning, reading serves as the primary source of new information about all sorts of topics. There is an evidence to argue that achieving academic success and SL/ FL acquisition is related to the crucial importance of a number of reading skills. (Carrell, 1988; Anderson, 1994). However, there are intriguing questions which involve whether there are two parallel cognitive processes at work, or whether there are processing strategies that accommodate reading in SL/ FL.

1.7.1 Differences between First Language and Second Language Reading

Although reading in the L1 shares numerous important basic elements with reading in SL or FL, the process differs greatly. A number of complex variables make the process of L1 different from L2. Because the reading process is essentially unobservable, teachers need to make significant efforts in the classroom to understand those behaviors as well. It is

therefore important that teachers know as much as possible about the cultural, linguistic and educational backgrounds of their readers since many of these factors that influence reading in an L2 context (Singhal,1998).

“[SL] reading is influenced by factors which are normally not considered in [L1] reading research” (Grabe, 1991:368). One feature of SL/FL readers that may influence reading in SL/ FL is language proficiency. It plays a key role in helping readers to read in another language other than in their L1. Grabe (1991) asserts that there is a distinction between SL/FL readers’ linguistic understanding in their NL and their linguistic understanding in the TL. Readers who start reading in their L1 have an amount of linguistic knowledge in their NL which they have acquired spontaneously, whereas, their counterparts readers starting to read in SL/FL do not acquire this linguistic knowledge until further experience with the SL/FL (Singer, 1981). Despite of the presence of this SL/FL linguistic knowledge, SL/FL readers sometimes do not achieve well in the target language due to their lack of confidence in their abilities in the TL. This lack of confidence is resulted from students’ beliefs that they need to know the meaning of every new vocabulary word since reading is considered as an input or tool to learn the TL.

Other linguistic differences between languages as word order variation, relative clause formation, orthographic differences and punctuation may render the SL reading process more difficult. Moreover, sociocultural and contextual differences between L1 and SL/FL may have some influence on the process. As Grabe (1991) also suggests, the reader’s psycholinguistic perspective affects the SL process; motivation and interest, skills and strategies.

There is also a difference between L1 readers and SL/FL readers in terms of reading purpose. In foreign language settings, reading is often used as a means to learn a language or to learn to read in that language. Whereas, reading in L1 is done to learn facts and get the idea of a text. In the absence of other sufficient materials for learning a language, reading seems to be an excellent alternative as it provides learners with authentic materials and settings for learning a second or foreign language. Nuttall (1982) argues in favour of the vital role of reading in the acquisition of a FL as it supplies authentic language. “The best way to improve your knowledge of a foreign language is to go and live among its speakers. The next best way is to read extensively in it” (Nuttall, 1982:168).

Section Two: Extensive Reading

1.8. Definition of Extensive Reading

Reading is one of the ways people around the world can increase their knowledge as well as get exposed to the experiences of other people. It is one of the skills that a learner of a foreign language should acquire. However, it is not always the case; reading can be a favourite activity in the EFL classroom. The key is to follow extensive reading approach. It is an approach to reading pedagogy that encourages students to engage in large amount of reading. “Extensive reading is generally associated with reading large amounts with the aim of getting an overall understanding of the material (Bamford and Day 1997). It is a language procedure where learners are supposed to read large quantities of material or long texts for global understanding because students themselves select the reading material based upon its relevance to their interests, knowledge, and experience. They read texts that match their language level and they choose the setting to read.

Extensive reading is sometimes called by alternative terms such as “pleasure reading”, “sustained silent reading”, “free voluntary reading” or “book flood”. It means, “reading in quantity and in order to gain a general understanding of what is read, it is intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a linking for reading” (Richard & Schmidt, 2002:193-194). It usually means reading many self-selected, easy and interesting texts and doing few or no exercises afterwards. Students are free to choose a book that they like and are allowed to read at their own pace. Its aim is to help students to enjoy reading, so assessment is usually minimized or eliminated entirely.

Krashen (1993:85) summarizes the importance of extensive reading by stating

When children read for pleasure, when they get “hooked on books”, they acquire, involuntary and without conscious effort, nearly all of the so-called “language skills” many people are so concerned about: they will become adequate readers, acquire a large vocabulary, develop the ability to understand and use complex grammatical constructions, develop a good writing style.

Extensive reading allows students to find pleasure in reading as they gain a general understanding of literacy ideas, learn reading strategies, acquire new vocabulary, and

increase their English proficiency. Since students read a large amount of material both inside and outside of the classroom, it is important for the teacher to make the objectives clear and properly monitor the students' progress.

Through the connection with literature, students become inspired to offer their opinions and tell their own stories; as a result, they gain confidence as readers, writers, and independent learners. With clear guidelines and objectives, extensive reading offers students the opportunity not only to recognize how they learn, but also to participate actively in that learning.

1.9. Principles of Extensive Reading

A variety of materials on a wide range of topics is available so as to encourage reading for different reasons and in different ways. Students select what they want to read and have the freedom to stop reading material that fails to interest them. Bamford and Day (1997:7-8) describes a number of principles that serves to understand the complexity of extensive reading, they are summarized as follows:

❖ The reading material is easy

Learners read material that contains few or no unfamiliar items of vocabulary and grammar. Reading for pleasure requires a large selection of books that are available for students to choose from at their level. Students select what they want to read on their interests. If a student finds a book too difficult or they do not enjoy it, they can change it for another. Students would not succeed in reading extensively if they have to struggle with difficult material.

❖ A variety of material on a wide range of topics is available

Students use a variety of materials on a wide range of topics so as to encourage reading for different reasons and in different ways. There should be a variety of materials available in the library for students to choose what they really like. The variety encourages a flexible approach towards reading as the learners are reading for different purposes.

❖ Learners choose what they want to read

Self-selection puts students in a different role from that in traditional classroom, where the teacher chooses or the textbook supplies reading material. This is what students really

enjoy about extensive reading. They are also encouraged to stop reading anything that is not interesting or that they find too difficult.

- ❖ Learners read as much as possible

The language learning benefits of extensive reading come from quantity of reading. Teachers can do a lot to help students pursue extensive reading outside of the classroom. For instance, he can regularly encourage students to borrow books from libraries to take home and read.

- ❖ Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower

Reading materials are well within the linguistic competence of the students in terms of vocabulary and grammar. The vocabulary and grammar of the book that students read should not pose a difficulty. The objective of an extensive reading program is to encourage reading fluency, so students should not stop frequently because they do not understand a passage. Dictionaries are rarely used while reading because the constant stopping to look up words makes fluent reading difficult. Instead of interrupting their flow, students should be encouraged to jot down the words they come across in a vocabulary notebook, and they can look them up after they have finished reading.

- ❖ The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding.

The purposes are determined by the nature of the material and the interests of the student. In an extensive reading program, the students are reading principally for the content of the texts where teachers use few or no follow-up exercises after reading. Teachers can ask students about the books they are reading informally and encourage occasional and mini presentations of the book which seem to be optional not obligatory to students.

- ❖ Reading is individual and silent

Learners read at their own pace .Sometimes silent reading periods may be reserved from class time when students read their self-selected books in the classroom. However, most of the reading is homework. Students read out of the classroom, in their own time, when and where they choose. As far as reading in class is concerned, a teacher can set aside a regular fifteen-minute period of silent reading in class. This silent reading has been said to help structural awareness, build vocabulary, and to promote confidence in the language.

- ❖ Reading is its own reward

Extensive reading is not usually followed by comprehension questions. The goal of reading is reader's own experience and joy of reading. However teachers may ask students to complete follow up activities after reading. These are designed to reflect students' experience of reading rather than comprehension.

❖ The teacher orients and guides the students

The teacher orients students to the goal of the program, explains the methodology, keeps track of what each student reads, and guides students in getting the most out of the program. If the materials available are interesting and appropriate to students level, then they appreciate reading them. Hence, students avoid experiencing frustration of not understanding the books. The positive experience of students stimulates them to read more increasing motivation, enjoyment and a desire to read.

❖ The teacher is a role model of a reader

The teacher is a role model of a reader for the students, he is an active member of the classroom reading community, demonstrating what it means to be a reader and the rewards of being a reader. The teacher encourages and assists the students with their reading, which the students undertake during and /or after class. He can talk in class about books that she or he has been reading and he can also read aloud to students as a way of introducing students to different genres or individual books. Moreover, a teacher can ask students about their reading experiences during occasional summaries. So extensive reading should be a student-centered and a student managed activity and the teacher plays the role of a guider and monitor to make students involved in the task.

1.10. Benefits of Extensive Reading

Extensive reading is an activity that can be carried out by the learner on his own outside the classroom, it plays an important role in foreign language learning (FLL). It may be the only way a learner can keep contact with the FL outside the classroom. It also provides valuable reinforcement of language and structures already presented in the classroom. An extensive reading suggests reading for general language improvement and pleasure on topics that interest the learner. It increases his motivation and gives him more positive attitude towards the TL. Extensive reading, especially where learners are reading materials written at their level, has a number of benefits for the development of a learner's language.

Extensive reading approach receives conceptual support from the views and theories that prioritize the importance of input in learning a SL/FL. The more learners read the more input they obtain. Krashen's (1982) widely known input hypothesis focuses on the benefit of written input through reading which is the most readily available form of comprehensible and meaningful input. It represents the strongest theoretical connection of the necessity and sufficiency of comprehensible input for many aspects of learning a SL, including vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and linguistic skills. If it is carefully chosen to suit learners' level, pleasure reading offers them repeated encounters with language items they have already met. This helps them to consolidate what they already know and extend it since it represents a reliable way to learn a language through massive and repeated exposure to it in context. Moreover, free reading can enhance readers' general language competence. Grabe (1991:396) notes that "longer concentrated periods of silent reading build vocabulary and structural awareness, develop automaticity, enhance background knowledge, improve comprehension skills, and promote confidence and motivation".

Furthermore, the importance of extensive reading extend beyond reading. There is "a spread of effect from reading competence to other language skills – writing, speaking and control over syntax" (Elley, 1991). He views provision of large quantities of reading material to learners as fundamental to reducing the exposure gap between NL and SL/FL learners. As we meet more language, more often, through reading, our language acquisition mechanism is primed to produce it in writing or speech when it is needed (Hoey, 2005). Extensive reading consolidates and sustains vocabulary growth. It allows for multiple encounters with words and phrases in context thus making possible the progressive accretion of meanings to them. In addition, Davies (1995) claims that a programme of extensive reading will make learners more positive about reading, improving their overall comprehension skills, and give them a wider passive and active vocabulary. It helps students to gain fluency, improve comprehension; build vocabulary and read independently; independent readers become more avid reader, better writers and ultimately lifelong readers. Bamford and Day (2004) praise the motivation aspect of extensive reading, seeing its primal benefit in developing positive attitudes towards the FL and increased motivation to study this language.

Therefore, it can be said that the use of extensive reading in foreign language teaching and learning does not only benefit reading proficiency but also the overall language proficiency as well.

1.11.Extensive Reading and Intensive Reading

Reading is an important language skill and highly complicated act that everyone must learn. It is not solely a single skill but a combination of many skills and processes in which the readers interact with printed words and texts for content and pleasure. Reading is a part of our daily life; it is an activity that can add someone's knowledge about important news and also some new vocabulary items. In foreign language, two approaches to language learning and instruction are recognized: Intensive reading and extensive reading.

Intensive reading is an approach to reading that deals with short texts under a teacher's guidance in the classroom for detailed understanding. The intensive reading process is reading for a high degree of comprehension where learners are concerned with the meaning of individual words or sentences. Brown (2007:366) argues that intensive reading is "a classroom-oriented activity in which students focus on the linguistic or semantic details of a passage. Intensive reading calls students' attention to grammatical forms, discourse markers and other surface structure details for the purpose of understanding literal meaning". It occurs when the learner focuses on the language rather than on the text including skimming activities. For instance, the learner may be answering comprehension questions, learning new vocabulary, studying the grammar and expressions in the text where the teacher acts as a facilitator who leads classroom activities and reads. Intensive reading is usually done with difficult texts with many unknown words that require the learner to use a dictionary. Although intensive reading is important, there are few opportunities for learners to read smoothly and become fluent and confident readers because the learner has to stop each time to work on something she /he has not understand .Thus extensive reading approach is required in learning SL/FL.

Extensive reading is an approach to reading that deals with relatively long texts with the purpose of general understanding, information and pleasure. Readers are more concerned with the meaning of the text than the meaning of individual words or sentences. Students read large amounts of high interest material, usually out of class, concentrating on meaning, reading for gist and skipping unknown words. According to Carrell and Carson (1997:49-50), "Extensive reading ...generally involves rapid reading of large quantities of material or longer readings for general understanding, with the focus generally on the meaning of what is being read than on the language". It employs strategies that a highly literate reader uses in L1 that require a relatively fast reading taking into consideration making the reader

comfortable. It means that students are given freedom to choose their own topic which they think are interested in to be discussed. Hence, its aim is to build readers' confidence and enjoyment. Extensive reading is an individual and silent reading which may include reading novels, magazines and newspapers where the teacher acts as a role model of a reader for the students.

1.12.Strategies of Extensive Reading

In EFL situation, students do not have much opportunity to use the SL/FL outside the classroom; lengthy assignments of reading easy books will increase exposure to the target language greatly. So, Extensive reading provides an excellent means of building schema, with this procedure, teachers can expect that their students will come to read the SL/FL not only skillfully, but with pleasure as well. It is with extensive reading that a teacher can assist his learners to build up their receptive vocabulary base so that they can achieve some measurable sense of success when reading a SL/FL.

The selection of appropriate and interesting texts seems to be crucial for the success of extensive reading because "It increases motivation, which is a significant factor in the development of reading speed and fluency" (Williams, 1986:42). Supporting this view, Brumfit (1986:189) mentions the general criteria of texts' selection: "Linguistic level, cultural level, length, pedagogical role, genre representation, and classic states". Choosing a material for extensive reading involves also: "Looking through various titles, scanning through books, and, skimming over a few pages to check to see if it is accessible and likely to be interesting to read. In accepting or rejecting reading material, students develop internal judgement criteria that they use to assess language input" (Gilner & Morales, 2010:17).

Extensive reading involves reading texts for enjoyment and developing general reading skills. For instance, a teacher reads a short story with learners, but does not set them any comprehension tasks afterwards. Learners can be encouraged to read extensively by setting up a class library, encouraging review writing, and incorporating reading of books into the syllabus, and specifying some class time to quiet reading. Extensive reading activities contribute to student motivation and make student reading a source for language practice and use in reading, vocabulary learning, listening, speaking and writing.

In an extensive reading approach, the students' main task is reading, but writing summaries is available not only to provide a means for teachers to check comprehension,

but because writing of summaries improves comprehension (Smith, 1998). In addition, this practice helps students to improve their writing ability (Robb & Sudder, 1989). Another task can be adopted for extensive reading is the Standard exercise, a set of open-ended questions that can be designed to suit most books available to students in a course (Scott et al, 1984). The teacher's role in the extensive reading procedure is to encourage and help students with their reading during or after class time and by checking and commenting on written summaries that students do of their reading. These summaries give students the opportunity to demonstrate their ability in reading and allow teachers to determine if students are understanding their books at an acceptable level. If not, the teacher's task is to guide them to books that are more appropriate.

Moreover, there are a number of vocabulary activities that go well with extensive reading. One of them is the Vocabulary Journal (Day, 2004), which can help students expand their existing vocabulary knowledge and acquire new vocabulary. A teacher instructs his students to scan a chapter in a book or the entire book (if it is short) after reading it, he chooses 5-10 new or unfamiliar words felt to be important, and record them in a vocabulary journal. This latter can be done either on a computer or by hand in a notebook.

To sum up, a teacher should be careful while choosing activities for an extensive reading procedure. He has to avoid boring activities that require from students to remember things from their reading or that test them through comprehension questions. In contrast, a teacher should focus on extensive reading activities that allow students to respond on a personal level to their books which encourage them to read and allow them to enjoy what they have read.

1.13. Goals of Extensive Reading

Extensive reading programme encourages the reading of a wide variety of texts from a range of genre in the target language. It is important that the material read is appropriate with the student's level of comprehension and that she/he can choose what is read. The primary focus of extensive reading is on reading. Hence, while there may be follow-up activities or monitoring by the teacher, this will not deter the student from wanting to read.

Extensive reading plays a major role in the development of language proficiency. It has a positive effect on vocabulary, reading, writing improvement and development of

knowledge which contributes to comprehension. Day and Bamford(1998:38) puts an extremely high value of extensive reading approach , he argues that “Reading is good for you...Reading is the only way, the only way we become readers, develop a writing style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammar, and the only way we become good spellers”.

Peregoy and Boyle (2000:240) says that “Wide reading increases general knowledge, which in turns facilitates comprehension when reading texts of all kinds, including content area texts”. He claims that extensive reading helps students to recognize the format, internal text structure, language patterns and vocabulary associated with particular text types and it is this knowledge of how texts work gained by wide reading that enables learners to construct their own texts of that type. Thus, teachers should be aware that by providing extensive reading opportunities for their students and materials that are comprehensible to them they are more likely to build the vocabulary and background knowledge which will facilitate understanding of that topic.

Teachers play an important role in enhancing their students to read extensively. Day and Bamford (2002:139) points out, teachers need to introduce their students to extensive reading and provide essential guidance as they read extensively. So, teachers could point some goals, as they are put by Nation (2004:22), that students may achieve through reading extensively.

❖ Language

- ✓ Learning new vocabulary.
- ✓ Establishing and enriching previously met vocabulary.
- ✓ Learning new grammatical structures.
- ✓ Establishing previously met structures.
- ✓ Becoming familiar with discourse features and patterns.

❖ Ideas

- ✓ Gaining enjoyment from reading
- ✓ Getting information from the reading material.
E.g. learning about other cultures and the world.

❖ Skills

- ✓ Developing reading comprehension skills
- ✓ Becoming fluent in reading.
- ✓ Developing knowledge to support written skills.

- ✓ Developing knowledge to support oral skills.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have firstly provided theoretical background concerning reading skill presenting reading process, reading comprehension and discussing the major approaches to reading. Then, we have tackled the reading phases and explored the effectiveness of reading ending with citing differences between L1 and L2 reading in language learning. Secondly, we have introduced extensive reading approach. It strived to give a definition of extensive reading as a language skill with reference to its role in developing learner's proficiency. In addition, the work has tried to cover the vast area of extensive reading stressing its crucial role in language learning and teaching on presenting principles, benefits and strategies of extensive reading. Further, a distinction between extensive and intensive reading has been also described ending with presenting the goals of extensive reading. Though, the aim of the study is to explore the role of extensive reading in improving students' writing skill, it is worth to clarify the importance of extensive reading. It is an approach that simultaneously develops general language skill and vocabulary knowledge in an enjoyable way. Extensive reading is an activity that is carried out by the learner on his own outside the classroom aiming at keeping contact with English as a SL/FL. Hence, it provides a valuable reinforcement of language through reading in one side for general language improvement and the other side to enhance the learners' writing skill based on topics that interest the learner.

Chapter Two: The Writing Skill

Introduction

Writing is one of the most challenging skills that occupies an intrinsic value in language teaching and learning. It is a fundamental skill since the learner has to make considerable effort and to practise many writing activities to reach an acceptable level of writing. In other words, writing has always been a heavy task and a burden over the shoulders of foreign language learners. 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 which are obtained and presented appropriately, cohesively, and accurately. In this chapter, we will present the reader with the writing skill in general, including different definitions, introducing writing in SL/FL, as well as reasons behind teaching this skill. We will also explore some criteria relative to different aspects for producing an effective piece of writing. Further, approaches to teaching writing are briefly discussed in this chapter. Later, we will also deal with the reading– writing relationship in SL/FL context presenting some studies concerning the contribution of extensive reading in writing skill development.

2.1. Definition of Writing

Writing is an important means of communication that is probably the most needed skill in academic communities. A great deal of the work carried out in the academic world is done through the medium of writing. The diversity of the writing acts that people may be engaged in during their daily life entails that there is no single definition of writing that would encompass all these acts (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996). However, the following definition may encompass different situations “Writing is an act that takes place within a context, that accomplishes a particular purpose, and that is appropriately shaped for its intended audience” (Hamp. Lyons and Kroll 1997:8 quoted in Weigle, 2002: 19).

Writing is a complex skill that engages the writers in a physical as well as a mental effort. As Weigle (2002:32-33) states, Writing is “not only putting one’s thoughts to paper as they occur, but actually using writing to create new knowledge”. Writing is not just the

activity of producing a piece of written language which is designed to be read. It is more than being a matter of transcribing language into symbols. Hyland (2003: 3) regards writing as “marks on a page or a screen, a coherent arrangement of words, clauses and sentences structured according to a system of rules”. He also views writing as composing skills and knowledge about texts, contexts, and readers” (ibid, p. xv). So, writing is not as simple as it seems to be. "But writing is clearly much more than the production of graphic symbols, just as speech, it is more than the production of sounds". Byrne (1979:1). This means that the graphic symbols have to be arranged in certain ways and conventions to form words, and the latter are arranged to form sentences. We produce a sequence of sentences arranged in a particular order and linked together in certain manners. In line with this, White and Arndt (1991, p.3) see that:

Writing is far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols: it is a thinking process in its own right. It demands conscious intellectual effort which usually has to be sustained over a considerable effort of time.

The research of White and Arndt (1991) into writing is based on the assumption that requires a high level of abstraction and actually demands a conscious work.

Moreover, Kress (1989; in Tribble, 1996) emphasizes that learning to write is not just a question of developing a set of mechanical ‘orthographic’ skills but it also involves learning a new set of cognitive and social relations. Writing is much more than the production of graphic symbols; these symbols have been arranged according to some rules to form words, and to combine them to form sentences. A sequence of coherent sentences is an adequate means of communication. According to Collins and Gentner (1980), the learner/writer should consider the four structural levels in writing starting with the word structure, sentence structure, paragraph structure, and overall text structure. Coordinating all these aspects is a staggering job that is definitely more than a single activity of putting symbols together.

Furthermore, Byrne (1979) states that writing is transforming our thoughts into language. It is a very complex skill that requires both physical and mental activity on the part of the writer. It is the activity of being able to communicate with the language through graphic representations of ideas, respecting the correction of the different structures and vocabulary items in order to share ideas to convince and persuade, to arouse feelings clearly concisely and understandably.

Byrne (1979) argues that writing is neither easy nor spontaneous; it requires conscious mental effort. He divides the problems that make writing difficult into three categories. The first category is purely psychological in that the writer faces the problem of lack of interaction and feedback between the writer and the receiver. The second category is characterized by linguistic problems. In speech, grammatical mistakes can be tolerated because of the spontaneous nature of the skill which prevents us from checking or monitoring what we produce. Whereas in writing we have to express ourselves in a clearer and more grammatical manner. The third category consists of cognitive problems in that writing has to be taught through formal instructions where the organization framework of our ideas in written communication has to be mastered.

Writing is communicating a message in an appropriate manner which demands proper thinking and appropriate use of words. As Nunan (1989) claims, the acquisition of writing requires an understanding as well as a thorough mastery of all the aspects, which make up writing both at the sentence and the discourse levels. The following diagram shows what writers have to deal with when they produce a piece of writing.

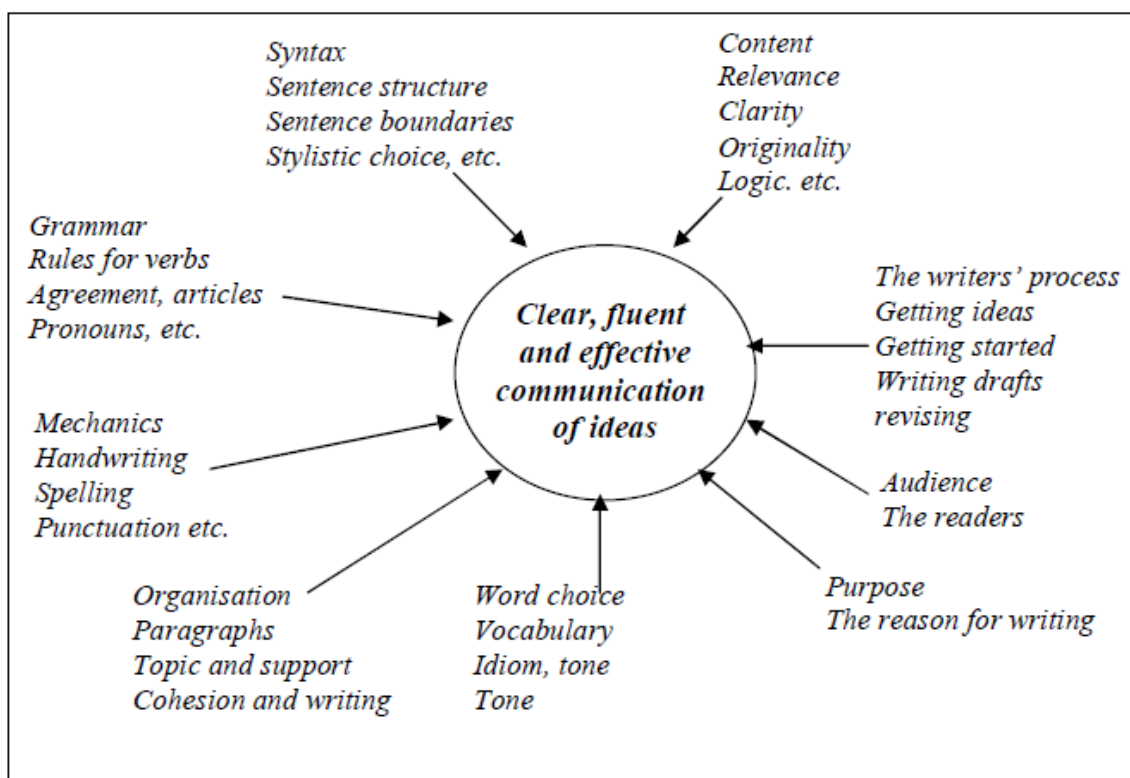


Figure 2.2: What Writers Deal with as they Produce a Piece of Writing (Raimes, 1983:6)

As it can be seen from the figure above, producing a piece of writing obviously involves competence in a number of connected spheres. The student needs to think about knowledge, abilities and the interests of their audience to communicate their ideas clearly, fluently and effectively. Hence, writing is the activity of being able to communicate with language through a graphic representation of ideas. It is also a difficult, sophisticated, prestigious social activity of communication and an important skill for foreign language learners as well as native speakers.

2.2. Writing in English as a Second/ Foreign Language

Writing is a difficult skill that learners need to master in both native language (NL) and second/foreign language (SL/FL). It cannot be developed in a vacuum; it demands a special interest from both teachers and learners. Tribble (as cited in Frith, 2009, p: 1) argues that “It is through writing that the individual comes to be fully effective in an intellectual organization, not only in the management of everyday affairs but also in the expression of ideas and arguments”. Thus, foreign language learners are struggling to write correctly since they could not express their ideas effectively without this competence.

In terms of pedagogy, writing is a central element in the language teaching setting as students need to write down notes and to take written exams. Yet, over the years, it has seemed that writing has been seen as only a support system for learning grammar and vocabulary rather than a skill in its own right. However, trainers and methodologists have looked again at writing in the foreign language classroom and acknowledged the importance of writing as a vital skill for speakers of a foreign language as much as for everyone using their first language (Harmer, 2004).

According to Myles (2002), the capacity of good writing is not a naturally acquired skill rather it is either a learned or culturally skill which must be practised through experience. Composing is one act of writing that implies the ability to give pieces of information through one of the forms of writing. Second language / foreign language learning (SLL/FLL) may face problems or difficulties when dealing with the act of composing. They may meet certain obstacles in formulating new concepts that involve transforming or reworking information. By putting together concepts and solving problems, the writer engages in a “two-way interaction between continuously developing knowledge and continuously developing text”.(Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987:12).

As Cumming (2001) states, three fundamental dimensions of second language writing are involved: features of the texts that people produce, the composing processes that people use while they write and the socio- cultural contexts in which people write. Each of these dimensions has a micro and macro perspectives as it is shown in the figure below.

| | <i>Micro</i> | <i>Macro</i> |
|------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Text</i> | Syntax & morphology | Cohesive devices |
| | Lexis | Text structure |
| <i>Composing</i> | Searches for words & syntax | Planning |
| | Attention to ideas & language concurrently | Revising |
| <i>Context</i> | Individual development | Participate in a discourse community |
| | Self-image or identity | Social change |

Figure 2.3: What Does a Person Learn When Writing in a Second Language? (Cumming, 2001).

The figure shows that writing improvement has been viewed in terms of features of the texts that FLL produce, processes of text composition and the context where they produce a piece of writing.

2.3.Reasons for Teaching Writing

Writing as a skill has come to play the eminent role it probably deserves in foreign language teaching because of the many benefits it provides, it may be described as helping learners to gain proficiency in the foreign language. It is the skill for mostly used to examine pupils' performances. Harmer (2004:3) agrees that writing should be learned because it could not be naturally acquired like speaking. Writing is a product that improves students' thinking and learning, it provides teachers with the opportunity to teach students to organize ideas and develop points logically.

Harmer (1998: 79) provides more reasons to teach writing for EFL learners which include reinforcement, language development, learning styles and writing as a skill. These reasons are summarized as follows:

- ❖ *Reinforcement*: Some learners acquire languages in a purely oral/ aural way, but most of them benefit greatly from seeing the language written down. Students often find it useful to write sentences using new language shortly after they have studied it.
- ❖ *Language development*: It seems that the actual process of writing (rather like the process of speaking) helps us to learn as we go along. The mental activity we have to go through in order to construct proper written texts is all part of the ongoing learning experience.
- ❖ *Language style*: For many learners, producing language in a slower way is something they appreciate. Therefore, writing is appropriate for learners who take time to think through. It is an activity that provides time and ease for learners more than interpersonal face-to face communication does.
- ❖ *Writing as a skill*: The most important reason for teaching writing is that, it is a basic language skill. Learners need to know how to write essays, how to put written reports together and how the writing system operates. They need to know some of the writing's special conventions such as punctuation and paragraph construction just as they need how to pronounce language appropriately.

2.4. Effective Writing

Writing in English within an academic context requires some criteria of acceptability relative to different aspects of writing that include organization, vocabulary, language use, punctuation, accurate capitalization and paragraphing.

Writing is a complex process that involves a range of skills and tasks. Although writing is often used to clarify and express personal thoughts and feelings, it is used primarily to communicate with others. Students need to become disciplined thinkers in order to communicate their ideas clearly and effectively. They need to learn to select and organize their ideas, keeping in mind the purpose for which they are writing and the audience they are addressing. They also need to learn to use standard written forms and other conventions of language. (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1997:11).

In order to develop an ability in writing, students move systematically and thoroughly through the different steps of the writing skill. Therefore, the writing process is the means by which students learn how to approach and carry out a writing task.

Furthermore, writing is a form of communication that permeates through almost every aspect of our personal, educational and professional lives. According to Starkey (2004), an effective piece of writing is the one that is organized, clear and coherent with accurate language and effective word choice.

2.4.1. Organization

In the process of writing, information should be presented to readers in a structured and organized format. Organization is usually decided upon through certain techniques that precedes the actual act of writing. In other words, the writer decides about the organization of this written work before engaging into the physical act of writing. Therefore, it presents information to readers in a structured way. Hence, the reader will believe what the writer is saying and willingly follow his lead. Starkey (2004, p.2) states:

By following an organized method of writing, you will guide your reader from your first to last sentence. He or she will be able to see how the various points you make in your [piece of writing] work together and how they support your thesis.

Organization refers to the plan of the written task that provides the structure of the writing and reflects its audience and purpose. It is characterized by an effective beginning and end, logical sequence of ideas and clear connection of the topic. This element of writing deals with coherent arrangement of material. It involves keeping the reader oriented to the central ideas. An effective writer organizes his ideas in a manner that flows logically from the beginning to the end of the written work.

2.4.2. Clarity

Clarity is an essential element of writing the learner should become skilled in in order to make his writing readable and guarantee the readers' understanding. An effective writer communicates his points using clear and concise language without being vague or ambiguous. Murray and Hughes (2008:86) emphasize the importance of clarity as a

fundamental element in facilitating a piece of writing to be readable and accessible. According to them, the key to achieve clarity is to be relevant to the topic avoiding long sentences that mislead the reader and produce short sentences directly to the point. Writers can achieve this objective through constant editing of their work cutting out repetitions, unnecessary words and complex vocabulary.

2.4.3. Cohesion and Coherence

Cohesion and coherence are important elements in any kind of writing. They are particularly crucial in academic writing, where success or failure may depend on how clearly the learner has managed to communicate his ideas to the reader. Cohesion is the grammatical and lexical linking within a text or sentence that holds a text together and gives it meaning. However, coherence is a quality of a piece of text that makes it meaningful in the minds of the reader.

Cohesion concerns the flow of sentences and paragraphs from one to another. It involves the tying together of old and new information. The writer works hard to achieve cohesion structurally to enhance the reader's understanding of ideas.

Cohesion is produced by the repetition of elements of the text e.g. recurrence, paraphrase, and parallelism; the compacting of text through the use of devices such as ellipsis and the use of morphological and syntactic devices to express different kinds of relationships such as connection , tense, aspect and dioxies relationships(Bussman, 1998: 199) .

Cohesion refers to the connectivity in a text; it concerns the degree to which sentences are connected. So, to achieve good cohesion, the writer should know how to use cohesive devices.

Coherence is the result of tying information in your writing together so that connections you have made in your own mind are apparent to the reader. According to Kane (2000) and Crème and Lea (2008), coherence has to do with arranging and linking one's idea in a way that makes them most easily understood by the reader. It is achieved when sentences and ideas are connected and flow together smoothly. With coherence, the reader has an easy time understanding the ideas that the reader wishes to express.

Murray and Hughes (2008:45) notice that good writer is the one “who sticks his idea together as links in a chain, each link connecting the one before it with the one after. If any links are missing, the connections become unclear and the argument structure breaks down”.

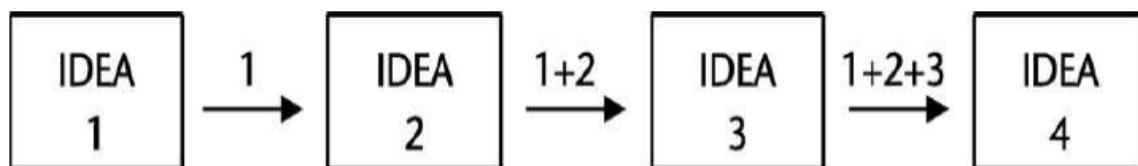


Figure 2.4: A Sequence of Ideas. (Murray and Hughes, 2008: 46)

A coherent piece of writing has parts which logically follow each other; they are not isolated thoughts but connected ones that refer to how easy it is to understand the writing work.

2.4.4. Word Choice

Using the correct word choices while writing is crucial to the writer’s success as a communicator. Choosing appropriate words is the best way for the learner to convey accurately his ideas. As Starkey (2004) and Kane (2000) claim, there are two aspects the learner should consider while choosing the words to be used: denotation and connotation.

Denotation is the basic or the literal meaning of a word. Learners should make sure of the correctness of their words, because sometimes some confusion may stem for words that sound or look similar (but have different meaning), words and usages that sound correct (but in fact are not considered Standard English), or words that are misused so often that their usage is thought to be correct. Connotation “is a word’s implied meaning which involves emotions, cultural assumptions and suggestions” (Starkey, 2004: 21). The learner should confirm that each used word denotes exactly what he intends to it, considering connotation requires the learner thinking beyond the dictionary, to what might be implied or inferred by his writing.

To sum up, word choice refers to a writer’s selection of words as determined by a number of factors, including both denotative and connotative meaning.

2.4.5. Mechanics

The word mechanics refers to the appearance of words, how they are spelled and arranged on paper. The fact that the first word of a paragraph is usually indented, for example, is a matter of mechanics (Kane, 2000). Conventions or mechanics are very significant in putting together a good piece of writing because no matter how original are the learner's ideas, if he cannot express them in a clear and accurate manner. According to Starkey (2004), the learner should express himself through the written word in a clear and accurate way which helps him to succeed in his writing. He addressed that written mechanics in terms of grammar spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. . Brooks and Penn (1970: 20) state that "For one thing, in writing, we must understand the structure of the language, what the parts of speech do, how the words relate to one another, what individual words mean, the rules of grammar and punctuation".

- ✓ Grammar is an essential element in writing .The learner must be knowledgeable of the rules of grammar and how to manipulate them in order to be skilled in the writing process, such as: pronouns, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions.
- ✓ spelling is one of the factors which need to be taken into account by students when dealing with writing, because it is an aspect many teachers in an EFL context focus on when evaluating students work. Correct spelling gives one's work credibility. Not only will the reader know that one is educated, but also that he is careful about his work.
- ✓ Capitalization is necessary both for specific words and to start sentences and quotes (Starkey, 2004). Capitalization must be used in academic writing and the learner should follow the rules of using capitalization and be careful of using it in the right way.
- ✓ Punctuation is necessary part in English academic writing. With proper punctuation your writing will be more polished and technically correct, and you will convey your voice more directly (ibid). They aid writers to give directions to their readers about which way a sentence is going

Capitalization and punctuation marks are important parts of writing according to Murray and Hughes (2008: 185):

They indicate pauses and sentence boundaries and also eliminate ambiguity. A well punctuated and capitalized piece of writing should make your work easier to read and understand and will therefore help it make a more favorable impression on your readers.

Capitalization and punctuation are not simply rules that we must memorize and follow; they are specific signals to the reader that are used to determine meaning and to clarify intent.

2.5. Approaches to Teaching Writing

Writing is one of the most important skills in learning a foreign language. The significance of being able to write in a second or foreign language has become clearer nowadays. Accordingly, different approaches to writing such as product approach, process approach and genre approach came into existence and they have been the concern of SL/FL researchers. . The product approach focuses on the text, the final output of the writing process, and on the superficial elements of language: grammar and mechanics. In contrast, the process approach concentrates on the process itself, that is, how a writer can explore and generate ideas, so that content and discourse in a piece of writing are the major concerns. Finally, the genre approach sees writing development as the learning of the genres, values, and practices of the target community.

2.5.1. The Product Approach

The product or the controlled writing approach was widespread in the mid- 1960's as "the marriage of structural linguistics and the behaviorist learning theories of second language teaching" (Hyland, 2003:3). A product approach is "a traditional approach in which students are encouraged to mimic a model text, usually is presented and analyzed at an early stage" (Gabrielatos, 2002:5). It is concerned with the final result of the writing process and mainly based on activities which require from the learner to be engaged in imitating and transforming model texts.

The product approach to the teaching of writing emphasizes mechanical aspects of writing, such as focusing on grammatical and syntactical structures and imitating models. As Nunan (1999) claims, it concentrates on writing tasks in which the learner imitates, copies and transforms teacher supplied modes, it focuses on steps involved in creating a piece of work where the model text is always taken as the starting point. It is studied and analyzed from all angles: structures of grammar, content, sentences, organizations and rhetorical patterns. After manipulating these features, students are given a new topic and invited for a parallel writing task.

According to Hairston (1982), the primary task of writers is to predetermine the form by which to organize their ideas. He believes that a writer knows what she/ he is going to write before she/ he writes. Naturally, the role of the model is important in the sense that it leads the student from a point of departure to an end with a task to replicate. Therefore, a written text as claimed by Silva (1990:13) is “a collection of sentences, patterns and vocabulary – a linguistic artifact, a vehicle for language practice”. The emphasis as White (1998:6) says is on “how the original arrived at that particular product. In other words, it gives no indication of the process”. This approach is primarily concerned with correctness and form of the final product. Teaching writing based on this approach is a habit formation where errors should not occur and if so it needs a correction or elimination where possible (Tribble, 1996).

In a typical product approach – oriented classroom, students are supplied with a standard sample of text and they are expected to follow the standard to construct a new piece of writing. It comprises four stages (steele, 2004):

- **Stage one:** students study model texts and then the features of the genre are highlighted. For example, if studying a formal letter, students’ attention may be drawn to the importance of paragraphing and the language used to make formal requests. If a student reads a story, the focus maybe on the techniques used to make the story interesting, and students focus on where and how the writer employs these techniques.
- **Stage two:** This stage consists of controlled practice of the highlighted features, usually in isolation. So if students are studying a formal letter, they may be asked to practice the language used to formal requests.
- **Stage three:** This is the most important stage where the organization of ideas is more important than the ideas themselves and as important as the control of language.
- **Stage four:** This is the end product of the learning process. Students choose from the choice of comparable writing tasks. To show what they can be as fluent and competent users of the language, students individually use the skills, structures and vocabulary they have been taught to produce the product.

2.5.2. The process Approach

At the beginning of the 1970's, "the nature of the written discourse as well as the writing process itself have attracted renewed interest from educational researchers, linguists, applied linguists and teachers" (Kroll, 1990:VIII). This interest led many researchers to focus on the "the composing processes of students' writings instead of on the written products they produce" (ibid:8). The process approach to the teaching of writing has been advocated in contrast with the traditional product approach of teaching writing. Therefore, teachers wanted their students to "experience writing as a creative process for exploring and communicating meaning" (Spack, 1984:651).

A central idea in the process approach is that writing is "an organic process which does not depend on copying a model" (Brookes and Grundy, 1998:18). With the rise of this approach, the emphasis is no longer on the finished text, but on the steps that make up the act of writing. Silva and Matsuda (2001:67) describe the process approach as:

[...] an approach that emphasizes teaching writing not as a product but as a process, helping students discover their own voice, allowing students to choose own topic, providing teacher and peer feedback, encouraging revision and using student writing as the primary text of the course.

Therefore, the teacher acts as a facilitator where he aids students to go through the writing process rather than to provide direct instruction.

In this approach, students need to realize that what is first written down on paper is not the final product, it is only the beginning. Hyland (2003:10) states that:

The process approach to writing teaching emphasized the writer as an independent producer of texts, but it goes further to address the issue of what teachers should do to help learners perform a writing task.

Thus, teaching writing has moved away from focusing on the final product itself to the different stages the writer engages in to create this product. In addition, it encourages students to write as much as possible without worrying about mistakes .So, the focus is on fluency rather than accuracy.

The writing process involves a series of steps to follow in producing a finished piece of writing. Nunan (1991) clearly states that the process approach focuses on the steps involved in creating a piece of work and the process writing allows for the fact that no text can be perfect. However, a writer will get closer to perfection by producing, reflecting on, discussing and reworking successive drafts of a text. According to Zamel (1983), writing is a process through which students can explore and discover their thoughts, constructing meaning and assessing it at the same time. Attention is paid first to the content, meaning and then to the form.

As Badger and White (2000:154) claims, “writing in process approach is seen as predominantly to do with linguistic skills, such as planning and drafting, and there is much less emphasis on linguistic knowledge about grammar and text structure». In this approach, students are taught planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing strategies at each stage of the writing process to help them to write freely and arrive at a product of good quality. Hyland (2003: 11) explains that the writing strategies do not occur in a linear sequence; they are recursive, interactive, and potentially simultaneous; i.e. all the work can be reviewed, evaluated and revised even before any text has been produced at all. In addition, Hedge(1988:20) sees the process approach as:

The process of composition is not a linear one, moving from planning to composing to revising and editing. It would be more accurate to characterize writing as recursive activity in which the writer moves backwards and forwards between drafting and revising with stages of replanning and between.

This process will be explained more in the following figure:

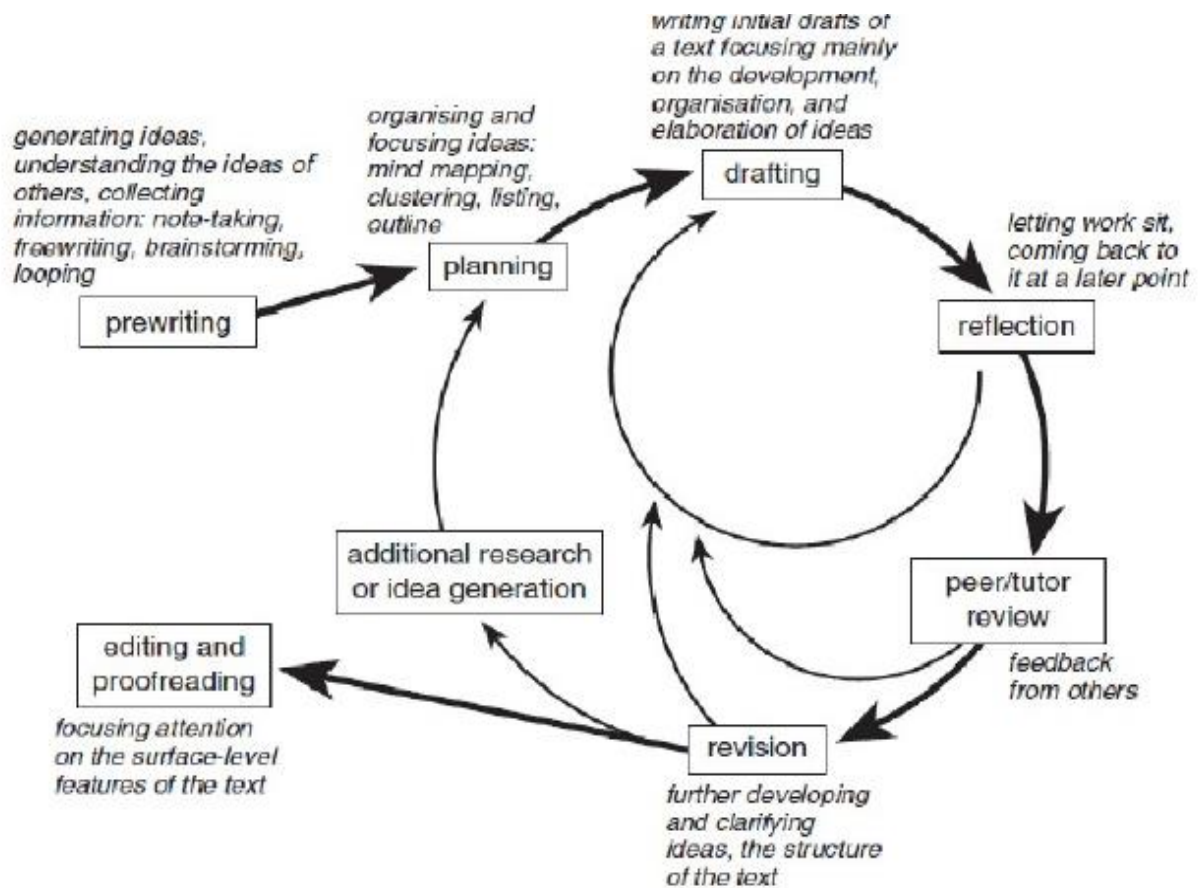


Figure 2.5: The Writing Process Approach (Murray, 1987: 34)

The figure 2.4. shows that writing does not have to be one way path, rather a recursive process is required to achieve stronger and more focused work. When we talk about writing as a process, we understand that ideas are generated, put in first draft, organized and arranged in a whole, revised and corrected and finally written in a final draft. In the process approach, the steps or stages are illustrated and practiced from the generation of ideas and compilation of information to writing a perfect piece of writing through a sequence of activities typically occurs in four stages: “Planning, drafting, revising, and editing” (Badger & White, 2000: 154).

❖ Planning

Planning is an important step in the writing process where students generate ideas based on prior knowledge or personal experience. Parson (1985:19) states that “students who are encouraged to engage in an array of prewriting experiences have a greater chance for writing achievement than those enjoined to get to work on their writing without this kind of

preparation”. Planning a piece of writing is generally made by reading, organizing, and classifying the prewriting notes. An effective plan could guarantee organization, clarity, and coherence for the written form since it gives direction to the work by following a logical order in dealing with ideas and information.

It is crucial to make students aware of the importance of the planning phase. Before getting started to write, it is always helpful that the learner generates his ideas developing certain ways to activate and reinforces different steps of the process. According to Murray (1980) planning exercises do not only help students to find something to say about a specific topic, they also help them to improve their writing skills in that they provide them with opportunities to generate ideas and write with confidence. The planning phase offers the writer a battery of strategies like brainstorming, which help the student “to make generalizations and to see connections and relationships among their observations, thoughts and facts” (Taylor, 1981:10). Planning is the phase which prepares the student to approach the writing task with confidence. It is also the phase where the topic is generated and the purpose and form are clarified.

❖ **Drafting**

Drafting is the stage where the writer gathers the information he collected in the planning phase to shape his ideas. It is the “physical act of writing” as referred to by Lindermann (1987: 26). It is the real writing stage where the writer develops his topic on paper. Trimmer (1995: 54) provides that, in drafting, writers “determine whether the information ...discovered in planning can be shaped into successful writing”. Generally, the first draft is never the final version. Concerning the drafting stage Galko (2002: 49) states:

Drafting means writing a rough, or scratch, form of your paper. It is a time to really focus on the main ideas you want to get across in your paper. When drafting, you might skip sections or make notes to yourself to come back and add more examples in certain spots or to check your facts later. As you draft, you do not need to worry about grammar, spelling, or punctuation. You will have time to refine these mechanical parts of your paper at a later stage.

Drafting is the process of writing a rough outline of what will be addressed. Therefore, it is worth noting here that drafting should be repeated as many times as necessary until reaching a good draft in the view of the teacher who plays an essential role by taking part in the writing

process. Trimmer (1995:55) also regards drafting as an “art of choice” where the writer evaluates his information, organizes and reorganizes it, until he constructs “a coherent draft”. Accordingly, the aim behind the draft is to jot down the ideas within the confines of the outline without that the student forces himself/herself to get everything correct (Chelsa, 2006). So, The goal of the drafting stage is to take the learner’s outline and to develop a piece of writing.

❖ **Revising**

The revising stage is the process of looking again and discovering a new vision of the writing produced in drafting. The writer corrects mechanical errors and realizes substantial changes in his writing during the stage. Revising is the first review of the written text, it is crucial to see if any part requires enhancement. While revising, the writer reread, shift ideas about, checks coherence, diction, clarity, and consider the feedbacks (Fowler, 2006; Johnson, 2008). It is considered as the core of the writing process because it represents “a discovery procedure as Taylor (1981: 7) writes:

Revision ... is that crucial point in the process when discovery and organization come together, when writers refine and recast what they have written and shape it into coherent written statement.

Hence, during the revision phase of the writing process, writers examine the content of their writing. They review their written text for clarity and craft and consider changes that would improve the piece.

Moreover, reviewing includes more than only checking spelling, grammar and punctuation, it also includes checking that content and purpose are clear and appropriate for the reader in the particular writing situation (Brown and Hood, 1989: 20). According to Johnson (2008), reviewing is the heart of the writing, and it could be more productive of advanced final products if it includes input from teachers and/or peers. Indeed, peer review is a key classroom activity that enhances the students’ ability to organize texts and increases their awareness of the importance of readership and that of purpose.

❖ **Editing**

Editing is the stage where the draft is polished; it is the final step before handing out the final draft. The writer gives attention to mechanics such as punctuation, spelling and grammar. Editing involves the careful checking of the text to ensure that there are no errors

of spelling, punctuation, word choice and word order. To shed more light on the editing phase, we will quote Johnson (2008: 167):

Basically 'editing' means making your piece as reader-friendly as possible by making the sentences flow in a clear, easy-to-read way. It also means bringing your piece of writing into line with accepted ways of using English: using the appropriate grammar for the purposes of the piece, appropriate punctuation and spelling, and appropriate paragraphing

Accordingly, editing should be undertaken when all revisions to the content are complete. It requires that writers proofread to find errors in grammar, usage, mechanics and spelling and then make appropriate corrections.

2.5.3. The Genre Approach

The genre approach to teaching writing is mainly concerned, as the name indicates, on teaching particular genres that students need control of in order to succeed in particular situations. This might include a focus on the language and discourse features of the texts as well as the context in which the text is produced (Nemouchi, 2008: 92-93). It looks beyond the subject content, composing processes and linguistic forms to see a text as attempts to communicate with readers. A genre-based approach places a great emphasis on the relationship between text-genres and their contexts (Hyon, 1996). It aims to help students become effective participants in their academic and professional environment as well as in their broader communities (Hammond and Derewianka, 2001).

Moreover, Swales (1990: 53 as cited in Tribble, 1996:49) defines a genre as follows:

A genre comprises a class of communication events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert member of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre.

This definition offers the basic idea that there are certain conventions or rules which are generally associated with a writer's purpose. It entails that the social purpose of writing determines the language used in writing; the choice of words, expressions and structures according to agreed conventions.

Based on this approach writing is "attempts to communicate with readers"(Hyland, 2003:18). That is writing is a social act where the written text is set to communicate

something achieving a specific purpose. Thus, central to the genre approach is the writer's purpose behind writing a text and the reader's expectations about the written text. The genre approach demonstrates that writing is socially constrained; writing differs according to the context in which it is produced (Badger and White, 2000). The knowledge of language is intimately attached to a social purpose, and more focus is on the viewpoint of the reader than on that of the writer.

Teaching writing on the light of this approach recommends deconstructing dominant genres, analyzing them from the linguistic point of view, reproducing them from an analysis of their structural and linguistic features, and generating learners' own texts that conform to the conventions of each genre (Badger and White, *ibid*). This approach argues that students can only produce a composition to be successfully accepted by a particular English language discourse community once they take context of a text into account into their own writing process. Thus, providing learners with the opportunity to experience different elements of writing; "the topic, conventions, style of the genre, and the context in which their writing will be read and by whom" (Harmer, 2004: 295). He also says, "In a genre approach to writing learners study texts in the genre they are going to be writing before they embark on their own writing" (*ibid*, p. 258).

Writing is mostly viewed as the students' reproduction of text based on the genre offered by the teacher. It is also believed that learning takes place through imitation and exploration of different kinds of models. Accordingly, learners should be exposed to many examples of the same genre to develop their ability to write a particular genre. Through exposure to similar texts, students can detect the specialized configurations of that genre, and they also can activate their memories of prior reading or writing experiences whenever they encounter the task of creating a new piece in a familiar genre (Badger & White, 2000: 155-156). According to this theory, knowledge is best constructed when learners collaborate, support one another to encourage new ways to form, construct and reflect on new knowledge. In this case, social interactions and participation of group members play a key role in developing new knowledge.

2.6. The Reading-Writing Relationship in Second/ Foreign Context

Traditionally reading and writing were considered as separate language skills either in L1 or in SL context. However, more recent works come to account for the relation between the two skills. Reading and writing are mutually reinforcing interactive processes. Even with the dissimilarity in their description, writing as a productive skill and reading as a receptive

one. Eisterhold (1990: 88) writes in this sense: " Good writers are always good readers, and better writers read more than poor writers." (Quoted in Nemouchi, 2008:44). Hence, reading is making sense of a passage through creating a relationship of parts from the text, While writing is relating prior knowledge and experience extracted from the text by meaning construction on a written form.

Besides reinforcing learning, the combination of reading and writing in the SL/FL context can improve the learning of both skills (Hudson, 2007). It is stated that "writing should not be isolated as a cognitive or academic activity because it fundamentally depends on writers' purposeful interactions with print"(Ferris and Hedgcock,2005: 31). That is teaching writing should be grounded on the reading ability. As it is seen by Johnson (2008: 7), the apparent relationship between reading and writing is that reading helps students to become better writers. Through reading, students have incidental contact with the rules of grammar, so they develop a sense for the structure of the language and grammar and increase their vocabulary. Therefore, Reading in the context of SL/FL writing is understood as the appropriate input for acquisition of writing skills because it is generally assumed "that reading passages will somehow function as primary models from which writing skills can be learned, or at least inferred" Eisterhold (1990: 88). Therefore, reading a variety of genres helps children learn text structures and language that they can transfer to their own writing.

Writing as a productive skill needs reading as a receptive skill as Harmer (2001: 251) claims, "productive work need not always to be imitative. But students are greatly helped by being exposed to examples of writing and speaking which show certain conventions for them to draw upon". Thus, when we read we extract information according to the purpose of our reading, interests and motivations; we supply information in order to make sense of what we read, using our knowledge of the world and our previous experience as readers. The former enables us to understand concepts, points of view and integrate them in our experience and the latter enables us to identify and understand cohesion, coherence, rhetorical organization, and conventions of written language (Lopes, 1991).

To sum up, researchers have increasingly noted the connection between reading and writing, identifying them as complementary processes of meaning construction involving the use of similar cognitive strategies.

2.7. The Contribution of Extensive Reading in the Writing Skill Development

Extensive reading can empower foreign language students to be fluent readers who enjoy every line they read and feel the pleasure of being hooked on books especially after

class time. Hence, an essential outcome of extensive reading would be achieved, that is to enrich students' vocabulary and increase their word recognition skills.

Krashen (1982) reveals that voluntary pleasurable reading contributes to the development of writing ability more than frequent writing does, and practicing writing leads to improvement of writing. In addition, good writers tend to plan, draft and revise more than poor writers. Further, he applies his theory of comprehensible input to the learning of writing. Therefore, writing is acquired rather than learned, by exposure to reading. Hence, reading develops the students writing competence, the underlying knowledge of the written language, but it cannot improve the writing performance, the ability to put the acquired knowledge into practice. In order to develop the performance practicing writing is needed.

Krashen (1989) studies the power of reading on language acquisition on the basis that reading becomes comprehensible input provided that texts are both interesting and understandable so that they capture the learners' attention. His research on reading exposure supports the view that it increases not only reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition, but it improves grammatical development and writing style. He claims that second language learners' writing competence derives from large amounts of self-motivated reading for interest and/or pleasure. Krashen (1985: 23) notes that

[...]if second language acquisition and the development of writing ability occur in the same way, 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 genuine interest and for pleasure" (Quoted in Nemouchi, 2008:48-49).

According to him, writing proficiency is acquired through reading instead of writing. Writing is developed as speaking does, by understanding written materials and retaining the various principles that govern them.

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. He emphasizes the idea that through writing we acquire the habit of expressing our ideas in a clear, correct and coherent way, fulfilling a double purpose: to be a medium of communication with others and a means of personal intellectual growth. Extensive reading program is administered “to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading” (Richard & Schmidt, 2002: 193-194).

One other essential outcome of extensive reading is to enrich students' vocabulary and increase their word recognition skills. Developing vocabulary is crucial in learning a foreign language in general and reading in that language in particular. Simply put, People with large vocabularies are more proficient readers than those with limited vocabularies (Luppescu & Day, 1993). Studies on vocabulary acquisition have demonstrated that learning vocabulary through extensive reading is not only possible, but is almost certainly the means by which native speakers acquire the majority of their vocabulary (Saragi *et al*, 1978). Exposing learners to large quantities of material provides them with the opportunity to meet words in their context of use and increases sight vocabulary learning. An end that is hard to achieve with explicit teaching during the relatively short period of time that foreign language learners spend in the classroom (Thornbury, 2002).

Nevertheless, extensive reading plays an important role in the recycling and the consolidation of vocabulary, in this token, Pigada & Schmitt (2006:03) declare that:

Incidental words acquisition research has verified the assumption that exposure to reading texts can contribute to L2 and also to first language vocabulary growth, as all studies have found evidence of incidental vocabulary learning.

In other words, the more we see words in the text, the more exposure we have to the words and the more acquisition of vocabulary takes place.

Conclusion

In conclusion, writing in a foreign language is an essential and a difficult skill at the same time. It plays a crucial role in social, cultural, professional and academic contexts that have led to consider it as a very important and central skill in the world of Applied Linguistics and is still an area of lively debate and research. Writing needs more attention and knowledge from both teachers and learners that would reinforce and facilitate learning this skill. In this chapter, we have explored the nature of writing as a cognitive activity and presenting it as a FL skill. Besides, we have presented reasons for writing to be taught and criteria for producing an effective writing task. In addition, we have included the approaches of writing. Then, since the aim of this study is to encourage the reading-writing relationship and to manifest the major contributions of extensive reading in developing the writing skill, we have presented some studies that support this relation.

Chapter Three: Field Work

Introduction

This third chapter is devoted to the empirical phase that strives to provide an answer to the inquiry: whether foreign language writing could be better achieved when learners read extensively. Thus, we have opted for a qualitative and descriptive method as the most appropriate one to achieve the research desirable aims. Indeed, this research work relies on the collection of data from third year LMD students and teachers of written expression in the department of English at Biskra University through two questionnaires. The questionnaires are among the most used tools for eliciting information from target respondents concerning their attitudes and backgrounds.

The students' questionnaire is administered to find out how much students are aware of the significance of extensive reading and to what extent they consider it as an important way to improve their writing skill. In the other part, teachers' questionnaire is addressed to investigate what efforts could be done by teachers to motivate their students to improve their writing performance through extensive reading. Besides, it examines whether they encourage reading practices and activities to raise learners' awareness toward the reading-writing relationship. Moreover, a detailed analysis and interpretation of the gathered data from both questionnaires is also presented in this empirical part of the work in the form of tables and figures. Results of this investigative study serve as a crucial step toward a diagnosis of the problem.

3.1. Students' Questionnaire

3.1.1. Aims of Students' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to depict the students' beliefs and attitudes toward both reading and writing skills as well as their abilities in both skills. It mainly attempts to point out the students' awareness of the reading- writing relationship, besides it seeks to report the extent to which that relation is supported during the written expression courses. Moreover, the questionnaire aims at sorting out the role of extensive reading in improving students' writing skill.

3.1.2. The population

Third-year LMD students at the department of Foreign Languages at Biskra University represent the population used in this questionnaire during the academic year 2015/2016. The total number of third year LMD students' population consists of 370 students, (307 female and 63 male). The population has been intentionally chosen on the basis that this level suits better this study where students had already received both formal instruction and experienced writing in English during both first year and second year. In addition, they need more vocabulary and different styles to accomplish better productions.

3.1.3. The Sample

Since it is impossible to deal with the whole population, our sample is composed of 52 informants (48 female and 4 male) of third year EFL students. The participants have been selected randomly among the ten existing groups.

3.1.4. Administration of Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given to 52 third-year students. Out of 52, 50 questionnaires were handed back. It is worth to mention that the questionnaire was administered on March 07th 2016 by the end of the written expression session and around 25 students were present in each group. It took around half an hour to be administered and the questionnaires were rendered back on the same day.

3.1.5. Piloting of the Questionnaire

It should be noted that the questionnaire was piloted prior to its administration, this resulted in slight changes in the questionnaire and one question was dropped out because it was thought ambiguous and misleading. In addition, Q.18 was modified to bring more precise data that suit our research.

3.1.6. Description of Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire (see appendix 01) consists of 23 questions carefully selected and simplified according to students' level. They are grouped in three sections. Most questions are closed-ended questions; respondents had to answer with dichotomies (yes/no questions), tick the appropriate answer (s) from a series of options, or rank the options following a scale of decreasing order of priority. However, there are some open-ended questions where the respondents were asked to provide explanations or further alternatives.

3.1.6.1. Section One: General Information (Q1-Q4)

In this section, the respondents are asked to indicate their gender as well as we look for the respondents' experience in learning English and if it is their own choice. Also, the informants were asked to rank the language skills in terms of their interest to develop each skill.

3.1.6.2. Section Two: Reading and Extensive Reading (Q5-Q15)

This section seeks information about some aspects of the reading skill and more precisely extensive reading. First, students were asked about their reading experience in English. In addition, we are interested to know where students read and if they practise reading for pleasure during free time. Moreover, we focus to know the extent to which students are encouraged to read by their teacher. Hence, we aim through this section to identify to what extent both teachers and students are aware of the notion of extensive reading and if students are enhanced to read extensively to develop their proficiency in writing.

3.1.6.3. Section Three: The Writing Skill (Q16-Q25)

This section provides general information about the respondents' background in Writing, their interest in the writing skill, and if it is a necessary skill to develop. Moreover, it seeks to report whether the relation between reading and writing is supported during the written expression courses or not. Furthermore, it aims at assessing the respondents' awareness of the effects of reading on writing. In addition, it seeks to provide the contributions that extensive reading offers to enhance students' writing skill.

3.1.7. Results of the Questionnaire

❖ Section One: General Information

Q1. Gender

| Gender | Number of respondents (N) | Percentage (%) |
|--------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Male | 4 | 8 |
| Female | 46 | 92 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.2: Students' Gender

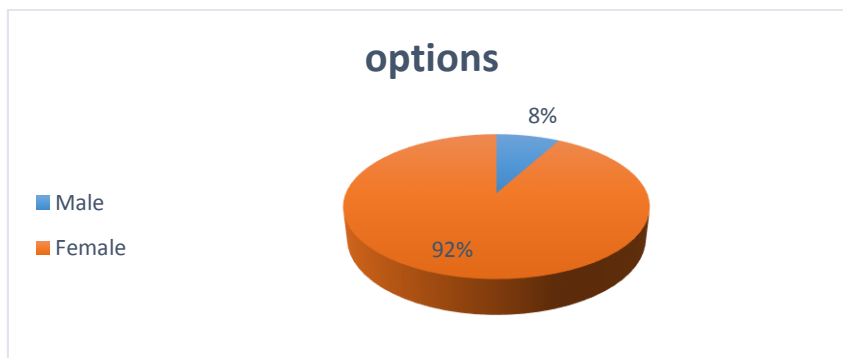


Figure 3.6: Students' Gender

From the above table, we can deduce that female respondents are more than male ones. In fact, out of 50 only 4 are male, that is (8%) of the sample are male respondents while the rest (92%) of the sample are female. This indicates that females prefer to study in literary classes than males.

Q2. How many years have you been learning English?

| N of years | N | % |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| 3 | 14 | 28 |
| 9 | 5 | 10 |
| 10 | 26 | 52 |
| 11 | 5 | 10 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.3: Students' Experience in Learning English

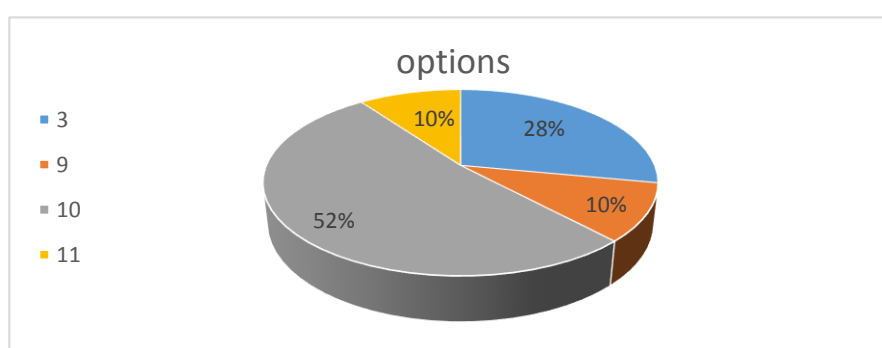


Figure 3.7. Students' Experience in Learning English

Table 3.3 illustrates that most respondents have been studying English for ten years. Thus, they are familiarized with English language and they possess a considerable luggage in English to be used. However, a considerable number of students have chosen three years.

This result shows that some respondents have wrongly perceived this question; consequently, they have only counted the years of learning English at university.

Q3. Is learning English your own choice?

| Options | N | % |
|---------|----|-----|
| Yes | 45 | 90 |
| No | 5 | 10 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.4: Students' Choice to Learn English

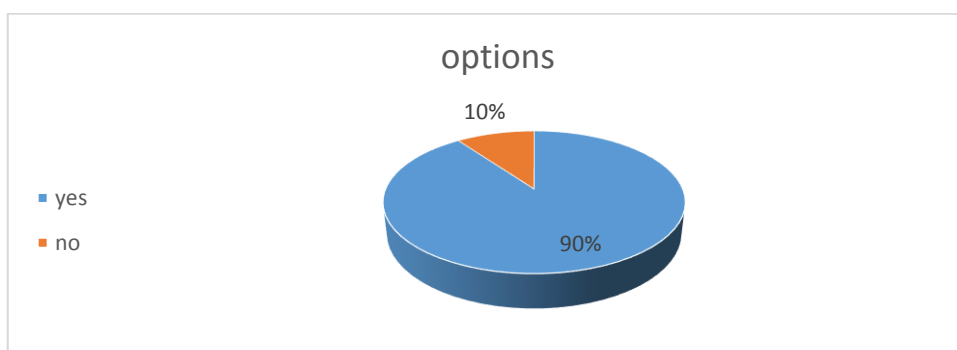


Figure 3.8: Students' Choice to Learn English

Table 3.3 shows that the majority of informants 90% are satisfied to learn English since it is their own desire to choose the branch. Consequently, they are supposed to be motivated with a high self-esteem. However, few number of students are not satisfied to study English. Hence, they need more support and encouragement.

Q4. Which of the following skills you are interested to develop? (Rank them in order from 1 to 4).

| Priority given to listening | N | % |
|-----------------------------|----|-----|
| 1 | 9 | 18 |
| 2 | 7 | 14 |
| 3 | 16 | 32 |
| 4 | 18 | 36 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.5: Priority Given to Listening

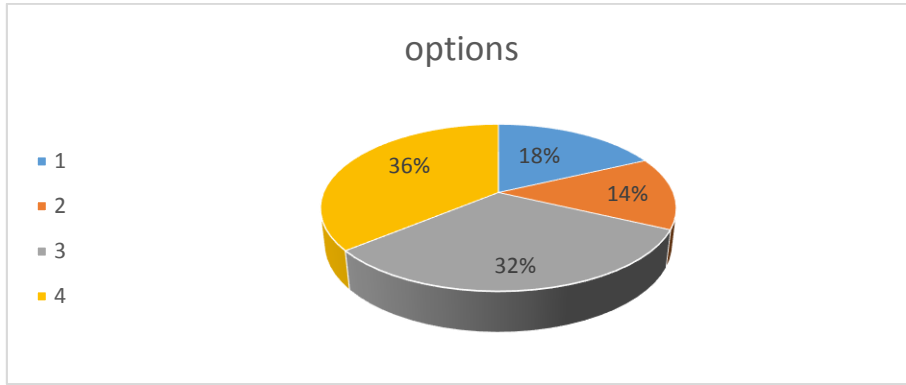


Figure .3.9: Priority Given to Listening

| Priority given to speaking | N | % |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | 32 | 64 |
| 2 | 12 | 24 |
| 3 | 4 | 8 |
| 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.6: Priority Given to Speaking

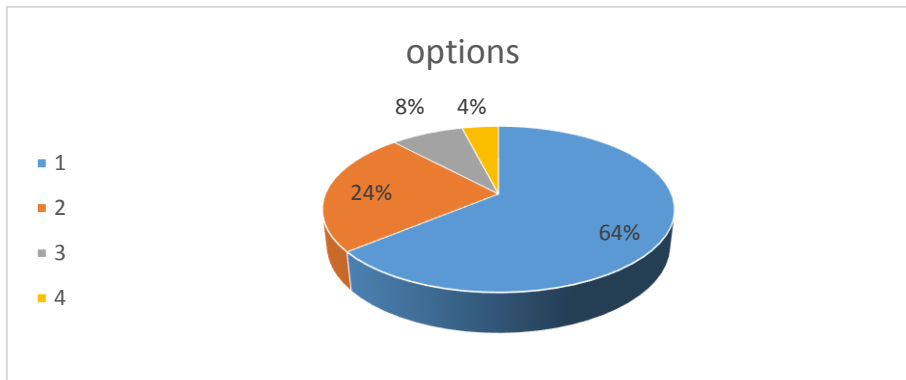


Figure 3.10: Priority Given to Speaking

| Priority given to reading | N | % |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | 6 | 12 |
| 2 | 9 | 18 |
| 3 | 17 | 34 |
| 4 | 18 | 36 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.7: Priority Given to Reading

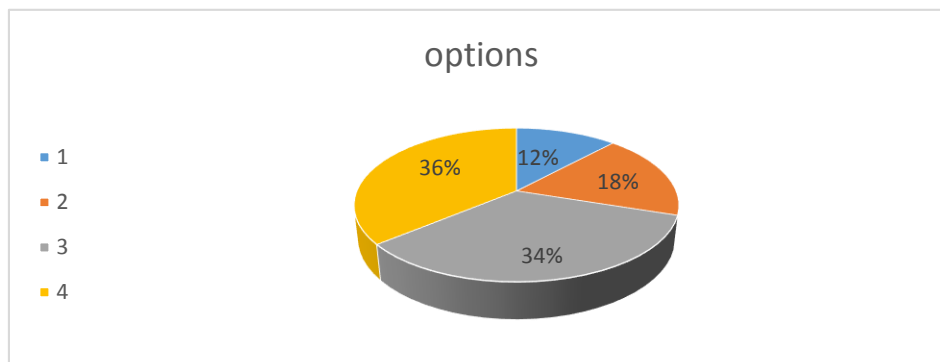


Figure 3.11: Priority Given to Reading

| Priority given to writing | N | % |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | 20 | 40 |
| 2 | 14 | 28 |
| 3 | 8 | 16 |
| 4 | 8 | 16 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.8: Priority Given to Writing

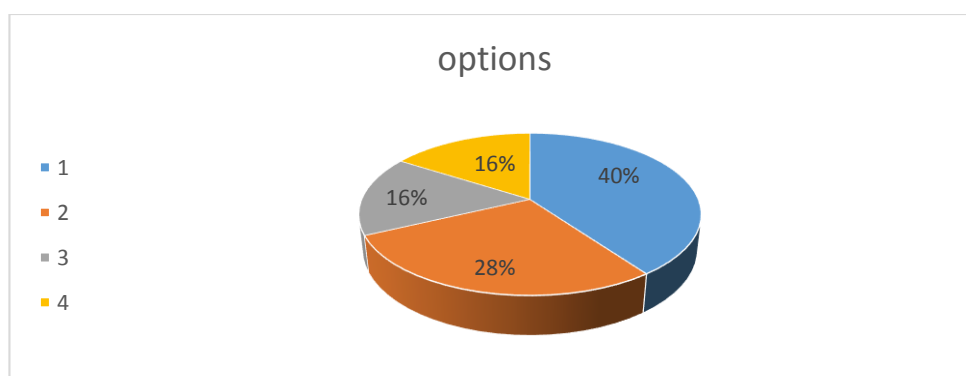


Figure 3.12: Priority Given to Writing

Table 3.6 and table 3.8 indicate that the respondents are more interested in developing their productive skills in learning English (speaking 64%, writing 40%). Whereas, reading skill holds the last position (12%) after listening 18% (table 5 and 7) in the respondents' classification of the skills they like most to develop. That is the respondents are less interested in developing the receptive skills. Probably, this is due to the over emphasis that speaking and writing hold in language learning. Thus, students require to master the language by speaking it and understanding when and how it is spoken. Also, to write effectively applying language rules appropriately.

❖ **Section Two: Reading and Extensive Reading**

Q5. How often do you read in English?

| Options | N | % |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Always | 5 | 10 |
| Often | 24 | 48 |
| Rarely | 21 | 42 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.9: Frequency of Reading in English

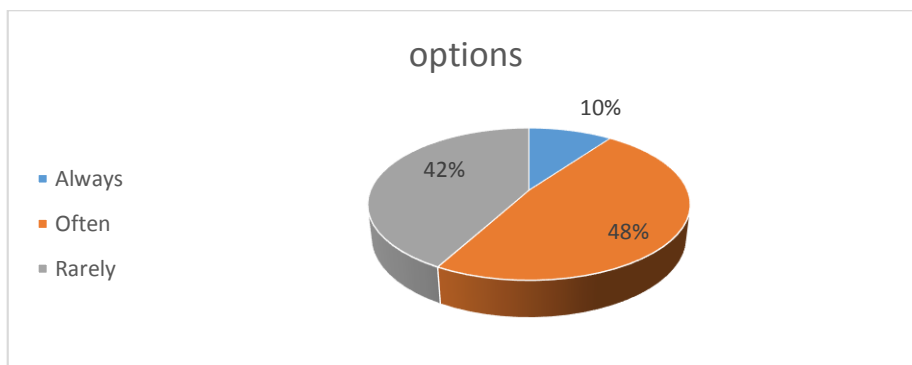


Figure 3.13: Frequency of Reading in English

Table 3.9 illustrates that most of the respondents said that they often or rarely read in English. These results demonstrate the lack of reading habit among the learners.

Q6. Where do you prefer to read?

| Options | N | % |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Only in class | 5 | 10 |
| In the library | 6 | 12 |
| At home | 32 | 64 |
| Elsewhere | 7 | 14 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.10: Students' Preferred Place of Reading

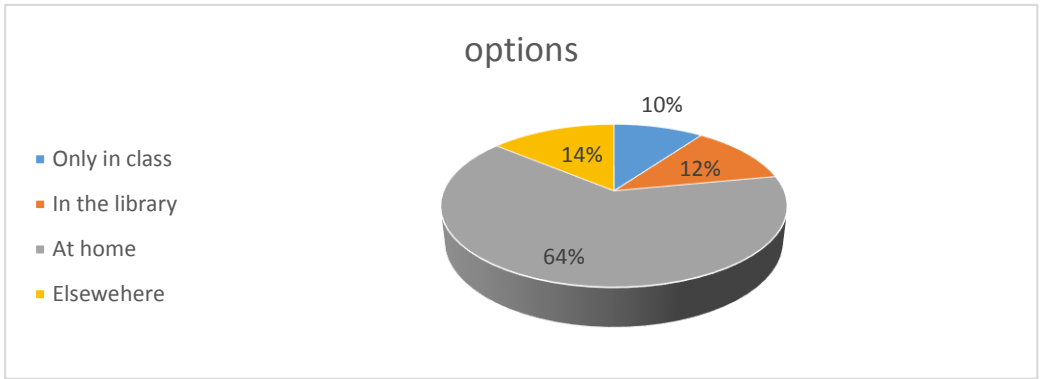


Figure 3.14: Students' Preferred Place of Reading

This question explicitly seeks the students' desires about which settings they prefer to read in. Table 3.10 indicates that the majority of respondents (64%) say that they read at home and (14%) prefer to read in other places than the ones mentioned such as in the garden or in the bus. However, six respondents (12%) report that they practise reading at the library, and only (10%) prefer to read in class. Within the question, there is an indication for one of the principles of extensive reading approach which is reading outside classrooms. Consequently, we deduce that students like to be in a suitable atmosphere and feel at ease in doing their readings far away from the classroom pressure.

Q7. Do you enjoy the time you spend reading extensively?

| Options | N | % |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Always | 13 | 26 |
| Sometimes | 33 | 66 |
| Rarely | 4 | 8 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.11: Students' Enjoyment of Extensive Reading

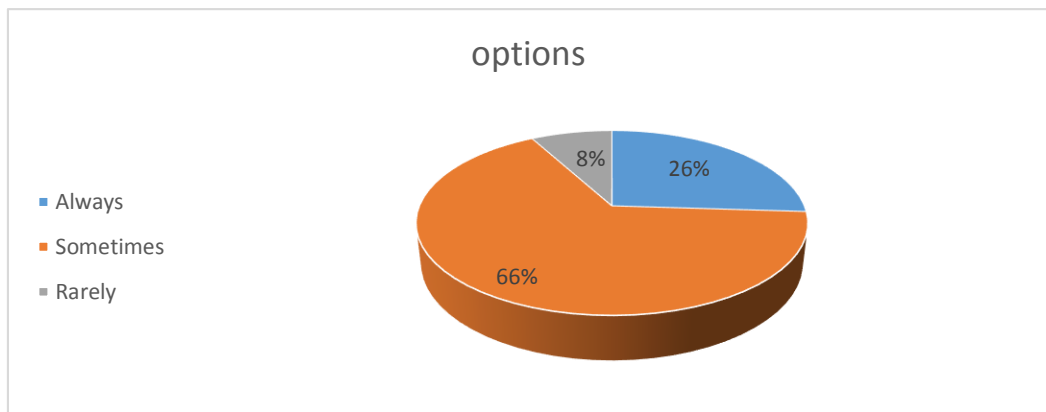


Figure 3.15: Students' Enjoyment of Extensive Reading

According to the results obtained from table 11, most of the respondents (66%) indicate that they sometimes enjoy the time they spend reading extensively. Hence, they have a desire to read but it needs an amelioration through encouragement to enhance this desire. In addition, a significant number of informants (26%) report that they always enjoy the time they spend reading which means that this category of students will benefit more since they feel at ease while reading. Whereas, (8%) of students declared that they rarely enjoy practicing extensive reading.

Q8. Do you know how to find a suitable book in a library that interest you and that is appropriate for your level?

| Options | N | % |
|---------|----|-----|
| Yes | 8 | 16 |
| No | 42 | 84 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.12: Students’ Confessions about Finding Appropriate Books in the Library

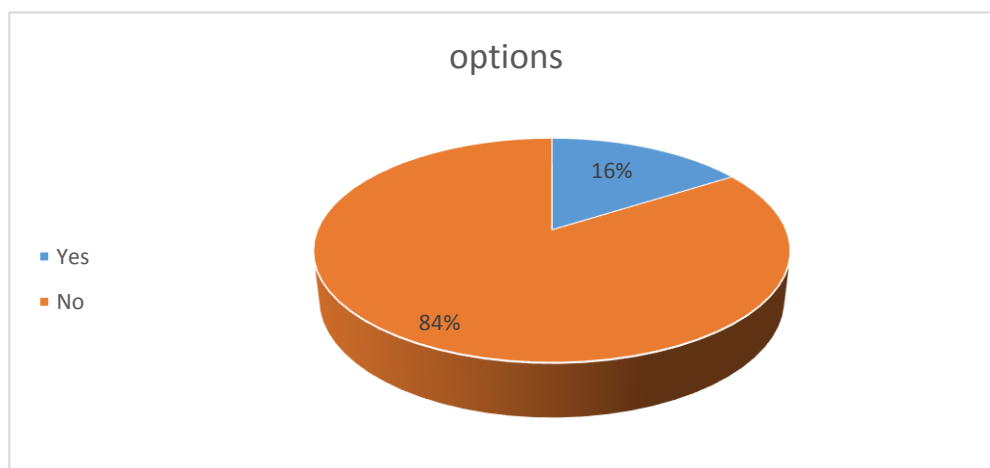


Figure 3.16: Students’ Confessions about Finding Appropriate Books in the Library

From table 3.12, we notice that the majority of participants (84%) are not aware of the standards that they should follow to obtain books that interest them and that are suitable for their level. For this, they sometimes enjoy what they read. However, just (16%) are conscious of the conventions that lead them to appropriate selection. This category of students gave justifications for their selection. They said that they look for attractive titles trying to know details about the book through reading the summary and the table of contents in order to have a clear idea about the material.

Q9. Does your teacher encourage you to focus on extensive reading outside the classroom? If yes, explain how?

| Options | N | % |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 44 | 88 |
| No | 6 | 12 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.13: The Teacher Encouragement to Focus on Extensive Reading

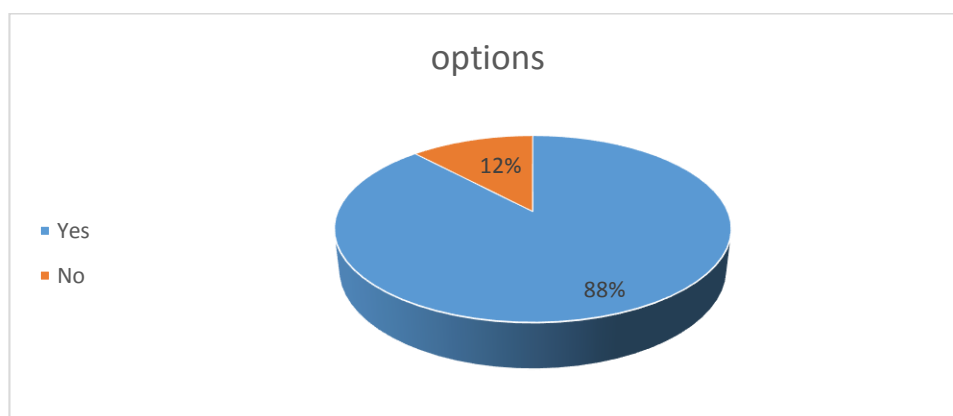


Figure 3.17: The Teacher Encouragement to Focus on Extensive Reading

From the result of table 3.13 we see that nearly all the respondents 88% reported that their teacher encourages them to read extensively, only 12% claimed that their teacher does not. This truly shows teachers' awareness of the importance of reading in EFL instruction. This group of informants provided us with explanations to clarify what kinds of readings teachers advise students to read about.

Indeed ,out of 44 students who claim that their teacher encourage them to read, (50%) of them were more precise about what the teacher has suggested for them to read and they believe that good readers are good writers. They have mentioned for instance books, magazines, journals, articles, critical essays, novels and short stories. However, this kind of reading is for pleasure which means they read what they are interested in, so they are motivated to read. In addition, (20%) reported that their teachers propose some titles of books that he has already read to increase students' degree of motivation by including himself in the task of reading. Also, they said that their teacher advise them to read anything written in English, and to vary their readings, so that they can be exposed to different types of texts. Further, (10%) of the informants explained that they are asked to read for the

purpose of developing their knowledge about the lessons which are already programmed for them to be learnt during the academic year.

Q10. Is reading outside the classroom beneficial to develop your level in learning English? If yes, explain how?

| Options | N | % |
|---------|----|-----|
| Yes | 44 | 88 |
| No | 6 | 12 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.14: Students’ Opinion about the Benefit of Reading Outside the Classroom

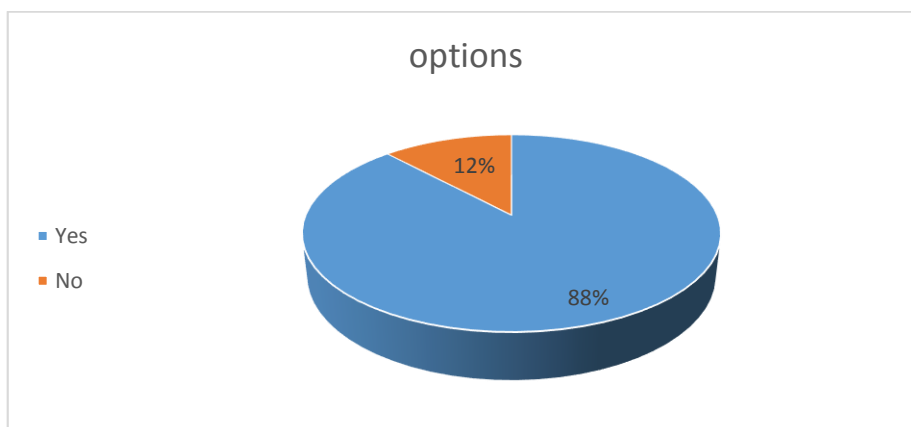


Figure 3.18: Students’ Opinion about the Benefit of Reading Outside the Classroom

It seems from the above results (table3.14) that a large portion of respondents answered positively. (88%) confirm that reading outside the classroom is beneficial to develop their level in learning English. In contrast, (12%) answered negatively.

Accordingly, students who said “yes” gave the following explanation:

- The reading skill aids students to enrich their vocabulary, to deal with different styles and to master the use of words in their specific contexts.(15 respondents)
- Raising the students’ awareness to avoid committing mistakes. (10 respondents)
- It increases students’ familiarity with construction of paragraphs and essays. (7 respondents).
- It helps students to expose themselves to the language and acquire new ideas. (12 respondents).

Q11. While reading in class you would like the teacher to to:

| Options | N | % |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Choose for you the text or passage to read | 8 | 16 |
| Let you free to choose among different readings | 15 | 30 |
| Give you a complete freedom to choose what interest you | 27 | 54 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.15: Students' Preferred Way of Choosing the Reading Material

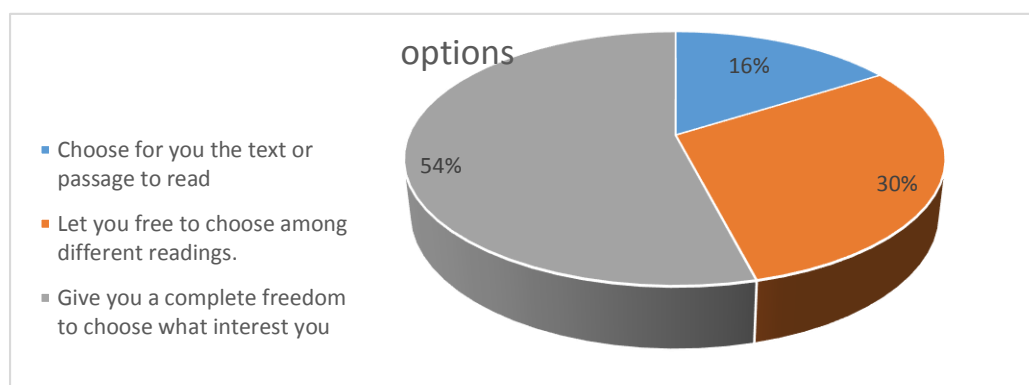


Figure 3.19: Students' Preferred Way of Choosing the Reading Material

Concerning the reading materials used in class, table 3.15 shows that (54%) of respondents would like the teacher to give them a total freedom to choose a reading material that interest them and suit their level. Moreover, (30%) of students would like the teacher to give them freedom to choose among different reading materials. Consequently, students are motivated to read whenever they are given the opportunity to participate and decide about the passage to be read. Whereas, only (16%) of informants prefer to let the teacher choose for them what they read in the classroom.

Q12. While reading extensively, do you understand the text?

| Options | N | % |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Word by word meaning | 1 | 2 |
| General meaning | 37 | 74 |
| Both of them | 12 | 24 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.16: The Text Understanding

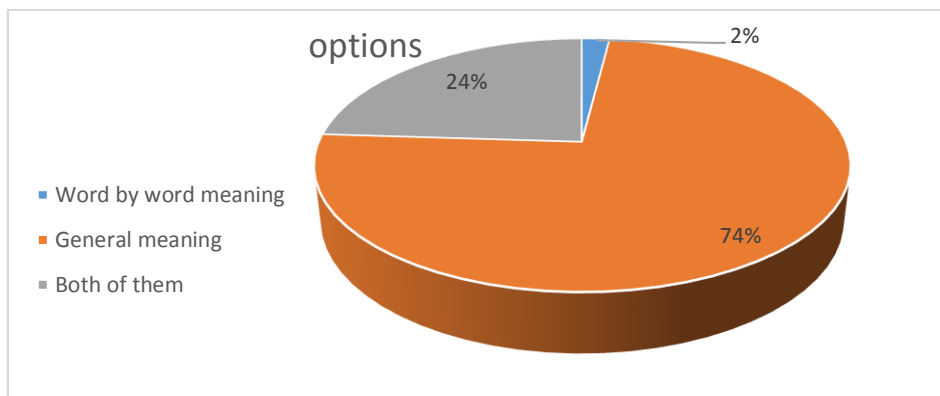


Figure 3.20: The Text Understanding

Table 3.16 illustrates that most of the respondents (74%) reach general understanding of what they read; these results emphasize the role of the readers' background knowledge in attaining the text meaning. In addition, (24%) or the participants reach both general and specific understanding of the text. While, just (2%) focus on specific understanding of the reading task. Thus, students concentrate on comprehending main ideas of the text probably for the sake of pleasure without checking the meaning of each word.

Q13. When dealing with a text, what would you like to do with it?

| Options | N | % |
|---|-----------|------------|
| To do comprehension activities | 3 | 6 |
| To gain new vocabulary and different styles | 30 | 60 |
| To extract and discuss different themes and ideas | 17 | 34 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.17: Reading Function

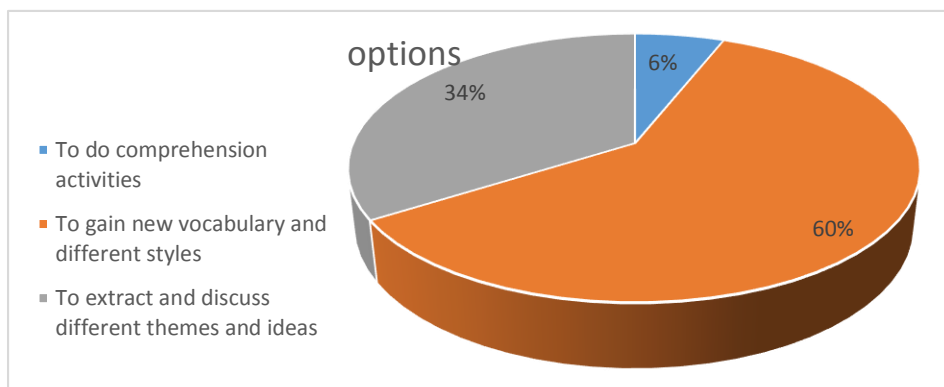


Figure 3.21: Reading Function

From table 3.17, the data show that 30 of respondents (60%) indicate that the reading skill help them to increase their vocabulary repertoire. This reveals that students are aware of the crucial role that reading plays to acquire new vocabulary and different styles. Moreover, the second category (34%) have chosen that reading enables them to extract and discuss different themes and ideas. As a result, students are convinced that reading is a source of development to their foreign language luggage, especially in terms of developing their writing skill. However, only (6%) said that they are interested to do comprehension activities. Hence, most of students disagree with being dependent to a particular text studying it specifically.

❖ **Section Three: The Writing Skill**

Q14. How do you find the module of written expression?

| Options | N | % |
|------------------|-----------|------------|
| Very interesting | 16 | 32 |
| Interesting | 30 | 60 |
| Not interesting | 4 | 8 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.18: Students' Attitudes towards the Module of Written Expression

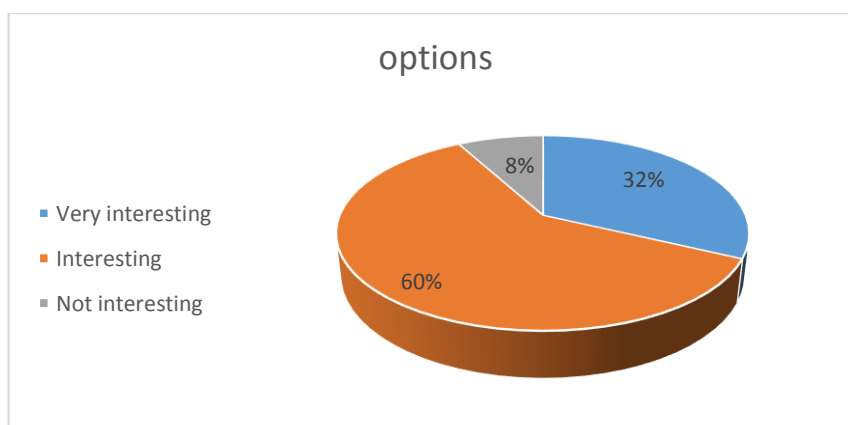


Figure 3.22: Students' Attitudes towards the Module of Written Expression

Table 3.18 shows that 60% of students find the module of Written Expression interesting and (32%) find it very interesting. This result demonstrates that students are aware of the importance of writing in learning a target language. Therefore, it is the teacher's role to guide them and help them to be more motivated and more interested. On the other hand, only four students (8%) who said that "Written Expression" is not interesting this may be due to their demotivation to write or they do not need to learn how to write.

Q15. Is the time allocated to study written expression sufficient to cover most of the aspects needed to develop your writing skill?

| Options | N | % |
|---------|----|-----|
| Yes | 16 | 32 |
| No | 34 | 68 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.19: Students' Opinions about the Time Allocated to Written Expression

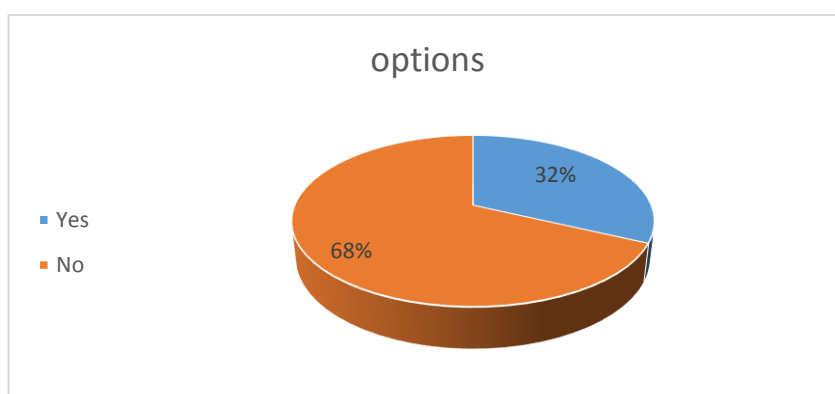


Figure 3.23: Students' Opinions about the Time Allocated to Written Expression

Table 3.19 shows that most of the participants (68%) consider the time given to study written expression is insufficient to increase their level of writing proficiency. Whereas, (32%) of them are satisfied with this given time. These results show that students should be given enough time to work at ease and to avoid working under pressure in order to develop their writing abilities.

Q16. How would you rate your level in English writing?

| Options | N | % |
|-------------------|----|-----|
| Highly proficient | 0 | 0 |
| Proficient | 3 | 6 |
| Adequate | 40 | 80 |
| Weak | 7 | 14 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.20: Students' Level in Writing

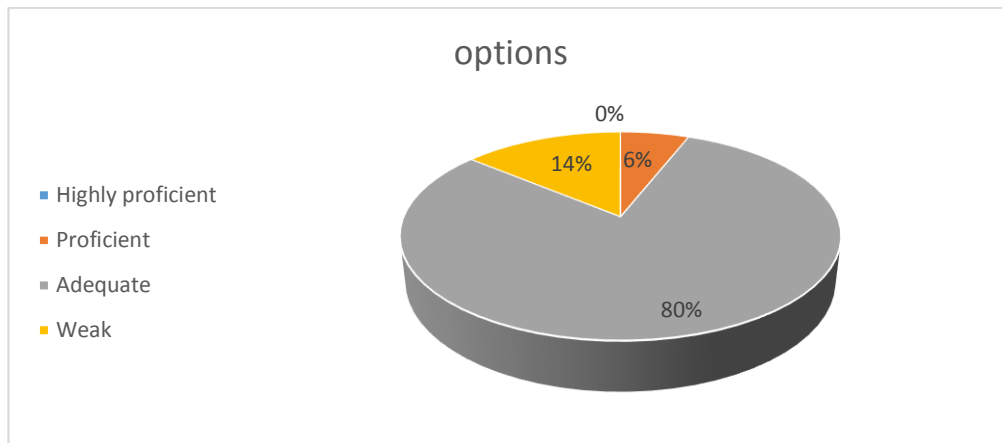


Figure 3.24: Students' Level in Writing

From table 3.20 we conclude that the majority of the respondents (80%) estimated that they have an adequate level in writing. This could imply that they are not satisfied with their performance in writing. However, (14%) considered their level in writing as being weak since they find many difficulties and problems concerning the writing skill, so that they need more interest with teachers' help, guidance and containment. Further, (6%) claimed that they their level is proficient and no student consider his level as highly proficient.

Q17. Is writing a necessary skill to develop? Explain

| Options | N | % |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 49 | 98 |
| No | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.21: Students' Necessity to Develop the Writing Skill

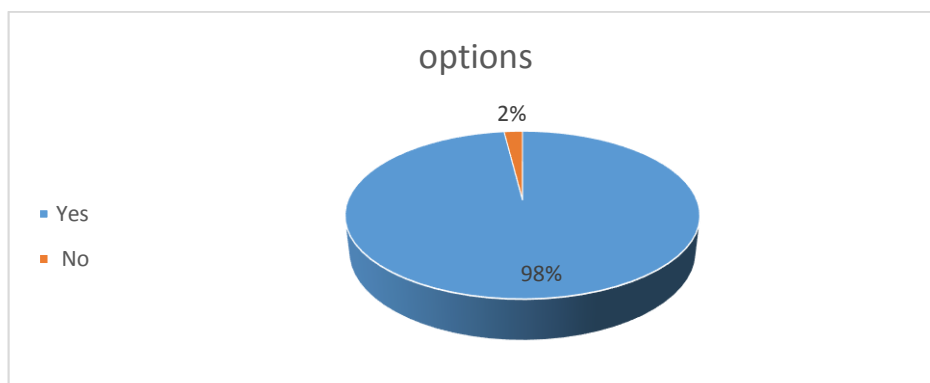


Figure 3.25: Students' Necessity to Develop the Writing Skill

As shown in table 3.21 the vast majority of the respondents 98% believe that writing is a necessary skill for them to develop. This implies that they are aware of the necessity of

the writing skill in learning a foreign language. Out of 49 students, 10 of them did not give any explanations, however, the 39 provided explanations that can be classified as follows:

- Writing is a way through which students express their ideas and opinions effectively by using their own style. It is a part of identity. (15 respondents)
- Students claimed that writing paves the way to develop the other language skills. So, they need to develop their writing skill to reach proficiency in English. (10 respondents).
- Students said that writing is an opportunity to practice and to develop the vocabulary, spelling and grammar they have already learned. In addition, students will be assessed according to what they have written. (5 respondents).
- Students claimed that they need the writing skill in other modules for the sake of passing their examinations and succeeding in their studies. (5 respondents).
- Students said that they need writing in different domains; it is beneficial in professional life for this they need to develop it. (4 respondents).

Q18. Good writing entails:

| Options | N | % |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Correct grammar | 1 | 2 |
| Appropriate vocabulary | 4 | 8 |
| Good ideas | 4 | 8 |
| Correct spelling | 1 | 2 |
| All of them | 40 | 80 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.22: Components of Good Writing

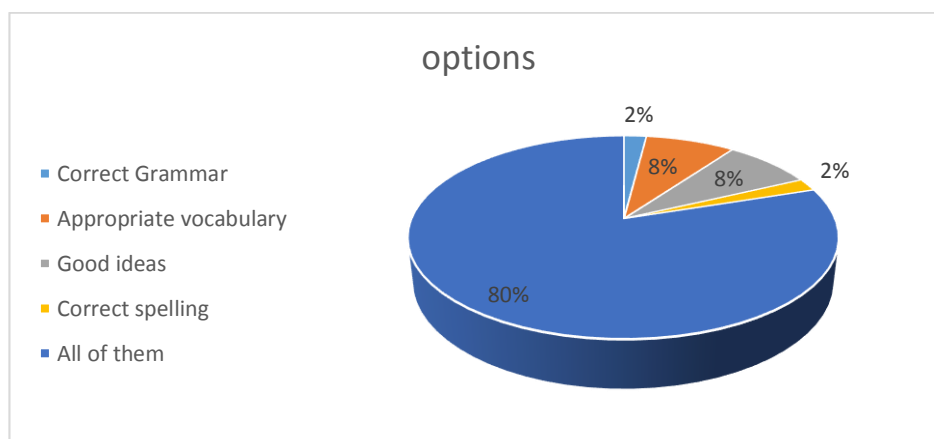


Figure 3.26: Components of Good Writing

The results obtained from table 3.22 indicate that most of the respondents 40believe that good writing entails: Correct grammar, appropriate vocabulary, good ideas, and correct spelling. However, four respondents said that good writing entails appropriate vocabulary as well as the same number said it is merely good ideas. Correct grammar and correct spelling were chosen only by one respondent for each one.

Eight respondents out of fifty added further components:

- Style. (Four students).
- Coherent writing and content organization. (Two students).
- Good handwriting and punctuation. (Two students).

Q19. What is the most difficult step in writing according to you?

| Options | N | % |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Generating ideas | 23 | 46 |
| Writing initial drafts | 23 | 46 |
| Revising | 2 | 4 |
| Editing | 2 | 4 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.23: The Most Difficult Step in the Writing Process

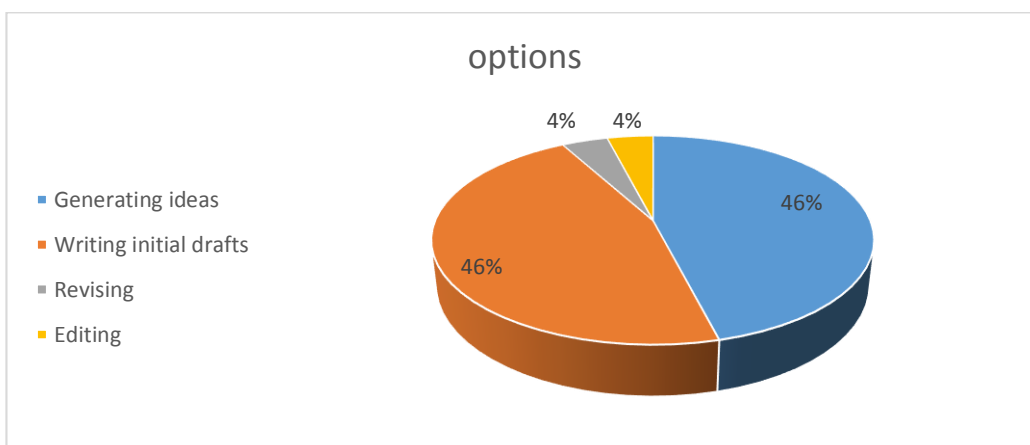


Figure 3.27: The Most Difficult Step in the Writing Process

From Table 3.23, we see that the majority of students (46%) have difficulties with the most important stages in the writing process, generating ideas and writing initial drafts. Although revising and editing are crucial in the writing process, they do not seem to cause much difficulty. Thus, students face much difficulty in producing thoughts probably due to the lack of vocabulary and necessary writing techniques.

Q20. Before writing your assignments, do you read extensively about that topic? If yes, Explain why?

| Options | N | % |
|---------|----|-----|
| Yes | 33 | 66 |
| No | 17 | 34 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.24: Reading Extensively for Writing Assignment

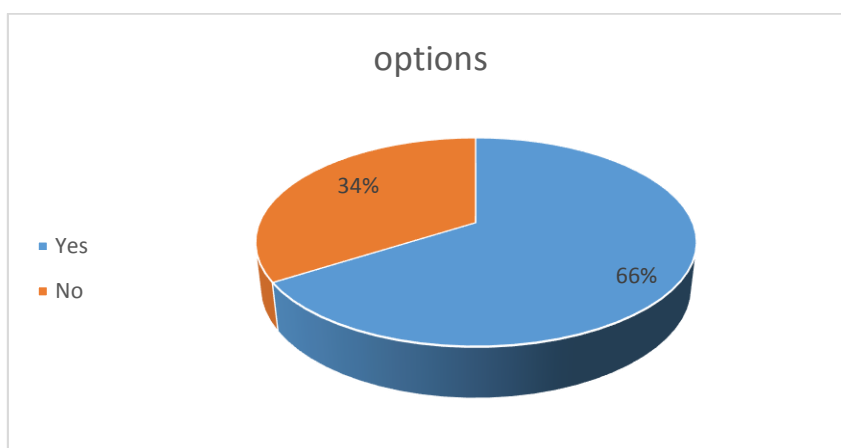


Figure 3.28: Reading Extensively for Writing Assignment

As shown in table 3.24 most of the respondents 66% reported that they read before writing their assignments while 34% said they do not. This means that the majority of the respondents are aware that reading would help them in writing since they face many obstacles during producing a piece of writing. Accordingly, 25 students out of 34 who answered yes to Q.20 justified their need to read before writing giving the following explanations:

- Some students reported that reading extensively provides the reader with relevant vocabulary and suitable expressions related to the given topic. (7 respondents).
- Reading in large quantities aids learners to be engaged in the topic through developing their ideas since they claim that they could not be engaged in an assignment without having background about it. (7 respondents).
- Some respondents considered reading as a kind of culture because it facilitates their understanding of the topic and being familiarized with the subject that they have to write about. (6 respondents).
- Reading extensively is a source of information to write about a specific topic, it aims to collect relevant data about the topic and avoiding committing spelling mistakes.(5 respondents).

Q21. Does your teacher stimulate you to read extensively to enhance your writing performance?

| Options | N | % |
|---------|----|-----|
| Yes | 40 | 80 |
| No | 10 | 20 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.25: Students' Stimulation to Read Extensively

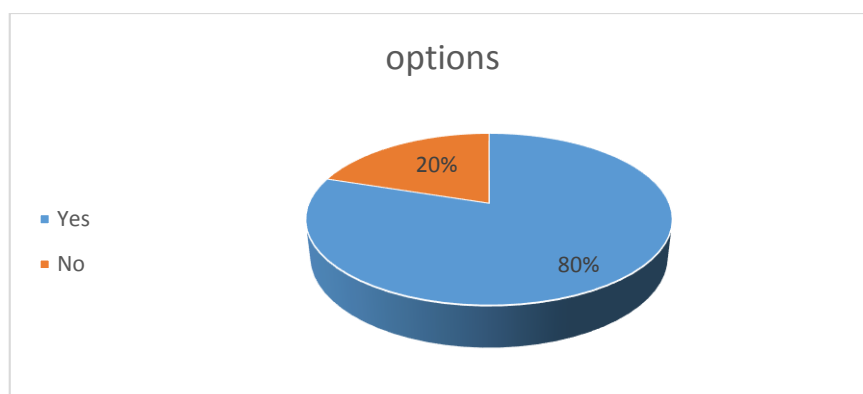


Figure 3.29: Students' Stimulation to Read Extensively

The results shown in table 3.25 illustrates that the majority of respondents (80%) declared that their teachers play an eminent role in enhancing them frequently to read topics that they are interested in. They claimed that this type of reading is considered as a source of knowledge that serves the amelioration of writing in a number of aspects. However, only (20%) of informants said that their teachers do not stimulate them to read extensively this may be due to misunderstanding of what teachers want to transmit. To explain their answers, 30 students out of 40 who selected “yes” gave logic suggestions. Students’ explanations can be summed up as follows:

- Students reported that their teachers aid them through proposing interesting books, short stories or articles to be read and trying to write just some comments related to the topic.
- Teachers give some suggestions to allocate longer periods to read outside the classroom in order to improve students’ writing proficiency through acquiring different aspects of the target language.
- Teachers encourage their students to read materials that are interesting for them to be more motivated and more engaged in the topic.

- Teachers advised his learners to drop a book that is difficult and to move to easier books that are appropriate for their level to gain a benefit from this reading.

Q22. As a foreign language learner, To What extent does extensive reading help you to improve your writing level? How?

| Options | N | % |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Very much | 42 | 84 |
| Little | 8 | 16 |
| No help | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Table 3.26: The Contribution of Extensive Reading in Improving the Writing Skill

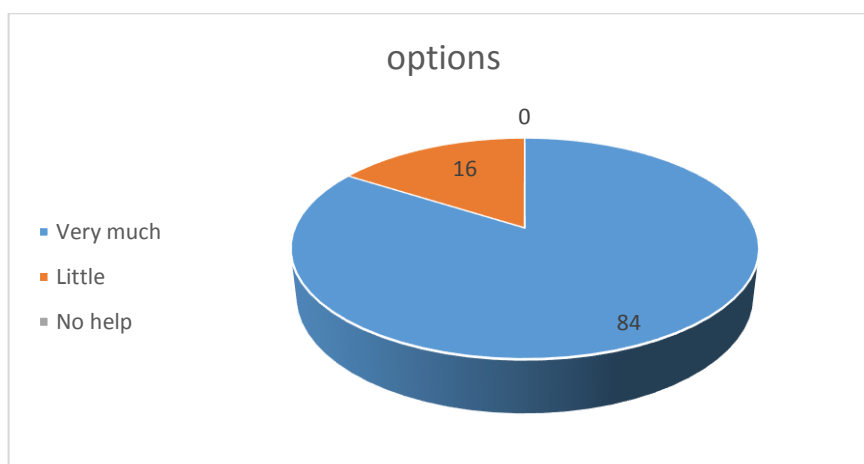


Figure3.30: The Contribution of Extensive Reading in Improving the Writing Skill

The results obtained from table 3.26 confirm that the respondents are fully aware of the reading-writing relationship. As shown (84%) of the participants argued that extensive reading play a major role in helping them to improve their writing level. While, (16%) of our sample claimed that reading extensively has a little influence on their writing development and no one of them ignores the impact of extensive reading on writing completely. Therefore, students prove that they are really aware about the benefits that extensive reading provides for learners.

For further clarification, 30 students of our sample gave explanations of how they benefit from extensive reading to improve their written productions. They are summarized as follows:

- Extensive reading extends the reading knowledge, so that they gain new ideas and expressions.
- Reading extensively refresh students' minds with more appropriate vocabulary that corresponds the topic.
- Reading in large quantities reduce students' errors that they appeared during writing. It helps them to avoid spelling mistakes and to apply appropriate grammatical rules.
- Reading different texts provides students with different viewpoints that they may use while writing.

Q25. Please add any further comment about the role of extensive reading in writing development.

Since we are interested in students' point of view towards the role of extensive reading in improving their writing, we allocated a free space for students to express their own views towards this issue. 22 of the respondents put interesting comments while the others did not comment. The informants mentioned the need to read extensively to better:

- Develop their knowledge.
- Learn about life in general.
- Help themselves to read a high number of works.
- Be exposed to new patterns of texts when they learn new vocabulary, different styles and deal with cohesion and coherence.
- Read to develop students' imagination "Read thousands of books and your words will flow like a river".

3.1.8. Interpretation of the Results

The major aim of this study is to investigate the role of extensive reading in improving EFL students' writing skill. We tend to know students' perception of extensive reading and its contribution on their writing proficiency through inquiring students to respond twenty-three questions of the questionnaire administered to them divided into three sections that reveal the following results.

Section One: General information

In this section, the results show that the number of female students studying at the department of English is higher than males (see table3.1). This means that girls have preference to study foreign languages. In addition, most of the students have been studying

English for a considerable period of time (see table 3.2). Hence, they are familiarized with some English rules and functions as grammar as well as considerable vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, as shown in (table 3.3) almost all respondents have chosen to study English with full satisfaction what leads them to be more successful since they possess one of the main features of success which is motivation. Further, the students are more interested to develop their productive skills “speaking and writing”, and less emphasis was put on the receptive ones “listening and reading)” (see tables4, 5, 6, 7). This indicates that students are in need to communicate using the target language for this they are interested to develop their speaking skill as well as their writing skill to reach the required level.

Section Two: Reading and Extensive Reading

From this analysis, students who are included in this study do not have good reading habits in English (see table 3.8). This implies that students lack the educational, cultural and social features that encourage them to read frequently. Accordingly, students need new strategies and a special support to develop this way of thinking. Concerning learners’ preferred place of reading, students prefer practicing reading outside the classroom where there are less constraints (see table 3.9). So, students are expected to be more motivated to read when they find appropriate setting to refresh their memories rather than repeating the same activity in the same setting. Consequently, this creates an environment of enjoyment when students read extensively since they read what they want in a preferred place. When speaking about the students’ ability to choose appropriate books that correspond their level, we conclude that the majority of students ignore the ways they should follow. Hence, this leads them to dislike reading.

In contrast, if students pay attention to the materials they read, dealing with subjects that interest them, they will achieve good reading habits. That is why students prefer to be given an opportunity to choose their subjects of reading to perform better and realize better feedbacks. Due to the importance that extensive reading plays in learning a foreign language, students reported that their teachers encourage them to read outside the classroom providing them with pieces of advice to reach a level of proficiency. In addition, students also are approved with the benefits that extensive reading present to their level development. Concerning the text understanding, students read the text for general understanding emphasizing on gaining new vocabulary, different styles and discussing different themes and ideas.

Section Three: The Writing Skill

Concerning the writing skill, most of the students find the module of written expression interesting, this entails that students have a desire to learn how to write. Such finding is very encouraging and the teacher has to get students more motivated and interested. This section also demonstrates that the great majority of students are not satisfied with the time devoted to study written expression because they need enough time to do more practice. Moreover, the vast majority of students (80%) estimated their level in English writing as being adequate. This will ensure students' desire to improve their writing proficiency. Furthermore, students consider the writing skill a necessary skill to develop (see table 3.20) since it presents their identity and a way through which they express their ideas and opinions in addition to its use in different domains in this life. Accordingly, good writing demands mastering all aspects of the language in order to create a balanced piece of writing. Students declared that achieving perfect productions does not require mastering only one element but it is a correlation between all elements.

When speaking of the writing process, we find that most of the students find difficulties in both steps generating ideas and writing initial drafts (see table 3.22). This result is reasonable since these steps present the actual act of writing that require a background knowledge to produce concrete results. Concerning the reading- writing relationship, students are aware about the contribution that extensive reading provides to enrich their vocabulary, acquire new styles, use correct spelling and apply correct grammar. For this, they use to read about a given topic to extend their knowledge and put themselves in the appropriate zone. Thus, teachers play an eminent role to support the reading- writing relation and enhance students to read more to achieve better productions.

3.2. The Teachers' Questionnaire

3.2.1. Aims of the Questionnaire

The main purpose of the teachers' questionnaire is to point out the improvements that extensive reading can provide for the students' writings. Furthermore, it aims at reporting the extent to which the reading-writing relationship is supported by the written expression teachers. Besides, the questionnaire seeks to find out the teachers' attitudes towards both the reading and the writing skills. Therefore, a detailed analysis of all the answers is carried out so as to find the most relevant findings and offer reasonable interpretations.

3.2.2. The Population

Our target population consists of all the written expression teachers in the department of English at Biskra University during the academic year 2015/2016. The total number of written expression teachers is (17). This population has been intentionally chosen since teachers are aware of students' level in writing and they have an experience that make their suggestions and observations valuable for the aim of this research.

3.2.3. The Sample

Since it is impossible to deal with the whole population, our sample is composed of six (6) teachers who are selected randomly among the total number.

3.2.4. Administration of Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire was handed out for six teachers on March 07th,2016 and all the teachers were very cooperative in that they handed back the answered copies in less than a week.

3.2.5. Piloting of the Questionnaire

It should be noted that the questionnaire was piloted prior to its administration with two teachers and no modifications are included since both respondents have answered the questionnaire without any ambiguities.

3.2.6. Description of Teachers' Questionnaire

The whole questionnaire consists of twenty-two (22) questions (see appendix 02) organized in three sections each one focuses on particular aspect. It involves closed, open-ended questions and likert scale. The teachers are supposed to answer by "yes "or "no" or tick up the appropriate answers from a set of options, or fill in the blank for further explanations or personal opinions.

3.2.6.1. Section One: General Information

This section aims at collecting general information about the respondents, their sex, their qualifications, their teaching career at university, and the courses they have taught.

3.2.6.2. Section Two: Reading and Extensive Reading

The purpose of this section is to find out the respondents' attitudes towards the reading skill and how they approach the notion of Extensive reading. Therefore, respondents are asked about the importance of extensive reading to develop their students' level, and whether they encourage their students to read and how they do so. Hence, we aim through this section to see to what extent teachers of written expression consider extensive reading as an important strategy to improve students' level in learning a foreign language especially developing the writing skill.

3.2.6.3. Section Three: The Writing Skill

This section aims at sorting out the teachers' views about the writing skill, its importance for learners, the students' level in writing and the approach by which writing is taught. This section investigates the relation between reading and writing and how can reading improves the students' writing skill. It aims at pointing out the teachers' viewpoints about the role of extensive reading in improving students 'writing proficiency and how the respondents support this relation.

3.2.7. Results of the Questionnaire

❖ Section One: General Information

Q1. Gender

| Gender | Number of respondents (N) | Percentage (%) |
|--------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Male | 0 | 0 |
| Female | 6 | 100 |
| Total | 6 | 100 |

Table 3.27: Teachers' Gender

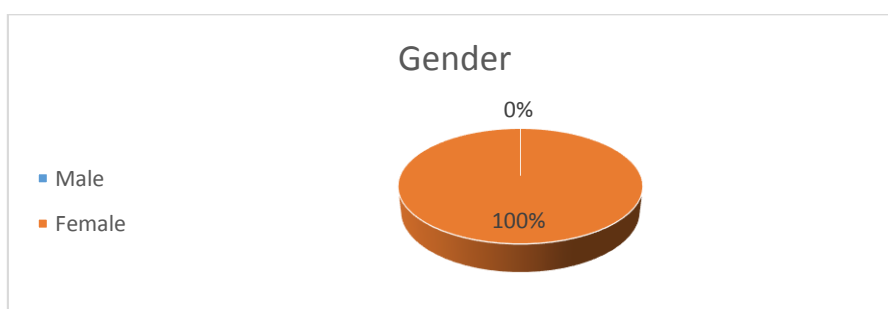


Figure 3.31: Teachers' Gender

Table 3.27 illustrates that our sample consists of six females and no male respondent. This means that there is an over representation of female teachers in the department of English.

Q2. Degree or qualification

| Options | N | (%) |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| License | 01 | 16.66 |
| Magister | 05 | 83.33 |
| Doctorate | 00 | 00 |
| Total | 06 | 100 |

Table 3.28: Teachers' Degree or Qualification

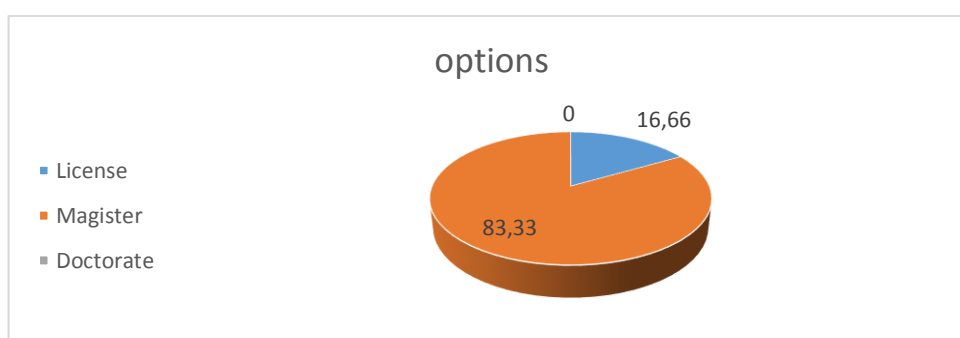


Figure 3.32: Teachers' Degree or Qualification

From table 3.28 we notice that 83.33% of the respondents hold a magister degree and 16.66%, hold a license degree. This means that the sample consists of full-time and part-time teachers who are in charge of written expression module.

Q3. Teaching career at the university

| Number of years | N | (%) |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Five | 01 | 16.66 |
| Six | 02 | 33.33 |
| Seven | 01 | 16.66 |
| Eight | 01 | 16.66 |
| Ten | 01 | 16.66 |
| Total | 06 | 100 |

Table 3.29: Teaching Experience

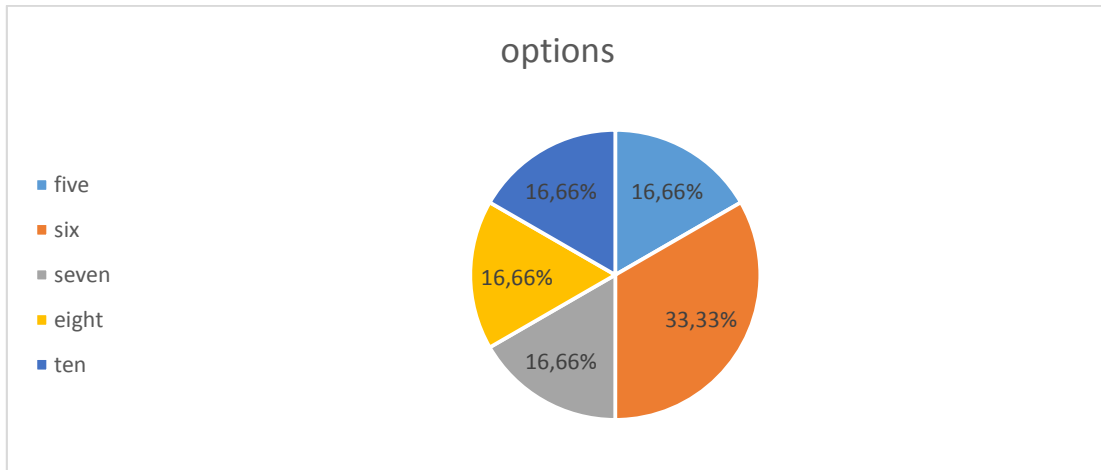


Figure 3.33: Teaching Experience

The results obtained show that the respondents' career at university is between five to ten years. Thus, teachers have a different experience in teaching English at university.

Q4. Course(s) you have taught:

| Number of years | N | (%) |
|---------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Written Expression | 06 | 42.85 |
| Oral Expression | 04 | 28.57 |
| Didactics | 01 | 7.14 |
| Phonetics | 01 | 7.14 |
| Grammar | 02 | 14.28 |
| Total | 14 | 100 |

Table 3.30: Modules Taught by the Respondents

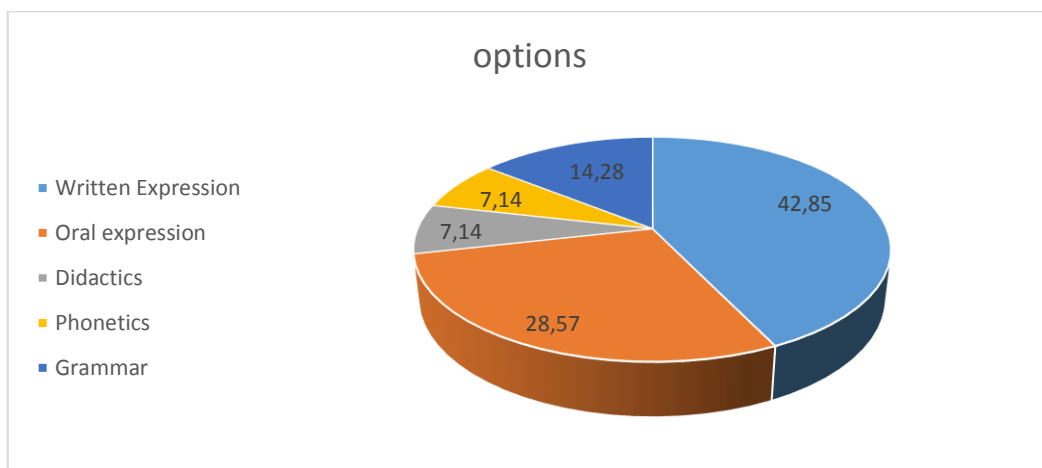


Figure 3.34: Modules Taught by the Respondents

According to the results obtained from table 3.30, all teachers have experienced teaching the module of written expression. In addition, teachers taught different modules what help them to see students' level from different angles.

❖ **Section Two: Reading and Extensive Reading**

Q5. Do you consider reading as an important skill for EFL learners? If yes, why?

| Options | N | % |
|---------|---|-----|
| Yes | 6 | 100 |
| No | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 6 | 100 |

Table 3.31: The Importance of the Reading Skill for EFL Learners

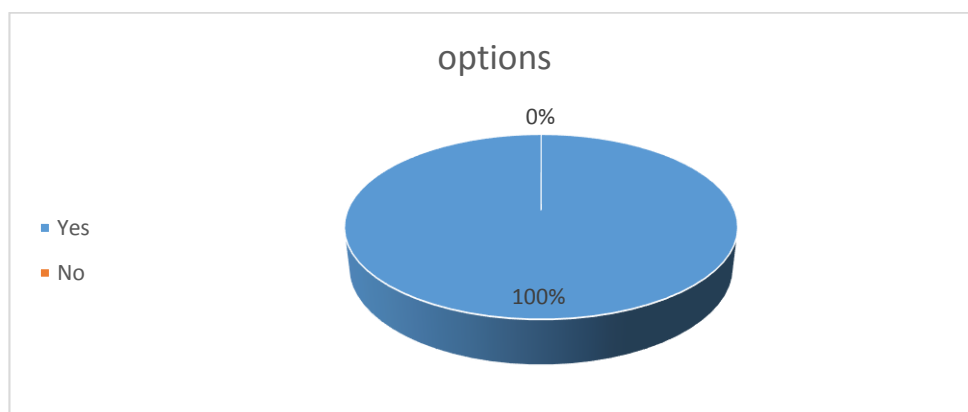


Figure 3.35: The Importance of the Reading Skill for EFL Learners

As it is shown in table 3.31, all the respondents (100%) stated that reading is an important skill for EFL learners. This means that teachers are greatly aware of the importance that reading provides for the EFL learners improvement. Teachers gave their justifications as follows:

- “Reading is an important receptive skill needed to develop the other language skills, especially writing”.
- “The more students read, the more they enrich their vocabulary, get new ideas and expressions. Hence, it fosters the learners’ language improvements”.
- “Reading serves as a model for good writing because it includes all necessary elements: Punctuation, mechanics and good style.
- “Thanks to reading, learners can have a large amount of vocabulary items, structures and ideas. Also, they can identify different writing styles”.

- “It is a source of input which plays a great role in enhancing the rest of the language competencies”.

Generally speaking, we conclude that reading in the teachers' points of view is a source of development to the other language skills.

Q6. Is reading as a skill neglected in the programme of teaching English in comparison to the other skills?

| Options | N | % |
|---------|---|-------|
| Yes | 5 | 83.33 |
| No | 1 | 16.66 |
| Total | 6 | 100 |

Table 3.32: The Negligence of the Reading Skill

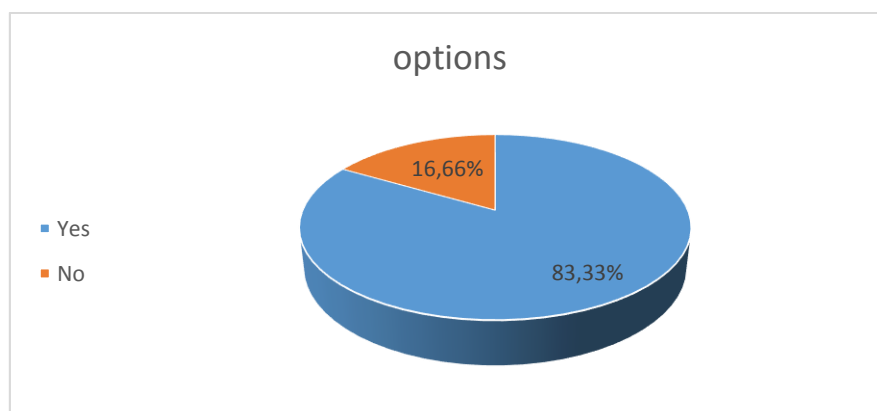


Figure 3.36: The Negligence of the Reading Skill

From the results obtained in table 3.32, we notice that the great majority of respondents (83.33%) believe that the reading skill is neglected in the programme of teaching English if it is compared with the other skills. However, only (16.66 %) claim that reading is not neglected. Therefore, teachers prefer to include reading tasks to ameliorate their students’ level and making them engaged in learning the target language.

Q7. Do you discuss your students’ beliefs about extensive reading?

| Options | N | % |
|---------|---|-----|
| Yes | 6 | 100 |
| No | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 6 | 100 |

Table 3.33: Discussion of Students’ Beliefs about Extensive Reading

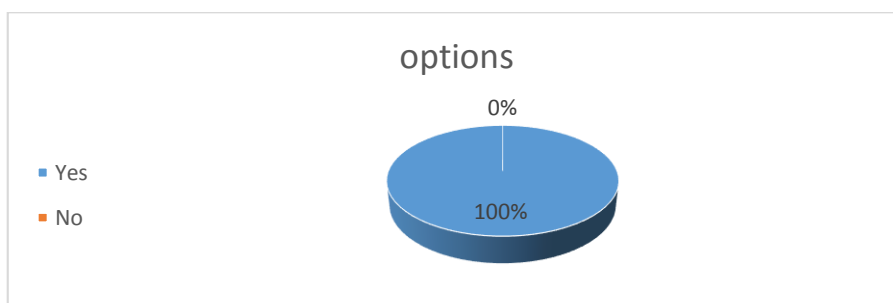


Figure 3.37: Discussion of Students’ Beliefs about Extensive Reading

From table 3.33, all the respondents reported that that they discuss their students’ beliefs about extensive reading. Thus, students will be aware of this notion and the role that it will provide for their enhancement.

Q8. Do your students like extensive reading? Explain

| Options | N | % |
|---------|---|-------|
| Yes | 5 | 83.33 |
| No | 1 | 16.66 |
| Total | 6 | 100 |

Table 3.34: Students’ Preference of Extensive Reading

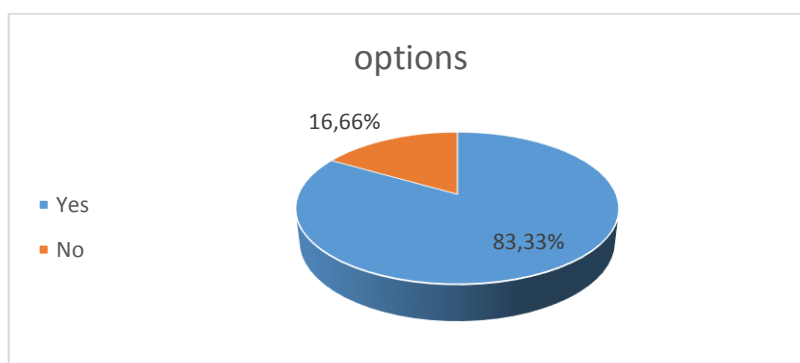


Figure 3.38: Students’ Preference of Extensive Reading

According to table 34, (83.33%) of the respondents stated that their students like extensive reading. They said that students like the EFL and like reading in this language but they need a push to strengthen this like by practice. Whereas, (16.66%) claimed that their students dislike extensive reading. They said that ”It is through practice that we become better in learning the language, reading it, writing it and even speaking it. Unfortunately, our students do not read!”

Q9. Are students interested in extensive reading for:

| Options | N | % |
|------------------------------------|----------|------------|
| Answering comprehension questions | 1 | 16.66 |
| Gaining new vocabulary | 4 | 66.66 |
| Discuss different themes and ideas | 1 | 16.66 |
| They are not interested at all | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 6 | 100 |

Table 3.35: Reasons for Students' Interesting in Extensive Reading

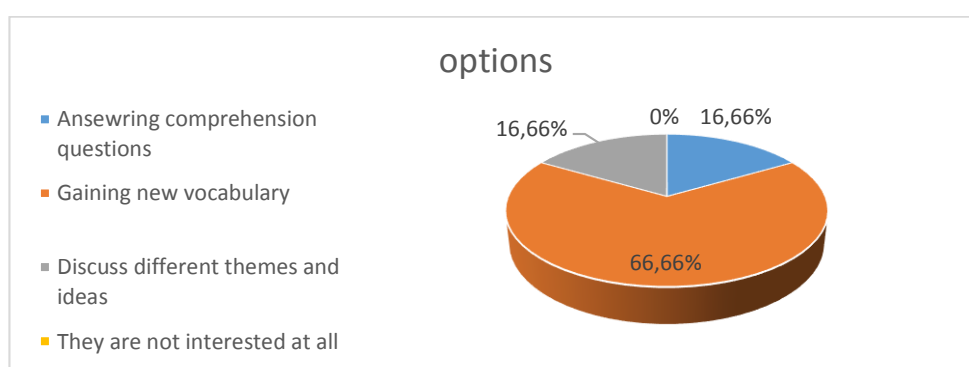


Figure 3.39: Reasons for Students' Interesting in Extensive Reading

According to table 3.35, we have recorded one informant who stated that students read for the sake of answering comprehension questions. Whereas, four respondents said that students read extensively to gain new vocabulary and one respondent thought that they read to discuss different themes and ideas. So, teachers argued that students prefer to read for general understanding rather than specific understanding of the text.

Q10. How often do you encourage your students to read outside the classroom? Explain

| Options | N | % |
|--------------|----------|------------|
| Always | 4 | 66.66 |
| Often | 2 | 33.33 |
| Rarely | 0 | 0 |
| Never | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 6 | 100 |

Table 3.36: The Frequency of Teachers' Encouragement

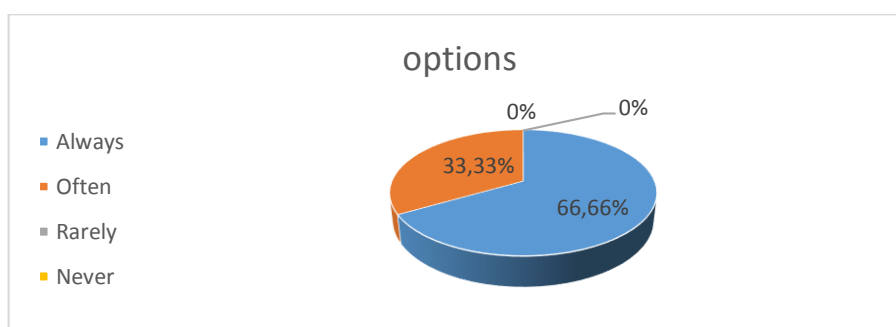


Figure 3.40: The Frequency of Teachers' Encouragement

Through this question, we tried to know how often do teachers encourage their students to read extensively. The informants' answers were positive as four teachers answered that they do not miss an occasion without encouraging students to read extensively materials that interest them. They also confirmed that guidance as for what students need to read is crucial in making extensive reading an enjoyable activity. The subjects' comments reveal that continuous encouragement and regular support for the practice of extensive reading both inside and outside the classroom can be the only way to help them enjoy extensive reading. One of the four respondents added that one way of doing this is by sharing books with students and acting as a role model whenever possible because students imitate their 'good' teacher. However, two teachers stated that they often encourage their students to practise extensive reading.

Q11. Students will enjoy reading if it is done properly and learners can choose what they want to read.

| Options | N | % |
|-------------------|----------|------------|
| Strongly agree | 2 | 33.33 |
| Agree | 4 | 66.66 |
| Disagree | 0 | 0 |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 6 | 100 |

Table 3.37: Teachers' Agreement about Students' Free Selection of Reading Materials

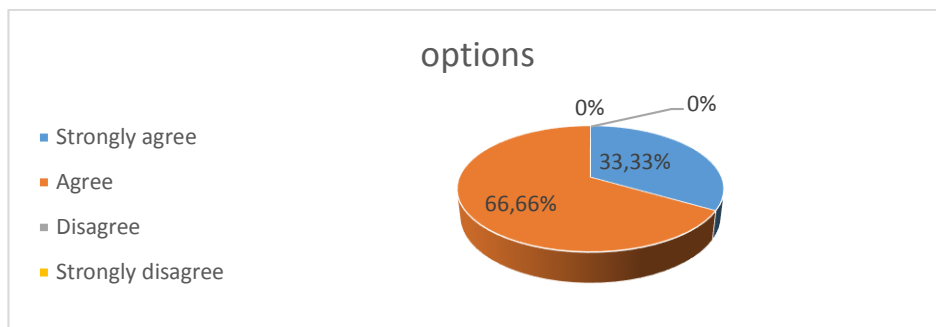


Figure 3.41: Teachers' Agreement about Students' Free Selection of Reading Materials

At the level of this question, (33.33 %) strongly agree that if students are given a chance to select the reading materials, they will enjoy reading. In addition, (66.66%) agree to make students participate in choosing their reading topics. However, no informant expresses her disagreement about this issue. Consequently, teachers are aware that if students read what is interesting for them and appropriate for their level, this will improve their level.

❖ **Section Three: The Writing Skill**

Q12. How much do you consider writing as an important skill for EFL learners?

Why?

| Options | N | % |
|-----------------------|----------|------------|
| Very important | 6 | 100 |
| Important | 0 | 0 |
| Not important | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 6 | 100 |

Table 3.38: The Importance of the Writing Skill

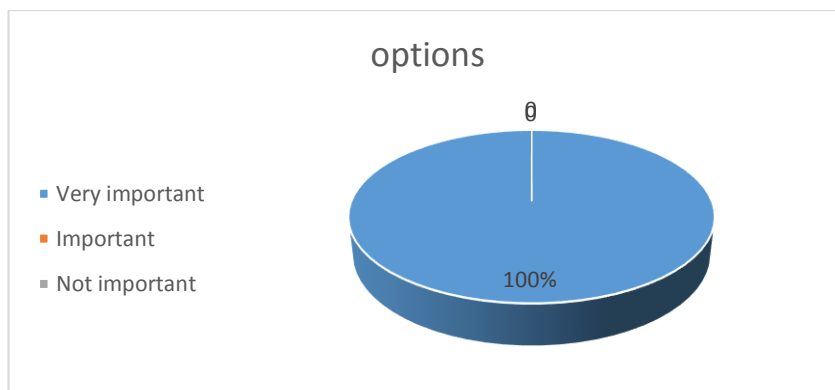


Figure 3.42: The Importance of the Writing Skill

From the table 3.38, all the respondents (100%) stated that the writing skill is very important skill for EFL learners. Therefore, they have to make greater efforts to increase their proficiency. All respondents agreed that writing is the essence of communication that students have to master since they need it in their academic carriers. One informant adds another comment that the three language skills reflect the learners' performance but writing reflects his competence.

Q13. How do you estimate your students' level in writing?

| Options | N | % |
|---------|---|-----|
| High | 0 | 0 |
| Average | 6 | 100 |
| Low | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 6 | 100 |

Table 3.39: Teachers' Estimation of the Students' Level in Writing

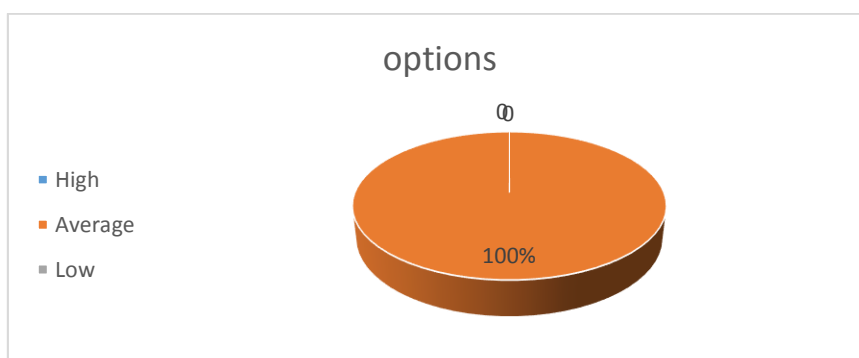


Figure 3.43: Teachers' Estimation of the Students' Level in Writing

Table 3.39 reveals that all teachers (100%) view that the level of students in writing in English is average while none of them said that students have high or low level. This means that learners have a background in writing which needs an amelioration.

Q14. Do you teach writing through? Why?

| Options | N | % |
|-------------------------|---|-------|
| a. The product approach | 0 | 0 |
| b. The genre approach | 0 | 0 |
| c. The Process approach | 4 | 66.66 |
| a+c | 1 | 16.66 |
| b+c | 1 | 16.66 |
| Total | 6 | 100 |

Table 3.40: Approaches to Teaching Writing

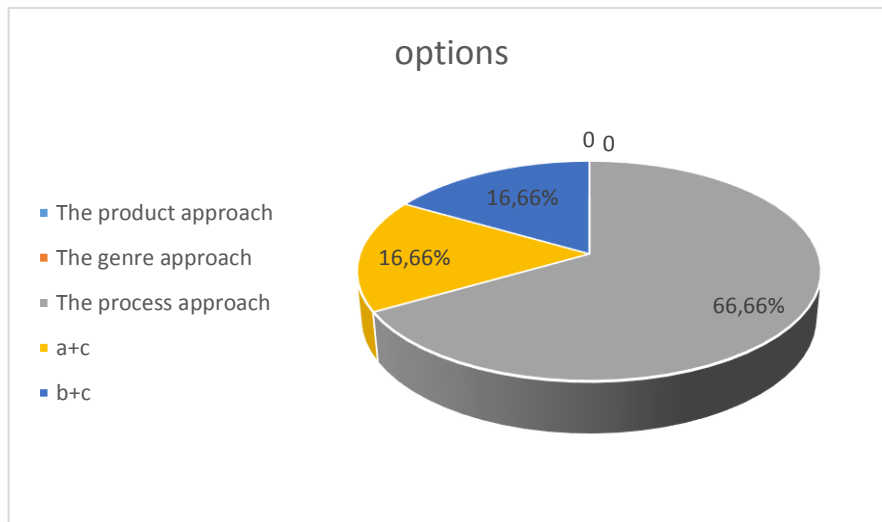


Figure 3.44: Approaches to Teaching Writing

According to table 3.40, 66.66% of the respondents opted for the process approach for teaching the writing skill, 16.66% of them stated that they teach writing through both the product and process approaches, also 16.66% claimed that they use the process and genre approaches to writing. The over emphasis put on the process approach to writing because it provides insights into the mental activities included in writing. The informants provided the following explanations for using a specific approach of teaching writing:

- The respondents who use the process approach stated that writing is a process that consists of different steps and students need to be aware of these steps to write successfully. They view writing as an exploratory and recursive process that involves moving forward and backward respecting the different stages of writing. Moreover, the process approach allows time for students to write and provide positive feedback from the teacher during writing.
- The informant who opted for the product and process approaches claimed that they use these two approaches depending on certain circumstances. In addition, the product approach is used to get the students background knowledge while the process approach is used to elicit the way by which writing is done.
- The respondent who used the process and genre approaches stated that they permit to identify the writing genre and the way that this genre is supposed to be written.

Q15. When you give a writing assignment, do learners find more difficulties in?

| Options | N | % |
|---------------------------------|---|-------|
| Applying correct grammar | 0 | 0 |
| Choosing appropriate vocabulary | 1 | 16.66 |
| Expressing good ideas | 0 | 0 |
| Using correct spelling | 0 | 0 |
| All of them | 5 | 83.33 |
| Total | 6 | 100 |

Table 3.41: Difficulties Encountered by Students

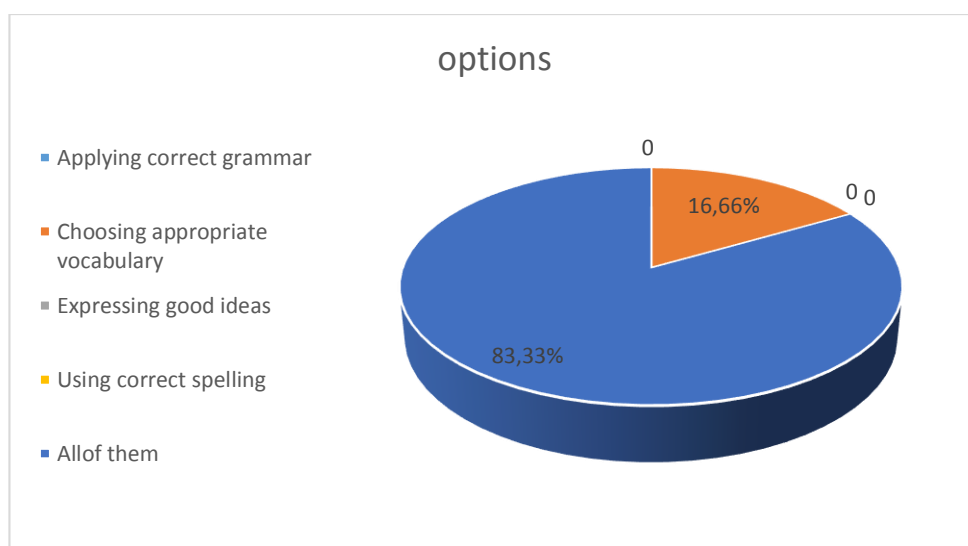


Figure 3.45: Difficulties Encountered by Students

This question attempted to highlight teachers' views concerning the difficulties that students face when writing. The majority of respondents (83.33%) believed that learners lack applying correct grammar, expressing good ideas and using correct spelling. In addition, one respondent claimed that students find difficulties in choosing appropriate vocabulary. Thus, students need more interest and practice to solve these problems.

Q16. Would you explain the reason(s) behind facing these difficulties in EFL writing?

All teachers agreed that students' difficulties in EFL writing are due to the lack of practice and lack of reading in the target language. They said that learners do not have enough vocabulary and ideas. This content is available when starting to read extensively.

Q17. Do you think that first language writing differs from foreign language writing? Explain.

| Options | N | % |
|---------|---|-----|
| Yes | 6 | 100 |
| No | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 6 | 100 |

Table 3.42: The Difference between First Language Writing and Foreign Language Writing

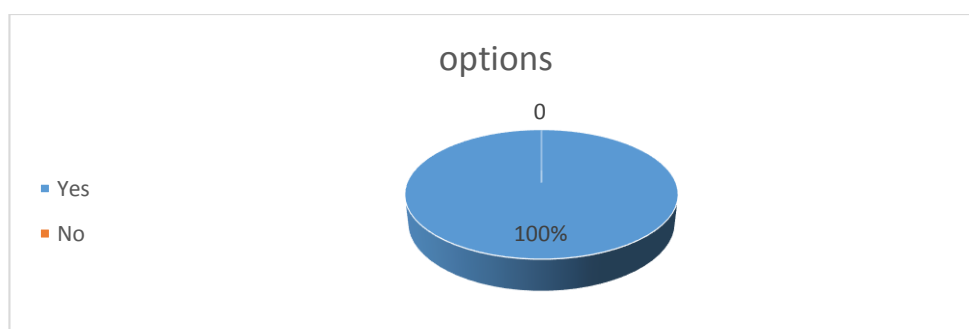


Figure 3.46: The Difference between First Language Writing and Foreign Language Writing

All respondents 100% stated that there are differences between writing in L1 and writing in SL/FL. They reported that FL is the target language where learners find difficulty when it comes to write. However, the L1 writing starts early in their learning process. They focused on the fact that L1 writer is a native producer who faces no obstacles with the language system. Whereas, SL/FL writer needs an academic elaborated knowledge of the language.

Q18. In your view, how can your students develop their writing skill?

| Options | N | % |
|---|---|-----|
| Practicing writing | 0 | 0 |
| Getting constant feedback on their writing | 0 | 0 |
| Reading extensively in the foreign language | 0 | 0 |
| All of them | 6 | 100 |
| Total | 6 | 100 |

Table 3.43: How to Develop the Writing Skill

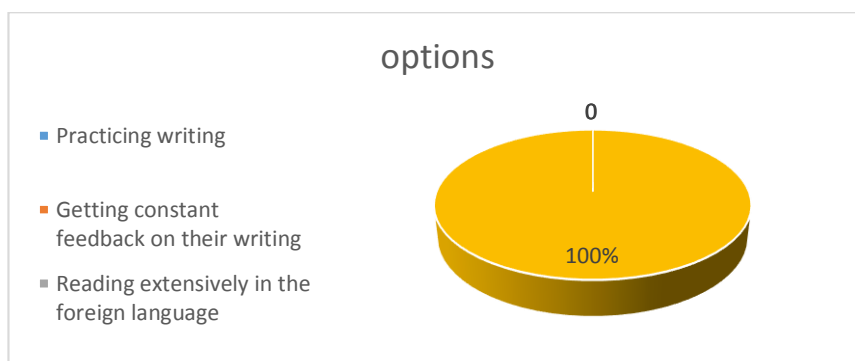


Figure 3.47: How to Develop the Writing Skill

All respondents (100%) claimed that students can develop their writing skill through practicing writing, and getting constantly feedback on their writing. In addition to, reading extensively in the foreign language. Consequently, teachers think that students require greater efforts to accomplish a good level in writing.

Q19. In your opinion, do good readers make good writers? How?

| Options | N | % |
|--------------|----------|------------|
| Of course | 4 | 66.66 |
| Yes | 2 | 33.33 |
| No | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 6 | 100 |

Table 3.44: Reading-Writing Relationship

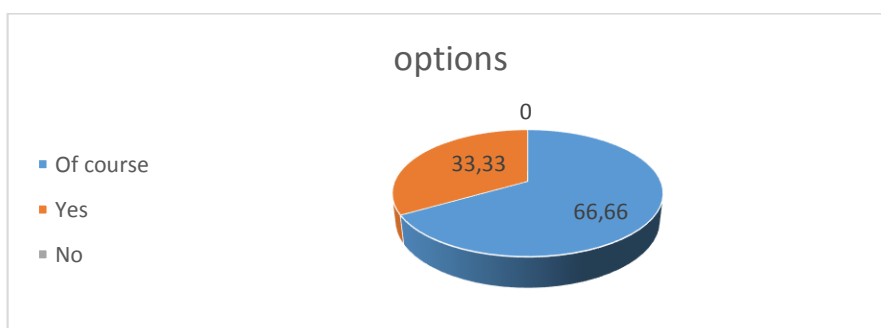


Figure 3.48: Reading-Writing Relationship

From table 3.44, (66.66%) of the informants insisted on the importance that reading makes good writers and (33.33%) of them answered "yes". Whereas, none of them ignore the existing relation between reading and writing. The respondents explained that both skills are complementary to each other. Moreover, they claimed that reading provides learners with

a suitable input through new words, constructions, and expressions. Furthermore, learners may imitate and reflect upon what they read. Hence, good readers are good writers.

Q20. Do your students believe that extensive reading improves their writing skill?

| Options | N | % |
|---------|---|-----|
| Yes | 6 | 100 |
| No | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 6 | 100 |

Table3.45: Students’ Appreciation of Extensive Reading

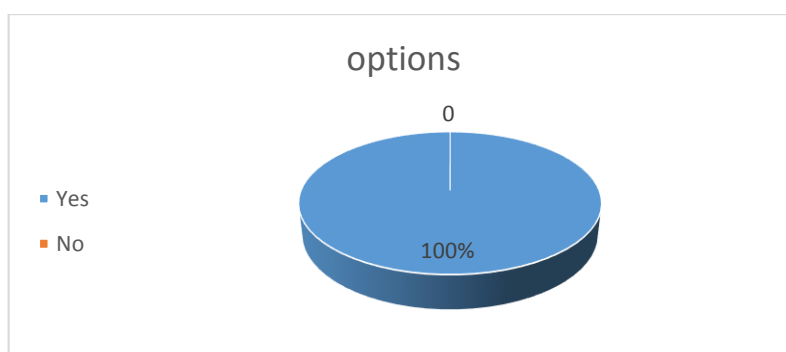


Figure 3.49: Students’ Appreciation of Extensive Reading

Teachers’ answers to this question were all positive, a fact that reflects students’ appreciation of extensive reading. The respondents shared the same opinion that students generally like to venture in new experiences, especially if they know that they will benefit from them. Extensive reading for them is a source of knowledge so that they can tackle any subject in their writing.

Q21. Through extensive reading, students can communicate their ideas in depth and develop the sense of fluency. Explain.

| Options | N | % |
|-------------------|---|-------|
| Strongly agree | 4 | 66.66 |
| Agree | 2 | 33.33 |
| Disagree | 0 | 0 |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 6 | 100 |

Table 3. 46: Teachers’ Agreement about the Role that Extensive Reading Carries to Reach students’ Writing Proficiency

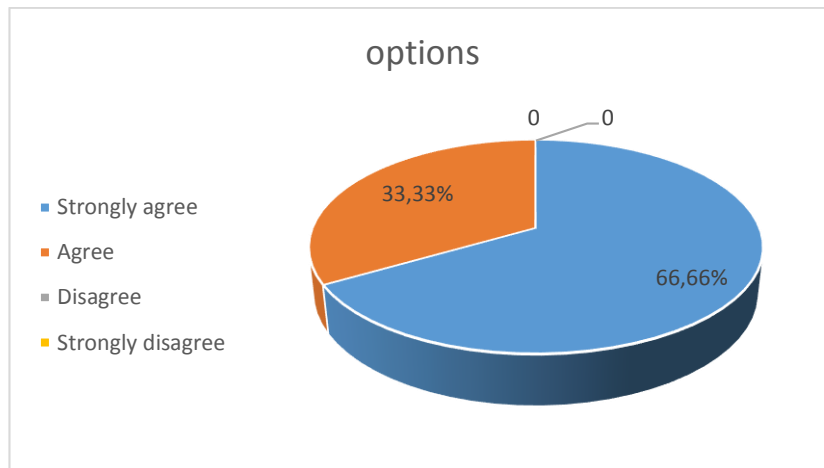


Figure 3. 50: Teachers’ Agreement about the Role that Extensive Reading Carries to Reach students’ Writing Proficiency

The results obtained from table 3.46 demonstrated that (66.66%) of the respondents strongly agree that extensive reading aids students to communicate their ideas in depth and develop the sense of fluency, in addition to the (33.33%) who agree with this proposal. However, none of them expresses her disagreement towards this issue. Indeed, they justified their opinions through praising the contribution that extensive reading provides to improve students’ writing skill. They are convinced that extensive reading would expose students to new vocabulary, sentence structure, word order, punctuation and transitions. So, for them a good reader is automatically a good user of the language.

Q22. What do you suggest to help your students read extensively in English, enjoy this skill and benefit from it mainly in improving the writing skill?

The last question in the present questionnaire was an open one for the sake of giving teachers an opportunity to express themselves and suggest proposals which they find helpful for students. All teachers agreed on the fact that extensive reading is a fruitful skill that has to be given great consideration by teachers and students alike. They strongly urged students to develop their reading autonomy by reading and reading a lot. For the choice of the reading topics, teachers insisted on students’ self-selection of relevant books that would foster their interest, curiosity and mainly increase their motivation for reading. Teachers also advised students to consult others- their teachers and parents- for the choice of materials they intend to read extensively when necessary. Finally, all informants emphasize teachers’ duty to specify time, help, encouragement, preparation and enthusiasm in order to support students to read extensively to improve their writing skill.

3.2.8. Interpretation of the Results

The analysis of the teachers' questionnaire reveals a consensus among teachers about both reading and writing skills, in addition to the reading- writing relation and the role of extensive reading in improving students' writing skill. After having analyzed results obtained from data collected in the different sections of the questionnaire, attentive interpretation of the results will be presented.

Section one: General Information

In the first section which is concerned with general information, the findings shows that our sample consists of six female teachers who have different experience in teaching English at university gaining different qualifications. This will help them to provide students with multiple pieces of information that aid them to ameliorate their level. In addition, the respondents are aware of the real level of students and the difficulties they face during their studies due to the different modules that they have taught during their career.

Section Two: Reading and Extensive reading

In this section, the results obtained elicit that despite the fact that the reading skill gains a considerable importance by teachers, it is considered as neglected skill in teaching a foreign language in comparison with the other skills (table 3.31). Therefore, teachers declared that they open discussions with their students about the importance of extensive reading and the crucial role that it has to improve their writing skill. The comments above confirm much extensive reading approach that it can facilitate students' reading ability, speed and comprehension and leads them to enjoy reading. Teachers are convinced that extensive reading is considered as a source of input that increases students' interest in the foreign language by raising their linguistic competence. They also stressed the role of extensive reading in developing students' vocabulary and helping them to develop positive attitudes and increased motivation to read in the foreign language. Accordingly, it is believed that students will enjoy reading if they are given a sort of freedom to choose topics that interest them and that are suitable for their level. Hence, they avoid falling in boring and difficult topics that destroy the desired aim.

Section Three: The Writing Skill

Concerning the writing skill, it is strongly believed that the writing skill is a very important skill that is needed in all domains of life. Thus, they emphasized the need of its

development among learners since they obtain an average level in writing. Furthermore, most of the teachers have opted for the process approach to teach writing believing in its effectiveness for developing students' writings and overcome the difficulties encountered by most students. The focal point in this discussion is the improvements that extensive reading provides for the development of the writing skill. From the analysis of the results, we have concluded that teachers are conscious of the reading-writing relationships and they are convinced to a large extent that good readers construct good writers. Extensive reading has shown to be an effective way of motivating students, increasing their vocabulary and raising readers self-awareness towards reading English as a foreign language.

The analysis of both students' and teachers' questionnaires has given some insights on the process of both reading and writing central to the problem of the study. Outcomes of this study seem to positively answer the research questions and strongly confirm and validate the stated hypothesis that EFL students' writing skill will be improved if they read extensively in the target language. Furthermore, both teachers and students acknowledged the role of extensive reading in developing students' writing skill.

Conclusion

Writing is a complex skill that entails a series of difficulties. Hence, learning to write accurately is something foreign learners need to develop. The present study is based on the investigation of the role of extensive reading in improving students' writing skill. Results reported in this chapter that are obtained from both students' and teachers' questionnaires reveal that extensive reading is an effective and pleasurable way for students to develop their writing skill. Extensive reading have fruitful effect on students' reading ability because it will explicitly teach them necessary reading and vocabulary strategies and raise their awareness of the reading skill. The more students read, the more they enjoy it and the better they produce proficient written productions. Consequently, the positive results that we have obtained in relation to the role of extensive reading in enhancing students' writing skill have confirmed our hypothesis meaning that there is a positive relation between extensive readings and good written productions.

General Conclusion

Writing is one of the essential skills that plays a crucial role for students to communicate and to achieve a global success in all domains of life. It attains a considerable interest in language teaching and learning. Concerning EFL students, writing is an important skill that needs to be developed what urges us to think of an effective solution that might help our students to read, improve their writing skill and develop their vocabulary. Extensive reading is thought to be the most appropriate cure to the problem. The present study attempts to provide the role that extensive reading plays in improving EFL students' writing skill. In addition, it seeks to elicit the students' and teachers' awareness of the reading- writing relationship and to report the extent to which teachers motivate their students to read extensively in order to improve their writing performance.

The main purpose of this work is to highlight the importance of extensive reading in enhancing EFL learners written productions. It examines the relationship between reading as a receptive skill and writing as a productive one. Therefore, we investigated learners' and teachers' perceptions towards the benefits that extensive reading provides for foreign learners to ameliorate their writing level. Hence, we aim through this research to test our hypothesis where we predict that if EFL learners become more aware of the role that extensive reading plays in the development of the writing skill and teachers raise their students' motivation through iterating the notion "read more", students' proficiency in writing would increase.

The present study is divided into three chapters, two theoretical chapters and a practical one. The first chapter comprises two sections where we introduce the theoretical background about the reading skill and present the notion of extensive reading. The first section begins by identifying reading from different perspectives. Then, it illustrates the reading comprehension process discussing the three different models: bottom-up, top-down and interactive models. In addition, it introduces phases of reading and criteria for effective reading. By the end of the section, learning and teaching reading in foreign language is discussed. Concerning the second section, we have identified extensive reading tackling its characteristic and benefits. Moreover, we tried to compare intensive reading and extensive reading to extract different ideas. Later, principles and goals of extensive reading were introduced to provide further clarification of this strategy.

The second chapter of this research is concerned with the writing skill. It consists of different topics that are devoted to clarify multiple dimensions of writing through giving its definition from different perspectives dealing with different criteria that guide us to effective writing. In addition, reasons for teaching writing and approaches to teaching writing were introduced to add more logic to our study. Furthermore, we have dealt with the essence of our study that is the reading- writing relationship and the contribution that extensive reading presents to develop the writing skill.

The third chapter is devoted to the empirical phase which strives to provide an answer to the inquiry. It investigates the role of extensive reading in improving students' writing skill through the analysis of two questionnaires administered for both third year LMD students of English at Biskra university and written expression teachers in the same department. The results of this study reveal that both teachers and students are aware of the reading-writing relationship. In addition, it demonstrates the role that extensive reading plays in improving the level of students' writing. Moreover, it shows the considerable support that teachers give to enhance students' writing skill through reading extensively. It also brings evidence about the success and efficiency of extensive reading in EFL teaching and learning. Therefore, the results obtained have confirmed the stated hypothesis since the writing skill is improved through reading extensively in the foreign language.

As a matter of fact and with reference to the outcomes already mentioned, significant improvements are thought to be achieved through the application of extensive reading strategy to improve students' level in writing. The present work does not pretend to be exhaustive; it remains an attempt to investigate the prominent role of extensive reading in enhancing students' level of writing which needs an elaboration. However, much more research need to be carried out in the field of extensive reading where many questions are still open to debate concerning this issue.

Recommendations

Considering the important contributions that extensive reading provides to improve EFL learners' writing skill and based on the findings of the present study, some practical suggestions and recommendations are proposed:

- ❖ Supporting the reading-writing relationship extensively to establish this notion in learners' minds. Hence, they will enjoy reading what leads them to improve their level in writing.
- ❖ Encouraging students to read easy materials that are appropriate for their level rather than dealing with hard materials that cause unsatisfactory results since compulsory and difficult activities create an unpleasant atmosphere.
- ❖ Urging students to read interesting materials where they activate their minds to extract new vocabulary, style and ideas to ameliorate their writing level.
- ❖ Follow-up activities is not an obligation in extensive reading, but if implemented it is preferable to make them short and simple for the sake of motivation since students should read for the aim of reading not for grades, answering comprehension questions or any other rewards.
- ❖ Guiding students to read and reread books that they found particularly interesting for general understanding skipping difficult words and continuing reading.
- ❖ Motivating students to expand their reading comfort zone through setting reading goals and keeping a reading log.
- ❖ Creating an atmosphere of challenge among students to enrich the idea of practicing extensive reading that leads to students' conviction towards the role that extensive reading plays in improving their written productions.

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Appendices

Appendix 01: Students' Questionnaire.

Appendix 02: Teachers' Questionnaire.

Appendix 01

Students' Questionnaire

Dear student,

This questionnaire is a part of research designed as a data collection tool for the accomplishment of a master dissertation in sciences of the language. It aims at finding out the students' opinions concerning the role of extensive reading in improving EFL students' writing skill. Your answers are quite significant for the validity of the research we are conducting. We wish to gain your full attention, honesty and interest. We would be very grateful if you accept to fill in the following questionnaire. Please, tick (✓) the appropriate answer or give a full statement whenever it is necessary.

Chabbi Sihem

Section One: General Information

Q1. Gender

- a. Male
- b. Female

Q2. How many years have you been learning English?

.....years.

Q3. Is learning English your own choice?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Q4. Which of the following skills you are interested to develop?

(Rank them in order from 1 to 4)

- a. Listening
- b. Speaking
- c. Reading
- d. Writing

Section Two: Reading and Extensive Reading

Q5. How often do you read in English?

- a. Always
- b. Often
- c. Rarely

Q6. Where do you prefer to read?

- a. Only in class
- b. In the library
- c. At home
- d. Elsewhere

- **In case you choose answer (d), say where exactly:**

.....

Q7. Do you enjoy the time you spend reading extensively?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely

Q8. Do you know how to find a suitable book in a library that interests you and that is appropriate for your level?

- a. Yes
- b. No

- **If yes, say how?**

.....
.....

Q9. Does your teacher encourage you to focus on extensive reading outside the classroom ?

- a. Yes
- b. No

- If yes, explain how? (What kinds of reading?)

.....
.....

Q10. Is reading outside the classroom beneficial to develop your level in learning English?

- a. Yes
- b. No

- If yes, explain how?

.....
.....
.....

Q11. While reading in class you would like the teacher to:

- a. Choose for you the text or passage to read
- b. Let you free to choose among different readings
- c. Give you a complete freedom to choose what interest you

Q12. While reading extensively, do you understand the text?

- a. Word by word meaning
- b. General meaning
- c. Both of them

Q13. When dealing with a text, what would you like to do with it?

- a. To do comprehension activities
- b. To gain new vocabulary and different styles
- c. To extract and discuss different themes and ideas

Section Three: The writing Skill

Q14. How do you find the module of written expression?

- a. Very interesting

- b. Interesting
- c. Not interesting

Q15. Is the time allocated to study written expression sufficient to cover most of the aspects needed to develop your writing skill?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Q16. How would you rate your level in English writing?

- a. Highly proficient
- b. Proficient
- c. Adequate
- d. Weak

Q17. Is writing a necessary skill to develop?

- a. Yes
- b. No

▪ **Explain.**

.....

.....

Q18. Good writing entails:

- a. Correct grammar
- b. Appropriate vocabulary
- c. Good ideas
- d. Correct spelling
- e. All of them

Q19. What is the most difficult step in writing according to you?

- a. Generating ideas
- b. Writing initial drafts
- c. Revising

d. Editing

Q20. Before writing your assignments, do you read extensively about that topic?

a. Yes

b. No

▪ **If yes, explain why**

.....

.....

.....

Q21. Does your teacher stimulate you to read extensively to enhance your writing performance?

a. Yes

b. No

▪ **If yes, how?**

.....

.....

.....

Q22. As a foreign language learner, to what extent does extensive reading help you to improve your writing level.

a. Very much

b. Little

c. No help

▪ **How?**

.....

.....

.....

Q23. Please, add any further comment about the role of extensive reading in writing development.

.....

.....

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.....
.....

**Thank you for your
cooperation**

Appendix 02

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire is a part of research designed as a data collection tool for the accomplishment of a master dissertation in sciences of the language. We direct this questionnaire to investigate the role of extensive reading in improving EFL students' writing skill. Your responses will be strictly confidential and a great help to us. We would be very grateful if you accept to fill in the following questionnaire. Please, tick (✓) the appropriate answer or give a full statement whenever it is necessary.

May I thank you in advance for your cooperation and the time devoted to answer the questionnaire.

Chabbi Sihem

Section One: General Information

Q1. Gender:

Male

Female

Q2. Degree or qualifications

License

Magister

Doctorate

Q3. Teaching career at the university:year(s).

Q4. Course(s) you have taught:

.....
.....

Section Two: Reading and Extensive Reading

Q5. Do you consider reading as an important skill for EFL learners?

a. Yes

b. No

▪ **If yes, why?**

.....
.....
.....

Q6. Is reading as a skill neglected in the program of teaching English in comparison to other skills?

a. Yes

b. No

Q7. Do you discuss your students' beliefs about extensive reading?

a. Yes

b. No

Q8. Do your students like extensive reading?

a. Yes

b. No

Explain.

.....
.....

Q09. Are students interested in extensive reading for?

a. Answering comprehension questions

b. Gaining new vocabulary

c. Discussing different themes and ideas

d. They are not interested at all

e.

Q10. How often do you encourage your students to read outside the classroom?

- a. Always
- b. Often
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

▪ **Whatever your answer is, explain how?**

.....

.....

.....

Q11. Students will enjoy reading if it is done properly and learners can choose what they want to read.

Strongly agree Agree disagree strongly disagree

Section Two: The Writing Skill

Q12. How much do you consider writing as an important skill for EFL learners?

- a. Very important
- b. Important
- c. Not important

▪ **Why?**

.....

.....

.....

Q13. How do you estimate your students' level in writing?

- a. High
- b. Average
- c. Low

Q14. Do you teach writing through?

- a. The product approach
- b. The genre approach
- c. The process approach
- **Why?**

.....

.....

.....

Q15. When you give a writing assignment, do learners find more difficulties in?

- a. Applying correct grammar
- b. Choosing appropriate vocabulary
- c. Expressing good ideas
- d. Using correct spelling
- e. All of them

Q16. Would you explain the reason(s) behind facing these difficulties in EFL writing?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Q17. Do you think that first language writing differs from foreign language writing?

- a. Yes
- b. No

▪ **If yes, would you state the difference(s)?**

.....

.....

.....

Q18. In your view, how can your students develop their writing skill?

- a. Practicing writing
- b. Getting constant feedback on their writing

c. Reading extensively in the foreign language

d. All of them

Q19. In your opinion, do good readers make good writers?

a. Of course

b. Yes

c. No

▪ **How?**

.....

.....

.....

Résumé

La capacité à produire des productions écrites efficaces est parmi les exigences les plus importantes que les étudiants visent à réaliser à travers leur étude de la langue. Cette recherche souligne l'importance de la lecture extensive, en montrant son rôle crucial dans l'amélioration de la compétence d'écriture et la signification obtenue grâce au soutien la relation entre la lecture et l'écriture. Afin de tester l'hypothèse qui prétend que l'écriture effective des langues étrangères pourrait être mieux réalisée lorsque les étudiants lisent extensivement, la méthode descriptive est utilisée. Cette étude est réalisée par la proposition de deux questionnaires, l'un à un échantillon d'étudiants de troisième année (LMD) à l'université de Biskra (N=52) sélectionnés au hasard parmi deux groupes sur dix pour démontrer la conscience des étudiants sur le rôle que la lecture extensive présente dans le développement de leur compétences en écriture. L'autre questionnaire est administré à un échantillon des enseignants de l'expression écrite (N=6) dans le département d'Anglais à l'université de Biskra pour découvrir leurs attitudes sur la relation existant entre la lecture et le développement de l'écriture et la mesure dans laquelle ils soutiennent leurs étudiants à lire pour atteindre un niveau de compétence. Les résultats du questionnaire des étudiants démontrent le rôle de la lecture extensive dans l'accomplissement de production écrite efficaces. En outre, les résultats obtenus par les questionnaires des enseignants soutiennent l'idée que la lecture extensive porte une contribution significative à l'enrichissement de vocabulaire des étudiants et améliorer leur niveau d'écriture. Ainsi, sur la base de ces résultats, l'hypothèse de recherche est confirmée que la lecture extensive est une solution efficace pour améliorer l'écriture des étudiants et de résoudre les différentes lacunes linguistiques. En conséquence, les résultats de cette recherche suggèrent de reconsidérer du statut de la lecture extensive dans l'apprentissage des langues étrangères en raison de l'impact qu'elle a sur l'évolution du niveau d'écriture.

