# Effect of Extensive Reading on Grammatical Accuracy and Fluency of EFL Learners' Writing Performance

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## Abstract

Learning and teaching a foreign language requires gaining mastery of all four skills involved in every natural language; however, developing writing ability is a skill which has received slight attention in Iranian context both by teachers and learners. In order to improve students' writing skill and encourage them to write creatively and also to provide teachers with various strategies for teaching writing, different solutions have been proposed. One of these techniques can be extensive reading. The present study was an attempt to investigate the effect of extensive reading on EFL learners' writing performance. To this end, thirty female advanced EFL learners participated in this study. As the pre-test, the participants wrote a paragraph on one of the topics of their course book. As the post-test they wrote a paragraph on a similar topic. In this study the learners' paragraphs were assessed using Jacobs et al.'s (1981) scale which is based on the content, organization, vocabulary, language used and mechanics. The obtained results revealed that extensive reading had an effect on general writing performance of the learners and it enhanced the learners' fluency in writing. However, it was found that extensive reading had no effect on the accuracy of learners' writing.

**Keywords:** extensive reading, writing, fluency, accuracy

## INTRODUCTION

English has become the central language in the world because of globalization. This idea is not new anymore. As English has been popular, many students all over the world are trying to learn English as a second or foreign language. Learning a foreign language requires mastery of four skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing). For foreign language learners, the skill of writing is very complex and challenging; most of these learners cannot gain the required and expected proficiency in this skill even in advanced levels. This can be due to the fact that writing is a productive skill that requires thinking and cognitive processes. It is considered the most complex skill because it goes through different stages i.e., prewriting, writing and editing, to reach its final product.

It is a general belief that students need to receive extensive input to develop their language proficiency. The language input EFL students receive is mostly from the classroom. Students do not often take any initiative to locate foreign language resources outside of class or engage in reading beyond a course requirement. Educators attribute the decline of students' reading engagement to the advent of multimedia (Li & Renganathan, 2008).

In recent years, classroom teaching and research has focused on extensive reading. In this regard, researchers such as Day and Bamford (2008) and Hunter (2009) identified a significant impact of reading on academic achievement. They argued that "reading can empower students with extensive vocabulary, syntax, and other language expertise that will enrich their use in the target language; hence, teachers play an important role in providing sufficient reading materials for students" (68).

Traditionally, the definition of reading has included both intensive and extensive reading. Intensive reading is reading that focuses closely on the linguistic text itself and the practice of particular reading skills. Whereas extensive reading, first coined by Palmer (1963 & 1964, as cited in Hunter, 2009) involves long texts or large qualities of materials. Extensive reading also involves global or general understanding with the intention of getting pleasure from the text. Related to this, extensive reading is based on the idea that reading is individualized, so students should choose the books they want to read (Blair, Susser, & Robb, 1990, p. 10).

Grabe and Stoller (2002) stated that extensive reading is reading that involves long texts and that exposes learners to "large quantities of material within their linguistic competence" (p. 259). In its place, writing has always been regarded as an important skill in teaching and learning English as a foreign Language (EFL). In other words, learners should be exposed to lengthy texts that they are able to comprehend. While extensive reading requires texts to be lengthy, there is no clear agreement on what lengthy or extensive means.

In terms of language learning, writing is probably the most difficult skill to acquire. It is something most native speakers never master and it is more challenging for second language learners. Writing is like swimming; the psycholinguist Lenberg (n.d, as cited in Brown, 2000) mentioned that "human beings universally learn to walk and to talk, but that swimming and writing are culturally specific learned behavior……We learn to write if we are a member of a literate society and usually only if someone teaches us" (p. 334).

Hyland (2003) claimed that nowadays, teaching writing occupies a much further essential situation in the field of second and foreign language teaching rather than two or three decades ago. Hyland related it to the defense of communication through network on writing skill and the extended familiarity with the nature of written texts and writing processes.

Writing is a recursive process and learners should revise their writing several times before submitting final drafts. According to Richards and Renandya (2002), "the skills involved in writing are highly complex. L2 writers have to pay attention to higher level

skills of planning and organizing as well as lower level skills of spelling, punctuation, word choice, and so on" (p. 303). While most EFL teachers often encounter various problems in their writing classes, they cannot find an efficient way to awaken students' imagination and set their minds working. At best, some teachers only adopt a product-based approach, focusing on exemplifying contrast and comparison, description, classification and so on.  An alternative approach can be extensive reading. Nuttal (1996, as cited in Ghanbari & Marzban, 2014 ) stated that "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" (p.128).

In order to improve the academic status of writing skill and encourage learners to write creatively and also for providing teachers with various strategies for instructing and correcting learners' mistakes, different solutions have been proposed in the related literature. It is believed that one of these techniques can be extensive reading (ER); according to Harris (2001), extensive reading (ER) can play an important role in learners' language education, so it should be a practical option for reading pedagogy in the foreign language curriculum.

Generally, it can be argued that both writing and reading require learners to actively engage in meaning construction, for which they have to actively involve themselves in interpreting and constructing meaning from the text and later produce a text. However, students find composing in English difficult because the writing process demands that they utilize many cognitive and linguistic strategies of which they are uncertain. Many students complain about the lack of ideas and incapability to think of anything interesting or significant enough to write. Extensive reading seems to be of help in this regard.

In EFL context, such as Iran, little attention is given to the role of writing skill as a tool of communication. By the growing interest toward extensive reading as a factor which can have an improving effect on learners' writing performance researches, such as Lee (2000) and Shen (2009), stated that teachers must find ways to explicitly develop, and integrate ER into learning especially writing process. Extensive reading encourages exposure to a wide range of text types. Explicit teaching of text types may help students recognize the patterns of different genres more easily; yet, learners need repeated exposure to a text type to build up their experience of how it works.

Peregoy and Boyle (2000) noted that "familiarity with text types facilitates reading comprehension" (p. 240). Richards and Renandya (2002) argued strongly for including extensive reading in the second or foreign language curriculum. There is now compelling evidence that extensive reading can have significant impact on learners' second or foreign language development (Pazhakh & Soltani, 2010). Day and Bamford (1998) also referred to affective reasons why extensive reading extends language proficiency.

It is argued that extensive reading encourages learner autonomy and "there is substantial evidence that learners taking responsibility for their own learning helps them succeed in second language learning" (Day & Bamford, 1998, p. 27). Day and Bamford (2004, as cited in Pazhakh & Soltani, 2010) argued strongly for including extensive reading in the L2/FL

curriculum. There is new piece of evidence that extensive reading can have a significant impact on learners' L2/FL development. Not only can extensive reading improve reading ability, it can also enhance learners' overall language proficiency (e.g., spelling, grammar, vocabulary, and writing).

Extensive reading is reading for pleasure, involving students reading texts for general understanding. Yet, despite the relationship between reading and writing, few attempts have been made to improve one with other. The present study aims to examine whether extensive reading could improve accuracy and fluency of EFL learners' writing. It will focus on a detailed analysis of the impact of extensive reading on writing. In particular, it will focus on the grammatical accuracy and fluency of the students' writing.

The effect of extensive reading has also been investigated in other aspects of writing. For instance, Atilgan (2013) stated that the role of extensive reading in building vocabulary continues to receive considerable attention in the first and second language research and pedagogy. In her article called "Effects of Extensive Reading on Writing In Terms Of Vocabulary" she used the extant research and results from a classroom-based inquiry to explore the role of extensive reading on vocabulary development. In addition to reviewing the literature, this article suggested that teachers of language learners should purposefully include extensive reading in the language classroom. Although, this study considered the role of extensive reading on writing in terms of vocabulary, the findings can be regarded as to be in line with the findings of the present thesis, which showed that extensive reading is effective in general writing performance and writing fluency.

In a similar study on the effectiveness of extensive reading in writing performance, Tsang (1996) claimed that extensive reading contributed to vocabulary growth. This study compared the effects of an enriched syllabus, which included extensive reading and writing assignments on English descriptive writing performance at different levels. Tsang examined students in three different English programs and found that the regular plus extensive reading program was reported to be significantly more effective than the regular plus mathematics and regular plus frequent writing programs. In the area of content and language use, the extensive reading program was the only one of the three programs that was significantly effective in vocabulary growth and the quality of writing.

Ghanbari and Marzban (2013) also investigated the role of extensive reading on vocabulary retention. Their study revealed that vocabulary instruction is most effective when students are positively and actively involved in their learning and they are allowed to use their own strategies to learn the vocabulary especially through extensive reading. Bahrani (2011) focused on the number of hours spend on reading and the development of the specialized language competence. In other words, those who claim that if one person spends more hours behind his/her chair reading; she/he develops more specialized competence than those who spend fewer hours.

In similar vein, Ahmadi (2012) investigated the effects of extensive reading on the writing ability of EFL students; it also took a further step to explore the effect of adding group work activity to extensive reading program to find its possible positive effect on

improving writing ability. The results of the data analysis revealed that adding group work to ER was fairly effective in improving the investigated writing aspects. A friendly interview with ER plus GW group for the sake of participants' self-rating of group work at the end of the program showed that the majority suggested reading a common book in groups would be more interesting and effective than different stories in each group which is in contrast with the nature of ER.

## RESEATCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Regarding the purpose of the study, i.e., investigating the impact of extensive reading on Iranian EFL learners' writing performance, the following research questions are posed:

**Q1:** Does extensive reading have any effect on Iranian EFL learners' writing performance?

**Q2:** Does extensive reading have any effect on Iranian EFL learners' writing fluency?

**Q3:** Does extensive reading have any effect on Iranian EFL learners' writing accuracy?

Based on three research questions, the following null hypotheses have formulated:

**HO1:** Extensive reading does not have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' writing performance.

**HO2:** Extensive reading does not have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' writing fluency.

**HO3:** Extensive reading does not have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' writing accuracy.

## METHOD

### Participants

Thirty female students, comprising two intact groups of Safir Danesh language institute in Tabriz, participated in this study. All the learners had taken a standard placement test (PET), before entering the study. The classes were 30 female learners at advanced level. It is worth mentioning that the participants were not aware of the research purpose. The participants came from the same educational background and all of them were high school or university students.

### Instruments

All the participants in the present study had already taken a standard placement test which was administered by the institute. As the pre-test, the participants wrote a paragraph on one of topics of their course book. As the post-test also they wrote a paragraph on a similar topic.

There are several writing performance scales for measuring the general writing performance. In this study the learners' paragraphs were assessed using Jacobs et al.'s

(1981) scale which is based on the content, organization, vocabulary, language used and mechanics.

## Procedure

This study was carried out with 30 female learners between the ages of 17 to 23, from Safir Danesh language institute in Tabriz; they were randomly assigned into two groups: the control and experimental groups. Each group contained 15 female students. The participants had entered the course at the institute through the placement test. A pretest-posttest design was employed. The teachers of both classes were the researcher and the book which was used as the course book was *Steps to Understanding* from which the topics were selected. The pre-test was writing a paragraph on the first topic in their course book. Besides giving a total score, the researcher measured the accuracy and fluency of the participants' writing. A total score was given using Jacob, et.al.'s scoring scale. The accuracy of the writing was measured by the number of error free t-units divided by the whole number of t-units (Arent, 2003 & Rahimpour, 2008) and the fluency of the writings was measured by words per t-units. This measure was adopted from Ishikawa (2006) which includes the total number of words divided by the number of t-units in the produced written text.

The teacher, course book, teaching methods, tasks and the activities done in both classes were the same except that each session the experimental group were asked to read extra short stories. The stories were chosen according to the learners' interest. The teacher encouraged the students to read books of their interest as much as possible, yet, to control their reading, the researcher also asked the learners to read their selected short stories in the last 10 munities of their class. This procedure was followed for 3 semesters (6 months). At the end of the last semester, the post-test was administered in which the participants were asked to write similar to the one they wrote in their pre-test. Once more, the writings were assessed in terms of accuracy and fluency, and was given a total score, as well.

## Design

The present study had a quasi- experimental pre-test post-test design with a control group. This study examined whether extensive Reading could improve accuracy and fluency of EFL learners' writing. It focused on a detailed analysis of the impact of extensive reading on writing, in terms accuracy and fluency. Thus, in the present study, extensive reading was the independent variable and the grammatical accuracy and fluency of the students' writing were the dependent variables. Thus, both dependent and independent sample t-test, were used.

## RESULTS

The data gathered in the pretest research was analyzed with regard to the null hypotheses formulated. Yet, initially, the normality of the distributions and the homogeneity of the participants in terms of their language proficiency, writing, fluency, and accuracy in writing were checked.

## Checking the Normality of the Distributions

One-sample Kolmogorov- Smirnov Test was used to check the normality of the distributions. The scores of the participants' writing, accuracy, and fluency pre- and post-tests had a normal distribution since all the p values were more than 0.05.

## Homogeneity of the participant (PET)

A Preliminary English Test (PET) was used for ensuring the homogeneity of the participants at the beginning of the study. The test consisted of 85 items and included four sections of Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. As assigned by the instructions given in the test itself, the participants were given 100 minutes to complete the test and each section of the listening part was played twice. Based on the PET outlines, those who gained scores between 70 and 89 were considered as advanced level learners. The descriptive analysis of the participants' language proficiency scores are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Participants' Language Proficiency in PET test

|       |              | Number | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|-------|--------------|--------|-------|----------------|
| Mark  | Experimental | 15     | 75.53 | 3.56           |
|       | Control      | 15     | 76.26 | 2.34           |

According to Table 1, the mean score of the participants' PET test in experimental group is 75.53 with the standard deviation of 3.56; for the participants in the control group, the mean score of PET test is 76.26 with the standard deviation is 2.34. The total score of the PET test was 100. Based on these scores, the participants were considered as learners at advanced level of language proficiency. Thus, an Independent Sample T-test was run to compare the students' scores in two groups. The results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Participants' Language Proficiency in PET test

|        |                            | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | |
|--------|----------------------------|-------|-------|------|-------|----------------|
|        |                            | F     | Sig.  | t    | df    | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|        | Equal variance assumed     |       |       | -0.6 | 28    | 0.51           |
| MARK   | Equal variance not assumed | 4.342 | 0.046 |      |       |                |
|        |                            |       |       | -0.6 | 24.20 | 0.51           |

As illustrated in Table 2, the p value is 0.51 > 0.05. This means that the homogeneity of the participants can be ensured; thus, it can be stated that there is no significant difference among the participants in this study and they are nearly at the same level of language proficiency.

## Writing Pre-tests

In this section, the leaners' scores in the pre-test of general writing, writing accuracy, and writing fluency are analyzed. Table 3 illustrates the participants' general writing scores in the pre-test.

**Table 3:** Participants' General Writing Scores in the pre-test

|              | GROUP        | N  | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|--------------|--------------|----|-------|----------------|
| Writing-pre  | Experimental | 15 | 62.66 | 16.13          |
|              | Control      | 15 | 66.33 | 10.43          |

As is shown in Table 3, the mean score of the participants' writing performance in the pre-test in the experimental group is 62.66 with the standard deviation of 16.13; whereas, the mean score of the participants' writing performance in the pre-test in the control group is 66.33 with the standard deviation of 10.43.

To compare the mean scores of the students in both groups, an Independent Samples T-Test was conducted. The results of which are illustrated in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Results Independent Samples T-Test related to Writing in pre-test

|                   |                             | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|
|                   |                             | F     | Sig.  | t     | df    | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Writing-pre       | Equal variance assumed      |       |       | -0.73 | 28    | 0.46           |
|                   |                             | 3.574 | 0.069 |       |       |                |
|                   | Equal variance not assumed  |       |       | -0.73 | 23.96 | 0.46           |

As is presented in Table 4, the p value is 0.46 > 0.05; therefore, it can be stated that there is no significant difference among participants' writing performance in the pre-test. That is to say, their general writing performance is nearly at the same level.

As another dependent variable of the study, the students' writing fluency was examined. Table 5 illustrates the participants' writing fluency scores in the pre-test.

**Table 5:** Participants' Writing Fluency Scores in the pre-test

|              | GROUP        | N  | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------|--------------|----|------|----------------|
| Fluency-pre  | Experimental | 15 | 6.96 | 1.39           |
|              | Control      | 15 | 6.68 | 2.2            |

As indicated in Table 5, the mean score of the participants' writing fluency in the pre-test in the experimental group is 6.96 with the standard deviation of 1.39, and the mean score of the participants' writing fluency in the pre-test in the control group is 6.68 with the standard deviation of 2.2.

The mean scores of the participants' writing fluency in both experimental and control groups were compared using another independent sample T-Test. The results are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6:** Results Independent Samples T-Test related to Writing Fluency in pre-test

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| fluency-pre | Equal variance assumed | | | 0.41 | 28 | 0.68 |
| | | 0.67 | 0.41 | | | |
| | Equal variance not assumed | | | 0.41 | 23.66 | 0.68 |

As illustrated in Table 6, the p value is 0.68, more than 0.05; therefore, it can be stated that there is no significant difference among participants' writing fluency in the pre-test. That is to say, their general writing fluency is nearly at the same level.

Writing accuracy was another dependent variable in this study. Table 7 illustrates the participants' writing accuracy scores in the pre-test.

**Table 7:** Participants' Writing Accuracy Scores in the pre-test

| | GROUP | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Accuracy-pre | Experimental | 15 | 0.6 | 0.21 |
| | Control | 15 | 0.57 | 0.24 |

As represented in Table 7, the mean score of the participants' writing accuracy in the pre-test in the experimental group is 0.6 with the standard deviation of 0.21; also, the mean score of the participants' writing accuracy in the pre-test in the control group is 0.57 with the standard deviation of 0.24.

Once more, the researcher conducted an independent samples T-Test to compare the scores of the participants' writing accuracy in both experimental and control groups. Table 8 demonstrates the results obtained from the t-test regarding participants' writing accuracy in the pre-test.

**Table 8:** Results Independent Samples T-Test related to Writing Accuracy in pre-test

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| accuracy-pre | Equal variance assumed | | | 0.31 | 28 | 0.75 |
| | | 0.2 | 0.65 | | | |
| | Equal variance not assumed | | | 0.31 | 27.643 | 0.75 |

As illustrated in Table 8, the p value is 0.75, more than 0.05; therefore, this means that there is no significant difference among the participants' writing accuracy in the pre-test. That is to say, their general writing accuracy is almost at the same level.

## Testing the First Null hypothesis

***In the first null hypothesis, it was stated that extensive reading does not have any significant effect on the Iranian EFL learners' writing performance.***

In order to test this hypothesis, the participants' scores in the post-tests were compared. Table 9 illustrates the participants' writing performance scores in the post-test.

**Table 9:** Participants' Writing Performance Scores in the post-test

|  | GROUP | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Writing-post | Experimental | 15 | 77.00 | 11.14 |
|  | Control | 15 | 68.06 | 10.16 |

In Table 9, the mean score of the students' writing performance in the post-test in the experimental group is 77.0 with the standard deviation of 68.06; whereas, the mean score of the students' writing performance in the post-test in the control group is 68.06 with the standard deviation of 10.16.

Nevertheless, it was essential to examine the significance of the difference between the two groups through using an Independent Samples T-Test. Table 10 demonstrates the results obtained from the t-test regarding the students' writing performance in the post-test.

**Table 10:** Results Independent Samples T-Test related to Writing Performance in post-test

|  |  | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| writing-post | Equal variance assumed |  |  | 2.29 | 28 | 0.03 |
|  |  | 0.17 | 0.67 |  |  |  |
|  | Equal variance not assumed |  |  | 2.29 | 27.76 | 0.03 |

The results in Table 10 reveals that there is significant difference between writing scores in the pre-test and the post-test as the p value is 0.03 less than 0.05; therefore, it can be stated that that the null hypothesis is rejected.

## Testing the Second Null hypothesis

***In the second null hypothesis, it was stated that extensive reading does not have any significant effect on the Iranian EFL learners' writing fluency.***

The related descriptive statistics are illustrated in Table 11.

**Table 11:** Participants' Writing Fluency Scores in the post-test

|  | GROUP | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fluency-post | Experimental | 15 | 8.13 | 1.52 |
|  | Control | 15 | 6.85 | 1.45 |

As displayed in Table 11, the mean score of the students' writing fluency in the post-test in the experimental group is 8.13 with the standard deviation of 1.52; and, the mean score of the students' writing fluency in the post-test in the control group is 6.85 with the standard deviation of 1.45.

However, to check the significance of the difference, the researcher conducted an Independent Samples T-Test, the results of which are presented in Table 12.

**Table 12:** Results Independent Samples T-Test related to Writing Fluency in post-test

|  |  | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| fluency-post | Equal variance assumed |  |  | 2.35 | 28 | 0.02 |
|  |  | 0.06 | 0.8 |  |  |  |
|  | Equal variance not assumed |  |  | 2.35 | 27.94 | 0.02 |

As illustrated in Table 12, the p value is 0.02 which is less than 0.05; therefore, it can be stated that that the null hypothesis is rejected and there is significant difference between writing fluency scores in pre-test and post-test. Thus, it can be argued that extensive reading affects writing fluency of advanced female EFL learners.

## Testing the Third Null hypothesis

***In the third null hypothesis, it was stated that extensive reading does not have any significant effect on the Iranian EFL learners' writing accuracy.***

The related descriptive statistics are illustrated in Table 13.

**Table 13:** Participants' Writing Accuracy Scores in the post-test

|  | GROUP | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Accuracy-post | Experimental | 15 | 0.59 | 0.2 |
|  | Control | 15 | 0.5 | 0.17 |

As shown in Table 13, the mean score of the students' writing accuracy in the post-test in the experimental group is 0.59 with the standard deviation of 0.50; and, the mean score of the students' writing accuracy in the post-test in the control group is 0.5 with the standard deviation of 0.17.

However, to check the significance of the difference, the researcher conducted an Independent Samples T-Test, the results of which are presented in Table 14.

**Table 14:** Results Independent Samples T-Test related to Writing Accuracy in post-test

|  |  | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| accuracy-post | Equal variance assumed |  |  | 1.2 | 28 | 0.23 |
|  |  | 1.58 | 0.21 |  |  |  |
|  | Equal variance not assumed |  |  | 1.2 | 27.03 | 0.24 |

As illustrated in Table 14, the p value is 0.23 which is more than 0.05; therefore, it can be stated that that the null hypothesis is not rejected and there is no significant difference between the writing accuracy scores in the pre-test and the post-test.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It is a common belief that improving foreign language learning requires gaining mastery through extended, comprehensive and various forms of input. The input, which learners receive, is not direct since most of EFL learners have no access to the contexts of the language they are learning and they are not able to use or even hear the language out of classrooms. Therefore, they have to adhere to some linguistic devices such as different films, listening records, and reading texts. These elements can improve their receptive and productive skills. It seems that one of the most complex skills for EFL learners is writing and scholars along with teachers have attempted to provide learners with different strategies and techniques for improving their writing performance. One of these methods is using extensive reading for developing writing performance. Through reading diverse text types learner can write easily and confidentially. Thus, the present study investigated the effect of extensive reading on writing performance of advanced EFL learners.

Based on the obtained results, it can be concluded that extensive reading had an effect on general writing performance of the learners and it enhanced the learners' fluency in writing. However, it was found that extensive reading had no effect on the accuracy of learners' writing. Therefore, it can be mentioned that by encouraging extensive reading learners can improve their general writing performance and write fluently, but still for writing accurately extensive reading will not be sufficient and both EFL leaners and teachers need to use other more direct techniques, in this regard.

Perhaps, concentrating on structural and formal aspects of sentences and grammatical features of words, and also, informing learners about organizational elements in writing can solve this problem. It is obvious that constant repetition of writing styles, structures and words in an extensive text has the potential to lead the learner to pick up them subconsciously that will subsequently contribute to better writing in terms of fluency and accuracy. Students who had completed the extensive reading not only produced writings that were more fluent but also demonstrated a general improvement in their writing performance.

Many studies have shown that reading can have a beneficial effect on second language learning, but relatively few of these have focused on extensive reading in classroom environments over a period of time. The present study was an attempt to find out the impact of extensive reading on Iranian EFL learners' writing performance. The results of the data analysis for the first null hypothesis revealed that extensive reading can improve writing performance in general. The results for the second null hypothesis of the study also revealed that extensive reading affects Iranian EFL learners' fluency in writing, positively. However, the results obtained from checking the last null hypothesis revealed that extensive reading has no effect on EFL learners' accuracy in writing.

To put it in a nutshell, based on the findings, it can be argued that generally speaking extensive reading is effective and beneficial in improving and developing EFL learners' linguistic skills and abilities. Therefore, EFL teachers may consider including extensive reading in their language classrooms. However, the extensive texts should be within the linguistic capacity of the students and care should be taken in ensuring the texts are neither too easy nor too difficult for each individual language learner; also, using interesting texts based on learners' stylistic differences can be more beneficial.

The results obtained from this study can be useful for development of extensive reading in EFL classes, especially writing courses; teachers can make use of this strategy in improving writing skill of learners. This study can also help EFL learners and teachers to recognize the importance of reading as a receptive skill in developing writing as a productive skill.

In addition, providing learners with various text types and exposing them to huge amount of reading texts with varying length and content can help them in reducing their writing pressure and increasing their self-confidence. By experiencing different reading styles, they can use the content, structures and even vocabularies of those texts in their own writings and finally be able to discover their own stylistic manner of writing.

Great advances have been made in the field of language skills and foreign language acquisition, as the literature on this field shows. However, great effort should be made to study which factors may affect learner's improvement in a classroom in order to obtain higher degrees of proficiency and mastery in skills.

Further investigations are required to support the findings of the present study, exploring extensive reading among advanced learners and also examining intensive reading of EFL learners in different proficiency levels can be conducted in order to open more windows to the psychological aspects of language learning and teaching. That is to say, this study can be replicated with a larger number of participants and over the whole semester or the whole year. In addition, it would be interesting to compare results across levels of proficiency as well as gender.

The present study examine the effect of extensive reading on accuracy and fluency of writing, further studies can be conducted in order to investigate the effect of extensive reading on writing of specific texts such as narrative or argumentative texts. It is

especially true when conducting research with more variables than those in the present study, such as including affective factors in this process.

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