Reading-writing Connections in EAP Courses: Implications and Applications

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Abstract—**Reading and writing skills are said to be so much interrelated at either primary, secondary and/or tertiary levels of education that it has been claimed that "…. Good writers are good readers…good reading is the key to becoming a good writer" (Rodriguez Kessler, 2006:5-6). Also, reading, as a skill for EAP students, is often linked to writing because the former often precedes the latter within the target disciplines. Seen together, reading and writing today are described as "parallel processes" or "natural partners" (Sarasota, 2008; Tsai, 2008) where the activities of readers are congruent to or mirror images of the activities of writers. The present research paper is an attempt to pinpoint different aspects of the issue, as far as its implications and applications at EAP courses are concerned. To this end, a number of relevant theoretical issues are touched upon first, later to be followed by a series of suggestions as to the empirical applications of the interrelationships between the skills.**

Index Terms —**reading, writing, reading-writing connections, EAP, mediation theory of language learning**

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching, as well as learning, at higher education level is a rather challenging enterprise. Working with young adults, as college or university students, is a demanding job which has proved to involve so many tough obstacles. At this level, students have their own cognitive, affective, and socio-cultural characteristics which make them distinctly different from other learners among other age-groups

Likewise, the variables involved in ensuring success in both teaching and learning at such a level are so diverse that so far no one has dared to claim possessing a thorough list to be considered the last word in the field. True, this is more so nowadays because the age-old ''information transmission'' mode of teaching -as the most dominant paradigm in academic, educational settings- is no longer considered appropriate (Cannon and Newble, 2000; Light and Cox, 2001).

A. Higher Education and EAP

In academia worldwide, a large number of journals and research articles are published in English, and a large proportion of academic textbooks too are in English. In addition, a considerable number of college/university courses, academic seminars and conferences are also held using English as their major language for the exchange of information.

This has clearly led to the emergence of the discipline of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), itself a younger offshoot of the little older branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP).To explicitly define the meaning of EAP, it is said to cover those educational activities in higher education, the purpose of which is the teaching and learning of the English language required by undergraduates, post-graduates and/or staff (Kennedy, 2001:25).

The divisions and sub-divisions of EAP are characterized with some minor differences in a number of relevant sources (e.g. Jordan, 1997; Johnson & Johnson,1998; Dudely-Evans & St John , 1998; and Johns & Price-Machado, 2001; Flowerdew & Peacock , 2001).Such sources typically tend to divide EAP into two main branches, i.e. English for General Academic Purpose (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP). According to Blue, as quoted in Dudely-Evans and St John (1998), an awareness of the distinction between English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) is crucial to a full understanding of EAP. EGAP refers to teaching the skills and language that are common to all disciplines; ESAP refers to the teaching of the features that distinguish one discipline from others (p.41).

B. Teaching and Learning L2 Reading and Writing

Historically speaking, of the four language skills, reading comprehension and writing in a second or foreign language can be regarded as the oldest and most viable skills both in being learned or taught at educational settings across the world. Furthermore, reading and writing skills are said to be so much interrelated at either primary, secondary and/or tertiary levels of education that it has been claimed that ''… good writers are good readers… Good reading is the key to becoming a good writer…Becoming a good writer works together with becoming a good reader'' (Rodriguez Kessler, 2006:5-9).

Seen from another perspective, throughout the years of their stay at colleges, university students are expected to spend the lion's share of their time primarily on reading various textbooks, journal articles and other similar reading materials. Thus, they are required to be or become efficient and competent readers of such texts. That's why Nunan (2001:242), among so many others, maintains that ''an enormous amount of time, money, and effort is spent teaching reading…[and] it is probably true to say that more time is spent teaching reading than any other skill''. As to the nature and typology of academic reading materials, they are thought to be different from other types of texts that we may have read prior to being admitted to the university. They are organized differently and are written in a distinctive style (Seal, 1997; introduction, xix).

C. Reading-writing Connections in Summary Writing

In everyday use of language, we are continually integrating the language skills or switching from one skill to another. It is best to reflect this integration when teaching a second or foreign language (Davies and Pearse, 2000:99). As far as the integration of reading- writing connections is concerned, it is admittedly an old, established technique to ask EAP students of reading comprehension courses to present or produce brief statements of the main ideas in a text or reading passage, either while reading or after completing reading the text. The ability to produce a summary (alternatively known as synopsis, or pr écis) is referred to in TEFL literature as summarizing, or summary skills, and has been a focus of instruction in the teaching and testing of reading comprehension skill(s).

At academic settings in particular, students are usually required to produce study summaries, to complete various types of summary assignments, and to complete tasks that call for the incorporation of a written source material in term papers or any other similar presentation (Johns & Mayes, 1990; Kirkland & Saunders, 1991; Nunan, 2003; Brown, 2004). However, this is not an activity to be expected to be carried out with the same degree of success by all language learners. After all, some more proficient language learners outperform the others and some others, with less background and practice in these skills, may lag behind.

D. Statement of the Problem

Reading, as a skill for EAP students, is often linked to writing because the former often precedes the latter within the target disciplines. Students read textbooks and journal articles with the goal of extracting relevant information and ideas for writing up assignments, examinations and dissertations, etc. For this reason, reading teachers often focus on reading skills they believe will be useful when students write extensively (See Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001).

EAP is admittedly "a thriving and important aspect of TESOL that has so far received less attention from researchers than it deserves…[and is]more complex and potentially problematic than most English language teachers recognize in the beginning of their EAP teaching" (Hamp-Lyons, 2001: 130). Within EAP, reading comprehension skill plays a pivotal part. The role of reading is so significant that reading is said to be "the skill of skills" (Anderson, 1984). Grabe (1991:375) too notes that reading is probably the most important skill for second language learners in academic contexts.

Nevertheless, reading is a skill that is one of the most difficult to develop to a high level of proficiency (Grabe, 2002). Dreyer and Nel (2003), as quoted in Lin and Siriyothin (2008) point out that many students enter higher education underprepared for the reading demands that are placed upon them. Nuttal (1996) too points out that although reading textbooks is vital for assignments, projects and exams, students are often not taught how to read textbooks and there is a tendency for subject teachers to use strategies that will not help them to improve their content reading skills or to be independent learners.

However, within EGAP (English for General Academic Purposes) all university language teachers are required to be fairly grounded in teaching of the skills and language that are common to all academic disciplines. To quote Dudley-Evans & St John (1998:41):

English for General Academic Purposes isolates the skills associated with study activities such as listening to lectures; participating in supervisions, articles and other reading material; writing essays, examination answers dissertations and reports. These are particular skills associated with each of these, so that, to take one example, reading almost any textbook involves understanding the main ideas, distinguishing the main ideas and the supporting detail, making notes on the main ideas, evaluating the writer's point of view, and where necessary skimming to understand the gist of the argument or scanning to find specific information.

This research article, thus, intends to contribute to the former body of scholarship on different aspects of teaching and learning of reading comprehension, in particular as far as the connections between this skill and writing are concerned.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A. Theories of Reading-writing Relations: Interlingual and Intralingual Aspects

Historically speaking, the relationships between reading and writing have been characterized by a complex set of approaches and conceptualizations .In more traditional approaches, reading and writing were conceptualized as individual skills that could be analyzed and taught as sets of independent skills and strategies. The separation between reading and writing instruction, Huot (1988) maintains, can be traced back as far back as the Middle Ages. Today however, reading and writing are usually described as "parallel processes" or "natural partners" (Trosky & Wood, 1982;

Tierny & Pearson, 1983; Sarasota, 2008; Tsai, 2008) where the activities of readers are congruent to or mirror images of the activities of writers (Smith, 1983).

Reading and writing are rightly referred to as "parallel" because there is a connectedness between what readers do and what writers do as they prepare to read or write: as they create meaning through text (in writing), and as they reflect on the text (in reading).However, as far as the exact nature of these relationships is concerned, it appears not to have been properly determined yet. As a matter of fact, the field committed to locating the interrelationships between these two skills seems still to be in its infancy because the concern for the study of reading and writing appears to have boomed in the last two decades (Stotsky, 1983; Shanahan, 1984; Hirvela, 2004; Hinkel, 2006; Parody, 2007).

Researchers from a variety of fields (e.g. education, composition, reading, learning psychology, and applied linguistics) have become interested in the ways that reading and writing might reinforce or accelerate the learning of content, the development of literacy skills, and the acquisition of language abilities (Grabe, 2003:242).Interactions between reading and writing is thus a topic of concern in the academy as it relates to students studying in their first language (L1) as well as students studying in their second language (L2).

The study of reading-writing relations, according to theoreticians (e.g. Grabe & Kaplan, 1997; Urquhart & Weir, 1998; Grabe, 2003) must be grounded in the theories of reading and writing that can stand independently. Reading-writing relations should then build on these theories and offer a framework that explains the ways in which reading and writing together enhance language, literacy, and content learning. Such a framework can offer teachers a richer understanding of how to assemble a course designed to promote literacy and language skills needed for successful performance in EAP contexts.

Academic writing too occupies a large proportion of student's study time. For a variety of reasons it causes difficulties. The requirements needed for any successful written assignment in academic setting is said to include: the need to select relevant material, present a reasoned argument, evaluate evidence and draw appropriate conclusions (Jordan, 1997:12-13).Knowledge of genre is a key element in all communication and especially significant in writing academic or professional texts. Knowledge of genre involves an understanding of the expectations of the discourse community that reads the text and of the conventions that have developed over time about the structure, the language and the rhetoric of the genre. And these are clearly challenges-at times insurmountable-for the majority of EAP students.

Researchers who address reading-writing relations adopting an approach to similarities and/or differences between or among L1-L2 (both in terms of processes and products involved)can be said to be interested in studying the interlingual aspects of the issue. Reading-writing relations have been a topic of L1 research for the past two decades(e.g. , Tierney & Shanahan,1991;Carson et al; 1990; Alderson, 1984, 2000; Macaro, 2001; Grabe, 2003; Cobb & Horst, 2001; Sadeghi, 2007).

Such sets of research have contributed to the view that some familiarity with L1 findings can help L2 teachers develop greater awareness of the challenges that all learners face in accomplishing their reading and writing goals. Carson et al.(1990) examined the first language and second language reading and writing abilities of ESL learners to determine the relationships across languages (L1 and L2) and across modalities(reading and writing)in the acquisition of L2 literary skills.

Researchers who address reading-writing relations with an eye mainly on what processes and/or products are followed in particular in L2, can be said to be interested in intralingual aspects of this issue. Second language research on reading-writing connections can be traced back to the 1980s.Two early topics of research involved the Interdependence Hypothesis and the Language Threshold Hypothesis (Cummins, 1979, 1981; Durgunoglu & Verhoeven, 1998; Connor, 1996; Johns & Mayes, 1990; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996). The former approach suggests that literacy transfers from the L1 to the L2, while the latter hypothesis argues against supportive transfer until a certain variable level of L2 proficiency is attained. Two further topics of research have also been identified; one being the argument that extensive reading directly improves writing abilities (Krashen, 1984, 1993), and the second to be the role of directionality between reading and writing (Is it better to go from reading to writing or from writing to reading for the most effective teaching?).Together, these four issues have dominated discussions of L2 reading-writing relations in the 1980s and 1990s (Wallace, 2001; Grabe, 2003).

B. Reading-writing Relations in L2 EAP Settings: Pedagogical Aspects

With the recognition that students must be prepared to engage in academically appropriate task and do so efficiently and successfully, reading-writing relations have taken on greater importance. Research exploring academic settings and tasks has demonstrated that students are commonly asked to combine reading and writing activities. Thus , apart from any value that derives from literacy development through reading and writing interactions ,there is an increasing need for teaching specific instructional genres (e.g. ,summarizing, writing a response to a reading selection and so forth) in connection with a variety of academic contexts.

Curricula and pedagogical practices for language and literacy development at EAP courses require considering two factors: 1) a needs analysis, and 2)a coherent framework for meeting student needs. A needs analysis needs to be done to identify student and institutional goals; tasks, texts and topics that should be included in instruction; time and resources needed to ensure effective teaching; and appropriate tools to assess effectiveness of learning. As regards the necessity for adopting a coherent framework, four general options are suggested for implementing EAP instruction (Grabe, 2003:254):

    1. a language-emphasis program, focusing on specific language skills

    2. a program with a reading-and-writing emphasis

    3. content-based instruction emphasizing EAP contexts

    4. task-based instruction, again emphasizing EAP contexts

As such, the two frameworks that offer the best opportunities for incorporating and writing within realistic academic demands are content-based instruction and task-based instruction. In both cases, there are possibilities to build the foundational skills for reading and writing abilities based on realistic academic expectations. Content-based instruction can be implemented in many different ways. When set up well in response to student needs and instructional goals, it offers an effective way to provide a set of reading and writing experiences, and it can provide much practice in the specific literacy tasks expected in advanced academic settings. Johns (1997), Snow and Brinton (1997) and Kasper (2000) list suggestions, both in theory and practice, to help enrich college-level content-based instruction. Similarly, task-based teaching can be relied on to support reading-writing integration at EAP courses. One example, is Carson (2000) who emphasizes reading and writing tasks developed for students in transition to academic work in university settings. She notes the following as a series of goals for EAP task-based teaching:

    1. establish tasks that support real academic learning goals

    2. cycle across fluency, accuracy, and complexity

    3. vary familiar and unfamiliar tasks, more formal and less formal language

    4. focus on meaning, form-control, and form-restructuring

    5. use tasks that reflect real-word language uses.

Based on the above guidelines, there are many tasks and activities that can prepare students for academic demands through reading and writing interactions. A number of these tasks are fairly traditional (e.g. , summaries, writing responses ,in-class essay writing ,report writing), but they are useful enough for developing skills for academic success as well.

With respect to the practical instructional tasks and activities that can promote reading-writing relations, Grabe (2003) asserts that hundreds of ideas for writing instructions can be found in relevant sources (Reid, 1993; White, 1995; Grabe and Kaplan, 1996; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998; Grabe & Stoller, 2002).The same source and author (Grabe, 2003: 255-257) offers ten general guidelines for instruction to be used for building reading and writing foundations for academic success.

One more experimental project dealing with reading-writing relations deserved to be mentioned here is Hirvela's (2001).The project centered on incorporating reading in the writing class. He describes a qualitative study of 39 undergraduate students' reading during an integrated EAP reading and writing course in an American university. The aim of the study was to investigate the incorporation of reading into a writing course. The course aimed to ensure that the learners were taught as active rather than passive readers, and also that the texts they read came from their academic discourse communities. Data were collected through student self-assessment, an end-of-course survey, interviews and recall protocols on learner attitudes.

C. Reading-writing Relationships: An Alternative Paradigm

In parallel with the above theoretical and practical researchers dealing with different aspects of reading-writing relations in both L1 and L2,and in both EAP and non-EAP courses, numerous studies have elaborated on the same issues from other perspectives. Of the numerous studies dealing with exploring reading-writing connections since 1980s, many appear to have adopted another alternative paradigm. Within this paradigm, the relevant issues are studied in terms of either an "interactive orientation" or "constructive orientation".

1. The Interactive Orientation

The interactive orientation postulates that reading can influence writing development and writing can influence reading development. Within this paradigm, reading is believed to involve an "interaction" between a reader and a text, which means that reading process is dynamic and variable, and there are different levels of understanding of a text (Lin, 2008).

Here, findings suggest interdependence between reading input and written output. It is meanwhile suggested that students' enthusiasm for the task adversely affect the written outcome in that interests may not be perceived by the independent markers as being particularly salient to the text and the summary task.

In another research of relevance to interactive orientation approach, Yamada (2002) investigated whether Japanese intermediate EFL writers would be able to summarize and integrate source texts without being heavily dependent on them if they were encouraged to use inferential thought processes. Students engaged in two summary writing tasks, each task requiring integration of two media sources on the same topic. One task involved more inferential process than the other. The results showed that task requiring greater degree of inference helped writers generate information which were more independent of the source texts.

2. The Constructive Orientation

The 1980's marked a change in focus as far as research into reading-writing interrelationships was concerned. Research began to examine the relationships between writing and reading as cognitive and social processes. In fact, a large and extremely influential body of research from a constructivist perspective indicates that reading and writing development are characterized by gradually more sophisticated rule-governed representations, and that the learner is an

active problem-solver who is influenced by background knowledge, text, and context (Stotsky, 1983; Squire, 1983;Chall & Jacobs, 1983; Eckhoff, 1983). During 70s, 80s and 90s several researchers described how "construction of meaning" occurs through reading-writing linkages (e.g., Flower & Hayes, 1981; Pearson & Tierney, 1984; Spivey, 1990; McGinley, 1992).

Constructive theory as well as research asserts that writing and reading are both meaning-making activities. When people write and read, meaning is continually in a state of becoming; the mind anticipates, looks back, and forms momentary impressions that change and grow as meaning develops. Because writing and reading involve the development of meaning, both were conceptualized as composing activities in the sense that both involve planning, generating and revising meaning which occur recursively throughout the meaning-building process.

Seen together, the work on reading and writing processes indicates that writing and reading are deeply related activities of language and thought that are shaped through use. The structures and strategies that writers and readers use to organize, remember, and present their ideas are generally the same in writing and reading. However, the structure of the message and the strategies used to formulate and organize it are driven by purpose and therefore different.

As an example of an action research carried out in terms of a constructivist approach to integration of reading and writing at EAP contexts, one may refer to McKusick et al.'s (2001).What they actually did was intended to emphasize purposeful uses of reading and writing in college, to stress strategic approaches to literacy development rather than isolated skills, to capitalize on the connections between reading and writing ,and to encourage students more toward independence and control of their own reading and writing processes. As a result, they planned to have students engage in reading and writing activities through the pursuit of meaningful, thematically focused goals, much as they might do in any college course in humanities or social science.

Preliminary evaluations of the integrated course have shown that students are more likely to retain, demonstrate more dramatic growth in reading on a standardized instrument, and report greater satisfaction than students who enroll in separate reading and writing courses (Mc Kusick, 2001).However, more research is needed to demonstrate effectiveness of the course, including longitudinal studies of   how students perform in subsequent courses and qualitative studies of students self-directed reading and writing processes.

III. DISCUSSION

A. Reading-writing Connections and Mediation Theory of Language Learning

Within the task-based language teaching/learning approach as expounded on by Ellis (2000,2003),Willis & Willis (2007), Harmer (2001), Johnson (2001), Skehan (1996), Nunan (2001,2003,2004), and Van den Branden (2006), one aspect which can empirically be addressed is the role of application of mediating tasks to EAP classroom procedures. This can be aimed at increasing the efficiency levels of TBLL/TBLT.

To explain the underlying tenents of mediation theory of language learning, of the numerous proponents of the theory, originally put forward by Vygotsky (1978),two can be regarded as outstanding figures: Lantolf (2000) as quoted in Ellis (2003:175-176), and Feustein (1991),as quoted in Williams and Burden (1997:67-87).As Lantolf (2000) points out "the central and distinguishing concept of sociocultural theory[the mediation theory of learning]is that higher forms of mental activity are mediated" (quoted in Ellis, 2003:175).

As such, the theory seeks to explain how mediated minds are developed out of social activity. Through social activity human capacities are modified and reorganized into higher forms, which allow individuals to exercise conscious control over such mental activities as attention, planning and problem-solving. A question however may be asked as to what extent the concept of mediator differs from a more traditional view of the teacher as disseminator of information. A difference does exist. First of all, mediation must be concerned with empowering, with helping learners to acquire the knowledge, skills and strategies they will need in order to progress, to learn more, to tackle problems. It is also concerned with helping learners to become autonomous, to take control of their own learning. Again, this may be argued that this is, and always has been, the job of a good teacher to act so. However, the advocates of the theory (e.g. Williams & Burden, 1997: 68) see the distinction between the teacher as mediator and teacher as instructor as a useful one.

Second, it is to be noted that mediation involves interaction between mediator and learner, and that the learner is an active participant in the process. Third, there is an emphasis on reciprocation, that is, the importance of the learner reciprocating the intentions of the mediator or teacher. This means that the learner is ready and willing to carry out the task presented, and that there is an agreement as to what should be done and why. Reciprocation can occur at the level of acceptance and willingness to comply, or it may involve a process of negotiation whereby agreement is reached as a result of other meditational activities. Fourth, it is important to note that learner autonomy involves more than the provision of suitable materials. The mediator needs to help the learners to interact with the materials in various ways until they become truly self-directed.

Furthermore, as far as the predominant models in SLA are concerned, proponents of mediation theory are said to prefer to talk of "participation" rather than "acquisition" (Ellis, 2003:176) to emphasize the point that development is not so much a matter of taking in and the possession of knowledge but rather of the taking part in social activity. In this view of learning, then, the distinction between "use" of the L2 and "knowledge" of the L2 becomes blurred because knowledge is use and use creates knowledge. As an instance of task-based research, researchers may launch analyses of

the way new linguistic forms and meanings arise out of the social and interpersonal linguistic activity that learners engage in while they are performing a task. In particular, the researchers may employ specific mediated tasks between reading a text and writing a summary for it. The mediated tasks here may include a "group discussion", "clustering", "personalizing" etc. to follow reading a passage which requires the reader to turn in a writing summary for it. Afterwards, an examination of the changes that resulted from performing the collaborative tasks may turn out to be fruitful in teaching language skills more effectively. This seems particularly of importance because" there have been few attempts at investigating the mediation that occurs in language classroom" (Williams & Burden, 1997:83).

To turn to another proponent of the application of mediated tasks to teaching language skills successfully, Feuerstein's viewpoints are required to be reviewed. According to Feuerstein, right from the birth an individual's learning is shaped by the intervention of significant others, sometimes as parents, sometimes as teachers, sometimes as gurus or as any other influential role model in any field. In teaching-learning contexts, these significant others select and organize stimuli that they consider most appropriate for the individual, shape them and present them in the ways considered most suitable to promote learning. They also intervene in shaping the learner's early attempts at responding to stimuli, directing and encouraging more appropriate responses while explaining why one response is more useful and appropriate than others (Feuerstein et al. ,1980).

Thus, in contrast to Piagetian theory, where it is believed that learners develop at their own pace through interaction with the environment, the way significant others interact with learners is considered to play a central part in the learner's cognitive development. This enables the learner to construct a view of the world and his or her place within it. Cognitive, social and emotional development are seen as inextricably linked, and the establishment of an appropriate climate in the learning environment within which this can be effectively fostered is as important as the content of what is conveyed (Williams & Burden, 1997:67).

B. Suggestions for Further Research

In the pages immediately preceding, some aspects of mediated learning experience to teaching in particular were introduced and elaborated on. Although these ideas are just beginning to be applied in a systematic way to language teaching, there is considerable accumulating evidence from a vast number of studies in general and special education to enable us to conclude that their influence can be both powerful and profound. (Williams & Burden, 1997: 84).

Drawing on the implications and findings mentioned above as to the reading-writing connections mediated by tasks, and using summarization protocol as an elicitation technique, a number of relevant areas for further research are suggested because as Williams and Burden (1997:83) maintain" there have been few attempts at investigating the mediation that occurs in the language classroom". However, before considering doing any of the following topics of research, it is important to state that this is not to advocate using each aspect of mediation for every language task given. Teachers will need to select for themselves which areas of mediation to consider for a particular teaching situation, with the needs for a specific class and context in mind.

1. Choosing three experimental groups and a control group in which a similar set of reading passages with appropriate levels of difficulty is distributed among the subjects. For each particular subject group, after studying the reading selected, the teacher may want to use a specific mediating task (e.g. oral discussion task, clustering task, personalizing task etc.) to get the subjects involved in more communicative activities aimed at using the information in the reading in real communication situations. The readers of the passages may afterwards be requested to write up a summary in English. On collecting the summaries followed by evaluating them based on a reliable measurement scale, and then by subjecting the resultant data to relevant statistical procedures, it may finally be possible to determine which of the four groups outperformed the others in reading comprehension as reflected in their written summaries. Does the introduction of reading passage (the input) and the written summary (the output) result in any significant difference in performance across the four subject groups? Why yes or no?

2. The same preceding procedure can be made use of in evaluating the likely difference(s) in performance across subject groups who are requested to present cross-linguistic summaries as their final output. In this case, respondents may be required to present two summaries for the reading they study; one in their mother tongue and the other in the target language. Since Nuttal (1996:187) has hypothesized a difference in performance in such a case, such a research may come up with findings which either reject the hypothesis or support it.

3. The same procedure may be replicated with both English and non-English major students in order to make appropriate comparisons and contrasts between performance of the two groups in terms of the reading-writing connections.

4. Another similar procedure may be replicated with students of EAP courses but with the application of some other elicitation techniques other than summary protocols, e.g. recall protocol, cloze procedure, gap-filling tests, information-transfer technique etc. to obtain relevant data for a more comprehensive research.

5. Another research plan to be suggested here is to do the same procedure as above but with an emphasis on elaborating on the likely similarities or differences observed in a cross-sectional treatment versus a longitudinal one.

6. Different language teaching methods for improving reading skills may also serve the prospective researchers as a basis for comparison and contrast of the performance of subject groups in terms of the resultant reading-writing connections.

7.   Given the likelihood of differences in performance between males and females in reading comprehension, investigating the role of specific mediating tasks between reading and writing may also result in some fruitful results.

IV. CONCLUSION

Teaching, as well as learning, at higher education level is a rather challenging enterprise. Likewise, the variables involved in ensuring success in both teaching and learning are so diverse that so far no one has dared to claim possessing a thorough list to be considered the last word in the field. Historically, of the four language skills, reading comprehension and writing in a second or foreign language can be regarded as the oldest and most viable skills in both being learned or taught at educational settings across the world. However, the variables involved are so varied that an appropriate study and examination requires a comprehensive outlook. The present paper first presented the variables involved, then elaborated on the theories of reading-writing relations: those emphasizing interlingual theories versus the intralingual ones. Touching upon some pedagogical aspects of reading-writing connections in L2 EAP setting, the authors introduced the concept of "mediating tasks" as a factor seemed to positively affect reading-writing relations. Finally, some suggestions were put forward for further research by prospective researchers.

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