Extensive Reading and the Writing Ability of EFL Learners: the Effect of Group Work

Mahmood Azizi [a], Hedviga Tkáčová [b, *], Martina Pavlíková [c], Zita Jenisová [c]

[a] University of Mazandaran, Mazandaran, Iran
[b] University in Zilina, Zilina, Slovakia
[c] Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Nitra, Slovakia

Abstract

This study attempted to investigate the impact of extensive reading (ER) on the writing ability of Iranian EFL students. The study also took a further step to explore the effect of adding group work activity to the extensive reading program to find its possible positive effect on improving writing ability. The present study had two experimental groups with no control group. Participants were 35 students majoring in English Literature as ER plus GW (group work) group and 30 students majoring in English Language Teaching as ER group both taking the course of reading comprehension(II) in the University of Mazandaran. Participants were first given a reading comprehension test taken from TOEFL from which 24 students were chosen as the participants of this study according to their marks. The ER plus GW group read one graded reader each week at home, discussed the summary or related topic in the groups of five or six. The group members took notes on each other's talk including new vocabulary and language structure. At home, they wrote a summary of the book. ER group, on the other hand, read one book each week and wrote its summary at home without any discussion. Both groups were asked to write about a common topic one before and one at the end of the program as their pre/post test. Their summary examined in terms of four writing aspects including: run-on sentences, vocabulary errors (word choice and word form), and overall accuracy. The results of t-test revealed that adding group work to ER was almost effective in improving overall accuracy, run-on sentences, word choice but not in word form errors.

Keywords: extensive reading, writing ability, group work, English literature, research.

1. Introduction

In language learning, reading is a very important and active skill. The ability to read in a second language is considered to be an essential skill for students. Learning to read requires

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* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: hedwiga.tkacova@mail.com (H. Tkáčová), mazizijam@umz.ac.ir (M. Azizi),
mpavlikova@ukf.sk (M. Pavlíková), zjenisova@ukf.sk (Z. Jenisová)

cognitive effort and a long process in first and second language (Grabe, 2006). Reading is a complex process involving the interaction of various cognitive, metacognitive, linguistic, and sociolinguistic elements. Benettayeb believes that reading is not an individual act, but it involves the interaction of the reader's general information, linguistic competence, visual and mental means, and socio-cultural reference (Benettayeb, 2010). Generally, it is a key to language acquisition and learning. There are generally four styles considered for reading including: skimming, scanning, intensive reading (IR), and extensive reading (ER). However, nowadays, extensive reading is not considered as a reading style but rather as an approach to second and foreign language reading instruction (Day, Bamford, 1998; Day, Bamford, 2004; Ficzere et al., 2020; Lalinská et al., 2020).

Harold Palmer was the first person who applied the term ER and IR in 1968. Intensive reading is reading complex material under the teacher's control by the aim of detailed understanding (Gardner, 2004; Imrie, 2004; Nishino, 2007 and etc.). On the other hand, ER is a kind of rapid, silent reading of large and easy to understand material without teachers' help in a stress-free environment, usually done outside the classroom (Asraf, Ahmad, 2003; Gardner, 2004; Imrie, 2004; Nishino, 2007). Generally speaking, ER is an approach to language teaching in which learners read a lot of easy material in the new language. They choose their own reading material and read it independently of the teacher. They read for general, overall meaning and for information and enjoyment. The only necessity is that the students already have a basic knowledge of the foreign or second language.

Over the past decade, an increasing number of studies have been conducted within English as a second or foreign language context on extensive reading. The purpose of those studies was to investigate the impact of ER on the improvement of language skills. ER program has been found to be very helpful and effective in increasing learners' language proficiency. Research has shown improvement of the vocabulary through ER (see e.g. Benettayeb, 2010; Nutttal, 2005; Nation, 1997; Matsuka, Harish, 2010), speed reading (Mason, Krashen, 1997; Bell, 2001; Mason, Krashen, 2004; Tanaka, Stapleton, 2007), reading comprehension (Lalinská et al., 2020; Kirmizi, 2009; Tanaka, Stapleton, 2007; Yamashita, 2008; Wan Rom, 2010), attitude and motivation toward reading (Asraf, Ahmad, 2003; Nishino, 2007; Prowse, 2002), listening (Day, Bamford, 1982; Schieppegnell, 1984), affect (Powell, 2005; Han, 2010; Grabe, 2001; Hartshorn, 2008), and writing (Lee, Hsu, 2009; Tsang, 1996; Nordquist, 2009; Lundstrom, Baker, 2009).

Learning including extensive reading can move forward with the use of educational applications in addition to teaching literature and language (Blakqori, 2020), use extensive reading combined with form-focused or meaning-focused activities (Khonamri, Roostaee, 2014), by increasing the competencies of teachers (Gadušová et al., 2020; Weda, 2018; Prochazka et al., 2018), through the assignments in IELTS format (Vasbieva, Vlasova, Novikova, 2020), with the use of media supports (Babushkina, Kalugina, 2020), different tools of modern communication (Pushkarev, Pushkareva, 2018; Pushkarev, Pushkareva, 2019; Martin et al., 2020; Kobylarek, 2018; Kobylarek, 2019), metacognitive strategy training (Khonamri, Ahmadi, 2015; Delaney, 2008), students' collaboration and reflection (Storch, 2005) or with the use and develop of literature-based reading materials (Irwansyah et al., 2020). The training of the practitioners in schools also proves to be suitable. Research has shown they need to be trained to develop precise themes and topics in the lesson plan (Muhammad et al., 2007; Syarifudin, Patak, 2019; Najmonova et al., 2020). As mentioned above, for many decades, people have been increasingly interested in ER programs. Extensive reading is being employed in reading classes for both native and non-native English students. The purpose of ER is improving reading skills by reading a large quantity of materials that are comprehensive and pleasurable enough. It can help improve reading skills in native and foreign languages and have a positive effect on the enhancement of other language skills (Stranovská et al., 2020a; Stranovská et al., 2019; Králik, Máhrik, 2019a,b).

Research studies (Asraf, Ahmad, 2003; Bell, 1998) show that students become better and more confident readers through employing ER program. Furthermore, they write better, their listening and speaking abilities improve, and their vocabularies get richer. In addition, ER makes students motivated to learn the target language and develop positive attitudes toward the new language. ER considers a special sense in the context of language teaching: real world reading but for a pedagogical purpose. Nuttal suggested that the best way to improve the knowledge of a

foreign language is to go and live among its speakers; the next best way is to read extensively (Nuttal, 2005).

The studies that have supported the effectiveness of ER (Jacobs, Gallo, 2002; Imrie, 2007; Han, 2010; Benson, 1991) have been carried out both in L1 and L2 settings in EFL and ESL contexts. Extensive reading program in the mentioned researches, have been employed on various age groups ranging from children to adults. All of these studies have shown that there is a high correlation between ER and different areas of a language except in the writing skill. Of course, that is to say that success has not been attained in all aspects of writing through employing an ER program. Furthermore, just a small number of writing criteria have been examined through employing ER program. Some writing criteria examined in research studies so far include: fluency, accuracy, word count, range of language structure, expression, complex structure, general improvement, content, language use, etc. (Tsang,1996; Abu Saleem, 2010; Han, 2010). Thus, writing improvement via extensive reading program, among the other language skills, needs more examination. In other words, the reason why ER has not been successful in improving some aspects of writing remains unanswered in foreign and native language learning setting. Accordingly, the following research questions were raised and guided this study.

2. Methodology
Accordingly, the following research questions were raised and guided this study:
1. Can the effects of ER on writing ability be enhanced by the use of group work?
1.1. Is there a significant difference in EFL learners' writing ability regarding selected items (run-on sentences, vocabulary errors including word form and word choice, and overall accuracy) after ER program?
2.1. Is there a significant difference in EFL learners' writing ability regarding selected items (run-on sentences, vocabulary errors including word form and word choice, and overall accuracy) after ER program plus group work?

Participants
Sixty five first year students, both male and female students majoring in English Literature and English Language Teaching studying at the department of foreign languages of Mazandaran University participated in this study. Their ages ranged from 19 to 23. The participants were divided into two experimental groups: the one in which group work was employed along with ER (ER plus GW) in English Literature class and the other one which only used ER (ER group) in English Language Teaching class. All of the participants took a reading comprehension test at the beginning of the course. This was done to control the effect of reading proficiency on the final analysis of the results.

Design
The study employed a quasi-experimental design which used a pre-test-treatment–posttest procedure to collect data. The present study had two experimental groups with no control group: ER plus GW group and ER group. The idea of having no control group is not something new in this domain. Some other studies (Lai, 1993; Mason, 2004; Han, 2010), also, designed their studies without a control group. In this study, if it were possible, the inclusion of a group work was preferred but in practice, it was difficult to impossible to find three reading classes with the same instructor. Both groups wrote two essays one before and one at the end of the program around the topic of "what is your idea about your previous-present reading course?"

Procedures
Thirty five English Literature students as ER plus GW group made six groups, five in each. The teacher divided these students according to the grade of their previous course in reading. The present course was reading 2. Each individual student read one book of his/her interest each week. The students themselves selected the books for the purpose of encouraging more involvement; furthermore, learners' motivation to read increases when they are interested in what they are reading. The reading occurred at home and a short discussion on the topic of the book or any related issues regarding the books they have read was held for 25 minutes in the class as a group work activity. Thus, each student could talk for about 5 minutes; it could play an absolutely crucial role in keeping them focused on what they have read. The rationale behind group element is that discussing a book with others boosts learners' curiosity, gives them opportunity to exchange

points of view, and introduces them to other books in the library. While working in groups, the members took notes on each **other's** talk including new vocabularies and language structures.

The teacher monitored the whole process by listening to the presentation actively, helping the students with choosing the books, etc. ER and group work are parts of their reading class activities. The teacher would consider separate mark for students' group works and discussions. ER program was employed in the reading class for 90 minutes, once a week. The analysis was done on 12 students whose scores were among 12-16.

To be more specific, the following activities were performed in the ER plus GW group:

Extensive Reading and Thinking Logs: students were required to read a book every week outside of class and keep logs of what they read. In the log, they were to write a summary of the book and express their opinion about it. At the same time, it was obligatory to write how much they thought the book helped them develop their general command of English (grammar and vocabulary). They were also required to complete an ER form asking for more detailed information about their reading.

ER Group Discussion: Each week, upon completing their graded readers, the students sat with their group members and talked about the books they had finished. They were required to take note of the expressions, vocabulary or the collocations they encountered in the book and share it with their group members.

Thirty English Language Teaching students comprised the ER group. The course they were studying was reading (II). They chose one book per week according to their interest. After reading the book at home, they filled out the checklist sheet, wrote the summary of the book at home, and handed them in to the teacher the next session. Like ER plus GW group, ten books should be read till the end of the program. This group did not have group work activity and discussion part. Extensive reading was one activity of their reading course with a separate mark considered for it. The writings of 16 students whose scores were among 12-16 were examined at the end.

The researcher studied the first three summary writing of the learners of both groups and observed that the most problematic areas of their writings were the three aspects mentioned before which were run-on sentences, vocabulary errors including word choice and word form. Overall accuracy was chosen by the researcher as the most important criteria to compare the two groups. Therefore, after an analysis of students writing, these four criteria were selected to be examined in this study. Every week, the researcher studied the data collected from the students carefully. Those summaries, which were seemed to be a copy from some sources like internet, were omitted.

The findings collected from the ER worksheet were as follows:

- Most of the learners found the graded readers comprehensive enough with not very difficult texts.

- The students' writings improved gradually and the length of the summaries they delivered increased a little as well.

- The problematic areas of their writing, regarding the first three summary writings, included: run-on sentences, incomplete sentences, articles, vocabulary errors (word form and word choice), and punctuation. These four (run-on sentences, vocabulary errors, and overall accuracy) were selected to be examined in the present study since they were more obvious in students writing.

3. Results
Part 1 of question 1

Is there a significant difference in EFL learners' writing ability after ER program plus group work?

To answer this research question, first the mean score of the first variable WC (word choice error) in control group was calculated and then the participants' marks were run to paired sample t-test formula to investigate the difference between the results in pre-test and post-test (Table 1).

Table 1. Paired Samples Statistics for Variable WC

Variable	N	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
WC_{pre}	12	86.7	76.37	27.6	45	100
WC_{post}	12	88.3	77.8	8.8	70	100

Source: own research

Table 2. Paired Samples t-Test Variable WC

Variable	T	Df	Sig
$WC_{pre\ \&}\ WC_{post}$	-0.34	15	0.73

Source: own research

Based on Table 2 it is shown that sig = 0.73 and since it is more than 0.05, the null hypothesis that there is not a significant difference in EFL learners' writing ability after ER program is accepted. Although it can be seen that there is three numbers rise in the post-test, the change is not meaningful according to t-test.

The second variable that was analyzed in the ERG was the run-on sentences (RO). The same steps as mentioned above were taken for this variable too and the results were as follows (Table 3):

Table 3. Paired Samples Statistics for Variable RO

Variable	N	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
RO_{pre}	12	91.75	130.47	11.4	72	100
RO_{post}	12	96.25	52.2	7.2	80	100

Source: own research

Table 4. Paired Samples t-Test Variable

Variable	T	Df	Sig
$RO_{pre\ \&}RO_{post}$	-1.175	15	0.26

Source: own research

Regarding Table 4, sig = 0.26 and since it is more than 0.05, this investigated item (i.e. run-on sentences) confirms the null hypothesis which was:" there is not a significant difference in EFL learners' writing ability after ER program is accepted".

WF (word form error) was the third variable examined in ERG that resulted in following analysis (Table 5):

Table 5. Paired Samples t-Test Variable

Variable	N	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
WF_{pre}	12	86.9	133.85	11.57	55	100
WF_{post}	12	96.94	62.73	7.92	71	100

Source: own research

Table 6. Paired Samples t-Test for Variable WF

Variable	T	Df	Sig
$WF_{pre\ \&}\ WF_{post}$	-2.81	15	0.013

Source: own research

Table 6 shows that sig = 0.013 and it is less than 0.05. So the above hypothesis which was: "there is not a significant difference in EFL learners' writing ability after ER program", is rejected regarding this variable.

The last variable OA (overall accuracy) was investigated in the writing of ERG and the same steps were followed for analyzing it (Table 7):

Table 7. Paired Samples Statistics for Variable OA

Variable	N	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
OA_pre	12	68.31	99.83	14.13	40	91
OA_post	12	81.19	240.16	15.5	50	100

Source: own research

Table 8. Paired Samples t-Test for Variable OA

Variable	T	Df	Sig
OA_pre & OA_post	-2.48	15	0.025

Source: own research

According to the Table 8 sig = 0.025 and it is less than 0.05 and the above hypothesis which was: "there is not a significant difference in EFL learners' writing ability after ER program ", is rejected.

Part 2 of question 1

Is there a significant difference in EFL learners' writing ability after ER program plus group work?

To answer this research question, the above steps were followed to calculate the mean score of the three variables mentioned above (WC, ro, WF, OA). Then the data were run to SPSS software to calculate the paired sample t-test score between the pre- and post test marks.

The first variable is WC (word choice error). The results of the analysis are as follow (Table 9):

Table 9. Paired Samples Statistics for Variable WC

Variable	N	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
WC_pre	12	81.67	77.5	8.8	66	92
WC_post	12	94.3	83.6	9.14	70	100

Source: own research

Table 10. Paired Samples t-Test for Variable WC

Vriable	T	Df	Sig
WC_pre & WC_post	-0.34	15	0.004

Source: own research

Table 10 shows that sig = 0.004 that is less than 0.05. Thus, it rejects the null hypothesis which was: "there is not a significant difference in EFL learners' writing ability after ER program plus group work".

The next variable analyzed is RO (run-on sentence) with the results showed below (Table 11):

Table 11. Paired Samples Statistics for Variable RO

Variable	N	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
RO_pre	12	99.25	6.75	./6	91	100
RO_post	12	98.3	3.3	5.7	80	100

Source: own research

Table 12. Paired Samples t-Test for Variable RO

Variable	T	Df	Sig
RO$_{pre}$ & RO$_{post}$	0.485	11	0.63

Source: own research

According to Table 12, sig = 0.63 that is more than 0.05 and the above null hypothesis which was: "there is not a significant difference in EFL learners' writing ability after ER program plus group work", is accepted. It shows that run-on sentences were manifested more in post-tests of the participants. Group work did not make the learners able to overcome this problem. More than that, as the mean score shows, participants showed weaker performance compared with pre-test.

WF (word form) is the third variable examined in the writings of ER plus GWG and the analysis is shown below (Table 13):

Table 13. Paired Samples Statistics Variable WF

Variable	N	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
WF$_{pre}$	12	85.08	1388	11.7	61	100
WF$_{post}$	12	94.5	60.6	7.7	78	100

Source: own research

Table 14. Paired Samples t-Test Variable WF

Vriable	T	Df	Sig
WF$_{pre}$ & WF$_{post}$	-2.68	11	0.021

Source: own research

Table 14 shows that sig = 0.021 and it is less than 0.05. As a result, the above null hypothesis which was: "there is not a significant difference in EFL learners' writing ability after ER program plus group work", is rejected.

The last variable analyzed is OA (overall accuracy). The result is as follows (Table 15):

Table 15. Paired Samples Statistics for Variable OA

Maximum	Minimum	Std. Deviation	Variance	Mean	N	Variable
83	50	12.7	162.2	65.7	12	OA$_{pre}$
100	70	10.06	101.2	87.1	12	OA$_{post}$

Source: own research

Table 16. Paired Samples t-Test for Variable OA

Sig	Df	T	Variable
0.001	11	-4.8	OA$_{pre}$ & OA$_{post}$

Source: own research

According to Table 16, sig = 0.001 that is less than 0.05. Then, the null hypothesis which was: "there is not a significant difference in EFL learners' writing ability after ER program plus group work", is rejected. Through an overall overview of the above analysis, one can infer that extensive reading program has been influential in improving some aspects of writing in this study such as OA and WF; it has been less effective in enhancing two other aspects which are ro and WC. Adding group element to ERP brings about improvement in three aspects of writing which are WF, WC, and OA but not in RO. It is noteworthy that learners gained a lower mean of RO in post-test than in their pre-test.

Also, an independent samples t-test at the 0.05 level of significance as the standard was performed to determine whether group work activity was effective through comparing the overall

means of ER plus GW and ER group from the pre-test to post-test. Table 17 illustrates the results of this analysis:

Table 17. Independent Samples T-test for ER plus EREG and ERG

		t-test for Equality of Means			
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
OA	Equal variances assumed	-.429	46	.66	-1.75
	Equal variances not assumed	-.429	43.642	.66	-1.75
RO	Equal variances assumed	-.076	46	.93	-.25
	Equal variances not assumed	-.076	45.618	.93	-.25
WF	Equal variances assumed	1.569	46	.12	2.79
	Equal variances not assumed	1.569	37.101	.12	2.79
WC	Equal variances assumed	-1.361	46	.18	-3.79
	Equal variances not assumed	-1.361	42.715	.18	-3.79

Source: own research

According to the above table, the results show that sig in all of the variables are the same in both groups and all are more than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis that "there is not a significant difference in EFL learners' writing ability after ER program plus group work", is confirmed (Table 18).

Table 18. ER plus GW and ER Groups' Statistics

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
OA	ER plus GWG	24	76.3750	15.67277	3.19919
	ERG	24	78.1250	12.36866	2.52474
RO	ER plus GWG	24	89.7917	10.88669	2.22224

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
OA	ER plus GWG	24	76.3750	15.67277	3.19919
	ERG	24	78.1250	12.36866	2.52474
RO	ER plus GWG	24	89.7917	10.88669	2.22224
	ERG	24	90.0417	11.93271	2.43575
WF	ER plus GWG	24	98.7917	4.40335	.89883
	ERG	24	96.0000	7.52388	1.53580
WC	ER plus GWG	24	88.0000	10.90672	2.22632
	ERG	24	91.7917	8.20381	1.67460

Source: own research

4. Discussion

Regarding the first part of the first research question which was" Is there a significant difference in EFL learners' writing ability regarding selected items (run-on sentences, vocabulary errors including word form and word choice, and overall accuracy) after ER program?", findings of the study showed that ERG's writing improved from the pre-test to post-test which was in line with the studies of Tsang, Lee and Hsu, Abu Saleem or Han (Tsang, 1996; Lee, Hsu, 2009; Abu Saleem, 2010; Han, 2010). They investigated the relationship between extensive reading and writing improvement of high school and college students. Their programs, especially the program in the study of Tsang and Abu Saleem, were very close to the one which east used in the present study (Tsang, 1996; Abu Saleem, 2010). Tsang believed that extensive reading was a very effective approach in improving different aspects of writing. He recommended ER in English teaching syllabus as an effective material. In their studies, these three researchers worked on some writing criteria such as general improvement, organization, mechanics, vocabulary, content, and language use (Tsang, 1996). However, the present study examined some other criteria which were more problematic in the participants' writing namely word choice, word form, and run-on sentences.

The second part of the first research question was" Is there a significant difference in EFL learners' writing ability regarding selected items (run-on sentences, vocabulary errors including word form and word choice, and overall accuracy) after ER program plus group work?". A survey in the literature revealed that group work element has been found to be effective on improving reading comprehension as Manning and Manning proposed in their study (Manning, Manning, 1984). They intended to test the value of combining ER with peer interaction. Heal, also, carried out a research on the effect of group work on the attitude of learners toward reading. He suggested that group work was a very effective factor in changing learners' attitude and increasing quantity of reading (Heal, 1998). However, the present study is not consistent with these researches. Although the findings of paired t-test performed for each group showed that group work was effective in improving writing to a great extent, findings of the independent t-test revealed that the performance of both groups was almost the same; thus, group work cannot be considered as the

reason of ER plus GW groups' improvement. The following sections will explain the analysis of the four variables in details:

According to the findings of the study, related to the first variable that is WF (word form), ER group outperformed ER plus GW group after ERP. First, it might imply that group work element did not influence that much on improving the vocabulary errors i.e. word form error (wrong form of an appropriate word or spelled incorrectly) in learners' writings. And second, that this aspect of writing may require a longer time to develop and in the short term, as was the case of this study, one should not expect a huge difference. It is worth mentioning that ER plus GWG has improved in terms of WF errors. RO is the third variable ending in ERG's outperformance.

Why run-on sentence problems and word form errors did not show a considerable improvement in ER plus GWG might be answered by the claim that these are two aspects of writing which require a big deal of reading and concentration to be improved. Perhaps, in ER plus GWG, the learners pay their close attention to group work. They were to read, discuss in groups, and finally write their summaries. Group work might play an intruding role ending in lack of concentration on writing and full concentration on doing the group work activity. However, ERG, on the other hand, without any group work activity, tried to just concentrate on their reading only and immediately writing their summaries. Building on the studies on the effect of ER on improving some writing criteria which ended in positive results (Tsang, 1996; Mason, 2004; Mason, 2005), it might be implied that mere ER is influential and GW was an intruding factor. Since, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there were almost no studies on this area, this reason should be viewed with caution. There is a need for more studies to examine the reason precisely.

The next variable analyzed was WC (word choice) in which ER plus GWG outperformed ERG leading to the conclusion that group work was somehow helpful in enhancing word choice error (spelled correctly but wrong word) related to vocabulary errors. So group work activity and interaction between learners, according to Long, was a factor helping the learners to concentrate on each **other's** talk; perhaps they were able to choose a better, and more appropriate word through repetition and taking notes on their group members' talk.

According to the findings of paired t-test, one can imply that group work can be an influential and effective element added to extensive reading program to improve writing ability of EFL learners. Relying on Long's interaction hypothesis both input and output are necessary for second language acquisition; interaction among learners in negotiation around meaning through clarification requests, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, and repetition makes input more comprehensible, meaningful, accessible, and more useful. The members of the groups listened to each **other's** speech and took notes on the new vocabularies and new structures. Therefore, it is expected that group work activities should have influenced their writings. However, because the comparison of the two groups indicated no significant differences between their performances, the above-mentioned claim cannot hold true unless it is investigated in depth in future.

According to the data, the last variable (OA) received higher mean score in ER plus GW group than in ER group. Overall accuracy (OA), as the most important writing aspect in the present study, was selected for the purpose of contrasting the two groups which improved in ER plus GEG. It supports the idea introduced by Mason and Krashen according to which besides massive reading, some output-oriented activities should be added to ER to result in better language acquisition (Mason, Krashen, 2004). According to Long's interaction hypothesis on which the present study is relied, while both input and output are necessary for second language acquisition, in order to gain a greater understanding of how this works, one should focus more attention on the interactions language learners engage in to end in more success.

Regarding learners' self-rating of adding group element to ERP, since finding an appropriate attitude questionnaire related to ER and group work was not accessible for the researcher, an unstructured interview to ER plus GWG was designed instead. According to the result, the majority of the participants (i.e. 18 out of 35) disagreed with adding group work activity to extensive reading during the program in their reading class. Most of the students (n = 15) reject adding such an element claiming that it was better if all of the group members read a common book. Since each member read a different book, while presenting the summary or the points related to the book, the members did not listen well and the process got a bit tiring for them. As far as the nature of ER has concerned, such a claim is not applicable in ERP. Building on Waring's (2007)

idea, each individual should choose a book of his/her interest and level of proficiency. There should not be any force in choosing the books.

5. Conclusion

This study showed how ER can be a supplementary approach in reading class for improving writing quality. Therefore, writing teachers, too, can add some input-based activity in the class in order to gain more positive outcomes. ER approach can also be employed in writing classes; integrating reading and writing in writing classes enhances the interrelationship between reading and writing.

For running a good ERP, teachers should notice the fact that some modifications (such as number of graded readers, duration of the program, etc) are needed in applying every stage of the approach to be more relevant to the situations and conditions of the students. It can be employed in high schools, universities, and language centers.

Although ER has been used in some language centers in Iran, most of the language teachers are not aware of the real quality of this approach and its useful impacts on improving different aspects of language. This study could be helpful for them to be aware of ERP and also make the learners familiar with it since it can build a long life reading habit.

6. Acknowledgments

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