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EFL Students' Challenges in the Integration of Reading and Writing in their Writing Classes

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Abstract: This study focused on investigating English as a foreign language (EFL) gifted high school students' challenges in classes when the integration of reading and writing was used. 103 grade 11 students from three gifted high schools in Mekong Delta were invited to participate in this study. The study adopted a descriptive, mixed method research design which employed the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to collect data. The questionnaire, together with semi-structured interviews was used to collect data about EFL gifted high school students' challenges of integration of reading and writing on their writing skills. The results of the study proved that students faced difficulties in integrating reading into writing lessons at a medium level, in relation to materials and integration tasks. However, the participants faced the greatest challenge in terms of personal backgrounds.

Keywords: *Challenges of integration of reading and writing, integration of reading and writing.*

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Introduction

Globalization and industrialization have put an emphasis on the importance of English due to its function as a communication means among nations. Therefore, improving the students' ability to use English effectively in communication has become one of the priorities. In the domain of language learning, writing is considered a difficult skill for learners to acquire (Ferretti et al., 2007). Being a productive skill, writing requires learner's critical and creative thinking to convey their thoughts, ideas, expressions and feelings in readable text (Rao, 2007; Richard & Renandya, 2002). The learners have to use a wide range of linguistic knowledge, the vocabulary choice and cohesive devices to compose the essential blocks of texts (Hyland, 2003). Rivers (1979, p. 263) state: "To write so that one is really communicating a message isolated in place and time, is an art that requires consciously directed effort and deliberate change in language".

For Vietnamese English majored students at high schools for the gifted, writing is compulsory in the exams and students usually struggle a lot in the writing exams. It seems to be difficult for them to organize their own ideas to make a good essay as they lack lexical sources, ideas and structures brings about their failure in construct a new composition (Moses & Mohamad, 2019). So how to help students overcome these obstacles in writing many teachers explore different techniques in teaching writing. As a result of the exploration, many researchers have concluded that the integration of reading and writing in writing classes is an effective way to help students to in their writing. Several studies have been conducted in exploring how the integration of reading and writing affect students' writing performance but not many have been conducted to find out challenges students face when they study writing lessons with the integration of reading and writing. In this article, the researcher makes an attempt to investigate challenges students face in the integration of reading and writing in their writing lessons.

Literature review

Reading

Grabe and Stoller (2019) defines reading as the ability to interpret information from printed texts coherently. In this definition, reading seems to be an interactive process between readers and the text of encoding a series of written symbols by using their knowledge to build, create and construct meaning. From another perspective, reading is

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considered as the process in which there is combination of the text and the reader's own background knowledge to build meaning (Nunan, 2003).

Writing

Writing is supposed to be the mental work that requires generating and inventing ideas, expressing them and the ability to organize them into clear and coherent texts (Nunan, 2003). Therefore, writing is acknowledged as one of the most difficult language skills (Dixon & Nessel, 1983). In another perspective, writing is also supposed as the production of communication of a message in written form to a particular reader for a purpose. Writers should think of how to link ideas, provide information with supporting arguments by using relevant lexical sources and correct sentences (Hedge, 2005).

Integration of Reading and Writing

Of the four English language skills, reading and writing have a mutual effect. The practice of integrating reading and writing emerged as the Whole language approach assumes English competences including reading, writing, speaking and listening should be acquired not in isolation, but in integration. The Whole Language movement strongly advocates the idea that that language should be taught as a whole. Rigg (1991) claims that "If language isn't kept whole, it isn't language anymore" (p. 522). Writing is a process of communicating and linking ideas, developing information and supporting arguments to readers in a well-written form. Nunan (2003) defines writing as the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organizing them into clear statements and paragraphs. It can be deduced from this definition that, since it involves mental work, an individual cannot just sit and put words together if he or she cannot invent an idea in relation to what has been read, and express it in meaningful sentences that can be read and understood. This definition proves that as learners read, there is a greater chance of reproducing the ideas derived from what has been read. Hence, it is inferred that writers need much information and language before writing (Kellogg, 2018). Meanwhile, Krashen (2012) claimed that writing ability is not from writing experience but from reading. Writers need knowledge about the world and the organization and structures to apply to writing (Aulls, 1985; Flood & Lapp, 1987). In this concern, Eisterhold (1994) regards reading as a relevant language skill from which learners' assumption in written texts can be made. In the same regard, reading is the basis for writing. "Reading materials are the thinking bank for writing." (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2011). Reading materials before writing is supposed to enrich writing content, especially for those who learn "where to appropriately incorporate a quote", how to "integrate a quotation into a text so it reads coherently" and "how to edit quoted text" (Cooney et al., 2018, p.3). Kuehner and Hurley (2019) also pointed out the benefits of integrating reading and writing saying that this may help develop students' critical thinking in reading by questioning the author's purpose in reading. By doing that, they could use textual evidence to support their original ideas in writing. Stotsky (1983) added that: "better writers tend to be better readers (of their own writing as well as other reading materials), and better writers tend to read more than poorer writers, and that better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers" (p.636). A conclusion can be made that "reading can support the learners with writing samples which they can initially imitate and then develop a new text world" Nguyen (2022, p.1178).

Challenges in Integration of Reading and Writing in Writing Classes

Weigle and Parker (2012) raise a question that how source texts can be used to provide input for generating ideas. In other words, students may have difficulty in generating and synthesizing ideas from sources into their ones. They may lack academic writing ability and cannot paraphrase the texts appropriately. In this regard, Weigle (2005) concerns that writers/examinees show heavy reliability on the language use of the text in their writing. Plagiarism is committed as citing from sources and plagiarism sometimes fail to distinguish. Therefore, teacher should make decision on the extent to which source texts can be used.

Time management may lead to a challenge when reading and writing are integrated. Saxon et al. (2016) mentioned that reading tasks are usually time-consuming, so they are under time pressure and cannot absorb knowledge from reading sources. In this regard, students may fall into time management trap. They seem to dedicate most time for their reading so there is not sufficient time for their writing.

Additionally, students report that reading texts may impose their ideas when reading as a model is provided (Khaki et al., 2013). The texts are considered to be restrictive, imposing and influential when they want to compose their own writings. Alkhawaldeh (2011) concerned that learners might rely on the texts too much that could restrict their creativity. Alkhawaldeh also claims that the learners encountered sophisticated words in the texts which challenged them to understand and apply these words for writing. As a result, they feel like resisting the texts and have problems in writing.

Cooney et al., (2018) added that students struggled with writing from sources because they had not understood the source text. In addition, they also had difficulty with paraphrasing that was resulted from teaching.

Methodology

Research Design

This study is a descriptive research design which employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches to collect and analyze data. In Creswell's (1994) words, a mixed method research is a study in which "the researcher explores entity or phenomenon bounded by time and activity and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collecting procedures during a sustained period" (p. 12). Also, a mixed method design allows researcher to use more than one tools of data collection rather than only one alone. In this research both the questionnaire and interview were used to reduce restriction to type of data collection.

Participants

In this study, three English majored classes of grade 11 from the three gifted high schools which are respectively located in 3 provinces in the Mekong Delta are were invited to fill in the questionnaires. Particularly, 103 participants aged from 16-18 years old were assumed to be similar in terms of background knowledge since they follow the same syllabus. They were intentionally selected so that their qualities could fit the aim of the study. In Creswell's (1994) word, this "will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question" (p.239).

Table 1. Summary of the Participants' Personal Information

Personal information	Number (N=103)	
Gender	Male	35
	Female	68
Age	16	7
	17	95
	18	1

Research Instruments

Questionnaire

In the current study, questionnaires were employed to investigate the students' challenges when they study their writing lessons with the integration of reading and writing approach. The questionnaire comprises 2 main sections. In the first section, questions for students' personal information were asked. Then 11 items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) which aimed to collect the participants' opinions about challenges when reading and writing is integrated into writing lessons were used. The items were based on the literature review and grouped into three clusters, as follows:

Table 2. The Three Clusters of Section 3

Clusters	Items
1. Perceptions in terms of materials	1-5
2. Perceptions in terms of integration tasks	6-7
3. Perceptions in terms of personal backgrounds	1-11

Semi-Structured Interview

Although considered as a statistically rigorous technique to collect data from large sample sizes (Martin & Bridgmon, 2012), questionnaires fail to discover in-depth description of the population (Choy, 2014). Therefore, semi-structured interviews then were conducted to collect the qualitative data. In this study, semi-structured interviews were designed based on the items in the questionnaire, aiming to gain insight into the challenges students faced when learning writing lessons with the integration of reading and writing. For the convenience of both the interviewer and interviewees, the interviews were conducted in Vietnamese. Nine participants were invited to face-to-face interviews which were voice-recorded for later transcripts and analysis.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed by IBM SPSS Statistics 20. First, IBM SPSS Statistics 20 encoded the participants' responses. Next, a scale test was run to check the reliability of the questionnaire.

Descriptive Statistics Tests were used to calculate the total mean scores of challenges they encountered when the integration of reading and writing approach was used in writing lessons; the mean score of each cluster; the mean score and the percentage of agreement and disagreement of each item included in the questionnaire. Items in each cluster were analyzed in accordance with the percentage of agreement and disagreement.

One-sample T-Tests were subsequently performed to check whether the mean scores were different from the test value, aiming to measure challenges students encountered in the integration of reading and writing in writing lessons. The test values were adapted from Oxford (1990) (see Table 3)

Table 3. Interpretations of Test Values

Test values	Interpretations
4.5 – 5.0	Very high
3.6 – 4.49	High
2.5 – 3.59	Medium
1 – 2.49	Low

Analysis of the Qualitative Data

From the data collected in the semi-structured interviews, students' responses were encoded by being transcribed and translated into English first. Next, thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The interview protocol to familiarize the themes was made. Similarities and differences among students' responses were recognized. Direct citation of students' answers was provided as evidence for each theme.

Results

Findings from the Questionnaire

A *Descriptive Statistics Test* was conducted to analyze the mean score, maximum, minimum and standard deviation of challenges students face when reading is integrated into writing lessons. The result revealed that the mean score was ($M=3.35$, $SD=.42$). The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Challenges of the Integration of Reading and Writing in Writing Lessons

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Challenges Mean	103	2.55	4.64	3.35	.42
Valid N (listwise)	103				

A *One-Sample T-Test* was then conducted on the mean scores of the students' challenges of the integration of reading and writing in writing lessons. The values ($M=3.35$; $SD=.42$) are statistically different from the test value of 3.6, a high level of agreement. The result indicated that a difference between the mean of the challenges ($M=3.35$; $SD=.42$) and the test value of 3.6 ($t=-5.893$, $df=102$, $p=.000$) was found. Therefore, it can be concluded that students' perceptions of challenges when reading is integrated into writing lessons are medium.

Table 5. One-Sample T-Test of the Students' Challenges of the Integration of Reading and Writing in Writing Lessons

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Test Value = 3.6		
				Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper
Challenges	-5.893	102	.000	-.24519	-.3277	-.1627

A repeated *Descriptive Statistic Test* was run to measure the mean scores of the three clusters of students' challenges of the integration of reading and writing in their writing lessons in terms of materials, integration tasks and personal backgrounds. The results are illustrated in the table below.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of the Three Clusters of Students' Perceptions on the Challenges Students Faced When Reading Was Integrated into Writing Lessons

Clusters	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
1. Challenges of the integration of reading and writing in writing lessons in terms of materials.	103	2.20	5.00	3.27	.54
2. Challenges of the integration of reading and writing in writing lessons in terms of integration tasks.	103	1.50	5.00	3.06	.76
3. Challenges of the integration of reading and writing in writing lessons in terms of personal backgrounds.	103	2.50	5.00	3.61	.50

Table 3 illustrates that the mean score of the cluster challenges in terms of *integration tasks* ($M_{Integ}=3.06$; $SD=.76$) was on the level of 3.0 (medium level), the cluster challenges in terms of *materials* ($M_{Mater}=3.27$; $SD=.54$) ranked in the second place. Particularly, the mean score of the challenges in terms of *personal backgrounds* ($M=3.61$; $SD=.50$), a high level of agreement, ranked first. This indicated students faced more difficulties related to their personal backgrounds than the the rest two.

Challenges students faced when reading was integrated into writing lessons in terms of reading materials

As shown in Table 6, the mean score of the challenges in terms of *materials* was $M=3.27$. Therefore, a *One-Sample t-Test* was conducted to check whether students' perceptions of difficulties when reading is integrated into writing lessons in relation to materials are statistically different from the test value of 3.6, a high level of agreement. The finding indicated a difference between the mean ($M=3.27$; $SD=.54$) and the test value of 3.6 was observed ($t=-6.173$, $df=102$, $p=.000<.05$). It could be stated that that students' perceptions about the difficulties they encountered when reading was integrated into writing regarding materials were at medium level.

A *Frequency Test* was performed on the percentage of agreement and disagreement of five items included in the cluster *materials* (items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5). The results are illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7. Challenges Students Encountered When Reading Was Integrated into Writing Lessons in Terms of Materials

Items	SD (%)	D (%)	Neu (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
1. The length of reading passages is too long.	1.0	9.7	30.1	49.5	9.7
2. Reading passages are not closely related to the theme of writing.	4.9	28.1	38.8	21.4	6.8
3. Reading passages are not in accordance with the genre of writing.	1.0	36.9	37.8	20.4	3.9
4. Vocabulary in reading texts is too difficult for me to apply in my writing.	0.0	13.6	32.0	39.8	14.6
5. Grammatical structures in reading texts are too difficult for me to apply in my writing.	0.0	23.3	30.1	35.9	10.7

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, Neu = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

Regarding challenges in relation with the length of reading passages, item 1 made up the largest proportion of agreement. 59,2% of the respondents stated that the long reading texts resulted in difficulties in performing integration tasks and might take much time to understand information from them. In the domain of vocabulary, 54.4% with agreement and 32.0% neutral may indicate that they were a bit skeptical. Items 5 received nearly half of the agreement. Specifically, participants encountered a lot of challenges regarding complicated grammatical structures in reading texts, with 46,6%. The items had the most neutral level of agreement were item 2 and item 3. 38.8% of the participants did not state whether they encountered difficulties when the theme of reading texts did not relate to that of writing requirement. Simultaneously, 37.8 of the participants showed that they had no conclusion on mismatch of genre of reading passage with that of the writing requirement.

Challenges Students Faced When Reading Was Integrated into Writing Lessons in Terms of Integration Tasks

A *Frequency Test* was performed on the percentage of agreement and disagreement of two items included in the cluster *integration tasks* (items 6 and 7). The results are illustrated in Table 8.

Table 8. Challenges Students Faced When Reading Was Integrated into Writing Lessons in Terms of Integration Tasks

Items	SD (%)	D (%)	Neu (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
6. The requirements of tasks that integrate are not easy to be met.	1.0	30.1	45.6	17.5	5.8
7. Tasks that integrate reading and writing take too much time.	3.9	20.4	38.8	30.1	6.8

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, Neu = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

With regard to challenges students faced when reading was integrated into writing lessons in respect of integration tasks, 36.9% of the participants agreed that the tasks of integrating reading and writing took much time. However, it is noticed that 38.8% of the participants did not state whether the tasks were time-consuming or not. Remarkably, although 31.1% of the participants disagreed that they had difficulties in completing the requirements of the tasks, a higher proportion of them showed neutral opinions, with 45.6%.

Challenges Students Faced When Reading Was Integrated into Writing Lessons in Terms of Personal Backgrounds

A *Frequency Test* was performed on the percentage of agreement and disagreement of four items included in the cluster materials (items 8, 9, 10, and 11). The results are illustrated in Table 9.

Table 9. *Challenges Students Faced When Reading Was Integrated into Writing Lessons in Terms of Personal Backgrounds*

Items	SD (%)	D (%)	Neu (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
8. Integrating reading and writing in writing lessons imposes my ideas.	1.0	10.7	30.0	47.6	10.7
9. Integrating reading and writing in writing lessons restricts my creativity.	3.9	18.4	32.0	35.9	9.7
10. I am under time pressure because I spend much time completing the reading tasks.	0.0	6.8	25.2	51.5	16.5
11. I am incapable of paraphrasing the texts appropriately, so I tend to copy the original texts and commit plagiarism.	0.0	5.8	24.3	52.4	17.5

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, Neu = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

It is noticeable that plagiarism was a big challenge to students when reading was integrated into writing lessons. To be specific, 69.9% of the respondents confirmed that they found it possible to commit to plagiarism when provided a reading input. It could be inferred that incompetence in paraphrasing could lead to copy the original texts. Regarding the challenges in relation to time pressure, 68.0% of the participants concluded completing the tasks for reading passages might put them under time pressure to write since finishing the reading tasks took them much time. While 58.3% of the respondents claimed that integrating reading into writing lessons imposed their ideas since generating ideas could be affected by provided ones in reading texts, nearly half of them (45.7%) committed their creativity in writing could be restricted if reading was provided.

*Results from the Interviews**Challenges Students Faced in the Integration of Reading and Writing in Writing Lessons in Relation to Materials*

The unclear ideas and complicated vocabulary in reading passages could lead to misuse and confusion in writing texts. Three participants reported that they encountered some complex phrases and ambiguous ideas from the reading text, so they spent much time understanding them, which limited time for writing. They noticed,

“Some words with multi-meanings are used in the reading passage. If I imitate and apply them into my writing, it can be confusing.” (Respondent 2)

“The ideas presented in the reading passage have not been explained in detail, which takes me much time to read and think of how to apply them to my own writing.” (Respondent 3)

“Some words and phrases from the texts are difficult to understand, and habitually, I try to discover them, so I have less time for writing.” (Respondent 9)

The length of reading should be taken into consideration. Three of the participants admitted they had difficulties with long reading texts. In some writing lessons, reading and discovering long texts are time-consuming. Hence, time for writing their texts was limited. Three of them concluded,

“Personally, I encountered challenges of long reading texts. I seemed to spend much time reading and discovering them, so I had less time for writing.” (Respondent 4)

“Occasionally, I read long texts, which takes much time. Besides, some words from the texts are complicated. As a result, I engage in discovering them without caring time for writing.” (Respondent 5)

“Some texts are quite long, so I spend much time reading, discovering and analyzing information in the texts. Consequently, I forget to spend a large amount of time writing. In addition, reading long texts makes me bored.” (Respondent 6)

Challenges students faced in the integration of reading and writing in writing lessons in relation to personal backgrounds

All of the nine participants agreed that they easily committed to plagiarism. They stressed that lack of vocabulary sources and incompetence of structures could lead to copy exactly those from the reading passage. In some cases, they were attracted to interesting ideas and relevant language. Consequently, they copy exactly the original materials purposelessly. They respectively said,

As I have just mentioned, plagiarism is easily committed to, and the integration can restrict my creative ideas. Those who have insufficient vocabulary can copy the original version.” (Respondent 1)

“I am afraid of committing to plagiarism because carelessly, I may copy exactly ideas and language from reading. Sometimes I do not have enough language to rewrite with my language.” (Respondent 5)

“I experienced one challenge when I focused too much on discovering information in reading, the information would stay in my long-term memory. As a result, when I began to write, my memory recalled it, and I tended to copy it exactly to my writing. It would be a bad habit.” (Respondent 6)

A noticeable challenge should be shed to light is that they thought their ideas were affected by the ones from the passage. Three students shared that the ideas from the texts seemed to impose them on thinking their own ideas. They felt restricted to invent new ideas because the obsession of the provided ones. They stated,

“As I have just mentioned, plagiarism is easily committed to, and the integration can restrict my creative ideas.” (Respondent 1)

“...Occasionally, generating new ideas is restricted because I am attracted to provided ones from reading. I like this interesting idea, and I also like another. Therefore, I end up with using available information instead of coming up with new information.” (Respondent 4)

“...I tend to stick to provided ideas in reading, so I become lazy to think of new ones.” (Respondent 5)

Challenges students faced in the integration of reading and writing in writing lessons in relation to integration tasks

Aiming to investigate the challenges student encountered when reading was integrated into writing regarding integration tasks, most of them did not confirm the tasks which caused them trouble. However, one participant claimed that she spent so much time finishing integrated tasks that she had less time for writing. She said,

“Additionally, I usually spend so much time on integration tasks that I have short budget of time for writing.” (Respondent 1)

Suggestions for effective integration of reading and writing in writing lessons

The respondents from interview share some recommendation in order to result in effective integration of reading and writing.

Three students implied that ideas presented in reading passage should be clear and understandable. They stressed that understanding unambiguous ideas was time-consuming and confusing. Hence, clear ones could be applied to their writings.

“Despite some challenges, the integration of reading and writing could be beneficial to students’ writing skills. From my viewpoint, for effectively integrating reading and writing, the reading texts should supply more simple and understandable ideas so that I could make use of them for my writings...” (Respondent 1)

“In my opinion, the genre of reading texts should be in accordance with that of the target writing. The ideas presented must be clear enough for me to make a list of applicable ideas so that I can paraphrase them.” (Respondent 3)

“To suggest, I think reading texts should contain enough ideas for students to consider, but not too many because the students will invest much time analyzing them. It would be an opportunity to think of new ones.” (Respondent 8)

Additionally, participant 4 suggested that the number of ideas provided in text should be appropriate. He implied that students should be facilitated to invent new ideas rather than relying on the texts. He said,

“From my viewpoint, reading texts should not provide excess number of ideas so that I can come up with new ones, and the length of the text should not be too long because it would take much time to be discovered.” (Respondent 4)

Besides, a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures are necessary for the effective integration. Three participants anticipated that they could have more choices for vocabulary from reading texts if the texts introduced various and relevant words. They reported,

“From my viewpoint, for effectively integrating reading and writing, the reading texts should supply more simple and understandable ideas so that I could make use of them for my writings. Diverse structures and vocabulary can a reference for me to make selection and apply to my writing. Therefore, I don’t need to spend much time on the task completion and analysis.” (Respondent 1)

“The reading text should not be too long and it should contain understandable language so that students don not have to spend much time on it.” (Respondent 5)

“The model reading should not be too long and contain understandable information and language in order to save time for writing. Teacher should organize more activities for students to have more interaction in writing classrooms.” (Respondent 9)

To make up for challenge regarding the length of the reading texts, teacher should consider the length of the texts.

“...and the length of the text should not be too long because it would take much time to be discovered.” (Respondent 4)

“My only suggestion is connected with moderate length of the reading texts. A long passage would take much time to read.” (Respondent 6)

“From my perspectives, firstly, the passage should not be too long, and the tasks for integrating should be easy enough to be accomplished because students need more time for writing.” (Respondent 7)

Discussion

The results of the current study revealed the biggest challenge stems from learners' personal backgrounds. Students agreed that integrating reading into writing might impose their ideas. This result is familiar with that of a study by Khaki et al. (2013) who confirmed that the texts could restrict students' creativity because students found it influential when they want to invent their own ideas. Some responses from the interview also revealed that learners felt resistant to reading and writing because they were usually obsessed with the ideas provided in the texts. However, it is different from what Cooney et al. (2018) found out as they mentioned that students had difficulty constructing an argument as they did not adopt a critical stance when they summarized the reading text. The difference may be caused by the different focus of the two research studies. Furthermore, time management might be a big challenge to students. The finding is in line with Saxon et al. (2016) who mentioned reading tasks were sometimes so time-consuming that students were under time pressure. Consequently, the time distribution for writing was limited. Importantly, plagiarism might be a threat to students when they are provided with reading texts. This supports by a study by Weigle and Parker (2012) who raised a question that how learners synthesized the information of reading passages for their own writing. A possible reason is that to those who lack writing ability, which associates with lack lexical sources and grammatical competence to transfer the language. They tend to commit to plagiarism because they cannot rewrite with their own words. Some of the interviewees admitted that they were attracted to interesting ideas and language in the reading texts. As a result, they tend to copy the texts purposelessly.

Regarding challenges in terms of reading materials used for writing, some interviewed students admitted that they were a bit confused in using vocabulary in their writing because of the complicated vocabulary in the reading. This is in line with Moses and Mohamad's (2019) study when they concluded that vocabulary is a challenge faced by students. In addition to that, the knowledge from source texts could affect the time for writing and their motivation. Some interviewees complained that complex phrases and ambiguous ideas from the reading sources could leave them an overwhelming sense of confusion and use the multi-meaning words improperly. As mentioned in a study by Khaki et al. (2013), some reading passages were too normal, with complex grammatical knowledge and multi-meaning words, so students had to devote much time discovering them, resulting in time limitation for writing. Some other respondents from the interview claimed that the length of reading should be taken into consideration. They had difficulties with long reading texts which were time-consuming which may lead to demotivation and that is similar to what Moses and Mohamad's (2019) concluded in their study.

Concerning integration tasks, Saxon et al. (2016) mentioned that reading tasks were usually time-consuming, but the participants of the current study did not confirm whether they faced challenges with the tasks. Only one interviewee reported that she spent so much time finishing integrated tasks that she had less time for writing.

Conclusion

The current study focuses on explore EFL gifted high school students' perceptions of the effects of integrating reading and writing on writing skills. The findings indicate that students perceived highly the effects of integrating reading and writing on writing skills in regard to language, organization, content, communicative achievement, evaluation and effectiveness. Furthermore, the study also shed a light on difficulties students encountered with integrating reading into writing lessons. They revealed that they faced challenges in terms of reading materials, integration tasks and personal backgrounds. It is clear that reading has great influences on writing skills. Therefore, it is concluded that moving towards an integrated reading and writing approach would be very worthwhile.

Recommendations

In order to increase the generalizability of the study, further longitudinal studies should be conducted in more gifted schools, or on high school students in general as the effectiveness of integrating of reading and writing needs to be explored further. This would check whether high school students in general positively perceive the effects of integrating reading into writing classes as EFL gifted high school students did. This would provide a fuller picture of learners' perceptions of the effects of integrating reading and writing on writing skills, and challenges they encounter with this integration. Additionally, there is a lack of studies on how teachers integrate reading into writing lessons, so further studies may be directed to employing experimental research that focuses on their teaching practices of integrating reading into writing lessons. This would shed a light on how teachers adopt integration practices and adapt tasks to maximize the benefits of the integration in classrooms.

It is essential that teachers should acknowledge the importance of integrating reading into writing lessons for the sake of its benefits to students' writing competence and their literacy development. Firstly, EFL writing teachers should consider the proficiency levels of their students when choosing reading materials. Secondly, since reading serves as a model for writing, authentic texts should be in use in language teaching so that learners can have appropriate models to follow the styles and genres of target writing. Thirdly, EFL writing teachers should regard the textbooks that should be used in EFL reading/writing classes. EFL textbooks designed to integrate reading and writing are highly recommended. Finally, noticed from the challenges shared from participants of the current study, teachers should make effort to improve students' paraphrasing skills by strengthening their grammatical knowledge and lexical capacity, and by designing various activities to train them how to rewrite sentences with their own words. They need to be encouraged and helped to avoid plagiarism.

Limitations

Although the current study has been successful in reaching its purposes, it is not without limitations. Firstly, the study employed a descriptive method using questionnaires and interviews, the data collected were not informative enough to be used to provide a deeper insight into the effects and challenges. Secondly, the number of male participants is not equal to that of female participants, thus the findings do not describe deeply the perceptions of male participants and female ones of the intervene of reading in writing.

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