Research Article

THE IMPACT OF VISUAL PRESENTATION ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNER'S WRITING ABILITY

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ABSTRACT
The present study aimed to investigate the impact of visual presentation on Iranian Intermediate EFL learner's writing ability. The main question this study tried to answer was whether using visual presentation might enhance higher ability of writing ability in Iranian learners of English at Intermediate level. To answer the question, 30 junior undergraduate translator trainees participated in the experiment of the study. They were randomly selected from among a population of translator trainees via an OPT test score of at least one standard deviation below the mean. They were then divided into two groups of 15 and were randomly assigned to an experimental and a control group. A pretest of writing was administered to both groups, then, the experimental group was assigned to visual presentation. A posttest of writing was then administered to both groups. The data of the study were analyzed using an independent sample t-test to indicate the groups' posttest mean difference, and the degree of progress from the pretest to the posttest in the two groups of the study was indicated by calculating two separate one-way ANCOVA coefficients. The results indicated that the Iranian EFL learners in the experimental group received higher scores in writing after being treated with visual presentation.

Key Words: Visual Presentation, Writing Ability

INTRODUCTION
Nothing is learned in vacuum. Moving from the notion of writing as product to writing as process and the notion of integrating skills has caused the researchers to integrate some skills or materials to the writing skill (Richards and Renandya, 2002). Reading is a kind of visual aid which can be used in writing classes. Specifically, reading is a material through which writing skill improves (Boran, 2009). Today, many researchers and theorists believe that reading and writing are usually described as "parallel processes" or "natural partners" (Trosky and Wood, 1982; Tierny and Pearson, 1983; Tsai, 2008) where the activities of readers are mirror images of the activities of writers (Smith, 1983). On the other hand, Richards and Renandya (2002) believe some materials such as videos and software can stimulate writing. Since the three areas of interest are the effects of reading as a visual presentation, listening as an audio presentation, and documentaries as the audiovisual presentations, the researcher has surveyed the effects of each mode of presentation on EFL learner's writing skill. Besides, the effects of these three presentations have been compared and contrasted.

In EFL classes, readings *(i.e.,* newspaper articles, poems, stories, formal or informal letters, application forms, critiques, notes, messages, etc.) can be used in teaching writing so that learners can take them as models of the written discourse of their target language since they represent the rhetoric, texture, various genres, and styles of the written discourse of English (Boran, 2009). Krashen (1987) believes that through reading we have the opportunity of being exposed to well-organized and well-written pieces of writing which help us to improve our language abilities and to build writing schemata. Casanave (2004), states that writing is a social practice which requires deep engagement with readings and with other writers. Even in the writing class, reading a text is important because they will give the students many ideas and they will give them a lot of good writing styles and useful sentences which must be some help for the students. Escribano (1999) has concluded that Text analysis is an important means for building schemata for writing.

Research Article

Film is one of the visual aids that can be used in a writing class. It makes lessons more fun. It can also be used to create a situation for writing classes in which the students have big enthusiasm in learning the process of writing (Harmer, 2001). Besides, authenticity, according to Morrow (1977), is a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer, for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort. Hsu (2011) (has investigated consistency of tenses is required) the extent to which the gap between the passive/receptive and active/productive vocabulary of EFL learners is narrowed in a college freshman composition class with the You Tube video clips needs paraphrasing). Moreover that multimedia appeares to provide additional channels for exposure to English (Hsu, 2011). As such, reading-to-write may no longer be the exclusive task in the composition classroom. A number of researchers have discussed the effects of presenting information using multimedia on second language vocabulary acquisition and so on improving main skills especially writing (Akbulut, 2007; Kim and Gilman, 2008). For instance, Lin (2004) has found out that audiovisual aids affect vocabulary learning leading to writing improvement.

Furthermore, there are some reasons why teachers and some researchers have tried to use other materials in writing classes for the purpose of writing improvement. First, writing is a complex meta-cognitive activity that draws on an individual's knowledge, basic skills, strategies, and ability to coordinate multiple processes (Graham, 1997). Writing is a difficult skill because it requires writers to have a great deal of lexical and syntactic knowledge as well as principles of organization in L2 to produce a good writing. Second, learners need to have a certain amount of L2 background knowledge about the rhetorical organizations, appropriate language use or specific lexicon with which they want to communicate to their readers. The last point which has been noted by many researchers (Arcario and Stempleski, 1992; Flynn, 1998; Hsu, 2011; Mayer, 2002; Rieber, 1991; Tajima, 2006; Tuttle, 1975) is the lack of motivation in writing classes which can be the result of the lack of exposure to authentic language materials such as visuals, audios, or audiovisuals.

Purpose of the Study

As it is said earlier, the present study is an attempt to ameliorate the pedagogical and practical implication and application of the impact of visual presentation on Iranian Intermediate EFL learner's writing ability. However the study tries to answer the following question that might yield message to curriculum innovation and policy.

- Does visual presentation, such as reading, affect EFL learner's writing abilities?

The present research can be useful for material designer and material selection and preparation, which might be a paradigm shift in curriculum innovation.

Research Question

In order to tackle the problem of the research in a much consolidated way, the following research question has been formulated as follows:

RQ**:** Does visual presentation, such as reading, have any effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learner's writing abilities?

Research Hypothesis

In order to answer the research questions, the following null hypothesis has been formulated:

H0: visual presentation, such as reading does not have any effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learner's writing abilities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
1. Methodology
1.1. Introduction
This part introduces the method of the study. More specifically it details the design of the study, the subjects who participated in the experiment, the instrumentation, procedures and statistical analysis.
1.2. Design of the Study
The design of the study was quasi-experimental design, which is a pre-post test design.

Research Article

1.3. Participants

A total number of 30 students who were studying English at Iran language Institute participated in the study. They have been studying English for three years. Their age ranged from 14 to 28 and their native language was Persian. They were randomly divided into two groups: control group and experimental group.

1.4. Materials

This research scheme takes advantage of three types of tests for the sake of data collection. An OPT test not released and publicized in order to measure the subjects' current status of proficiency level. The test covered the areas of cloze tests, structure and vocabulary proficiency.

The subjects in both groups were screened and equated as far as their proficiency levels were concerned. A pre-test of writing was given to the subjects to assess the initial differences of subject knowledge of learner's writing ability. Finally, a posttest of writing was administered to both groups to find out the effectiveness of the treatment.

1.5. Procedure

The procedure through which this study is conducted includes different stages of application which embraces the selection of the subjects, instrument and materials. Basically three types of test will be used in this study one is OPT test which is used to make the subject homogeneous. This test is divided into 3 parts, cloze test, structure, and vocabulary proficiency.

Part one begins with questions 1 to 40, Part two from questions 41 to 60, and part three is a writing section. For questions, 1 to 5 students are supposed to mark one letter A, B or C on their answer sheet. From questions, 6 to 10 students must choose the word, which best fits each space in the text.

From questions, 11 to 20 students are supposed to choose the word in the space provided in the passage. From questions 21 to 40 students must choose the word or phrase which best completes each sentence. From questions, 41 to 50 students are given a passage to fill in by choosing the best word or phrase. From questions, 51 to 60 students are supposed to mark one letter A, B, C, or D, which best complete each sentence.

Having been homogenized by an OPT test 30 students were selected and they were randomly divided into two groups, control and experimental. Both groups sat for a pre-test of writing. The purpose of this test was to assess the initial knowledge of the subjects under investigation. The control group received no treatment and approached the traditional way of teaching writing. However, the experimental group received treatment based on visual presentation.

The whole project took for 5 weeks, each week for 2 sessions, and each session for 60 minutes. And the last step was the posttest of writing in which the subjects' ability in both groups on the specific treatment program were assessed.

1.6. Statistical Analysis

The data of the study was computed based on computer assisted program (SPSS) software. Independent-sample t-test was used to present the analysis and result of the study based on the hypothesis of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Data Analysis and Result

1.1 Introduction

This part discusses the details of the results of the current study. The results will be presented in two main sections: first, the procedures whereby the data have been analyzed as well as the main findings of this study will be elaborated on; second, the resulting status of the hypotheses of the study, that is, their rejection or support will be explained.

Both sections take advantage of illustrations such as tables and figures in order to provide a more clear-cut image of what has been obtained.

Research Article

1.2. The Descriptive Analysis of the Data

This section focuses on the descriptive analysis of the obtained data in this study. Such analysis was done using the SPSS software. Table (1) shows the descriptive analysis for the pretest and the posttest of writing in the experimental group of the study:

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of the data of the Experimental Group of the study

Tests	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Missing Value
Pre-writing	15	3.4667	2.12916	4.533	0.00
Post-writing	15	15.5333	1.97804	3.912	0.00
Valid N (listwise)	15				

As is indicated in table (1), the number of participants has been 15 in each experiment (N_{PRE} = 15; N_{POE} = 15), and there has been no missing value (Missing Value = 0.00) which means that all selected participants participated in the experiments of the study. The mean for the pretest of writing scores was shown to be 3.4667 ($\bar{X}_{PRE}$ = 3.4667) as compared to the mean for the posttest of writing scores which was 15.5333 ($\bar{X}_{POE}$ = 15. 5333). As for the standard deviations obtained for the experimental group, there seems to be more variability among the Pre-writing scores than the scores in the Post-writing. This may give an image of the participants' posttest scores being more homogenous after conducting the treatment of the study (treating with visual presentation). Similarly, the descriptive analysis for the pretest and the posttest of writing in the control group of the study has been indicated in table (2) below:

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of the data of the Control Group of the study

Tests	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Missing Value
Pre-writing	15	8.70	1.442	2.079	0.00
Post-writing	15	7.8667	1.69651	2.878	0.00
Valid N (listwise)	15				

As is indicated in table (2), the number of participants has been 15 in each experiment (N_{PRC} = 15; N_{POC} = 15) and there has been no missing value (Missing Value = 0.00) which means that all selected participants participated in the experiments of the study. The mean for the pretest of writing scores was shown to be 8.70 ($\bar{X}_{PRC}$ = 8.70) as compared to the mean for the posttest of writing scores which was 7.8667 ($\bar{X}_{POC}$ = 7.8667). As for the standard deviations obtained for the control group, there seems to be more variability among the Pre-writing scores than the scores in the Post-writing. This may give an image of the participant's posttest scores being more homogenous after conducting the treatment of the study (using visual presentation).

1.3. The Inferential Analysis of the Data

This section focuses on the inferential analysis of the obtained data of this study. Such analysis was done using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) from which the 'Compare Means', 'Independent Samples Test' for calculating the t value, also, 'Regression' and 'Linear' windows for calculating the Covariance.

Table 3: The T-test results of the study

T-Test Results	Observed t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Between the Posttest Scores of the Experimental and the Control Groups of the Study (Equal variances not assumed)	16.114	56.685	0.000

Research Article

As is indicated in table (3), the t-value of the study was calculated between the posttests of writing the participants in the experimental and the control groups. The observed t value was calculated as to be 16.114 (t_{obs}= 16.114) and the degree of freedom was 56.685 (df = 56.685). The reason why the degree of freedom here was not calculated based on the common formula of df = N-1 was that the SPSS calculated the degree of freedom while considering the variances of the participant posttest groups as unequal instead of equal (V_E= 3.912 Vs. V_C= 2.878) see tables (1) and (2). Finally, the level of significance was calculated as to be 0.00 (p = 0.00) which has been used in interpreting the data for the rejection or support of the hypothesis of the study in the next section.

The next inferential analysis of the data of this study was related to the degree of relationship between the pretest and the posttest of sentence word order in each participant group. This was indicated by calculating the Covariance coefficient between the pretest and the posttest scores in each group of the study. The results have been illustrated in the Covariance Matrix in table (4):

Table 4: The Covariance Matrix for the pretest and the posttest Scores of the experimental and the control groups

Matrix	Between the Pretest and the Posttest of the Experimental Group	Between the Pretest and the Posttest of the Control Group
Covariance	0.031	0.035

According to table (4), the covariance between the two sets of pretest and posttest scores in the experimental group is 0.31 ($Cov_{PRE\ POE}$ = 0.31) while it is 0.035 ($Cov_{PRC\ POC}$ = 0.035) in the control group of study. This means that the degree of statistical distance between the pretest and posttest scores in the experimental group is lower than the control group which is representative of the closeness of the scores in the control group thus, it can be concluded that the control group of the study has undergone no significant change as a result of being treated without visual presentation.

Conclusion

The literature suggests that using visual elements in teaching and learning yields positive results. In order for visual enhancements to be used most effectively, teachers should possess skills that include the language of imagery as well as techniques of teaching visually; therefore, guidance in the area of visual literacy for instructors is warranted. Results of the impact of visual literacy in the classroom can be explored further through teachers examining their current use of visual elements and comparing visual content of lessons with student achievement. Additional research to develop tools that measure an individual's degree of visual literacy, including skills of creating and interpreting visual language, is important in evaluating the overall impact on student learning. Additionally, the identification of possible relationships among other factors such as learning styles and demographic characteristics is desirable for a comprehensive study of the concept of visual literacy.

The peculiar point is the fact that although it has been long taken for granted that the visual practices (reading) can have better and more efficient results on students' writing ability.

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Research Article

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