International Scientific Journal
AKADEMIC JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH (AJER)
May 2025

Tashkent 2025

"Academic Journal of Educational Research (AJER)" magazine publishes in the form of scientific articles the results of scientific research conducted by professors and teachers of higher education institutions and independent researchers in our Republic and International. Also, scientific articles of the employees who are working in the international and other scientific institutes, production organizations and enterprises of our Republic and conducting scientific research will be included in the magazine.

All articles were posted to the journal's electronic scientific base at www.ajeruz.com
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EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING COMPREHENSION AND COHERENT WRITING PRODUCTION IN EFL STUDENTS

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Annotation: This study explores the relationship between reading comprehension and coherent writing production among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Uzbekistan. In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the connection between reading comprehension and writing proficiency, with research indicating that strong reading skills can enhance the ability to produce coherent and well-organized written texts. The primary aim of this research is to investigate how reading comprehension strategies influence writing outcomes, specifically in terms of logical flow, clarity, and cohesion, among Uzbek EFL learners. The study utilizes a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of students' reading comprehension scores with qualitative assessment of their writing samples. The findings suggest that students with higher reading comprehension levels tend to demonstrate more coherent and organized writing, supported by stronger vocabulary usage and sentence structures. This paper discusses the implications of these findings for EFL teaching practices in Uzbekistan, highlighting the importance of integrating reading comprehension exercises with writing instruction to improve students' overall language proficiency.

Key words: reading comprehension, writing production, EFL students, coherent writing, sentence structure, language proficiency, educational practices, mixed-methods research.

Introduction: The relationship between reading comprehension and writing production is a critical area of investigation in second language acquisition (SLA), particularly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. In Uzbekistan, where English is increasingly recognized as a global lingua franca, understanding how these two skills intersect can provide valuable insights into improving language instruction and fostering student success. The Uzbek education system has been integrating modern pedagogical approaches to language teaching, with a growing emphasis on reading and writing as interconnected skills. However, the mechanisms by which reading comprehension influences writing proficiency, particularly in terms of coherence and cohesion, remain insufficiently explored.

Reading comprehension refers to the ability to understand, interpret, and analyze written texts, which involves both decoding skills and higher-order cognitive processes such as inferencing and reasoning. On the other hand, writing production involves the ability to produce clear, structured, and coherent written texts. Previous studies have

highlighted a robust correlation between these two skills. For example, research conducted by Snow (2010) suggests that effective readers tend to produce more organized and logically structured writing. This is particularly relevant in EFL contexts, where learners face the challenge of not only mastering vocabulary and grammar but also developing the cognitive strategies necessary for organizing ideas cohesively. A significant body of literature underscores the critical role of reading comprehension in enhancing writing outcomes. According to Anderson (2009), the more students are exposed to complex reading materials, the more likely they are to internalize advanced writing structures, including coherence and cohesion. In the context of Uzbek EFL learners, this relationship becomes particularly crucial as they are often required to demonstrate their ability to write academic texts in English. Recent studies by local researchers such as Turaev (2018) and Makhmudov (2020) have indicated that while many Uzbek EFL learners achieve moderate success in reading comprehension tasks, their writing often lacks coherence and clarity, which may be attributed to insufficient development of writing strategies.

Literature Analysis and Methodology: The relationship between reading comprehension and coherent writing production has been widely studied in the context of second language acquisition (SLA), with numerous studies supporting the notion that effective reading practices positively influence writing abilities. In the Uzbek EFL context, however, this relationship remains under-explored, despite growing interest in improving English proficiency among students. This section examines existing literature on the connection between reading comprehension and writing, focusing on the cognitive and instructional factors that mediate this relationship, with particular emphasis on the Uzbek educational setting. Reading Comprehension and Writing in Second Language Acquisition: Research in second language acquisition has consistently demonstrated that reading comprehension and writing production are closely interlinked. A seminal study by Grabe (2009) argued that reading and writing are not isolated cognitive processes but rather interdependent skills that mutually reinforce each other. The more proficient a learner is at reading, the more likely they are to demonstrate advanced writing skills, including coherence, vocabulary usage, and sentence structure. This claim is substantiated by multiple studies, such as that of Rasinski et al. (2020), who found that students with high reading comprehension abilities were able to produce clearer, more logically structured written texts.

The relationship between reading and writing is particularly crucial for EFL learners, as they must navigate the complexities of a new language while developing cognitive strategies for processing and producing written content. For instance, Hosenfeld's (2006) work highlighted that learners who engage in extensive reading tend to have better control over their writing processes, particularly in terms of textual organization. This is particularly true for writing that requires logical flow and coherence, as reading

extensively provides exposure to various textual structures, vocabulary, and syntax, all of which contribute to more organized writing production. Cognitive and Pedagogical Insights: The Role of Vocabulary and Cohesion: Several cognitive factors mediate the relationship between reading comprehension and writing production. One of the most significant is vocabulary acquisition. A robust vocabulary enhances both reading comprehension and writing fluency by providing learners with a rich repertoire of words and phrases, which they can then use to construct coherent sentences and ideas. Research by Laufer (2005) has shown that vocabulary size directly correlates with both reading comprehension and writing quality. In the case of EFL learners, vocabulary acquisition often occurs incidentally through reading, as students are exposed to new words in context.

Another critical factor is coherence and cohesion in writing, which are often considered indicators of high-quality written texts. According to Swales and Feak (2012), the ability to produce cohesive writing—writing that flows logically from one idea to the next—is a skill that can be developed through regular reading. Their study found that proficient readers were able to produce texts with better organization and cohesion due to their exposure to well-structured written materials. This finding is particularly relevant for Uzbek EFL students, as previous research indicates that many students struggle with writing coherence, a challenge that may stem from limited reading comprehension strategies (Turaev, 2018). Research on Uzbek EFL Learners: While much of the global research has focused on the connection between reading and writing, relatively few studies have examined this relationship within the context of Uzbekistan. Turaev (2018) conducted an investigation into the English language proficiency of Uzbek university students, focusing on reading and writing tasks. His findings revealed that while students performed adequately on reading comprehension assessments, their writing skills, particularly in terms of coherence and cohesion, were underdeveloped. Turaev argued that one of the key reasons for this discrepancy was the limited integration of reading strategies into writing instruction, which meant that students were not able to transfer their reading skills to their writing practices effectively. Makhmudov (2020) extended this research by exploring the role of extensive reading programs in improving both reading comprehension and writing production among Uzbek EFL students. His study showed that students who engaged in regular reading activities demonstrated improved writing outcomes, particularly in their ability to organize and develop ideas clearly. This aligns with the findings of Snow (2010), who argued that the reading-writing relationship is particularly significant in contexts where students are required to produce academic texts.

Furthermore, an educational reform initiative led by the Uzbek Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education (2021) has aimed to integrate reading and writing instruction more cohesively. The initiative recognizes that both reading comprehension

and writing are essential skills for academic success, and it emphasizes the importance of teaching strategies that encourage the transfer of skills between the two domains. However, as noted by researchers like Makhmudov (2020), the practical application of this integrated approach in Uzbek classrooms remains a work in progress, with many teachers still focusing on reading and writing as distinct, unconnected tasks. Gaps in the Literature and Future Directions: While there is a growing body of research on the connection between reading comprehension and writing production in EFL contexts, there remain several gaps, particularly in the Uzbek educational setting. Most studies have been conducted in Western or Asian EFL contexts, with limited attention paid to Central Asia, where unique cultural and educational factors may influence language acquisition. Thus, there is a need for more localized research to explore the specific challenges faced by Uzbek EFL learners in developing both reading comprehension and writing skills.Future research could focus on longitudinal studies to examine how reading comprehension and writing production evolve over time in Uzbek EFL learners. Additionally, intervention studies that assess the effectiveness of integrating reading comprehension strategies into writing instruction would provide valuable insights into best practices for language teaching in Uzbekistan.

This section outlines the research design, data collection methods, participants, and data analysis procedures employed in this study to investigate the relationship between reading comprehension and coherent writing production in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. The research methodology was constructed with careful consideration of the educational context in Uzbekistan and existing literature in second language acquisition (SLA). The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to provide a comprehensive analysis of the interplay between reading and writing skills.

Research Design: The study followed a correlational research design, aiming to establish the relationship between reading comprehension and writing production among Uzbek EFL learners. This design was chosen because it allows for the exploration of how variations in one variable (reading comprehension) might influence another (writing production) without the need for experimental manipulation. The use of a mixed-methods design is essential for capturing the nuances of the relationship between these two complex cognitive processes.

Participants: A total of 150 participants were selected from two major universities in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. These participants were first-year undergraduate students enrolled in English language programs, with a strong background in general English education. The selection criteria ensured a homogeneous group in terms of language proficiency, as all participants had achieved a B1 level of English proficiency based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The participants were divided into two groups:

1. Experimental Group (75 students) – These students were exposed to an intervention program designed to integrate reading comprehension strategies with writing instruction.

2. Control Group (75 students) – These students were exposed to traditional, separate reading and writing instruction without any integrated approach. The intervention group engaged in reading comprehension exercises and writing tasks that were directly linked, whereas the control group followed the conventional teaching methods of reading and writing as distinct subjects. This design allowed for a comparison between the two teaching approaches in terms of their effectiveness in improving both reading comprehension and writing production.

Reading Comprehension Assessment: To assess the participants' reading comprehension, a standardized reading comprehension test was administered. The test included five passages from academic texts, followed by multiple-choice questions that measured the participants' understanding of the content, vocabulary, and the ability to make inferences. The reading passages were chosen based on their relevance to university-level content, ensuring that the test was both appropriate for the participants' language proficiency and aligned with academic reading demands.

The reading comprehension test was designed to measure the following skills:

• Literal understanding: Identifying facts and details presented in the text.

• Inferential understanding: Drawing conclusions and making predictions based on the text.

• Vocabulary acquisition: Recognizing and understanding new vocabulary words in context.

The test was scored on a scale of 0 to 50, with higher scores indicating stronger reading comprehension abilities.

Writing Production Assessment: Writing tasks were designed to measure the students' ability to produce coherent and logically structured essays. The writing test involved two prompts:

• Prompt 1: A narrative essay based on a personal experience (aimed at assessing organizational coherence and cohesion in writing).

• Prompt 2: An argumentative essay on a current social issue (designed to assess argumentative skills and the ability to present ideas in a clear, structured manner).

The writing tasks were assessed using a rubric that evaluated:

• Coherence: The logical flow of ideas and the structure of the essay.

• Cohesion: The use of transitional words and phrases to connect ideas within and between paragraphs.

• Vocabulary: The variety and appropriateness of vocabulary used in the text.

• Grammar and Syntax: The correct use of grammatical structures and sentence construction.

Survey on Learning Strategies: In addition to the assessments, a survey was administered to gather qualitative data on the participants' perceptions of their reading and writing skills and their learning strategies. The survey consisted of 20 Likert-scale questions, focusing on the following areas: Frequency of reading outside of class. Use of reading comprehension strategies (e.g., summarization, annotation, and making predictions). Writing strategies, particularly related to organizing and revisin written texts. Self-assessment of reading and writing skills. The data from the survey provided additional insights into how students perceive the relationship between reading and writing and their self-reported strategies for improving these skills.

Quantitative Data Analysis: Quantitative data from the reading comprehension and writing assessments were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and ranges, were calculated for both reading and writing test scores. Inferential statistics, specifically Pearson's correlation analysis, were employed to examine the relationship between reading comprehension scores and writing production scores for both groups. Additionally, an independent samples t-test was used to compare the performance of the experimental group and the control group, assessing the effectiveness of the intervention program.

Qualitative Data Analysis: Qualitative data from the surveys were analyzed using thematic analysis. The responses were categorized into themes related to reading and writing strategies, perceptions of skill development, and the relationship between reading and writing. This analysis provided a deeper understanding of students' experiences and attitudes toward integrating reading and writing instruction.

Ethical Considerations: Ethical guidelines were strictly adhered to throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring that they understood the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing all data and storing it securely. Additionally, participants were assured that their academic standing would not be affected by their participation in the study.

Results and Discussion: The data collected from both the reading comprehension assessments and writing production tasks were analyzed to examine the relationship between reading comprehension and coherent writing production among EFL students in Uzbekistan. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to interpret the results of the study.

Reading Comprehension Performance: The reading comprehension assessment consisted of five academic reading passages, each followed by multiple-choice questions. The average score for the entire sample was 35.4 out of 50 (SD = 6.8), with the experimental group showing a slightly higher mean score of 37.1 (SD = 6.2) compared to

the control group's average score of 33.7 (SD = 7.2). This indicates that students in the experimental group, who participated in integrated reading and writing activities, performed better on the reading comprehension test. Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis between the reading comprehension scores and writing production scores yielded a significant positive correlation of $r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$, suggesting a moderate to strong relationship between the two variables. This supports the hypothesis that stronger reading comprehension is associated with more coherent writing production in EFL students.

Writing Production Performance: The writing production assessment consisted of two tasks: a narrative essay and an argumentative essay. The results for both tasks were assessed on a 100-point scale, and the average scores for the entire sample were as follows:

- Narrative Essay: Mean score of 62.3 (SD = 10.4)
- Argumentative Essay: Mean score of 65.2 (SD = 11.1)

Both tasks showed a significant variation between the experimental and control groups, with the experimental group demonstrating superior performance. The experimental group's average score for the narrative essay was 65.6 (SD = 9.2), and for the argumentative essay, 68.4 (SD = 9.9), compared to the control group's average scores of 59.0 (SD = 10.7) for the narrative essay and 61.9 (SD = 12.3) for the argumentative essay. These differences were statistically significant, as indicated by an independent samples t-test ($t = 4.32$, $p < 0.001$). A closer analysis of the writing production performance revealed that the experimental group not only wrote more coherent and logically organized essays, but also demonstrated a greater ability to use appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures. The control group, on the other hand, had difficulty organizing their ideas and often exhibited a disjointed structure in their writing.

Survey Data Analysis: The survey data indicated that students who frequently engaged in integrated reading and writing activities reported a greater sense of confidence in their ability to produce coherent written texts. A majority (73%) of participants in the experimental group agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Reading comprehension helps me write better." Conversely, only 49% of the control group expressed the same sentiment. The survey data further revealed that the experimental group used a variety of strategies to improve their reading comprehension (e.g., summarizing, making predictions, and identifying key vocabulary), which they then applied in their writing tasks. The results of this study highlight the significant relationship between reading comprehension and coherent writing production in EFL students. As predicted, students who participated in integrated reading and writing activities outperformed those who followed traditional, separated instructional methods. The positive correlation between reading comprehension and writing production supports existing theories in second language acquisition that argue that reading comprehension provides cognitive scaffolding for writing tasks (Al-Hammadi, 2017).

The findings from the current study align with the work of several scholars in the field of language acquisition. For example, research by Koda (2005) and Grabe (2009) has consistently shown that reading comprehension contributes to writing ability through the enhancement of vocabulary knowledge, idea organization, and coherence in written discourse. This study adds to the body of evidence suggesting that fostering reading comprehension skills in EFL classrooms may lead to improvements in students' writing production. The significant difference in writing performance between the experimental and control groups suggests that the integration of reading comprehension strategies into writing instruction can enhance students' ability to write logically and coherently. This finding echoes the work of Shohamy (2011), who found that students who actively engage with reading texts through summarization, annotation, and critical analysis are better equipped to produce structured and cohesive written arguments.

Moreover, the higher self-reported confidence in writing skills among students in the experimental group may be attributed to the increased exposure to and practice of reading comprehension strategies that directly inform the writing process. The integrated approach likely facilitated a deeper understanding of the reading material, allowing students to transfer this knowledge into their writing tasks. One unexpected finding from the survey data was that a significant portion of the control group (49%) also believed that reading comprehension helped them improve their writing. However, their lack of formal integration between reading and writing instruction may have hindered their ability to apply these insights effectively in their writing tasks. This underscores the potential benefits of structured pedagogical approaches that explicitly link reading and writing activities in the EFL context.

While the results are promising, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The sample was restricted to first-year university students, which may not fully represent the diverse range of EFL learners in Uzbekistan. Future studies should consider a broader sample, including students from different academic levels and language proficiency backgrounds, to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the cross-sectional design of this study limits the ability to observe long-term effects of integrated reading and writing instruction. Longitudinal research would be necessary to examine the sustained impact of such an instructional approach over time. In conclusion, this study provides strong evidence for the positive relationship between reading comprehension and coherent writing production in EFL students. The results suggest that integrating reading comprehension strategies with writing instruction can lead to significant improvements in students' writing abilities, particularly in terms of coherence, cohesion, and vocabulary usage. This finding has important implications for EFL teaching practices in Uzbekistan, where a more holistic approach to language instruction could foster stronger reading and writing skills among learners. Future research should

explore the long-term effects of integrated instruction and examine its applicability across different educational contexts and student demographics.

Conclusion: However, the study also points to certain limitations, including the narrow scope of the sample and the short-term nature of the intervention. Future studies should focus on more diverse learner populations, as well as longitudinal approaches, to explore the long-term effects of integrated reading and writing instruction. Additionally, expanding the research to include different language proficiency levels and academic contexts could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between reading and writing in EFL education. In conclusion, the integration of reading comprehension strategies into writing instruction should be considered an essential practice in EFL classrooms. This approach has the potential to significantly improve students' writing skills and overall language proficiency, ultimately contributing to more effective language learning outcomes.

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