



The Effects of Reading Short Stories in Improving Foreign Language Writing Skills

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ABSTRACT

This study is an inquiry into the effects of reading short stories in improving foreign language writing skills through Read for Writing model, which is the adaptation of the approach called Talk for Writing (Corbett, 2013). It is a quasi-experimental 13-week field study which was implemented in a primary school. The purpose of this study is to investigate if there is a significant difference both in the pre-post-test writing achievements of students who were taught through the Read for Writing model, and between the experimental group and the control group. Finally, the participants' views on the model were determined. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques were designed such as tests for short stories, story assessment control lists, reading and writing syllabuses, lesson plans, an analytic story assessment rubric, and a student's view questionnaire. The results of the study indicate that the Read for Writing model has a positive effect on students' short story writing skills in terms of language, content, organization, and communicative achievement.

INTRODUCTION

Many people believe that writing is a *talent* but according to Sokolik (2003:106) “writing is a teachable and learnable skill” for both native and non-native speakers. In foreign language teaching, basically, learners are exposed to varied course books and literary texts (generally simplified graded readers or authentic literary texts) as well as other text resources which can help them build up prior knowledge and present model texts for their writing. There are some researches and views on the ineffectiveness of the former (Rosenblatt, 1978; Tomlinson, 2003 & 2008) and the positive impact of the latter (Lazar, 1993; Paran, 2008; Saka, 2014).

Besides, Tomlinson (2003) advocates that “books they (professional materials writers) write are usually systematic, well- designed, teacher-friendly and thorough. But they often lack energy and imagination and are sometimes insufficiently relevant and appealing to the actual learners who use them.” (2003:4). According to Tomlinson (2003:4), “teachers throughout the world only need a little training, experience and support to become materials writers who can produce imaginative materials of relevance and appeal to their learners”.

Apart from course books, literary texts can have the potential to present model texts for writing. Literature can stimulate the imagination of students, develop their critical abilities and increase their emotional awareness (Lazar, 1993:19). Saka (2014) reported that literature is “an authentic material and by reading literary texts students face language written for native speakers and try to understand the texts”. Choudhary (2016) states that teachers have started using literary texts and their analyses to explore and ignite the imagination and creative skills of the students.

Furthermore, Paran (2008) examined the role of literature in foreign language learning and teaching and demonstrated that principled evidence is emerging which is showing the benefits of using literature. Also, it has been emphasized that more systematic evaluation of courses, and enquiries into the views of the learners were needed. The extent of the use of literature in the L2 classroom in primary and secondary school settings, the way literature is taught, how it is perceived by teachers and received by students, and how successful it is in promoting language proficiency are some other areas that were suggested by the researcher (Paran, 2008). Additionally, Saka (2008) holds the view that short story has some advantages to teach foreign language compared to other genres. Also, Mourão (2009), listed 30 excellent reasons for using stories in ELT classrooms under the titles of socio-affective, cognitive, aesthetic, cultural and linguistic.

There are some researches (Can & Sapar, 2010; Çileli & Özen, 2003; Eke, 1997) that investigate the effects of reading in writing performance. For instance, Can and Sapar (2010) examined the effects of reading *Little Red Riding Hood* and rewriting the story in a creative way. The researchers reported that students created and developed critical thinking and writing skills and they were highly motivated.

Moreover, another study conducted by Çileli and Özen, (2003) investigated the effects of an extensive short story reading program on the EFL writing skills development of intermediate-level university students. The study reported that the EFL learners in the experimental group exposed to the extensive short story reading program attained a higher level of writing proficiency post-test scores. The findings of this study proposed that the extensive short story reading program played a facilitative role in EFL writing proficiency (Çileli & Özen, 2003).

Besides, Eke (1997) analysed the effects of a short story reading program on the EFL writing skills development and explored that participants in the experimental group exposed to the short story reading program showed a significant progress in their writing skills, especially in terms of organization and content.

This paper presents an investigation into the effects of reading short stories in improving foreign language writing skills through “Read for Writing” model, which is the adaptation of the approach called “Talk for Writing” (Corbett, 2012).

Johnston (2008:2) believes that story writing cannot be taught but he is positive that it can be learned. He claims that everyone knows how to tell stories but

“...despite this proficiency, something happens when we endeavour to write, rather to tell, a story. Somewhere, somehow, we blow it. I think of this as a breach that opens between the conception of a story, and actualization of that story, the distance between the perfect idea in your mind and the foundering jumble of words on the page. Writing exercises, I believe, serve to introduce or elucidate *techniques and strategies* that authors can use to bridge that void”

With regard to the young learners, the techniques and strategies that EFL teachers use to promote writing stories were varied but not systematically planned and evaluated. Many researchers argue that reading and writing should be taught together (Grabe, 2001; Hirvela, 2004).

In this study, *Talk for Writing* model (Corbett, 2001, 2011, 2012, 2013) was implemented, considering the benefits and appropriateness for the sample group’s age. It was adapted and renamed as *Read for Writing*. Therefore, it is essential to examine this model’s and the adapted version’s stages profoundly herein.

Talk for Writing & Read for Writing

Corbett and Strong (2011; 2012; 2013) suggest *Talk for Writing* approach to teach story writing for primary school learners. It has three main stages: imitation stage, innovation stage, and independent application.

The imitation stage starts with a creative context and an engaging start that the foreign language teacher has established to warm up the tune of the text and to help the learner internalised the pattern of the language required. The text map of an extract from the story needs to be drawn before the lesson and language teacher shows this map with physical movements to help the children recall the story. In this way, the children hear the text, say it for themselves and enjoy it before seeing it written down. Corbett (2012) identifies this stage as follows:

“Once they have internalised the language of the text, they are in a position to read the text and start to think about the key ingredients that help to make it work. This stage could include a range of reading as-a-reader and as-a-writer activities. Understanding the structure of the text is easy if you use the boxing-up technique and then help the children to analyse the features that have helped to make the text work. In this way the class starts to co-construct a toolkit for this type of text so that they can talk about the ingredients themselves – a key stage in internalising the toolkit in their heads.” (Corbett, 2012)

The innovation stage could begin with activities to warm up the key words and phrases of the text focused on. In this stage, all the learners in the classroom plan and write a story together (*shared writing*). It begins with a boxed-up grid to show how to plan the text and then apply the shared writing step. The learners and the teacher think aloud and decide the best alternatives (words, multi-word units, phrases, sentences, paragraphs etc.) for their story. Corbett (2012) believes that this process enables the learners to develop the ability to generate good words and phrases.

“If, during this process a teaching assistant (or in KS2 an able child) flip-charts up words and phrases suggested, these can be put on the washing line alongside the shared writing so when the children come to write they have models and words and phrases to support them. Throughout the shared writing, the children should be strengthening the toolkit so they start to understand the type of ingredients that may help.”

Eventually, the whole class discussion is suggested to observe some good examples of successful short stories the learners generated.

The invention/independent application stage could begin with some activities focused on helping the children understand aspects that they were having difficulty. Corbett (2012), mentions that this stage,

“...will continue to focus on the next steps needed to support progress so the children can become independent speakers and writers of this type of text. Perhaps some more examples of the text are compared followed by more shared writing on a related topic and then the children can have a go themselves on a related topic of their own choosing.”

Corbett (2012) highly recommends that learners’ work should be published or displayed. He believes that it is important to provide children with a purpose for their writing.

Corbett’s (2012) *Talk for Writing* model was adapted for the participants of this study and the list below shows the steps of the adopted version called *Read for Writing*:

1. Selecting a short story with the help of the *Story Selection Control Lists*
2. Text map activity with repetition and physical movements,
3. Read aloud the story,
4. Analysing the text in groups (boxed-up planning),
5. Vocabulary study: Preparing vocabulary cards in groups for the unknown words and multi-word units. The card encompasses definition, parts of speech, example(s), pictures, and synonyms of the words and multi-word units.

6. Presentations on the topics like character description, writing the beginning of a story, to develop the language and style of a story, rhetoric devices etc.

7. Writing a text in groups using the topics instructed such as rhetoric devices, good examples of sentence patterns, strategies like *showing character through what is said and done* etc.

8. Shared writing with the whole class,

9. Writing a story independently,

10. Self-assessment with the rubric,

Briefly, each step needs to be implemented by the foreign language teacher so that the story can be internalised by foreign language learners and the children may have the chance to create their own stories independently. Basically, *Read for Writing* model is not radically different from *Talk for Writing* approach (Corbett, 2012), but it was expanded by the researcher according to the needs of the foreign language learners. The steps such as selecting a short story, reading aloud the story, vocabulary study for foreign language learners, presentations on the topics like character description, writing the beginning of a story, to develop the language and style of a story, rhetoric devices were supplemented with respect to the needs of foreign language learners. Also, it was planned that self-assessment was suitable for the participants, instead of peer assessment. Finally, a personal and class writing log was recommended to jot down nice expressions, effective and powerful adjectives, adverbs, expressions to be used while describing a character, or any phrase or word that sounds good to the learner. Additionally, the researcher had a similar writing log to build a bank of nice expressions to be suggested during the shared writing sessions.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Participants

The study followed the quasi- experimental design. Two groups- experimental and control group- were assigned in a private primary school in Ankara, Turkey. The former group was all the 7th grade students who were voluntarily participated the current program in 2013- 2014 academic year, and the latter group was all the 7th graders who took the post test in 2014- 2015 academic year. The first one served as an experimental group and the other one as control. The researcher administered a pre- post-test to the experimental group and the post- test to the control group to test the effect of using *Read for Writing* model on developing short story writing skills. The initial experimental sample group consisted of 54 students of whom 6 did not complete the entire program due to various reasons (health, absence for a long time). The table below demonstrates the details of the participants and the program:

Table 1. The participants

	Experimental Group	Control Group
Grade	7th grade	7th grade
Age	12-13	12-13
Language Level	A2 and B1.1	A2 and B1.1
Number	48 (F: 23, M: 25)	31 (F: 15, M: 16)
Program Dates	2nd October 2013 19th February 2014	-
Post Test Dates	19th February 2014	19th February 2015

Material

Story Selection Control Lists (SSCL's), *Analytic Story Assessment Rubric (ASAR)*, reading and writing syllabuses, and lesson plans were designed for this study.

It is substantial to explain the steps involved during the development of both SSCL's and ASAR owing to the validity and reliability of the instruments. SSCL's were designed to evaluate and select authentic short stories for the implementation of the study and ASAR was to assess the short stories of the participants (pre-test, post-test and self-assessment).

1. SSCL's

Two SSCL's were developed in three stages:

1. Determining the characteristics of appropriate story for the study
2. Preparing the drafts of the SSCL,
3. Taking the views of the experts on the SSCL,

The first control list (SSCL1) checks short stories' appropriateness for children. Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson (1999) define *children's literature* as "good quality trade books for children from birth to adolescence, covering topics of relevance and interest to children of those ages through prose and poetry, fiction and nonfiction". This study set out with the aim of assessing "good quality" of short stories for children. Many researcher (Can, 2012; Civaroğlu, 1998; Corbett, 2001; Lukens, 1999; Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson, 1999; Oğuzkan, 2001; Sever, 1995; Sever, 2008; Sever, 2013; Sofuoğlu, 1979; Solar, 2012; Tosunoğlu and Alamdar, 2012; Williams, 1990) study on the characteristics of an appropriate story for children and exhibit shared characteristics: Theme, subject, characters, plan, message, environment, and language. The criteria were identified as the common characteristics of an appropriate short story for children.

The second control list (SSCL2) contains the elements of language/style. The appropriateness of language of short stories was assessed using language/style checklist. It was assumed that the objectives that were supposed to be taught in the reading and writing syllabus needed to be within the stories selected for the implementation. To illustrate, one of the goals in the programme is to teach participants how to polish their paragraphs with "effective and powerful adjectives and adverbs (Tired Words List)" (Corbett, 2001). Therefore, it was considered that the texts needed to contain the examples of effective use of adjectives and adverbs. Other linguistic and stylistic features of texts were:

- Select precise words
- Try something new
- Use adjectives & adverbs effectively (adverbs are more powerful)
- Begin sentences with ed-ing-ly starters, subordinating conjunctions, prepositional phrases, similes
- Make the reader picture the scene and experience the emotions
- Structure statements, questions, exclamations and orders
- Construct simple, compound, complex and minor sentences
- Sound effects: the rhythm of the sentences; onomatopoeia, alliteration
- Use simile, metaphor, personification
- Move hook to front and jump straight in (Corbett, 2001)

Of equal importance, stories need to achieve cohesion. Cohesion is achieved by a number of devices: conjunctions, substitution, lexical cohesion, ellipsis, (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1976; Özkan, 2004; Uzun, 1995).

Short Story Selection

Story Selection Control Lists (SSCL's), which was designed by the researcher, were used to select the short stories. It was considered that a wide genre of short stories (detective, science

fiction, humour etc.) was required, but fairy tale was not included in this group, as Ay & Bartan (2011: 248) observed that it is “the least interesting topic for both genders”.

After surveying children’s literature, 20 short stories were distinguished to be elected by three raters who were experienced English language teachers and had worked in the same school with the sample groups for many years. The stories that got the most points were chosen to be read during the implementation: *A mouthful* (89, 3), *Just a Pigeon* (88, 3), *Hairy* (88, 3), *Umbrella Man* (87, 3), *The Sound of Annie's Silence* (87), *Mouse* (86, 6), *Me and My Cat* (86, 6).

Analytic Story Assessment Rubric (ASAR) consists of three parts: Assessment criteria, criteria definitions, scoring strategies (Popham, 2000; Aslanoğlu & Kutlu, 2003).

1.1. Assessment criteria

ASAR was developed as an assessment system appropriate for the purposes of evaluating the short stories of the participants, including their pre-post-tests and their self- assessment process. It is originally based on the CEFR (2001), Cambridge ESOL FCE rubric and teacher’s handbook (2011), Corbett’s (2008; 2012) *Talk for Writing* objectives and the writing toolkit (Corbett & Strong, 2011), the researches on reading and writing relations, generating and using rubrics (Coskun, 2005; Temizkan, 2011; Ülper& Uzun, 2009; Ülper, 2011) and, text linguistics (Uzun, 1995; Williams, 1990) regarding the participants’ foreign language level and age.

In conclusion, ASAR contains four main dimensions (criteria) such as *language, content, organization, and communicative achievement* and 25 descriptors/ sub-skills as listed below:

Language:

1. Uses the adjectives, adverbs and nouns in the story.
2. Uses the precise words and tries something new.
3. Begins sentences with “-ed-ing-ly starters”, subordinating conjunctions, prepositional phrases, and similes.
4. Makes the reader picture the scene and experience the emotions. Show rather than tell.
5. Uses statements, questions (?), exclamations (!) and orders.
6. Uses simple, compound, complex and minor sentences.
7. Reorders sentences.
8. Creates special effects by using stylistic devices.
9. Uses simple grammatical forms with a good degree of control. (I can understand the text although there are some grammatical mistakes.)
10. Spelling and punctuation are well handled.

Content:

1. The plot of the story is clear.
2. Uses strategies that help with action writing.
3. Builds up the characters using some strategies. They are believable.
4. Creates setting scenes by selecting precise places and time.
5. The opening paragraph is really interesting.
6. The problem/dilemma is clear in the story.
7. Resolution: Ties up the story.
8. Ending: There is a reflection on what happened.
9. An appropriate title for the story.

Organization

1. Describes scenes as paragraphs. All parts (beginning - middle - end) are connected.

2. Uses the linking words correctly both within and across the sentences and paragraphs.
3. Uses some cohesive devices correctly.

Communicative Achievement

1. The story is easy to follow. (I understood every part of the story.)
2. Uses past and present tenses in a smooth way.
3. The genre and the language of the story fit together.

1.2.Criteria definitions

In ASAR, the participants' stories were evaluated on a scale of 0-2 (No, Partly, Yes.). It has three dimensions with 0 indicating *the work doesn't meet requirements of the specific criterion*; 1 *it has limited problems according to the criterion*, and 2 *it has almost no problems*. Students' short stories were scored out of 50 as follows: Language 20, Content 18, Organization 6, and Communicative Achievement 6.

1.3.Scoring strategy

Analytic scoring generates several scores that provide information that is potentially useful for guiding instruction and programmatic decisions (Bang, 2013). It's claimed that examining separate aspects of writing allows for a more comprehensive coverage of the construct, thus increasing the validity of analytic scoring (Charney, 1984; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Quinlan, Higgins, & Wolff, 2009).

Briefly, ASAR includes assessment criteria, criteria definitions, scoring strategies (Popham, 2000; Aslanoğlu & Kutlu, 2003), and additionally, it encompasses the descriptors' examples to demonstrate and explain each criterion for not only raters but also the foreign language learners who assess themselves and their peers. It is vital to make the criteria obvious and comprehensible by displaying the sample statements, strategies, devices etc. in ASAR, thus, it was planned to contribute to the reliability of the rubric.

Research Questions

The focus of this study is to inquire the impact of reading short stories in improving foreign language writing skills, with regard to this, there were three research questions:

1. Are there any statistically significant differences between pre-post-test writing achievements of the English language learners who were taught through the writing syllabus based on *Read for Writing* model (experimental group)?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences between experimental group and control group in terms of short story writing skills?
3. What are the experimental group's views on the model?

Method

It is a quasi-experimental design which uses two separate design groups: The one-group pre-test-post-test design and post-test-only design with non-equivalent groups (Creswell, 2014). As it hadn't been ethical¹ to conduct a randomized controlled trial in the school in 2013-2014, it was possible and better to assign a control group with all 7th graders in the same school in

¹ The school's science committee guided the researcher to implement the programme to the whole group of 7th graders (three groups), as it's unethical to assign a control group with regard to the equality aspect of the children's rights. That's why; a control group was assigned in 2014-2015 academic year.

2014-2015 academic year. Therefore, the first design was applied to assess if there was a significant difference between the pre and post-tests of the experimental group, while the second one explored the differences between the post-test scores of the experimental and control group. It's claimed that "the use of a comparison group helps prevent certain threats to validity including the ability to statistically adjust for confounding variables" (Harris, et al., 2006). Briefly, experimental group was pre-tested and post-tested while control group was only post-tested.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Data management and analysis was performed using SPSS 15 and 21. Experimental group was received a reading and writing programme based on *Read for Writing* model. The course consisted of 13 weeks and 26 hours of lessons. Each lesson has 40 minutes. Both experimental and control groups were also exposed to their course books (Spark 3) for 7 hours in a week.

Participants in the experimental group were guided to read and analyse authentic short stories and wrote short stories as explained above (see *Talk for Writing and Read for Writing*). Briefly, the procedure was: Text map activity with repetition and physical movements, reading aloud the story, analysing the text in groups (boxed-up planning), vocabulary study, presentations on the topics like character description, writing the beginning of a story, developing the language and style of a story, rhetoric devices etc., writing a part of a story in groups, shared writing with the whole class, writing a story independently, self-assessment with the rubric, awarding the short story certificates to the ones whose stories were good examples and discussing the criteria. Participants read three stories (*A mouthful*, *Just a Pigeon*, and *Me and My Cat*) and exposed to the procedure above for each story. Also, three stories (*Hairy*, *The Sound of Annie's Silence*, and *Mouse*) were utilized to be analysed in terms of the style of the texts by the learners as homework. They wrote five short stories independently, including pre-post tests. They had the chance to check their own stories with the help of the ASAR.

In contrast, the control group was not assigned reading or writing tasks like the ones in *Read for Writing* model. They only used their course books (Spark 3) during the academic term when they were post-tested.

Briefly, both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques were designed such as pre-post-tests to evaluate short stories, story assessment control lists, reading and writing syllabuses, lesson plans and materials, an analytic story assessment rubric, and a student's view questionnaire.

In order to establish scoring validity, the pre-post-tests "must be as similar as possible" in terms of the tested skills/ sub-skills (Weir, 2005: 250). A couple of sentences were used to serve the beginning of an opening paragraph of a short story as pre-post-tests.

The pre-post-tests were scored by three experienced ELT teachers. A native- American and two non-native ELT teachers assessed the participants' short stories (pre-post-tests). Moreover, rater training was essential for rater reliability. Rater training is a "systematic process to train raters to apply the rating scale and the mark scheme in a consistent way." (Weir, 2005: 190). For this reason, three ELT teachers were trained through explaining each criterion of the ASAR one by one as well as the objectives of the program. Additionally, there needs to be consistency of marking between raters (inter-rater reliability) (Weir, 2005:34). Three raters' scores were analysed via Intra-class Correlation Coefficient and for pre-test, the correlation was .70 and the post-test correlation was .80. The scorings of both pre-test and post-tests indicate a good inter-rater reliability.

RESULTS

In order to address the first research question - *Are there any statistically significant differences between pre-post-test writing achievements of the English language learners who were taught through the writing syllabus based on Read for Writing model (experimental group)?*-the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 15 and 21) were used and analysed via paired samples t-test to statistically conclude whether or not *Read for Writing* model had any impact on short story writing.

The data in Table 2 (see Table 2) below show that *Read for Writing* model had a statistically significant effect (p. 000) on the amount of improvement (Pre-test= 16,97; Post-test= 26,47, over 50 points) in the experimental participants' foreign language writing skills.

Table 2. The results of paired samples t-test average scores of experimental group's pre-test and post-test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test	48	16,97	9,77	47	-8.57	.000
Post-test	48	26,47	12,88			

p<.05

As tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 below demonstrate, the amount of progress in the experimental participants' short story writing skills on language (Pre-test= 6,13; Post-test= 9,35, over 20 points), organization (Pre-test= 1,75; Post-test= 2,79, over 6 points), content(Pre-test= 6,73; Post-test= 10,60, over 18 points), and communicative achievement (Pre-test= 2,47; Post-test= 3,57, over 6 points) is statistically significant.

Table 3. Paired samples t-test average scores of experimental group's pre-test and post-test results on language

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test	48	6,13	3,07	47	7.3	.000
Post-test	48	9,35	4,37			

Table 4. Paired samples t-test average scores of experimental group's pre-test and post-test results on organization

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test	48	1,74	1,14	47	5.9	.000
Post-test	48	2,79	1,51			

Table 5. Paired samples t-test average scores of experimental group's pre-test and post-test results on content

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test	48	6,73	3,97	47	7.02	.000

Post-test	48	10,60	5,05
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Table 6. Paired samples t-test average scores of experimental group's pre-test and post-test results on communicative achievement

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test	48	2,47	1,30	47	6.7	.000
Post-test	48	3,57	1,62			

$p < .05$

As mentioned in *assessment criteria* part above, ASAR contains not only four main dimensions (criteria) such as language, content, organization, and communicative achievement, but also 25 descriptors. These descriptors were analysed statistically before and after the intervention and revealed that all the descriptors' improvement was statistically significant, except for two descriptors: "Uses statements, questions (?), exclamations (!) and orders." (p.423); "Resolution: Ties up the story." (p .055) $p < .05$.

The second question was: *Are there any statistically significant differences between experimental group and control group?*

To compare the experimental group's and control group's post-tests, the scores were analysed through independent samples t-test, and as it is illustrated below (see Table 7) the difference between the scores of the groups (experimental group= 26,47; control group= 7,46; $p < .000$) was statistically meaningful.

Table 7. The results of the independent samples t-test of the two groups on the post-test

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental	48	26,47	12,8	77	8.8	.000
Control	31	7,46	6			

$p < .05$

Also, results for the experimental and control groups are summarised in Tables 8, 9, 10, and 11 below. The comparison of both groups' post- test mean values reflects that the amount of improvement in the experimental group's short story writing skills on language (Experimental = 9,3; Control= 2,9, over 20 points), organization (Experimental = 2,6; Control= ,8, over 6 points), content (Experimental = 10,6; Control= 2,3, over 18 points), and communicative achievement (Experimental = 3,5; Control= 1,3, over 6 points) is statistically significant. Similarly, all 25 descriptors' progress was statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Table 8. Independent samples t-test of the two groups on the post-test results on language

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental	48	9,3	4,3	77	8.6	.000

Control	31	2,9	2,1
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Table 9. Independent samples t-test of the two groups on the post-test results on organization

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental	48	2,6	1,5	77	6.4	.000
Control	31	,8	,9			

Table 10. Independent samples t-test of the two groups on the post-test results on content

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental	48	10,6	5	77	8.4	.000
Control	31	2,3	2,4			

Table 11. Independent samples t-test of the two groups on the post-test results on communicative achievement

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental	48	3,5	1,6	77	6.1	.000
Control	31	1,3	1,5			

$p < .05$

The third question in this research was: *What are the experimental group's views on the model?*

It was revealed that the participants reported (see Table 12) they enjoyed the activity of *analysing a text in groups* most. The least enjoyed activity was: *drawing their text maps*. Also, as table 12 illustrates, participants didn't like *the text map activity with repetition and physical movements*.

Table 12. The activities and the number of students who enjoyed them

Activities	Number of students
Analysing the text in groups	34
Writing a story independently	27
Listen to a story	26

Writing a text in groups	25
Shared writing with the whole class	25
Presentations on the topics like character description, writing the beginning of a story etc.	23
Text map activity with repetition and physical movements	22
Drawing their text maps	17

The contribution of the programme was asked to the participants. Here are some of the statements that participants often mentioned: “We’ve learned English in a better way; I’ve learned how to write; My writing skill has improved; I’ve learned how to write a story; I’ve learned new vocabulary; I started to use some elements such as reported speech, adjectives, and adverbs; My texts are better than before.” These comments are the summary of all comments made by the participants.

CONCLUSION

This study was designed to determine the effects of reading short stories in improving foreign language writing skills through *Read for Writing* model, which is the adaptation of the approach called *Talk for Writing* (Corbett, 2013).

The results of the study reflect that there is a statistically significant difference in the pre-post-test achievements of the experimental group based on texts’ *language, content, organization, and communicative achievements*. Another important finding was that the post-test scores of the experimental group were higher than the control group’s post-test scores. It can, therefore, be assumed that reading short stories through *Read for Writing* model had an impact on improvement of writing skills, in terms of *language, content, organization, and communicative achievements*. This study produced results which corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work in this field (Çileli& Özen, 2003; Eke, 1997; Can & Sapar, 2010; Temizkan, 2011). In conclusion, the students’ views on the model were revealed that they enjoyed reading and writing short stories.

The findings of the current study are consistent with those of Çileli and Özen (2003) who found that the EFL learners in the experimental group exposed to the extensive short story reading program attained a higher level of writing proficiency post-test scores, especially on organization and content.

The findings further support the relationship between reading and writing skills. Can and Sapar (2010) discovered that students created and developed critical thinking and writing skills, and they were highly motivated. Also Kırkgöz (2012) presents a review of positive applications of creative writing texts into ESL/EFL classrooms. She explored increased confidence in enjoyment of reading and vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, she declared that creative writing texts and exercises could potentially inspire imaginative student writing through interaction with the text. (Kırkgöz, 2012: 112).

The findings on the students’ positive views on the model were compatible with many researches (Hirvela, 2005; Yang, 2001; Eke, 1997) about the reading literary texts and writing short stories. However, they mentioned that they didn’t like *drawing the text map* and *the text map activity with repetition and physical movements*. The comments of the participants above shed light on the students’ view questionnaire finding that, while they were motivated with the help of literary texts, they raise awareness of their linguistic competence.

These differences between two groups can be explained in part by reading and writing relationships, the authentic reading texts that were selected through systematic checklists, student centred activities, and cooperative reading and writing tasks. It is interesting to note that 34 participants reported they enjoyed “analysing a text in groups” activity most. This activity contains two interrelated steps:

1. Presentations on the topics like character description, writing the beginning of a story, developing the language and style of a story, rhetoric devices etc.
2. Analysing a text (sentence(s), paragraph(s), extract from a short story) in groups before playing games in groups such as sentence pattern games, word rhyming and rhetoric devices games, colouring your words etc.

To illustrate, the power point presentation which was aimed to promote learners’ generating literary texts and their style started with two sample sentences and the teacher asked, “Which one is more effective?”

(1) *The cat sat on the mat.*

(2) *The Siamese cat curled up on the Persian rug (Corbett, 2001).*

After discussing the differences between two sentences, samples of the strategies that may improve their language style (see *Assessment Criteria, Language*) were first explained and displayed through powerpoint slides, and then the teacher guided the participants who worked in groups to find some more samples from the short story they read. Afterwards, teacher demonstrated sentences like the first one (1) (such as, *The baby was crying; The man was on the corner; The woman was hiding*) and the learners were asked to write “effective and powerful” (Corbett, 2001) sentences in groups like the second one (2). Some of them were as follows:

The sleepy cat sat on the fluffy mat.

The black cat sat on the warm blue mat.

The naughty children were playing in the gorgeous garden noisily.

The thief who wears a black suit went away before I could see.

Another example for creating “effective and powerful” texts in groups was to introduce common sentence openers (such as “*Angrily, he stormed out of the room. Happily, she whistled a tune. Gleefully, he ate the doughnuts*”) (Corbett, 2001) and to guide them to analyse and write sentences in groups. Moreover, shared writing sessions supported the learners to learn how to think aloud to construct effective sentences, paragraphs and finally short stories.

Other examples which were written by participants in groups during “analysing a text in groups” activities were as follows:

“It was a tired Friday night.”

“I am as lonely as an astronaut in the space.”

“My pencil is so lazy.”

“The morning of 17th February was nice and sunny with an amazing competition at school.”

“He tiptoed through the foggy graveyard. He felt dead scary.”

“He walked through the cursed dark graveyard with no sound. He didn’t want to show his face which was white.”

While facilitating the analysis and production of texts in groups, the teacher made use of her writing log. She jotted down nice expressions from the stories she had read before and suggested some of them during the shared writing sessions. It was observed that some of the expressions above were the versions of the recommended expressions. For instance, the following expressions were written down writing logs of the class and the teacher: “*The morning of June 12th was clear and sunny, with the fresh warmth of a full-summer day...; “tiptoed, felt dead scary, a tired Friday”*

The administration of the short story writing pre-test to experimental group and post- test to the experimental and control groups proved that *Read for Writing* model had a positive effect on developing 7th grade students' short story writing skills in terms of *language, content, organization, and communicative achievement* with 25 sub-skills/descriptors.

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions could be reached:

1. It is effective to use *Read for Writing* model in developing students' short story writing skills.
2. This model could facilitate learners to identify not only the elements of a short story, but also enlightens them about the strategies that they may choose to use while writing such as *show rather than tell, using a writing log, adding in adjectives and adverbs in a sentence, polishing and rewrite effective expressions, using stylistic devices, setting scenes, using different types of sentences, strategies that help with action writing, strategies that help to build up character* etc.
3. This study points out the benefits of relating authentic short stories into writing stories though cooperative tasks in EFL instruction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study have a number of important implications for future practice.

1. As *Read for Writing* model offers an effective syllabus, lesson plans, materials and evaluation instruments, it could give ideas for foreign language teachers and other experts.
2. This model should be taken into account while designing English language curricula and syllabuses since it offers systematic procedures to supplement the needs of learners and to motivate them to get involved in short story writing process.
3. SSCL's (to select authentic short stories) and ASAR (to assess the short stories of the learners) presented a systematic assessment for both texts being read and the ones written by the learners. These instruments could be practical implications of the study and could help teachers and also learners understand all the aspects of a short story profoundly.
4. In-service training or workshops for the foreign language teachers could be useful to discover the lesson plans, materials and evaluation tools based on *Read for Writing* model.

In future investigations it might be possible to use a different text type-for instance, non-fiction, instead of fiction- for the same model.

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