

**EFFECTS OF READING TASKS ON CHINESE
EFL STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION**

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READING COMPREHENSION**

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การศึกษากึ่งทดลองนี้ มุ่งวิจัยค้นหาผลกระทบของกิจกรรมการอ่านที่มีต่อความเข้าใจในการอ่านของนักศึกษาจีนที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ: 1) การอ่านโดยการเขียนสรุป; 2) การอ่านด้วยการเขียนบันทึก; และ 3) การอ่านด้วยการอภิปรายปากเปล่า นอกจากนี้ยังได้ตรวจสอบเจตคติของนักศึกษาที่มีต่อกิจกรรมการอ่าน ผู้เข้าร่วมสำหรับการวิจัยครั้งนี้ได้แก่นักศึกษาจีนวิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษ ชั้นปีที่สาม จำนวน 81 คน ที่ลงทะเบียนเรียนรายวิชาภาษาอังกฤษชั้นสูง ที่ มหาวิทยาลัยกุ้ยโจว ประเทศจีน นักศึกษาทั้งหมดมาจาก 3 กลุ่มหลัก กลุ่มหนึ่งสุ่มกำหนดให้เป็นกลุ่มควบคุม อีกสองกลุ่มที่เหลือแต่ละกลุ่มได้รับการปฏิบัติที่แตกต่างกัน ซึ่งเชื่อมโยงกับการอ่านและการเขียน นักศึกษาที่เข้าร่วมในงานวิจัยได้รับการมอบหมายให้อ่านงาน 11 ชิ้น เป็นเงื่อนไขในการลงทะเบียนเรียนในรายวิชาดังกล่าว ข้อมูลที่ใช้ในการศึกษาวิจัย ได้แก่คะแนนของนักศึกษาในแบบทดสอบความเข้าใจในการอ่าน, ข้อมูลจากผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม 79 คน, ผลสะท้อนกลับที่เป็นลายลักษณ์อักษรของนักศึกษา 238 รายการ และการสัมภาษณ์ตัวต่อตัวแบบกึ่งโครงสร้าง การเปรียบเทียบคะแนนเฉลี่ยแบบตัวแปรพหุระหว่างกลุ่มในแต่ละระดับ แสดงให้เห็นว่า นักศึกษาได้รับประโยชน์เพิ่มขึ้นจากการอ่านงานเขียนสรุปมากกว่าการอ่านด้วยการเขียนบันทึกหรือการอ่านด้วยการอภิปรายปากเปล่า นอกจากนี้งานวิจัยพบว่าชนิดของเนื้อหาที่มีผลกระทบที่แตกต่างกันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญต่อความเข้าใจในการอ่าน และยังพบอีกว่านักศึกษารับเนื้อหาเชิงอธิบายดีกว่าเนื้อหาเชิงเล่าเรื่อง อย่างไรก็ตามผลที่ได้รับแสดงให้เห็นว่าไม่มีความแตกต่างทางด้านเพศภาวะของนักศึกษาอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ ผลการวิเคราะห์ตัวแปรเชิงพหุแสดงให้เห็นผลลัพธ์ที่แตกต่างของกิจกรรมการอ่านเนื้อหาชนิดต่างๆของกลุ่มที่อ่านด้วยการเขียนบันทึกเล่าเรื่อง ผลลัพธ์บ่งบอกว่ากลุ่มที่อ่านการเขียนบันทึกเล่าเรื่องมีเจตคติเชิงบวกมากที่สุด

งานวิจัยนี้เสนอแนะว่าความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างการอ่านกับการเขียนอาจช่วยพัฒนาความเข้าใจในการอ่านของนักศึกษา ผลของการวิจัยมีนัยยะสำหรับการสอนและการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะที่เป็นภาษาต่างประเทศในบริบทจีน วิทยานิพนธ์ได้ให้ข้อเสนอแนะสำหรับการวิจัยเรื่องการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศในอนาคตเช่นกัน

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READING WITH SUMMARY WRITING/READING WITH JOURNAL
WRITING/READING COMPREHENSION

This quasi-experimental study investigated the effects of three reading tasks on Chinese university EFL students' reading comprehension: 1) reading with summary writing; 2) reading with journal writing; and 3) reading with oral discussion. It also examined the students' attitudes towards the reading tasks. The participants for this study were 81 Chinese third-year English major students enrolled in the Advanced English Course at Guizhou University, China. The students were from three intact groups. One group was randomly designated as the control group. Each of the other two groups was assigned a different treatment which connected reading and writing. The subjects were assigned to do 11 reading tasks as one of the course requirements. The data used for the study were the students' scores on a reading comprehension test, written questionnaires with 79 respondents, 238 entries of the student's written feedback on the reading tasks, and semi-structured face-to-face interviews with 18 interviewees.

The comparison of multivariate means between groups at each level showed that the students benefitted more by reading with summary writing than by reading with journal writing or reading with oral discussion. Also, the findings revealed that text types had significantly different effects on reading comprehension and that the

students performed better in expository than in narrative texts. However, the results revealed no significant gender differences. The MANOVA results showed differential effects of the reading tasks across text types in the group of reading with journal writing. Also, the outcomes indicated that the journal writing group had the most positive attitudes.

This research suggests that reading-writing connections may improve students' reading comprehension. The findings have implications for the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language in the Chinese context. The dissertation makes recommendations for future research on EFL reading.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	=	Analysis of Variance
CTT	=	Classical Test Theory
IAS	=	Item Analysis System
MANOVA	=	Multivariate Analysis of Variance
RCT	=	Reading Comprehension Test
RJ	=	Reading with Journal Writing
RO	=	Reading with Oral Discussion
RS	=	Reading with Summary Writing

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to provide a general background of the present study. It starts with the importance of reading in English as a second or foreign language (L2) for university students. After that, a statement of the problem, the purposes of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, and the definitions of key terms, are presented. The chapter concludes with an outline of the dissertation.

1.1 Background of the Study

In the age of globalization, reading in second or foreign language settings continues to have an increasingly important role. The acquisition of reading skills in an L2 is a priority for millions of learners around the world. As Eskey (2005) has pointed out, many EFL students rarely need to speak the language in their day-to-day lives but may need to read it in order to “access the wealth of information” (p. 563), recorded exclusively in English. In fact, the ability to read the written language at a reasonable rate and with good comprehension has been recognized to be as important as oral skills, if not more important (Eskey, 1988).

In a world that demands competency with printed texts, the ability to read in an L2 is one of the most important skills required of people in international settings (Grabe, 2002). In an L2 setting, reading may function as a major source of comprehensible input and thus be a means to the end of acquiring the language. At the

same time, reading is an end itself, as the skill that many serious learners most need to employ. The importance of academic reading has been well recognized by many researchers. Levine, Ferenz, and Reves (2000) stated that the ability to read academic texts is considered one of the most important skills that university students of ESL or EFL need to acquire. Indeed, reading comprehension skill has come to be the “essence of reading” (Durkin, 1993), essential not only to academic learning in all subject areas but also to professional success and, indeed, to lifelong learning (Pritchard, Romeo, & Muller, 1999).

However, due to the complexity inherent in the reading process, reading is also a skill that is one of the most difficult to develop to a high level of proficiency (Grabe, 2002). Many students have difficulty understanding what they read, in particular, comprehending academic texts (Snow, 2002). As Dreyer and Nel (2003) pointed out, many students enter higher education underprepared for the reading demands that are placed upon them.

In China, English is studied as a foreign language (EFL) and, therefore, not used as the everyday means of communication for most people. Many Chinese EFL students rarely speak English in their daily lives. However, in order to get access to the newest information, they may need to read materials recorded in English. In other words, to be able to read in English has particular importance to Chinese university students.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Once EFL students reach upper-level courses, it is often assumed that they are fully proficient speakers, readers, and writers of the foreign language. However, the fact is that very few students meet this assumed standard of proficiency in upper-level

courses, and many students are unable to understand the assigned texts (Redmann, 2005). Blame is sometimes placed on lower-level teachers for their failing to teach the necessary grammar and vocabulary, or on students for their failing to devote the necessary time and efforts to reading. As a matter of fact, what the EFL students often lack is experience with the target language. Therefore, rather than assuming students are proficient in English, upper-grade teachers may devise various tasks to help the students get more experience in the target language and thus become proficient readers. Furthermore, Roe, Smith, and Burns (2005) pointed out tasks for reading become increasingly complex as students advance through grades. Thus, continual attention must be given to the reading tasks assigned to the EFL upper-level students.

According to Alderson (2000), L2 reading could be somewhat slower and less successful than L1 reading because of the levels of readers' proficiency, types of text, text difficulty, and task demands. Research on L2 reading has considered various variables involved in the reading process, and most of this kind of research has consisted of participants from the beginning and intermediate levels of language instruction (e.g. Brantmeier, 2003; Carrell, 1988a; Hudson, 1982; Johnson, 1981; Young & Oxford, 1997; Schueller, 2004). However, little empirical research (e.g. Brantmeier, 2001; Young, 2003) has been done to investigate readers at the advanced levels of language instruction, and it is at this stage of acquisition where more L2 reading research is needed. As researchers attempt to learn more about advanced L2 readers, it has been noticed that students' gender (Brantmeier, 2003; Pae, 2003; Young and Oxford, 1997) and text types (Alderson, 2000; Brantmerer 2005; Grabe, 1988; Olson, 2003; Perfetti, 1997) should be explored.

Meanwhile, the relationship between reading and writing has long been recognized, and it is agreed that reading and writing cannot be separated (Castellani, 2001). Reading and writing interaction has received considerable attention from theorists, researchers and practitioners (Baker & Boonkit, 2004; Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000; Salthouse, 1996; Shannhan, 1988; Tierney & Pearson, 1983). Findings of research in L2 reading and writing echo each other to a large degree. Many researchers point out that successful L2 readers and writers use similar strategies. For example, successful readers and writers do not use strategies hierarchically or linearly, but interactively in reading and recursively in writing (Carrell, 1983a; Zamel, 1992). In contrast, according to Leki (1997), less successful readers and writers seem to do the same thing. They access the text on the page rather than the meaning potential of that text, the forms of the letters and words rather than the overarching connections between them

However, up to now, language skills are still mostly taught as distinct skills, which is a dilemma in L2 reading instruction (Lee, 2008). Additionally, discussions of reading-writing connections focus mainly on writing proficiency (e.g. Kennedy, 1994; Ruiz-Funes, 2001; Tsang, 1996), regarding reading as a springboard to writing tasks and writing improvement. Many researchers assume reading abilities for the students as unproblematic. Nevertheless, it is far from being true with many EFL learners. Low comprehenders have difficulty using writing to make sense of their reading, and this is a serious problem because tasks that require students to write about texts are ubiquitous at all levels of schooling and assessment. Also, research on reading comprehension and research on writing make little mention of validated interventions for helping learners to

develop abilities for writing about text. Therefore, Grabe (2004) suggested that it is essential to give consideration to reading as well as writing in reading-writing research.

Based on the EFL students' problems in reading comprehension on the one hand, and the strong connections between reading and writing on the other hand, one way to improve the students' reading comprehension might be to introduce writing into the reading classroom. This present study was motivated by concerns over difficulties that learners appeared to encounter in EFL reading. It examined the impact of three reading tasks - reading with summary writing, reading with journal writing, and reading with oral discussion - on EFL learners' reading comprehension. It differs from earlier studies of reading-writing relationship, which mainly focused on writing proficiency.

1.3 Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this quasi-experimental study were five-fold:

1. To investigate the effects of the three reading tasks on Chinese EFL students' reading comprehension;
2. To investigate the effects of text types on Chinese EFL students' reading comprehension;
3. To investigate the effects of gender on Chinese EFL students' reading comprehension;
4. To investigate the interactions among the three independent variables, namely, reading tasks, text types, and gender of students; and
5. To examine the students' attitudes towards the three reading tasks.

1.4 Research Questions

The seven research questions below guided the present study.

1. Do the three reading tasks facilitate Chinese EFL students' reading comprehension development?
2. Do the students in the groups of reading-writing connections show greater reading comprehension than those in a group of reading with no writing?
3. Are there any significant effects of text types on Chinese EFL students' reading comprehension?
4. Are there any significant effects of gender on Chinese EFL students' reading comprehension?
5. Are there any significant interactions among the three independent variables?
6. What are Chinese EFL students' attitudes towards the three reading tasks?
7. Which reading tasks are most effective?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Even though there have been many research studies on the roles of summarizing, they have seldom been examined in comparison with journal writing for their effectiveness in supporting reading. This study aimed to fill in the gap and examine the effects of the three tasks - reading with summary writing, reading with journal writing, and reading with oral discussion - on L2 reading comprehension. The primary significance of this study is that it may add new information to L2 research on reading comprehension because no empirical studies have been conducted on the effects of these three reading tasks. Also, the one-term (18 weeks) duration of the study is a long enough time period to give validity to the students' reading comprehension skill.

Second, besides adding information to L2 research on reading comprehension, this quasi-experimental study may improve global insight into the reading-writing relationship by involving two kinds of source-based writing, namely, summary writing and journal writing. Shanahan (1988) noted that combining reading and writing instructionally is complex, and he argued for the need to design experiments that show how to do that most productively.

Third, the research findings could be of great help to identify the relationship between students' reading comprehension and reading tasks, text types, and students' gender. Thus, the research findings can serve as a database for further study about L2 reading comprehension, particularly about the effects of the reading tasks and their interactions with text types and students' gender.

Finally, pedagogically speaking, the findings of this study may have implications for students learning English as a foreign language. Students can improve reading comprehension by applying the effective reading tasks developed from this study.

1.6 Definitions of Terms

The following terms are frequently used in the present study.

Reading Tasks

Reading tasks refer to the activities or work plan that is part of the reading curriculum and teaching. In order to do the reading tasks, learners must employ reading skills and have a clear outcome. They must employ cognitive process to comprehend, manipulate, produce and interact with the text being read. In the case of the current

study, reading tasks refer to reading with summary writing, reading with journal writing, and reading with oral discussion.

Reading with Summary Writing

Reading with summary writing is one type of reading task in this study. After the students have finished reading a text, they are required to write a summary. They have to identify the main idea, delete irrelevant information, generalize redundant information, and then reorganize their ideas. In summary writing, only the gist of a text is required.

Reading with Journal Writing

Reading with journal writing is another type of reading task in this study. Students are required to write a journal in English after they have finished reading a text. Journal writing is a way for students to document their learning and collect information which is related to their reading. It is basically a free form and students have the freedom to express their own understanding, their questions and concerns, to reflect on their learning processing, or to write about other reading-related themes and concerns.

Reading with Oral Discussion

Reading with oral discussion is the third type of reading task in this study. After reading a text, the students are not required to write, but orally discuss the comprehension questions.

Students' Written Feedback

Students' written feedback in this research context refers to the report written by the students after they have finished their respective tasks. In their written feedback, the students mainly discuss their attitudes and perceptions of the tasks they have completed.

Text Types

Text types in the context of this study refer to the narrative and expository texts. A narrative text is written to express either a true or fictional story. They may take the form of a travel story, autobiography, fairy tale, etc. A narrative text may contain the following elements: characters, setting, plot, and theme (Spafford, Pesce, & Grooser, 1998). An expository text is written to present factual information or ideas. This type of text is referred to as content area texts, which includes social studies, mathematics or science (Spafford *et al.*, 1998). An expository text may have the following structures: cause-effect, comparison-contrast, description, problem-solution and sequence (Harris & Hodges, 1995).

1.7 Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into six chapters. Chapter One provides an overview of the study, including background of the study, statement of the problem, the purposes and research questions, the significance of the study, and definitions of key terms.

To answer the research questions, the researcher has reviewed the related theories and previous research studies in the field. This is developed in Chapter Two and includes an exclusive literature review on L2 reading, reading-writing connections, and writing from sources.

Chapter Three provides an overview of the methodological design of the study, including the description of the participants, the variables, the data collection instruments, and data analysis methods, as well as the rationale behind the selection of

data collection procedures. Also, it reports the results of the pilot study and describes the main study.

Chapter Four presents the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the data elicited through the pretest and posttest, the students' written feedback, the questionnaires, and the interviews with the students.

Chapter Five discusses the results of the research findings of the present study.

Chapter Six summarizes the main findings of the present study in response to the research questions, establishing the pedagogical implications of such results and their limitations. Some suggestions for further research in the field are outlined at the end of this chapter.

1.8 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher has given a description of the background of the study in order to put it in context. The statement of the problem, the research purposes and questions, the significance of the study, and the terms frequently used in the study were briefly discussed. An outline of this study was given in the final part of the chapter. In the next chapter, a review of the theories and research on L2 reading, L2 writing, and reading-writing connections will be presented.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter offers a review of the literature related to the present study. The literature review is in four sections. First, it discusses the nature and purposes of reading, theories in L2 reading, L2 reading processing and issues in L2 reading. The second section describes bases and principles of reading-writing connections, and related research works. In the third section, two types of writing from sources - summary writing and journal writing - are dealt with. Finally, the theoretical framework for the study is summarized.

2.1 Second/Foreign Language Reading

Different people use the term “reading” in different ways. However, no one single definition tells the complexity inherent in the ability to read (Grabe, 2002). According to McNeil (1992), reading comprehension is making sense out of texts. Although writers structure texts for their given purposes, readers interpret what they read in order to arrive at their own construction of what the text means to them. Heilman, Blair, and Rupley (1998) defined reading as the active process of constructing meaning from written text in relation to the experiences and knowledge of the reader. Grabe (2002) suggested the following five abilities should be seen as definitional for reading: a rapid and automatic process, an interacting process, a flexible and strategic process, a purposeful process, and a linguistic process. As far as reading comprehension is concerned, Grabe (2004) suggested that it “implies processing efficiency, language

knowledge, strategic awareness, extensive practice in reading, cognitive resources in working memory to allow critical reflection, and appropriate purposes for reading” (Grabe, 2004, p. 19).

Reading is an internal, mental process that cannot be observed or studied directly. Many investigators relate reading to thinking and argue that the two are inseparable in understanding printed language. According to Thorndike (1917, as cited in Heilman *et al.*, 1998), reading involves the same sort of organization and analysis as does thinking, which includes learning, reflection, judgment, analysis, synthesis, problem-solving, selection, inference, etc. The act of recognizing words requires interpretation of graphic symbols. In order to understand a reading selection thoroughly, a reader must be able to use the information to make inferences and read critically and creatively, which means understanding the figurative language, determining the author’s purpose, evaluating the ideas presented and applying those ideas to actual situations (Roe, Smith & Burns, 2005). Grabe (2002) added that the level of comprehension of the text is influenced by how successfully the readers (their preexisting knowledge of the text, their interest in it, their purpose of reading it, etc.) interact with the text (the text type, the vocabulary, the grammar, etc.), and that the reading process engages the readers a series of stages: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading.

Nature of Reading

Reading is such a complicated process that researchers have found it impossible to identify its overall features (Alderson, 2000). Nevertheless, there are some characteristics which have been commonly recognized. First, there is an interaction between a reader and the text during the process of reading. While reading, the reader thinks about what the text means to him, how he understands it or how the text is useful,

entertaining, boring to him. Consequently, as Alderson (2000) pointed out, the reading process may be dynamic and variable. Different readings of the same text vary, not just from reader to reader but from reading to reading by the same reader, depending on how each reading configured within the reader's experience (Smagorinsky, Cook, & Reed, 2005). Second, there are different levels of understanding of a text. Gray (1960, as cited in Alderson, 2000, p. 8) suggested that "reading for inferred meanings is deeper than it is for literal meaning." At the same time, reading for critical evaluation of a text is even more highly valued than literal understanding. In other words, the levels of understanding vary from one to another in a hierarchical way.

Purposes of Reading

The nature of reading decides that understanding of a text varies from reader to reader and that people may have different purposes for reading. Grabe and Stoller (2002) classified the reading purposes as follows:

1) reading to get general understanding which is the most basic purpose for reading; 2) reading to search for information when a reader scans the text for some specific information and skims for a general idea; 3) reading to learn when a reader needs to learn a considerable amount of information from a text; and 4) reading to integrate information when a reader evaluates, composes, selects and critiques information being read (p. 11).

Different purposes for reading determine that one text may be read in a variety of styles. Purposes 3 and 4 are typical in academic reading. Different from reading a novel, a short story or a newspaper article, academic reading needs the readers to synthesize information from multiple reading sources, from different parts of a long and complex text, or from a prose text and accompanying diagram or chart.

Reading Tasks

In second language acquisition research, there is no single definition for “task.” This is because the study of tasks has been approached from different perspectives and for different purposes. As Bygate, Skehan and Swain (2000) pointed out, definitions of “tasks” are generally “context-free,” which may lead to the fact that tasks are viewed differently depending on the different perspectives. Some researchers define tasks in terms of their usefulness for collecting data and eliciting samples of learners’ language for research purposes. Examples are Bialystok (1990) and Pica (1991) who both defined tasks as a way to meet criteria for information control, information flow and goals of the study.

Some other researchers look at tasks from a purely classroom interaction point of view. For example, tasks are viewed as products (Horowitz, 1986) or “real academic assignments” situated in a disciplinary context (Swales, 1990). Crookes (1986) defined a task as “a piece of work or activity, usually of a specified objective, undertaken as part of an educational course or at work” (p. 1). Willis (1996) defined a classroom task as “a goal-oriented activity in which learners use language to achieve a real outcome” (p. 53). Nunan (1989) regarded tasks as classroom work which “involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form” (p. 10).

The third type of definition is from the perspectives of both the classroom and of research. Skehan (1996) viewed classroom and L2 research tasks as activities which have meaning as their primary focus and generally bear some resemblance to real-life language use, and success on the task is evaluated in terms of achievement of an outcome. Ellis’s (2003, p. 9-10) definition includes all the above-mentioned aspects

listed by Skehan. Besides, Ellis mentions “a workplan for learner activity,” which “requires learners to employ cognitive processes,” and “can involve any of the four language skills.” Based on the different definitions of “tasks” and the purpose of the present study, which was to examine how writing could be used to improve students’ reading comprehension, the researcher defines tasks from the perspective of classroom interaction. Reading tasks in this study refer to the activities or work plan involved in the reading classroom.

2.1.1 Theories in L2 Reading

Considerable advances have been made in understanding the nature of L2 reading, and these changes have influenced how L2 reading has been taught, learned, and assessed. Up to now, a lot of theoretical issues related to L2 reading have been discussed. Two of them are discussed in this section: the Process Approach and Schema Theory.

Process Approach

In essence, theories of reading comprehension have experienced a change from focusing on product to process. Reading was once thought to be a passive process, where readers’ only purpose was to decode the text in order to figure it out correctly, which was supposed to consist of a hierarchical list of word-identification and comprehension skills that would enable one to comprehend what one was reading (Heilman *et al.*, 1998). And, reading meant getting the writer’s intended message as much as possible (Nuttall, 1996).

In contrast with the older emphasis on teaching reading comprehension as a product, process approach regards successful reading comprehension as a complete

grasp of meaning in a written text in which a dynamic and growing appreciation of interrelationships in the text is required (Yang, 2000). McNeil (1992) claimed four assumptions underlying the process approach as follows. 1) What students already know affects what they will learn from reading. 2) Both data-driven and concept-driven processes are necessary in comprehending text. A data-driven process is a “bottom-up” strategy and calls for activating schemata and applying them when setting expectations for reading, and it calls for filling gaps in one’s schemata with information read in the text. A concept-driven process is a “top-down” strategy in which the reader’s goals and expectations determine what is read. 3) The deeper a person processes text, the more he or she will remember and understand it. The deeper-processing of text relies on two strategies, which are elaboration and the use of the author’s organizational framework. And, 4) the context in which reading occurs influences what will be recalled. The reading context, including the reader’s purpose and perspective, affects the readers’ judgment about the importance of text elements as they are counted.

Schema Theory

Another theory concerning how people read is Schema Theory. Harris and Hodges (1995) defined Schema Theory as “a view that comprehension depends on integrating new knowledge with a network of prior knowledge” (p. 227). A central component of this theory relates to the interrelated and interdependent relationship between text comprehension and the reader’s background knowledge. Schema Theory regards reading as an active event in which prior knowledge is relevant to what is read. It necessarily includes reader’s prior knowledge to bear upon what is being read (Reid, 1993). According to this theory, a reader uses his/her prior knowledge to enter into a

transaction with the text that leads to an understanding and interpretation unique to him/her.

According to Schema Theory, each individual has different internal representations for the subject matter of a text. Carrell (1983) distinguished three different dimensions of schemata: *linguistic* (language knowledge), *content* (knowledge of the topic), and *formal* (previous knowledge of the rhetorical structures of different types of texts). He contended that each of these dimensions plays a role in the interaction among the text and the reader and that when one or all are missing, reading can be problematic.

Similarly, McNeil (1992) recognized three kinds of schemata related to reading comprehension: *domain*, *general world knowledge* and *knowledge of rhetorical structures*. According to McNeil, *domain schemata* refer to the knowledge of specific topics, concepts, or processes for reading specific subject matter. *General world knowledge* is the schema related to understanding social relationships, causes, and activities common to many situations and domains. Finally, *schemata about rhetorical structures* is the knowledge of the conventions for organizing and signaling the organization of texts, for example, knowledge of expository text may reduce the difficulty in reading texts of this kind. When it comes to being successful in teaching reading, McNeil (1992) pointed out that two types of activities are related. One is the teaching of organizational patterns of texts or rhetorical structures. The other is intervention aimed at developing and activating a schema that relates to a particular text. Closely related to Schema Theory is the idea that reading and writing are integrally related, which will be discussed in the review of reading-writing connections (see Section 2.2).

2.1.2 L2 Reading Processing

Reading is dynamic, requiring active, meaningful communication between the author and the reader (Heilman *et al.*, 1998). Fluent reading requires efficient cognitive processing by the reader. In the history of research on reading comprehension, there have been three processing recognized: *bottom-up*, *top-down*, and *interactive processing* (McNeil, 1992).

Bottom-up Processing

In bottom-up reading processing, readers are assumed to decode precisely from letters into words, from words into larger grammatical units and finally to the understanding of the text. Readers recognize letters, words, sentences, and text structure. In this view, reading is initiated by examining the printed symbols and requires little input from the reader (Walberg *et al.*, 1981, as cited in Roe *et al.*, 2005). In bottom-up models, reading comprehension is achieved through accurate and sequential processing of text and comprehension is regarded as text driven and controlled by the text only (Gove, 1983).

Top-down Processing

Different from decoding in precise or sequential fashion in bottom-up processing, top-down processing requires readers to attack the text with expectations of meaning developed before and during the processes, making use of the text information when they need to confirm and extend their expectations (Eskey, 2005). In top-down processing, the act of reading begins with the reader generating hypotheses or predictions about the material, using visual cues in the material to test these hypotheses as necessary (Walberg *et al.*, 1981, as cited in Roe *et al.*, 2005). According to top-down proponents, prior knowledge plays a vital role in reading.

Interactive Processing

However, as Eskey (1988) indicated, the negligence of learners' weak linguistic procession skills leads to "a strongly top-down bias" (p. 95) in L2 reading pedagogy. Eskey (1988) further explained that L2 readers are fundamentally different from L1 readers in that L2 readers need to master essential "knowledge of the language of the text" (p. 96) before they can successfully process the L2 reading schema. Some researchers (Baker & Boonkit, 2004; Koda, 2005; Paran 1996) argued that strictly top-down models cannot fully account for the results of much empirical research and, therefore, they proposed that reading is an interactive, top-town and bottom-up, process.

According to the interactive model of reading, the information-processing system in reading consists of different levels of processing that operate in a parallel manner. It depicts reading as a combination of top-down and bottom-up processing in continuous interaction (Roe *et al.*, 2005). This view assumes that students are simultaneously processing information from the text being read and information from their background knowledge. The readers form the meaning of the text through interaction of a variety of their mental processes to work at different levels such as using the bottom-up process to identify the meaning and grammatical category of word, sentence syntax, and text details (Aebersold & Field, 1997). At the same time that the data-driven processing level is doing visual analysis, the syntactic and semantic processing systems are operating to generate hypotheses about the interpretation of the visual information coming from visual analyses (Nassaji, 2003). Readers simultaneously decode texts and encode them through their instantiation of interpretive conventions, experiential images, and other conventional and personal knowledge (Smagorinsky *et al.*, 2005). Ruddel and Unrau considered a wider range of potential

interactions by asserting that “meaning is not entirely in either the text or the reader but is created as a result of the interactions among reader, text, teacher and classroom community” (as cited in Roe *et al.*, 2005, p. 1032).

Further, reading is an interactive process and is more than merely getting the author’s ideas because both the reader and the writer depend on one another (Nuttall, 1996). The reader must prepare a text for himself or herself in order to be a thoughtful reader. The cognitive process of reading comprehension involves constructing meaning from a text, and this meaning may or may not be what the author intended (Brantmeier, 2001). As Hammadou (1991) claimed, L2 reading comprehension is a complex process that not only entails understanding words, sentences, paragraphs, texts, but also entails “building a model within the mind of the comprehender” (p. 27).

It can be seen from the above review of L2 reading processing that reading is more than active. Reading is a dynamic interaction between the writer and the reader. The reader creates meaning for the text by “retaining newly acquired knowledge, accessing recorded and stored knowledge and attending to the writer’s clues as to the meaning intended for the text” (Cohen, 1990, p. 75). In short, reading calls for the reader’s active interaction with the text being read.

2.1.3 Issues in L2 Reading

Having complexity inherent in its process, L2 reading has been discussed from many perspectives. This part discusses L2 reading from the perspectives of metacognition, text types and gender.

Metacognition and L2 Reading

Metacognition refers to the ability to reflect on one's thinking. It also includes "the ability to manage one's learning actions" (McNeil, 1992). Metacognitive knowledge or awareness is the specialized portion of a learner's acquired knowledge base which consists of what learners know about learning, and to the extent a learner has made distinctions in language learning (Wenden, 1998). As Ruiz-Funes (2001a) noted, metacognitive knowledge is important if students want to be able to take control of their own thinking and become self-directed thinkers.

Schoonen, Hulstijn and Bossers (1998) defined metacognitive knowledge in the context of reading as readers' assessment of themselves and their knowledge and control of strategies for processing and learning from text, in relation to both the complexity of the task at hand and the goals and plans that guide the reading process. Similarly, Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001) regarded metacognitive knowledge in reading as the knowledge of the readers' cognition relative to the reading process and the self-control mechanisms they use to monitor and enhance comprehension.

McNeil (1992) defined three interrelated metacognitive processes that relate to reading: *self-knowledge*, *task knowledge* and *self-monitoring*. Apart from McNeil's three processes, metacognitive knowledge has been classified into *self-knowledge*, *task knowledge* and *strategic knowledge* by some researchers (Anderson, 2002; Dhieb-Henia, 2003; Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001). The above-mentioned classifications of metacognitive knowledge are similar. First, *self-knowledge* and *task knowledge* are shared by both classifications. Second, even though different in wording, *self-monitoring* and *strategic knowledge* both refer to the ability of being aware of

understanding, and knowing what to do to facilitate the acquisition and utilization of knowledge; thus, they are both associated with good reading.

A number of studies have indicated that metacognition plays an important role in helping students plan and monitor their comprehension while reading. Examples are Muniz-Swicegood (1994), Li and Munby (1996), Schoonen *et al.* (1998), Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001), and Vandergrift (2005). In essence, successful readers seem to use more metacognitive strategies than less successful readers and also appear to use them more frequently. Better readers also have an enhanced metacognitive awareness of their own use of strategies and what they know, which in turn leads to greater reading ability and proficiency.

Text Types and L2 Reading

The types of texts have been claimed by many researchers to be one variable that needs to be explored in L2 reading. Examples are Alderson (2000), Brantmerer (2005), Grabe (1988), Olson (2003) and Perfetti (1997). In order to help students have rich opportunities to get access to different kinds of texts, Olson (2003) suggested teachers provide students with opportunities to read and write a variety of styles. Similarly, Hinkel (2006) suggested that teachers select readings from a wide array of genres, such as narrative, exposition or argumentation. There are two reasons for this. First, based on the text being read, practice in text analysis can become a useful springboard for an instructional focus on the specific uses of grammar structures and contextualized vocabulary. Second, instruction can address the features of written register by bringing learners' attention to the situational variables of language in context.

According to Alderson (2000), narrative and expository texts may be the two text types that attract researchers' attention because these two types are found to be most

different from each other. Narration frequently uses description, while exposition often incorporates aspects of all writing domains. Narrative writing requires readers to focus on events and to arrange the parts in a time or order frame. To understand a narrative text, students must learn about ordering, beginning and ending, transition and balance, and suspense and climax. While reading an expository text, readers must be able to understand analysis, organization and development, find logical argument, evidence and sometimes figurative language.

Grabe (1988) asserted that an important part of the reading process is the ability to recognize text genres and various distinct text types. In a study that examined text types (stories and essays) and comprehension, Horiba (2000) reported that non-native readers are affected by text types. Perfetti (1997) proposed that depending on the types of texts used and the types of tasks performed, readers may develop a complex integration of information that can be learned.

Carrell and Connor (1991) conducted a study to determine the relationships of intermediate-level ESL students' reading and writing of both persuasive and descriptive texts. Twenty-three undergraduate and 10 graduate ESL students were asked to do four tasks in four separate class periods over a 2-week period. The results indicated that genre has complex effects on L2 reading and writing, and that descriptive texts are easier than persuasive texts for reading. And, Carrell and Connor noted that complex interaction of genre and language proficiency appears in reading performance. Higher language proficiency may aid question-answering for more difficult persuasive texts but does not significantly affect the question- answering for easier descriptive ones.

More recently, Sharp (2004) conducted an experimental study with 490 Hong Kong secondary students learning English as a second language in order to assess if

rhetorical organization affects reading comprehension. Four rhetorically different texts were used, namely, *description*, *cause-effect*, *listing* and *problem-solving*. The students were given eight minutes for reading and five minutes for answering questionnaire questions. After that, the students were given 10 minutes for writing a recall. In the end, they were required to do a cloze test for another 10 minutes. The results of one-way ANOVA showed that the test measures differed in the results they produced. At the same time, cloze testing showed significant differences between the four texts, the results of recall protocols indicated no significant difference between the text types. Sharp explained this phenomenon is due to the education system in Hong Kong, where memory-related tasks are traditionally emphasized. While taking the recall test, the students may have used memorizing strategy, which contributed to their higher score in the recall test.

Recently, Brantmerer (2005) investigated the effects of reader's knowledge, text types and test types on L1 and L2 reading comprehension in Spanish. Four reading passages, including two topics, two versions each with one in Spanish and one in English, one with analogies and one without, were applied as the instrument. The assessment tasks included multiple-choice tests, recall protocol and sentence completion. Analysis of covariance was used to analyze the data. The results showed that the addition of analogies in texts did not aid L1 and L2 reading comprehension when measured by recall, sentence completion, and multiple-choice tests. However, there was a significant effect of subject knowledge on comprehension.

In short, it could be seen from the above-mentioned research studies that L2 readers are influenced by different text types, and more related research is advisable.

Gender and L2 Reading

According to Alderson (2000), gender is a variable in L2 reading which deserves more attention. However, only a small number of L2 reading studies have been conducted in this regard and the findings reported in these studies are inconsistent (Brantmeier, 2002, 2003, 2004; Bugel & Buunk, 1996; Pae 2003; Young & Oxford, 1997).

Bugel and Buunk (1996) examined gender differences in L2 reading comprehension. The subjects were 2980 high-school students. It was revealed that males scored significantly better on the multiple-choice tests for essays about laser thermometers, volcanoes, cars, and football players. Females achieved significantly higher scores on the comprehension tests for essays on text topics such as midwives, a sad story, and a housewife's dilemma. Bugel and Buunk concluded that the topic of a text is an important factor in explaining gender-based differences in second language reading comprehension.

Young and Oxford (1997) conducted a study with native English speaking students learning Spanish as a second language. However, they found no significant differences by gender as measured by recall tests.

In a rather different context, Brantmeier (2003) reported significant interactions between readers' gender and gender-oriented passage content with comprehension among intermediate second language learners of Spanish at the university level. Results indicated a significant gender difference with comprehension assessed via multiple-choice test as well as written recall. Males scored higher when the topic was boxing, and females outperformed when the topic was a frustrated housewife. Self-reported topic familiarity ratings were also found significant by gender and text

topic. This study provided evidence that readers' gender and passage content interact in ways that affect second language reading comprehension. Brantmeier suggested that at the intermediate level it may not be linguistic factors (the Spanish language) that impede second language comprehension but rather the unfamiliar content of the text. She indicated that reading performance, as measured by recall task, was significantly influenced by passage content and readers' gender, whereas enjoyment and interest mattered little.

Previously, Brantmeier (2002) utilized the same passages and comprehension assessment tasks with two groups of students from advanced university grammar and literature courses. The results indicated that while significant differences in topic familiarity are maintained across instruction levels, the effects of passage content on L2 reading comprehension by gender are not maintained when the intermediate level text is read by more advanced learners. Brantmeier concluded that the readers' gender is a variable that may affect second language reading comprehension.

Brantmeier (2004) conducted an inquiry examining the topic familiarity levels and comprehension of university level male and female second language (L2) readers. All subjects were asked to read two passages and complete a written recall task, a multiple-choice test, and a questionnaire. The reading text was counterbalanced according to passage content and reader's gender. The results revealed no significant gender differences in reported topic familiarity levels. However, females recalled significantly more idea units and scored higher on the multiple-choice test than the males. The results showed that while male and female readers at the advanced levels of instruction indicated being equally familiar with the topic, and females outscored their

male counterparts on L2 comprehension tasks. The overall findings indicated that females may have an advantage over males in the free written recall procedure.

In a study by Pae (2003), the effects of gender on English reading comprehension for Korean EFL learners were examined. The English Reading Comprehension Test consisted of 38 items. The results indicated that items related to mood, impression, and tone tended to be easier for females, whereas items about logical inference were more likely to favor males. Pae suggested that females tended to perform better than males on items with more contextual information.

In conclusion, the integration of skill building and knowledge acquisition requires that foreign language reading plays a vital role at all levels, from the beginning, through the intermediate to the advanced. Reading is by no means a passive activity or a single-factor process. It is a multivariate skill involving a complex combination and integration of a variety of cognitive, linguistic, and nonlinguistic skills ranging from basic low-level processing abilities to high-level knowledge of text representation and the integration of ideas with the reader's global knowledge.

2.2 Reading-Writing Connections

Integrated skills learning refers to learning of more than one language skills within the same context or time frame so that these skills reinforce and augment learners' attainment in each of the skills (Lee, 2008). In academia, the strong connections between reading and writing skills are undeniable. Wilson (2008) indicated that the profile of integrated learning has never been higher as educators see the links between such skills as reading and writing. As Nuttach (1996) pointed out, reading and writing are so closely associated that it is natural for them to support each other.

According to Shanklin (1982), writing is a process of “interactive and dynamic activation, instantiation and refinement of schemata” (p. 89). The same as reading, writing is a complex, multifaceted processing. It requires extensive practice and assistance with tasks across various genres, and consistent exposure to a wide range of texts and tasks (Grabe, 2004). Much like reading, writing calls for efficient cognitive processes, such as planning, organizing, comprehending, integrating, and critiquing.

Depending on readers’ and writers’ goals, intentions and circumstances, the reading-writing relationship is understood as negotiation (Tierney & Shanahan, 1990). In essence, writing is an activity that is informed by reading, whereas it influences reading as learners become more proficient in their language use (Jabbour, 2004).

2.2.1 Bases of Reading-Writing Connections

Researchers on reading and writing connections have increasingly discussed writing and reading as analogous and parallel cognitive processes. Nystrand (1990) regarded reading and writing as processes of constructing meaning from and with the texts, which result in and are thus guided by internal representations of text. Some researchers (Laine, 2003; Spivey, 1990) have indicated that writers construct meaning when they compose texts. Similarly, readers construct meaning when they understand and interpret texts. Reid (1993) indicated that both reading and writing are multifaceted, complex, interactive processes that involve many subskills and that they both depend on individual past experiences. In addition to transactions between author or reader and text, both reading and writing are mediated by a range of interrelated cultural factors (Smagorinsky *et al.*, 2005).

Carson (1993) believed that the connections between reading and writing are complex. As early as in 1967, Goodman claimed reading-writing connections from the perspective of psycholinguistics. He said that reading was a “psycholinguistic game.” He asserted that readers predict meaning from what they have already known, already read and then confirm their guesses as they reform “a message which has been encoded by a writer” (p. 37). Similarly, Reid (1993) recognized the complexity of reading-writing connections by claiming that reading can be a natural part of the writing process as writers become the readers of their own writing. In Reid’s (1993) view, the writer actively discovers and constructs meaning, interpreting and re-interpreting information for the reader, while the reader reconstructs and rediscovers the meaning by actively bringing their world knowledge and experience to the text. Leki and Carson (1993) reflected another perspective of the reading-writing connections when they noted that reading and writing share common social aspects and that the text is where a specific reader and writer meet. They asserted that readers and the texts belong to a given discourse community which helps readers to negotiate meaning mediated by text.

Some researchers have investigated the bases of relationship between reading and writing. According to Grabe (2004), the overlap of reading and writing processes and abilities is not simply a matter of conventional recognition of “two sides of literacy.” Nevertheless, reading starts by recognizing the signs on paper and ends with an interpretation in the reader’s mind. Writing, on the other hand, starts by encoding meanings and ends in polishing the writing on paper for discourse structure, text organization, and language mechanics (Jabbour, 2004). Table 2.1 below is an overview of the bases of reading-writing connections.

Table 2.1 Bases of Reading -Writing Connections

Researcher	Sources of Reading-Writing Connection
Tierney and Pearson (1983)	5 similar processes: <i>planning, drafting, aligning, revision and monitoring</i>
Kucser (1987)	4 similar emphases: <i>background knowledge; a common data pool of written language; similar transformation processes; common processing patterns</i>
Shanahan (1988)	6 similar engagement of reader and writer: <i>constructing meaning; going back in a recursive process; interacting and negotiating; employing common cognitive strategies; using skills automatically; being motivated and self-confident.</i>
Tierney and Shanahan (1991)	3 general categories: <i>knowledge and processing; variance between 25 to 49 percent; reading leads to better learning</i>
Olson (2003)	7 similar strategies: <i>planning and goal setting, tapping prior knowledge; asking questions and making predictions; constructing the gist; monitoring; revising meaning; reflecting and relating; evaluating.</i>

In Tierney and Pearson's (1983) view, readers and writers employ similar processes to create meaning. Readers bring their own schemata to reading as they use the writers' cues to understand the writers' potential meaning and create their own understanding from the text. Much like readers, writers use their background knowledge to generate ideas, put these ideas in a form that they accept, and in a form that may match the readers' needs. According to Tierney and Pearson (1983), reading and writing share the processes of *planning, drafting, aligning, revising and monitoring*. Both readers and writers plan and set purposes for their reading or writing tasks. Similarly, both readers and writers draft when they reconstruct the meaning while rereading or rewriting. Furthermore, readers and writers align themselves with the author and the audience, respectively. Alignment is necessary for the reader and the writer to establish a foundation of negotiation. Revising interplays between reading and writing, although it does not apply to reading as explicitly as to writing. Much like writers reread, reshape, and reconsider their writing, readers reread and rethink; they approach the text from

different perspectives as times passes. Furthermore, Tierney and Pearson argued that monitoring is an integral part of both reading and writing, which enables readers and writers to understand each other.

Many researchers have claimed that common generative cognitive processes are involved in meaning construction in both reading and writing. Kucser (1987) proposed four potential key cognitive mechanisms for reading and writing: both emphasize background knowledge; both draw on a common data pool of written language; both utilize similar transformation processes of background knowledge into text; and both employ common processing patterns in text production as individuals read and write.

Shanahan (1988) came up with six common characteristics that experienced readers and writers share. According to Shanahan, both readers and writers are actively engaged in constructing meaning from and with texts; go back to go forward in a recursive process; interact and negotiate with each other; employ common cognitive strategies; use skills automatically; and are motivated and self-confident.

Tierney and Shanahan (1991, p. 272) suggested three general categories underlying the reading-writing connections as follows. 1) Reading and writing share knowledge and processing. They assumed that knowledge that improves reading is likely to improve writing. They also assumed that the processes readers use to comprehend text are most likely similar to the processes writers use to compose text. 2) Reading is a transaction among readers, writers, and texts. Readers and writers are engaged in a distanced dialogue. Tierney and Shanahan summarized the previous studies on reading-writing connections and claimed that these two modalities seem to

correlate at 0.5 to 0.7, meaning that reading and writing may share variance between 25 to 49 percent. 3) Reading as a collaborative activity is believed to lead to better learning.

Olson (2003) proposed three foundations of strategic reading and writing: *declarative, procedural* and *condition knowledge*. According to Olson, in order to construct meaning from or with texts, readers or writers need to deliberately access cognitive strategies and become familiar with these strategies. In other words, declarative knowledge is a must for experienced readers and writers. Second, successful readers and writers need to know how to have procedural knowledge so as to apply these strategies. Finally, both readers and writers need to have conditional knowledge, which is the knowledge of when to apply strategies and why they are effective. Also, Olson (2003) argued that readers and writers employ seven similar strategies to create meaning.

- 1) Readers and writers develop two kinds of plans: procedural plans and substantive plans. Procedural plans are content-free regarding how to accomplish a task. In contrast, substantive plans are content-based plans that focus more directly on the specific topic at hand.
- 2) Readers and writers activate their existing schemata to make sense of information from or for a text.
- 3) Readers and writers ask questions in order to make predictions throughout the reading/writing process, thus deriving meaning from the text.
- 4) Readers and writers construct the gist when they create “the initial envisionment” (p. 10).
- 5) In both reading and writing, the monitor, which is a metacognitive process, directs the readers’ or writers’ cognitive process as they are striving to derive meaning.
- 6) Both readers and writers stop and backtrack, reread bits of text in order to revise meaning and reconstruct the draft. After readers and writers finish reading or writing, they reflect on the significance of their growing understandings to their own lives. And,

7) experienced readers and writers evaluate either the process or product of their reading or writing, or both.

In addition to the bases of reading-writing connections, researchers have addressed the ways to connect reading and writing from various perspectives. Reid (1993) proposed three reading-writing connections. First, reading and writing skills are cognitively similar in that both writer and reader construct meaning from text and interpret meaning from text. Second, both reading and writing are multifaceted, complex, and interactive processes that involve many subskills, and both depend on individual past experience. Third, “both reading and writing are interactive, recursive processes in which background knowledge plays an integral part, both activate schemata about the language, content, and form of the text, and both lead to the exploration of those schemata in discovering meaning” (Reid, 1993, p. 64).

Grabe (2001, p. 15) addressed five reading-writing interactions: “reading to learn, writing to learn, reading to improve writing, writing to improve reading, and reading and writing together for better learning.” He noted that any theory of reading and writing work together in support of each other.

Eisterhold (1990) proposed three hypotheses on the relationship of reading and writing. The first hypothesis is that the reading-writing relationship is *directional*. Because reading and writing share “structural components,” whatever acquired in one modality may be applied in the other. For example, the ability to recognize rhetorical structure in reading implies the ability to produce similar structure in writing. Based on this reading-to-writing model, the transfer of information proceeds in one direction only. Second, from a *non-directional* perspective, reading and writing derive from a “single underlying proficiency” (Eisterhold, 1990). This model is based on the assumption that

both reading and writing are “processes of interactive and dynamic activation, instantiation and refinement of schemata whereby increased knowledge in one would lead to increased ability in the other,” and, a common underlying link that makes this relationship is that reading and writing share “cognitive process of constructing meaning” (Shanahan, 1984, as cited in Esmaceli, 2002, p. 90). The third hypothesis is the most complex model because it views reading and writing as bidirectional, interactive and interdependent. Based on this model, there are multiple relations between reading and writing, and that might change as learners’ language ability develops. In other words, what is learned at one stage can be different from what is learned at another stage.

In summary, the above review of the bases of reading-writing connections shows that the reading and writing processes share many similarities. The part that follows will review the related research studies on L2 reading-writing connections.

2.2.2 Principles of Reading-Writing Connections

Reading-writing connections have been explored by a number of linguists (Carson, 2004; Esmaceli, 2002; Flower, 1990; Langer & Applebee, 1987; Liu, 2000; Many *et al.*, 1996; Smagorinsky *et al.*, 2005; Spivey, 1990). Hinkel (2006, p. 109) called for integrated teaching of multiple language skills, in this case, reading and writing instruction. Further, Shanahan (1988) identified seven instructional principles for relating reading and writing skills.

1. Teachers provide daily opportunities for students to read literature and write in response to their reading;
2. Teachers provide opportunities for students to read and write for genuine purposes;

3. Teachers understand that student reading and writing reflect the developmental nature of the reading and writing relationship;
4. Teachers make the reading-writing connection explicit to students by providing opportunities for them to share their writing with classmates;
5. Teachers emphasize that the quality of reading and writing products students produce depends on the processes that they have used;
6. Teachers emphasize the communicative functions of reading and writing and involve students in reading and writing for genuine communication purposes; and
7. Teachers teach reading and writing in meaningful contexts.

It is noticed that Shanahan's principles are primarily about the adequate tasks that connect reading and writing together, explicit explanation of the reading-writing connections, the genuine purposes and communicative functions of the tasks, and the meaningful contexts of reading-writing connections in reading instruction.

2.2.3 Research on L2 Reading-Writing Connections

Since readers and writers employ similar cognitive strategies when they derive meaning from and with texts, the reading and writing combination may contribute to better language proficiency (Olson, 2003). To date, a number of researchers (Carson, 2004; Esmaili, 2002; Flower, 1990; Langer and Applebee, 1987; Liu, 2000; Many, Fyfe, Lewis, and Mitchell, 1996; Smagorinsky *et al.*, 2005; Spivey, 1990) have explored the ways that reading and writing are integrated. Studies conducted on the reading-writing connections can be divided into three major categories: studies that examine the impact of reading on writing, studies that examine correlations between reading and writing, and studies that examine different perspectives on the reading-writing relationship or explain its theoretical bases.

Carson, Carrell, Silberstein, Kroll, and Kuehn (1990) conducted a study to examine the first language and second language reading and writing abilities of adult ESL learners. The 105 (57 Japanese and 48 Chinese) ESL students were asked to write an essay and to complete a cloze passage in both their first and second languages. The results indicated that reading ability transferred more easily from L1 to L2 than did writing ability, and that the relationship between reading and writing skills varied for the two language groups. For the Chinese group, L1 reading-writing relationship may be accounted for by differences in L1 educational experience. However, for the Japanese group, the L1 reading-writing relationship remained even when L1 education was taken into consideration. Meanwhile, the Chinese group showed a stronger correlation between L2 reading and writing abilities than did the Japanese group.

In a study of advanced-level ESL students, Kennedy (1994) investigated the effects of topic on the reading-writing connections. Thirty-one advanced ESL students were divided into three groups, Group A, Group B, and Group C. During the 8-week session, all the subjects were required to write three papers on three topics. Among them, two of the topics were written as daily class work and the other served as the final exam. Groups B and C were limited to synthesizing information from class/small-group discussions about personal experience or about information they had gained previously related to the topic, whereas Group A synthesized information received from readings on the topic and from class/small-group discussions. Different topics were used in Groups B and C, whereas the same topics were used in Groups A and C. The results from one-way ANOVA indicated students' gender, age, and topics used for composition had a significant interrelationship with the total improvement in composing skills. Experimental and control groups using different topics showed different results from the

experimental and control groups using the same topics. It was found that the younger the students were when they were first exposed to English, the more they improved; and that females improved more than males.

Tsang (1996) conducted a study with 144 ESL secondary students in Hong Kong to compare the effects of reading and writing assignments on English descriptive writing performance. Three intact classes were randomly assigned into the three treatment groups. During the 24 weeks of instruction, students in the reading group were required to read eight books and complete eight review forms which required minimum writing. Different from the reading group, students in the writing group were given eight essay-writing tasks to complete in 24 weeks. Meanwhile, students in the regular class were given 10 to 15 multiple-choice questions to answer after each class session. The results from the posttest showed that the reading group did significantly better than the other groups in both content and language use.

In an action research study, Liu (2000) investigated the effectiveness of a wide range of reading-writing tasks on the students' abilities to reflect upon, evaluate, revise and value their own writing, and on their reading comprehension as well. Fourteen ESL undergraduate students participated in the 10-week study. Four reading assignments were chosen: two short stories and two personal narratives. By following Readers Theater (RT) theory, Liu designed three phases of activities for each text: students read aloud their chosen sentences from the source text; student-chosen passages were used to extrapolate individual responses and meanings from the source text; and students created their own conclusions to the text. Data were collected from the students' and teacher's reflective journals, from a survey on students' reactions towards the activities in class, and from the students' writings. The results showed that the students saw the benefits of

the RT reading-writing tasks in three ways: language skills, peer collaboration and the classroom atmosphere.

Aiming to explore the role of literacy and curriculum in identity construction, McCarthy (2001) examined 12 students from diverse backgrounds and others close to them, such as teachers and parents. In the 7-month study, the data collection methods included interviews with students, parents, the teacher, and peers; classroom observations; and analyses of student writing. Analyses of the data suggested that there was coherence of perspectives for about half of the students while there was less agreement for the other half. Corresponding to the degree of the students' success in reading and writing, perspective and context played more salient roles in the identity construction of more successful students than less successful students. Similarly, McCarthy found that literacy was a more important feature of the more successful students than others. In contrast, he found reading and writing were not central for the less successful students. McCarthy suggested providing students with more and various opportunities to explore their own identity construction by talking and writing about the issues of themselves.

Esmaeili's (2002) exploratory study investigated whether content knowledge from reading would affect the processes and the products of adult L2 students' writing and reading performance. The subjects were 34 ESL first-year engineering students. Following the counterbalanced within-subjects design, the participants did two reading and writing tasks in two conditions, one when the reading passage was related thematically to the writing task and the other when the reading passage was not. Half of the randomly selected participants were given one of the reading texts. They were asked to read it, summarize it orally in English, and then write on a topic which was

thematically related to the information given in the reading text. After finishing these two reading and writing tasks, they did two other tasks that were not thematically related. Then the other half of the participants completed the same tasks, but they began with the thematically unrelated tasks. In addition, the participants answered structured-interview questions and filled out a retrospective checklist of the writing strategies they used immediately after they wrote their composition in the thematically related condition. The findings showed that academic literacy is viewed as a phenomenon consisting of two interwoven constructs, namely, reading and writing. Each construct also has its own entities. The findings also revealed that writing involves reading and one cannot separate them from each other.

Carson (2004) examined the tasks of reading and writing needed in entry-level undergraduate and graduate courses in academic contexts. The subjects were 23 native speakers of English and 15 non-native speakers. The data collection methods included an examination of the academic tasks and interviews with faculty and students. Four findings emerged from the data. First, the results indicated 15 similarities and 5 differences in tasks for the disciplines examined. Second, successful task preparation leads to the possibility of successful task production and is therefore likely to be indicative of a student's potential to deal with academic language tasks. Third, reading is an extremely important component of task production to the extent that students need to read exam questions and task directions. Fourth, integrated language skills are important in any of the course tasks. Based on the above findings, Carson suggested that the more we understand the specific reading and writing needs and skills accompanying commonly assigned academic tasks, the better we can prepare students to read and write well within contexts.

Nearly three decades of research on reading and writing connections has proved that they should be taught together to enhance L2 learning. When taught together, reading and writing engage students in a greater use and variety of cognitive strategies than when they are taught separately. Using writing as a learning tool may lead to better reading achievement, and using reading as a vehicle for elaborating on ideas may lead to better writing performance. Table 2.2 summarizes the research works conducted about reading-writing connections.

Table 2.2 Research on Reading-Writing Connections

Researcher	Participants	Duration	Focus of Study	Language Proficiency Level	Methods of Data Collection	Investigated Variables
1)Carson, Carrell, Silberstein, Kroll &Kuehn (1990)	-57 Japanese ESL tertiary students -48 Chinese (ESL tertiary students)	2 weeks	The relationship between L1 and L2 reading and writing abilities	-Low-intermediate -Advanced	Correlation	-Languages (L1 & L2) -Modalities (reading & writing)
2)Kennedy (1994)	31 ESL tertiary students	8 weeks	Writing	Advanced	Experiment	Gender, age, topic
3) Tsang (1996)	144 ESL secondary students	24 weeks	Descriptive writing performance	High elementary to low intermediate	Experiment	Form level
4) Liu (2000)	14 ESL tertiary students	10 weeks	Attitudes to writing and reading comprehension	Intermediate	- Reflective Journal - Survey - Students' writings	NV
5) McCarthy (2001)	12 elementary students from diverse backgrounds	7 months	Role of literacy and curriculum in identity construction	NA	-Interview -Classroom observation - Analyses of student writing	Language proficiency

Table 2.2 Research on Reading-Writing Connections

Researcher	Participants	Duration	Focus of Study	Language Proficiency Level	Methods of Data Collection	Investigated Variables
6) Esmail (2002)	34 ESL tertiary students	2.5-hour test	Writing and reading performance	Intermediate	- Summary recall protocol - Structured-interview	Content knowledge
7) Carson (2004)	-23 native speakers of English -15 nonnative speakers	1 term	Reading and writing tasks in academic contexts	- Intermediate - Advanced	-Academic tasks -Artifacts - Interviews	-Disciplines -Language proficiency

2.3 Writing from Sources

Reading-writing connections may be implemented in various methods. This part discusses one of them: writing from sources. Source-based writing can be a powerful tool for learning the content of a text. Olson (2003) pointed out that writing is a tool for learning that heightens and refines thinking. Ways of using source texts to create new text include an argument, a report, a critique, a summary, or a proposal based on other kinds of texts (Spivey, 1990; Collins, Lee, Madigan, & Fox, 2005). Composing from sources is not a linear, two-step procedure in which reading precedes writing. In contrast, source-based writing is hybrid action in which writing influences reading and reading influences writing (Spivey, 1990, p. 295). As Jabbour (2004) noted, writing is an activity that is informed by reading, whereas it influences reading as learners become more proficient in their language use.

The role that writing plays in reading has been recognized by researchers. According to Olson (2003), because writing is recursive and writers go back to reread bits of text in order to keep the process moving forward, reading is a natural and essential component of the writing process. Linking writing to reading texts can be an effective method of generating ideas and aiding the writing process, as well as providing model texts (Baker & Boonkit, 2004). Composing from sources strengthens the reading-writing connections. As Spivey (1990) said, in composing from sources, reading and writing processes “blend and co-occur.” McNeil (1992) asserted that students may become better comprehenders when they are able to describe what goes on in their heads when they read.

Writing helps the reader acquire a base knowledge of specialized styles, vocabulary and cohesive devices with which to interpret text. As students themselves learn to write about setting and people, developing and resolving conflict, using dialect, giving directions, describing phenomena, and so forth, they become better able to understand and interact with writers who are writing about the same things (McNeil, 1992, p. 187).

In order to be an active reader, students may have to read as a writer. As Pearson and Tierney (1984) claimed, no one can be a good reader unless one reads as a writer. The writer produces text with readers in mind and readers determine what the text means to them. In fact, reading is a dynamic interaction between the writer and the reader in which the reader creates meaning for the text (Candlin & Lotfipour-Saedi, 1983).

Introducing writing into the reading classroom might be one way that makes the reader’s interaction with the text come true. As Hirvela (2004) noted, written texts leave readers with gaps that may be filled by active, meaning-making reading, which is often guided most effectively by writing. Furthermore, writing provides a unique opportunity for the reader to dialogue with a text and find a particular way into it, and

thus provides the learners with an opportunity to generate and explore meaning. Finally, writing provides opportunities for the teacher to observe the students' reading comprehension.

Just as reading involves the same sort of organization and analysis as does thinking (Heilman *et al.*, 1998), writing “shapes” thinking (Olson, 2003). Langer and Applebee (1987) indicated two kinds of writing tasks that develop and shape the readers' thinking. The first kind of writing tasks includes note-taking, short-answer comprehension questions, and summary writing. These writing tasks prompt students to focus on specific items of information and lead the students to present their ideas carefully. The second, in contrast, is when students are writing expressively to learn, perceiving their writing as part of an ongoing instructional dialogue that is not subject to assessment by the teacher, such as journal writing, their thinking and writing is more exploratory and that they are more apt to take risks (Langer & Applebee, 1987).

When composing from sources, writers are also readers while transforming source texts to create new texts (Spivey & King, 1989). In these acts, the writer has two kinds of knowledge sources. One is available in the immediate source texts and the other is what can be generated from previously acquired knowledge in long-term memory. When writers compose from sources, reading and writing processes blend, making it difficult to distinguish what is being done for purposes of writing. The reading process can be viewed as components of the writing process and comprehending is also composing.

To investigate how native and non-native speaking university students use information from a source text in their own academic writing, Campbell (1990) conducted a study with 30 undergraduate university students (10 native and 20 ESL).

The students were given the first chapter of a text to read and then asked to write a composition involving the use of terminology from the source text. The results showed that the 30 students' compositions could be categorized as one of the following types: Quotation, Exact copy, Near copy, Paraphrase, Summary, or Original explanation. In addition, it was found that the non-native speakers referenced the author or text more often than the native speakers. However, it was found that students applied copying as their main method of text integration, even though they had the ability to paraphrase, summarize, quote, and integrate information from a source text. Therefore, Campbell (1990) suggested that students should be given more opportunities to practice source-based writing in order to develop better awareness and skill in using information from source text and thus "train themselves to edit out instances of copying" (p. 225). As for non-native speakers of English, Campbell suggested that the use of source text as background and support for their own written ideas should be emphasized.

Ruiz-Funes (2001) explored the relationship between the linguistic quality of the papers produced by third-year university students of Spanish as a second language and the type of task representation. The 14 subjects read a literary selection and then wrote a paper based on the reading. They wrote the first draft in class and completed it over the period of a week in class as well. T-unit analysis was performed to explore the syntactic complexity of the papers produced by the students. Four conclusions emerged from Ruiz-Funes's study. 1) Given the same source-based writing, L2 students interpret the task in different ways and therefore produce different kinds of papers. 2) The ability to write syntactically complex sentences does not lead to cognitively sophisticated composing. 3) The ability to write with grammatical accuracy is not an indicator of the students' ability to express elaborate ideas. 4) The ability to write with grammatical

accuracy may lead to the students' ability to write more syntactically complex sentences. Ruiz-Funes noted that these findings are an indication that the ability to read insightfully and write critically in a foreign language is linked to complex thinking and the cognitive process, rather than to the language skills of the students. Another implication of Ruiz-Funes's study is that when teaching reading and writing, emphasis should be placed on the process rather than on the linguistic accuracy of the product. As Ruiz-Funes (2001) pointed out, "foreign language students need to be taught how to interact with a text, elaborate on it, and transform its information..." (p. 233).

In another study, Hamer (2003) examined the effects of adding writing to the university reading curriculum. The participants were 48 university students with various L1 background. Among them, 29 students were in the reading-writing focused group and 19 students were in the reading-focused group. During a 15-week semester, the students in the reading-writing-focused group were asked to complete 17 writing exercises designed to have them interact with the text they read, while no writing was involved in the reading-focused group. All the students took the same final examination and the grades between the two groups revealed that a higher percentage of students passed in the reading-writing group, and that these students got higher grades.

The above research shows that source-based writing cannot be played down in L2 reading comprehension. Readers compose as they are comprehending, and the interaction of reading, responding, and composing may result in understanding. Writers use many different methods to generate ideas for the writing assignment. While writing, writers are trying to express ideas, but if those ideas are not based on information, the writing just does not work. In order to give students experiences with reading that demonstrate the ways in which readers engage, contribute to, and make connections with

texts, writing needs to be fully integrated with reading. The part that follows reviews two ways of writing from sources which are used in L2 teaching and learning: summary writing and journal writing.

2.3.1 Summary Writing

Summarizing is an academic literacy task that entails both reading and writing abilities (Carson, 1993). In summarization, only the gist of a text is required. To produce the gist of a text, three strategies are found necessary: *deleting*; *generalizing* irrelevant or redundant propositions; and *constructing* new inferred propositions. Kern (2000) argued that when learners condense their expression by deleting, reorganizing, and reshaping their ideas, they are engaged in an “act of transformation” (p. 488) that allows them to integrate the development of both their language and interpretive skills. As a powerful tool for understanding, organizing, and remembering information from texts, summarization embraces other major cognitive activities such as identifying main ideas, distinguishing main ideas from supporting details, determining the structure and organization of the text, and recognizing sequences of events. These cognitive activities are all considered crucial to good comprehension (Kintsch, 1990; Raymond, 2002; Rewey, Danserau, & Peel, 1991).

Brown and her colleagues suggested that producing an oral or written summary can be both a comprehension fostering and a comprehension monitoring activity (Brown, Campione, & Day, 1981). As a comprehension fostering activity, the process of summarization focuses attention on the central information of the text and provides the reader with a conceptual framework that facilitates memory and comprehension. As a comprehension monitoring activity, summarizing a text or a

segment of a text offers the reader an opportunity to evaluate the ongoing process of comprehension since “if the reader cannot produce an adequate synopsis of what is being read, this is a clear sign that comprehension is not proceeding smoothly and that remedial action is called for” (Brown, Palincsar, & Armbruster, 1984, p. 263). Summary writing is commonly regarded as a reading comprehension strategy (Brown, Campione, & Day, 1981; Redmann, 2005). It is a whole-text, super-macro-level skill that must be learned. By completing a summary, students may become very proficient in distilling the main events from the text while actively using in context some of the key words they encounter within it (Redmann, 2005).

Some studies have emphasized the importance of summarizing as an aid to reading comprehension. Kim (2001) investigated the characteristics of Korean EFL students' summary writing. Seventy freshmen were asked to summarize two English texts taken from a college-level ESL reading book. Both of the texts were expository in nature and one was assumed to be easier than the other. The results indicated that Korean EFL students do not possess effective summarization skills. According to the results, the most frequently used rule by the students was deletion. Analysis of data also revealed that text difficulty affects summary writing. The results showed that due to text difficulty, the students' summary writing changed in the proportion of content idea units, the use of selection and transformation rules, and in the accuracy rate, but not in the use of the deletion rule or total rule use. Thus, Kim suggested that the students were in need of summarizing skills.

Pena (2003) investigated the effects of explicit teaching of expository text structure on summary writing by EFL university students and examined the summarization strategies employed by students with good or poor knowledge of text

structure. The results showed that explicit teaching of patterns of textual organization has a positive effect on the quality of a written summary. It was also found that the common strategies used by the subjects in the experimental group were *reduction/generalization* and *integration/fusion*, whereas strategies used by those in the control group were *copy* and *selection*.

Probably due to the tight structure of summarization, it is a pity that summarizing has become unfashionable (Nuttach, 1996). However, as Olson (2003) suggests, learning to work within the constraints set by others is an important life skill. Therefore, it may benefit students to have the experience of tightly-framed assignments such as summary writing.

2.3.2 Journal Writing

In upper-level foreign language courses, the ability of students to read articles and literary selections and to respond to them in an insightful and critical manner plays an important role (Ruiz-Funes, 1999a, 1999b). Writing a journal stimulates students' reflection on learning and thus enhances learning (Todd, Mills, Palard, & Khamcharoen, 2001). One reason for the popularity of journal writing is the flexibility it offers students. Journals give students freedom within the classroom to express their own understanding of literary works in contrast to the teacher's understanding. As Olson (2003) argued, asking students to write a journal describing what they have to think about in order to produce a particular text prompts them to become more conscious of the strategies they employ in reading and writing. Journals help students make connections between reading and writing by combining the two, allowing students to construct their own meaning (Atwell, 1987; Parsons, 1990; Tierney & Shanahan, 1991).

Another reason for the popularity of journals is that they engage students in non-threatening exploration and development of ideas (Reid, 1993). Journals offer students an informal opportunity to raise their awareness of learning. Smalley, Ruetten and Kozyrev (2001) suggested three uses of journal writing. First, a journal can be a place to record the observations. Second, it can be a way of thinking on paper, a way to explore and discover what the readers think. Third, more directed writing assignments such as responding to a reading passage may be conducted by writing journals.

Journal writing may offer students constant and consistent training in the foreign language reading process in that it asks them to engage with texts in the target language by activating background knowledge and experiences related to the subject of a text and by reflecting on the text (Redmann, 2005). Journal writing provides students with a place to interact with the text. It is intended to support students as they negotiate the meaning of a foreign language text and develop an awareness of how reading takes place. Through the journal, students “use writing to represent their thoughts and interpretations of texts as they read and write reflections on their own reading processes” (Kern, 2003, p. 53, as cited in Redmann, 2005). Therefore, journal writing can stress metacognition. In addition, journal writing may provide students an opportunity to share privately in writing their reactions, questions, and concerns without any threat of reprisal or evaluation. It offers the teacher an opportunity to learn what each individual student is doing and thinking (Tierney and Readence, 2000).

Journal writing requires students do a great deal of writing, but the writing practice is integrated with the reading process. Rather than treating reading as an isolated skill, the journal requires that students engage with a text through reading and writing. As Redmann (2005) noted, “journal writing may offer a concrete way of

helping students develop their reading abilities and of integrating the negotiation and interpretation of texts into all levels of the foreign language curriculum” (p. 485).

The effect of journal writing on writing ability was argued by Wu (2000), who found that freshmen in Taiwan were successfully empowered to create their own short stories by using the writing skills they learned from journal writing. Chanthalangsy and Moskalis (2002), and Marsh (1998) also indicated that after the intervention the students demonstrated improved writing skills, they produced more developed and complex material, and their writing was more mature.

Ewald (2006) investigated learners’ perspectives of the role of journal writing in their L2 classes. The results indicated that 88% of the students reacted positively to the use of journals. Ewald suggested that even though journals may not be useful to all students in all classroom contexts, students’ highly-positive evaluations of journal writing imply that learners have potential to benefit from journal writing. He also suggested that when teachers suggest topics for journals, they should supply the students with the freedom to write about course-related themes and concerns.

Marefat (2002) conducted a study with 80 Farsi-speaking undergraduate students majoring in EFL. All of the participants were required to keep a diary, which was regarded a kind of journal. They were asked to write their reactions, comments, questions and feelings for 5-10 minutes at the end of each class session for as long as 13 sessions. A total of 826 diaries were submitted for qualitative analysis to seek patterns of the students’ attitudes towards diary writing. Examination and analysis of students’ diaries revealed that the use of diary writing may vary from detecting the problematic areas, evolving teacher/teaching assessment to particularly facilitating and thus developing students' writing ability. Marefat (2002) indicated that diary writing is a

useful practice in identifying students' particular areas of difficulty and interest. He suggested that diaries may be recommended to facilitate and improve teaching and learning writing.

While journal writing has become an increasingly important tool in language learning, how to use journals to improve learners' reading comprehension is still unclear (Todd *et al.*, 2001). Todd *et al.*'s study examined how teachers can give useful feedback on participants' journals. The participants were eight EFL Master's degree students. Through analyzing journals and teachers' comments in response to journals, and from interviewing participants about the usefulness of the comments, Todd *et al.* made two conclusions concerning teachers' feedback on journals. First, a general comment is not sufficient. Instead, feedback should be related to specific points in the journal. Second, comments which give suggestions, evaluate positively, add information, or support the participants, are perceived as the most useful type of comments.

In short, through an extensive review of reading-writing connections, the researcher has found that no empirical studies have been conducted to examine the effects of summary writing and journal writing on EFL students' reading comprehension. And, only a few studies have been done on the students' attitudes towards reading-writing connections. Finally, gender and text types are variables which have not been examined thoroughly. Thus, the present study focused on the effects of reading-writing connections on the students' reading comprehension, taking into account text types and students' gender.

2.4 Theoretical Framework for the Study

The related literature has provided an overall picture of the recent research works on L2 reading and reading-writing connections in the past two or three decades. It could be noticed from the review in this chapter that past research has been conducted in a variety of L2 settings, towards different target populations and with multiple results. Up to now, no empirical studies have been conducted comparing the effects of reading with summary writing and reading with journal writing on L2 learners' reading comprehension, which was the objective of this study. Figure 2.1 presents an overall picture of the theoretical framework for this study. Two types of source-based writing were employed, namely, summary writing and journal writing. After reading texts, students in one group wrote summaries, which have a quite tight structure, while students in another group wrote journals, which have a comparatively loose structure. Students' reading comprehension was then assessed by multiple-choice and short-answer tests after they had completed their respective tasks.

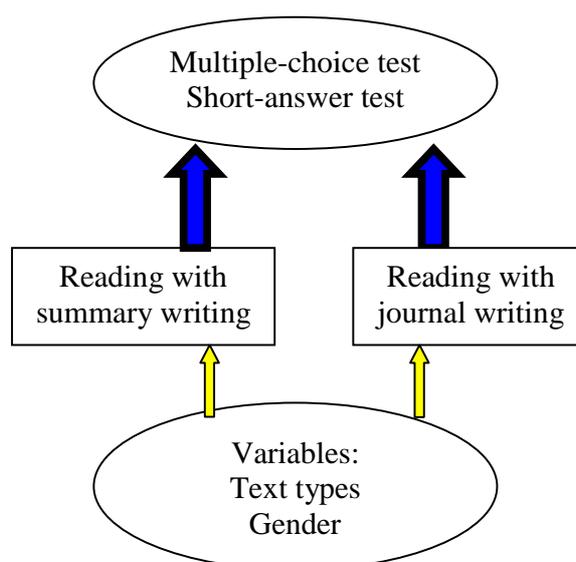


Figure 2.1 Theoretical Framework for the Study

2.5 Summary

In conclusion, this chapter discussed the relevance of the present study to preceding research work. It started with the nature and purposes of reading, theories in L2 reading, followed by issues related to L2 reading. After that, bases and principles of reading-writing connections, approaches that implement reading-writing connections, and related research works were presented. Lastly, summary writing and journal writing were reviewed. Chapter Three will explain the methodology used in this research study, report the results of the pilot study, and describe the main study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology employed in this study. It starts with the rationale for the choice of methodology. The participants, the variables, the research instruments, the data collection procedures, and the data analysis methods, are then described. Next, this chapter reports the pilot study in detail. Finally, the main study is also described.

3.1 Rationale for the Choice of Methodology

This part discusses the reasons why a mixed method of research design was employed in this present study. The main purpose of the present study was to investigate the effects of reading tasks on Chinese university EFL students' reading comprehension. As Wiersma and Jurs (2005) asserted, intervention designed to improve students' achievement should take on the form of an experimental treatment, therefore, the first phase of this study was experimental and quantitative in nature. In order to better understand the intervention, the next phase of the research was directed towards students' attitudes and perceptions of the intervention. After they had finished their respective tasks for each unit, and also at the end of the research, the students were surveyed about their attitudes. Thus, this present study included both quantitative and qualitative phases. The quantitative phase of the study looked at statistical relationships

between the three reading tasks and students' reading scores. The qualitative phase of the study aimed to better understand the results from the quantitative phase.

Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) argued convincingly for the validity of mixed method research, emphasizing its benefits in many diverse research settings. They asserted that mixed methods are often more efficient in answering research questions than either the qualitative or the quantitative approaches alone because mixed methods allow cross-method comparison and provide grounds for triangulating data in which the weaknesses of one method may be offset by the strengths of another. Mixed methods in this study refer to an experiment and surveys. The first five research questions (see Section 1.4) could be adequately addressed with quantitative analysis. The last two research questions require qualitative analysis to provide new directions for further quantitative inquiry. The multiple data sources include students' scores on the Reading Comprehension Test (RCT), students' written feedback, and semi-structured oral interviews.

3.2 Participants

A total of 81 third-year English major undergraduate students at Guizhou University, China, participated in this study. The students were from three intact classes. They were randomly designated as two experimental groups and one control group. All the students were high school graduates and were currently pursuing a university degree. The students were classified as advanced EFL learners. Two reasons may determine the students' advanced level placement. First, according to the National Curriculum for College English Majors of Higher Education in the People's Republic of China (2000), third-year undergraduate students are at the advanced level. Second, the participants in

the present study had some basic knowledge of English and could read and write in English. According to Bamford, Julian, and Richard (2004), advanced language learners are those who “already have a basic knowledge of, and are literate in, the foreign language.”

3.3 Variables

As reviewed earlier in Chapter Two, text types and students’ gender are two factors which may influence reading comprehension. More research is suggested concerning these two variables (Alderson, 2000; Brantmeier 2005; Grabe, 1988; Olson, 2003; Pae, 2003; Perfetti, 1997). Thus, the independent variables of this quasi-experimental study were reading tasks (reading with summary writing/reading with journal writing/reading with oral discussion), text types (expository/narrative) and students’ gender. The dependent variables were students’ scores on the RCT, as measured by multiple-choice and short-answer questions.

3.4 Research Instruments

The instruments used in the study were the demographic survey, the RCT, the students’ written feedback, and the semi-structured oral interview. In order to address the first five research questions, which concern the effects of reading tasks on reading comprehension, student achievement was assessed on the RCT. To address the last two research questions, which concern the students’ attitudes and perceptions of the reading tasks, students’ written feedback and semi-structured oral interviews were employed.

3.4.1 Demographic Survey

This instrument was addressed to all the participants before the pedagogical intervention in the form of closed-ended questionnaire. The purpose of the survey was to elicit data about the students' personal and English learning background (see Appendix D for versions in English and Chinese of the questionnaire).

3.4.2 Reading Comprehension Test

The RCT (See Appendix E) constructed by the researcher was employed as a pretest and posttest for all the three groups of participants. This part describes the passages and test types utilized in the RCT.

Narrative and Expository Reading Texts

Six reading comprehension passages selected from the China Public English Test System (PETS), level 5, made the Reading Comprehension Text. The PETS is conducted by the Chinese Ministry of Education. It is the communication and co-operation project of China and Britain for testing social English learners' capacity of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. There are five levels in PETS, of which level 5 is the highest. The reason why the researcher adopted the reading passages from PETS5 is that it is similar to the level of English majors when they finish their two-year intensive learning at university (Zhang, 2003).

In choosing reading passages, the researcher made rough estimates of length and level of difficulty, based mainly on her experience as a teacher of EFL. Reading passages used in the test were presented in two different styles of writing: narrative and expository. The RCT consisted of three narrative passages and three expository passages. Each passage was accompanied by three short-answer questions and three

multiple-choice questions. In all, the RCT consisted of six sections and 36 question items. The researcher put one expository text after one narrative text purposely, concerned that the test results would be influenced if the subjects read the same text type continuously. The suggested time on the task for the six passages was 60 minutes. Table 3.1 demonstrates the six passages by their text type, word number and the main idea.

Table 3.1 Overview of the Six Passages

Passages	Text Type	Word Number	Main Idea
1	Narrative	414	Slums in the city of Birmingham
2	Expository	627	How shops increase sales
3	Narrative	650	The American presidential election in 2000
4	Expository	506	Dowsing
5	Narrative	721	European Gypsies
6	Expository	565	Painting the house

Despite the word-number difference among the passages, the researcher assumed that the number difference was not large enough to influence the test result. Besides, the students were not scored by the time they spent reading each text, as long as they finished all six texts within 60 minutes.

Multiple-choice and Short-answer Tests

Wiersma and Jurs (2005) claimed that in any research study directed toward improvement in student achievement, student achievement should be measured. Also, it is suggested that the method of assessing reading comprehension influences how readers perform on a test of reading comprehension (Wolf, 1993). In addition, Alderson (2000) argued that there is no best method for testing reading. Some common reading assessment measures include *multiple-choice*, *written and oral recall*, *cloze*, *summary*, *sentence completion*, *short-answer*, *open-ended-question*, *true/false*, *matching activity*, *checklist*, *ordering*, and *fill-in-the-blank tests*. Researchers assert that the outcome of

each individual assessment task provides a limited representation of reading comprehension (Alderson, 2000; Bernhardt, 1991; Brantmeier, 2001). In order to understand the complete picture and to be able to generalize research findings, a variety of assessment tasks are needed (Bernhardt, 1991). Similarly, Anderson, Bachman, Perkins, and Cohen (1991, p. 61) argued that “more than one source of data needs to be used in determining the success of reading comprehension test items.” Furthermore, because test performance may be affected by test method, Bachman (1990) regarded it as important to employ multiple task types to reduce such effects.

The primary purpose of the RCT was to measure the reading comprehension of the Chinese university EFL students who were the participants of the present study. The theoretical foundations on which the RCT was based were those of Alderson (2000) as well as those of other researchers. There were three foundations which the researcher used as a guide in test construction.

1. The test should include both easy and difficult items, should be intrinsically and successively motivating, and should be on an appropriate cognitive level for the subjects.
2. The test should contain the proper amount of items to allow students to demonstrate their English proficiency within a limited time and it must be reliable (Alderson, 2000).
3. Both reliability and validity should be taken into consideration (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005). Furthermore, the level of difficulty and power of discrimination of the test must be taken into consideration as the basis of test item selection (Alderson, 2000).

In the present study, reader's performance across two different reading comprehension assessment tasks was used: multiple-choice and short-answer questions.

Ur (1996: 38) defined multiple-choice questions as consisting "... of a stem and a number of options (usually four), from which the testee has to select the right one." Multiple-choice questions are a common means of assessing learners' reading comprehension because the task is familiar to subjects and is easy for researchers to score (Wolf 1993). Alderson (2000, p. 211) stated that multiple-choice test items are so popular because they provide testers with the means to control test-takers' thought processes when responding; they "allow testers to control the range of possible answers." Even though it may be time-consuming to prepare a multiple-choice test, it is easy to mark, and to evaluate. Weir (1990) also mentioned that multiple-choice questions are fashionable since marking them is totally objective.

Nevertheless, multiple-choice tests have some disadvantages. First, distracters may trick the test-takers deliberately, which results in a false measure. Second, being a good reader does not guarantee being successful in a multiple-choice test since this type of test requires a separate ability. Third, test-takers may "not necessarily link the stem and the answer in the same way" that the tester assumes (Cohen, 1998).

To choose the passages which were paired with multiple-choice questions, the researcher followed the criteria proposed by previous researchers: 1) that all items are passage dependent (Bernhardt, 1991; Wolf, 1993); 2) that some of the items require the reader to make inferences (Wolf, 1993); 3) that all distracters are plausible in order to prevent participants from immediately disregarding responses (Alderson, 2000); and 4) that the test-takers are not able to determine correct responses by looking at the other questions on the page (Razi, 2005). In short, the passages with multiple-choice questions were chosen so that they could be answered correctly only if the participants read and understood the relevant passages.

The other test type of the RCT was short-answer questions. As Weir (1993) pointed out, short-answer tests are extremely useful for testing reading comprehension. According to Alderson (2000, p. 227), short-answer tests are seen as “a semi-objective alternative to multiple choice.” Cohen (1998) argued that open-ended questions allow test-takers to copy the answer from the text, but firstly one needs to understand the text to write the correct answer. Test-takers are supposed to answer a question briefly by drawing conclusions from the text, not merely by responding “yes” or “no.” The test-takers may be required to infer meaning from the text before answering the question.

Short-answer tests are not easy to construct since the tester needs to see all possible answers. Scoring the responses depends on thorough preparation of the answer keys. The objectivity of scoring short-answer tests depends upon the completeness of the answer key and the possibility of students responding with answers or wordings which are not expected. As Hughes (2003, p. 144) indicated, “The best short-answer questions are those with a unique correct response.” He also proposed that this technique works well when the aim is testing the ability to identify referents. The researcher always kept Hughes’ suggestion in mind while designing the short-answer questions. Also, she discussed the keys with three experts who were teaching the Advanced English Course at Guizhou University, China.

Taking into account the assertions about reading comprehension assessment, the researcher decided to use two reading assessment measures in the RCT - multiple-choice and short-answer tests - to tap more varied areas of reading comprehension. The choice was based on the advantages and disadvantages of each test type and also on their wide use in language learning in general. Also, multiple-choice and short-answer tests were selected because the students in the current study were familiar with them and this

may reduce anxiety that could be introduced by the inclusion of unfamiliar task types in a test (Yo, 2006). In the RCT, short-answer questions were always put before multiple-choice questions for all the passages. The purpose was to confirm that the students' answers to short-answer questions would not be influenced by the multiple-choice questions.

As discussed above, there exist many techniques to test students' reading comprehension. By considering both the advantages and the disadvantages of each test type, the researcher decided to use the students' scores on multiple-choice and short-answer tests as the pretest and posttest scores, while bearing in mind the preparation, administration, and scoring of the test.

3.4.3 Students' Written Feedback

Students' written feedback was employed in order to elicit information about how they felt about the tasks and how their attitudes developed. Over the 18-week quasi-experiment, all the participants were required to spend five minutes writing their feedback on the reading tasks after each unit. The participants learned 11 units of the textbook *A New English Course* (Li, 2004), thus each student wrote 11 feedback entries.

3.4.4 Semi-structured Interview

An interview is a conversation "initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation" (Cannel and Kahn, cited in Robson, 1993, p. 229). Face-to-face interviews offer the researcher the possibility of asking people directly about what is going on and thus a

“shortcut” (Robson, 1993) in seeking answers to research questions. An interview can be classified into one of three categories ranging from unstructured through semi-structured to structured (Nunan, 1992). In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer has worked out a set of questions in advance, but is free to modify their order, change the way they are worded, give explanations, leave out particular questions or include additional ones. Semi-structured interviews may be the most popular among the three categories because they are flexible and also give the interviewee a degree of power and control over the course of the interview. In this research, semi-structured interviews (See Appendix H) were conducted with the students to elicit more information about their attitudes towards the tasks.

In sum, taking into account the advantages and disadvantages of various data collection methods, the present study took a triangulation method and employed students’ scores on the RCT, students’ written feedback, and face-to-face semi-structured interviews, to assess the students’ reading comprehension, and to collect data about their attitudes towards the three reading tasks.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

This research was conducted in a normal English learning setting, where three intact groups of students enrolled in the Advanced English Course participated in the study in an 18-week period. Figure 3.1 is an overall picture of the data collection procedures.

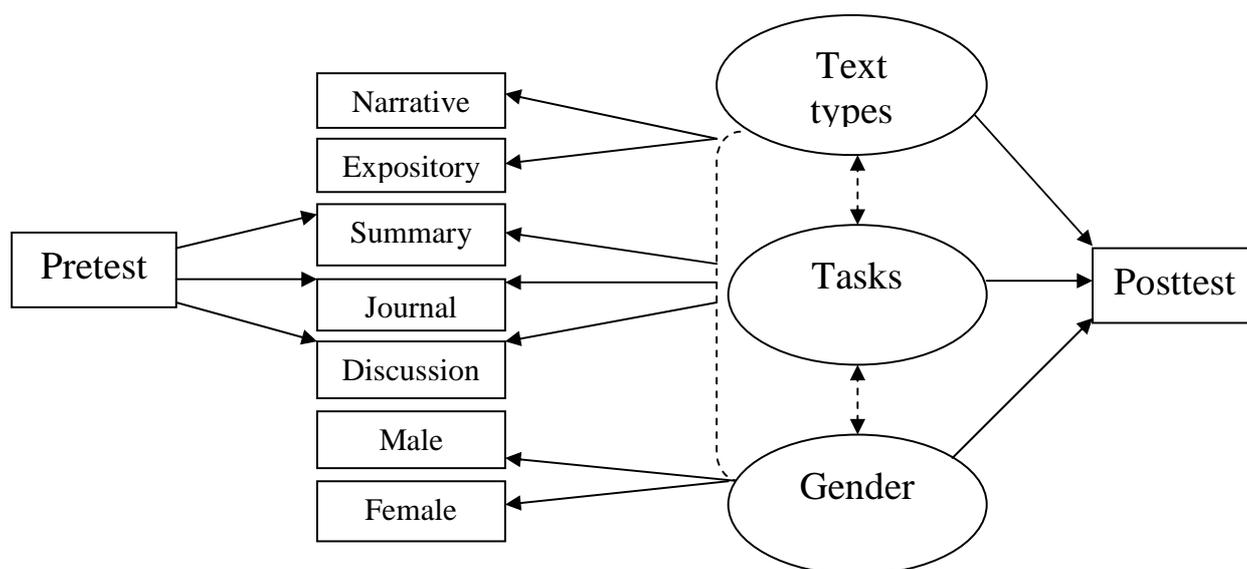


Figure 3.1 Overview of the Data Collection Procedures

The focus of the study was to determine whether types of reading tasks had significant effects on L2 reading comprehension. As discussed earlier, three groups of students enrolled in the Advanced English Course were the participants of the quasi-experiment during regular class time in an 18-week period. This study was conducted from September 2007 to January 2008 - the fifth semester of the participants, which is actually the first of two semesters of third-year students.

According to the National Curriculum for College English Majors of Higher Education in P. R. C. (2002), the Advanced English Course aims to enhance the third-year English majors' reading skills in accuracy, fluency and grammar, based on their previous two-year intensive learning at university. It is compulsory for all third-year undergraduate English majors for the whole academic year. The textbooks applied for the Advanced English Course are *A New English Course*, Books 5 and 6, which are particularly designed "for the use of third-year students majoring in English in tertiary institutions with a four-year program" in China (Li, 2004, p. vi). Five principles

underlying the textbooks are as follows: 1) a heuristic approach is adopted so that the students may be able to work on their own initiative and develop active and logical thinking; 2) the selection of texts is based on the principle of variety, so that the students may broaden the scope of knowledge; 3) different kinds of language activities are devised so that the students may consolidate and expand their language knowledge and further improve their language skills; 4) various types of activities are designed so that the students may acquire integrated language skills in English; and 5) a large input is given within a limited space so that the students may be ensured of an adequate language intake.

Each of the 11 units of *A New English Course*, Book 5 consists of two texts. Text I is the main article designed for intensive reading. *Pre-reading Questions*, *Dictionary Work*, *Library Work*, *Comprehension Questions*, *Organization and Development*, *Analysis*, *Language work*, *Paraphrase*, and *Language Work* are the activities of Text I. Text II is designed for extensive reading. It is similar to the first one in theme, except that it's longer. *Questions for Discussion* are the main activity for Text II.

The specific procedures in this research were as follow. First, the three groups of participants were pretested by the RCT to decide if there were significant differences among them before the intervention. The participants were required to finish the RCT in no more than 60 minutes.

Subsequently, the three intact groups of students were randomly assigned to one of the three groups: group of reading and summary (RS), group of reading and journal (RJ), and group of reading with oral discussion (RO). The students who wrote summaries after reading formed one experimental group, the students who wrote

journals after reading formed the other experimental group, and the students who orally discussed the Comprehension Questions after reading formed the control group.

Next, the researcher applied the writing-based treatments to the experimental groups. The control group did not receive any of the treatments given to the two experimental groups. Instead, the treatment in the control group consisted of the instruction typically conducted in EFL classrooms. Specifically, at the beginning of the experiment, the participants in the RS group were told that they would be assigned to write summaries after reading. Similarly, the subjects in the RJ group were informed about the journal writing they had to do. However, those students in the RO group were not informed because they knew about the task from their textbooks.

After reading every Text I of the 11 units, the students in the RS group spent 20 minutes doing summary writing and those in the RJ group wrote journals. Meanwhile, the RO group students orally discussed the Comprehension Questions required in the Workbook, *A New English Course*, which consisted of two types of questions, namely, True or False Questions and Answering the Following Questions.

Students' feedback was written regularly 11 times to correspond with the teaching schedule. For each unit, after the subjects had finished doing their tasks, the researcher asked all the three groups of students to spend five minutes writing their feedback on the tasks they had completed. The purpose of this instrument was to elicit more information about students' attitudes and perceptions of the different reading tasks, not to test students' English proficiency. Therefore, the students were allowed to write in their L1 Chinese if they did not feel comfortable in English. The data obtained from the students' written feedback were translated into English and submitted for qualitative analysis.

At the end of the 18-week period, all of the three groups of students were retested using the same reading passages as used in the pretest. The students' scores on the posttest were again reported as a means of comparison. To determine the effects of the three different reading tasks, the reading comprehension posttest mean scores of students receiving the writing treatment were compared to the scores of another group of students who did not receive the treatment. In addition, to determine the students' reading comprehension development, the pretest and posttest mean scores of the subjects were compared.

The purpose of using the same RCT as both the pretest and posttest was to compare the subjects' scores on the two tests and to see their development after the intervention. The danger that the subjects' posttest may be influenced by their pretest was small because the researcher took three measures to avoid the possibility. First, the researcher did not make the answers known to the subjects. Second, the pretest papers were returned to the researcher immediately after the test. In addition, the 18-week intervention period was long enough for minimal recall of the passages in the pretest, thus practice effect could be consequently avoided. The data obtained from the pretest and posttest was submitted for quantitative analysis.

To ascertain whether any additional variables played a role in reading comprehension, follow-up semi-structured interviews were conducted one week after the RCT. The interview consisted of six guided questions aiming at investigating the students' attitudes towards the reading tasks. Because gender was one independent variable considered, an equal number of male and female students from each group would be selected for the interview, if significant effects of gender difference were identified. Otherwise, the interviewees would be selected depending on their answers in

the written feedback. Chinese was also used for better understanding and convenience. The interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and translated into English for qualitative data analysis.

3.6 Data Analysis

This part describes the methods of data analyses employed in the present study. Data obtained from the quasi-experimental study were submitted for statistical analysis by using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 15.0 software, while data obtained from the students' written feedback and interviews were submitted for qualitative analysis.

3.6.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics was employed for an overall picture of the students' performance on the RCT and their attitudes towards the three reading tasks.

3.6.2 ANOVA

Before the intervention, the students' mean scores on the RCT were analyzed to see if there were any significant differences in reading proficiency among the three groups of students. One-way univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) in General Linear Model in Statistical Package in Social Sciences (SPSS) was calculated in testing the null hypothesis that the mean scores of the three groups were not significantly different.

3.6.3 *t* Test

Paired-sample *t* tests were calculated to compare the subjects' mean scores on the pretest and posttest, to see if there were significant differences between the students' pretest and posttest scores, thus to decide the students' development in their reading comprehension.

3.6.4 MANOVA

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was applied to analyze the students' scores on the posttest, as measured by multiple-choice and short-answer tests. The difference between MANOVA and ANOVA is that ANOVA is used when there is only one dependent variable, while MANOVA is powerful for studies of more than one dependent variable (Bohrnstedt, 1988). The MANOVA procedure compares several means simultaneously, shows the between-subject main effects and the within-subject main effects. Results of MANOVA may point to the possible conjoint effects of independent variables.

There were multiple potential purposes for MANOVA. The first purpose was to compare groups formed by categorical independent variables on group differences in a set of interval dependent variables. The second was to use lack of difference for a set of dependent variables as a criterion for reducing a set of independent variables to a smaller, more easily modeled number of variables. Finally, to identify the independent variables which most differentiate a set of dependent variables.

One main purpose of this research study was to examine the effects of three reading tasks on two dependent variables: short-answer and multiple-choice questions. Therefore, MANOVA was considered appropriate in this study. Three-way MANOVA

in General Linear Model of SPSS was calculated to see if there were significant differences among the three groups of students, measured by short-answer and multiple-choice questions; and if there were significant interactions among the three independent variables - reading tasks, text types, and students' gender.

3.6.5 Qualitative Analysis

Data collected from students' written feedback and the oral semi-structured interviews were analyzed qualitatively to seek patterns of the students' attitudes towards the three reading tasks. The specific procedures were as follows. First, all answers from the students were typed up in a list under each research question. Then, students' responses were grouped into categories of similar answers. Third, the most salient patterns of the students' attitudes were identified.

3.7 The Pilot Study

Prior to the main study, a pilot study was carried out to try out the instruments which were then employed in this study, namely, the RCT, students' written feedback and semi-structured interviews. The main purpose was to see if the instruments used in this study could suit the research purposes or not. The pilot study was carried out at Guizhou University for three weeks in May, 2007. This part discusses how the pilot study was conducted and its implications for the main study.

3.7.1 Participants

A similar sample of university students as that in the main study participated in the pilot study. The participants were selected on the basis of convenience and

availability. Seventy-two third-year English major undergraduate students at Guizhou University who were taking the Advanced English Course as a compulsory class in the second term of academic year 2006 and 2007 were the participants of the pilot study. There were 20 male and 52 female students. Their age ranged from 20 to 24.

3.7.2 Data Collection Procedures

The 72 students from three intact groups were randomly assigned to one of the following groups: group of reading with summary writing (RS) (N=24), group of reading with journal writing (RJ) (N=23), and group of reading with oral discussion (RO) (N=25).

The pilot study started on May 8th, 2007, and lasted for three weeks. The researcher taught all of the three groups of students. She met the students in six 2-hour class sessions for a total of twelve hours. During the pilot study period, the subjects studied two units from *A New English Course*, Book 6: Unit Five: *The Lady, or the Tiger?* and Unit Six: *Dull Work*. These two units were chosen because Unit Five is narrative and Unit Six is expository in nature. The text types are those considered in this study.

After reading Text I of Unit Five, the students in all the three groups were allowed 20 minutes to do their respective tasks. Specifically, the students in the RS group were required to write a summary of *The Lady, or the Tiger?* The students in RJ group were required to write a journal. And, the students in the control group orally discussed the Comprehension Questions required in the textbook. After finishing their tasks, the students were given another five minutes to write their feedback on the tasks.

The same procedures were repeated when students studied Unit Six. That means each student was required to write two entries of feedback in the pilot study.

On the next Monday, after the students had finished studying these two units, the researcher carried out the pilot study for the RCT. The pilot study had three purposes as follows: 1) to see if the test had appropriate validity and reliability; 2) to check the level of difficulty and power of discrimination of the test; and 3) to identify major problems or errors within the test, such as test content, time allocations, instructions, and the arrangement. This was vital to help make the main study as problem-free as possible.

The students were very cooperative when the researcher told them they would be required to take the RCT. Sixty three (RS=21, RJ=20, RN=22) out of the total 72 students participated in the Reading Comprehension Test. Among them, 15 were males and 48 were females. The students were allowed 60 minutes to read the six passages and answer all of the 36 questions. While doing the test, the students were not allowed to ask questions concerning the content, nor were they allowed to use the dictionary.

Right after the RCT, the 63 students answered the questionnaire concerning the test difficulty and their familiarity with the test types. The purpose was to check the validity of the RCT. The students were also asked to comment on the test time and test format.

The next week after all the three groups took the RCT, some students were selected for the interviews. Because gender was one of the variables considered in the present study, an equal number of two male and two female students were randomly selected from each group. Therefore, there were four interviewees from each group and 12 altogether from all the three groups. The face-to-face semi-structured interviews took

place in early June 2007. Chinese was used to elicit more information about the students' attitudes. Each interview lasted from 15 to 20 minutes.

3.7.3 Data Analysis

The data obtained from the students' scores on the RCT, the students' written feedback, and interviews, were submitted for either quantitative or qualitative analysis. What follows are how the data analyses were carried out.

3.7.3.1 Reading Comprehension Test

The students' answers on the RCT were marked by the researcher and validated by three EFL teachers, who had been teaching at the university level for at least six years. When marking the test items, the correct answer was given one point and no point was given to the incorrect or unanswered item. This criterion worked well with multiple-choice question items. However, marking the short-answer questions was more complicated because it was very difficult to predict all responses to and interpretations of short-answer questions (Alderson, 2000). Therefore, Alderson in the same year asserted "some form of pre-testing of the questions is essential wherever possible" (p. 227). He also noted that the only way to ensure that the test constructor has removed all the ambiguities in the question is to try it out on students similar to those who will be taking the test. In fact, two of the purposes of the pilot study were to ensure that 1) all the ambiguities had been removed, and 2) to achieve good questions with a unique correct answer.

In marking short-answer questions, whenever one possible response was found, the researcher and the three teachers discussed whether one point would be given or not,

in order to confirm that the test marking was correct. The researcher found that there were some unanswered items. It may have been that the test items were too difficult or the time given was not enough. This would be evidenced in the item analysis, which was performed thus to check the level of difficulty and power of discrimination of the test items. Furthermore, test validity and reliability were taken into consideration so that the scores of the test takers were sufficiently reliable for the researcher to determine their levels of proficiency. What follows is how the validity and reliability of the RCT were determined.

Test Validity

Wiersma and Jurs (2005) described validity of assessment as the appropriateness of the interpretation of the results of a test and its specificity to the intended use. Four common types of validity are face validity, construct validity, content validity, and predictive validity. Of these, content validity may be the most important and is widely viewed as the essence of a language test. They also pointed out that usually the first approach to establishing the validity of a test or whether the test appears to measure what it aims to measure is through the assessment of “experts,” in this case, language teachers.

In order to validate the contents of the RCT, the six passages were given to 12 EFL teachers and experts, all of whom are university EFL teachers. Among the 12 EFL teachers and experts, nine are Chinese and three are native speakers of English who are teaching EFL at Guizhou University, China. All of the nine Chinese EFL teachers had been teaching for over four years, while the three foreign teachers had been EFL teachers at university level for at least one year. The six passages with 36 questions were given to the 12 teachers before the pilot study in April 2007. The data obtained

from the teachers' answers was used to determine whether or not the texts used in the test were appropriate for the Chinese university EFL students.

Besides the language teachers, to validate the test, a close-ended questionnaire was conducted with the 63 testees of the pilot study. The questionnaire asked whether the test was difficult for them and whether they were familiar with the test types. To elicit what the students thought about the difficulty of the test, three answers ranging from 1 (easy) to 3 (difficult) were supplied for the students to choose from. The second question was designed to elicit the students' familiarity with the test type. If the test type was familiar to them, the students chose "yes." If not, they chose "no."

Test Reliability

Wiersma and Jurs (2005) defined test reliability as the consistency of the instrument in measuring whatever it measures. Among the five procedures commonly used to estimate reliability of a test, namely, parallel forms, test-retest, split-half, Kuder-Richardson procedure, and Cronbach alpha, the Cronbach alpha is the most commonly used (Wiersma and Jurs, 2005). For the pilot study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was employed to estimate the internal consistency of the test. The method was appropriate because the test was administered to the students of the pilot study only once. The Cronbach alpha was found by using the SPSS program. The reliability of this test was 0.76, which was considered acceptable according to the criterion of 0.70 as suggested by Fliess (1981, as cited in Robson, 1993).

Item Analysis

The students' test scores obtained through the piloting stage were used for item analysis in order to see the quality of each item, and whether it could be changed or improved. All of the 36 items were analyzed by using the Item Analysis System (IAS)

developed by Khaimook (2004). IAS is a program that is designed for analyzing the difficulty level and discrimination power of standardized tests. In IAS, the items can be analyzed according to Classical Test Theory and Item Response Theory. In this study, item difficulty was decided by using the following format of Classical Test Theory (CTT):

$$p = (P_H + P_L) / 2 \text{ (Stanley \& Hopkins, 1972, as cited in Khaimook, 2004)}$$

In the format, P_H refers to the proportion of correct response in high ability group and P_L refers to the proportion of correct response in low ability group. The difficulty index of an item is the proportion of correct response in high ability group and low ability group divided by two. From the format, it could be noticed that high difficulty index stands for low difficulty level, and that the difficulty level of an item decreases as the difficulty value increases. In IAS, the difficulty value of an item between 0.30 and 0.70 ($0.30 < p < 0.70$) is considered to be appropriate.

Item discrimination of the reading comprehension test is again submitted for CTT of IAS (Khaimook, 2004). In this system,

$$r = P_H - P_L$$

r indicates the power of discrimination. P_H refers to the proportion of correct response in high group and P_L refers to the proportion of correct response in low group. The criterion of $r > 0.20$ is adopted in IAS, which means discrimination of the test items must be over 0.20 in order to be appropriate.

It is noteworthy that the students' responses to short-answer questions were submitted for IAS because the researcher wanted to see if these items are appropriate or not for the students. As semi-objective alternatives to multiple-choice questions (Alderson, 2000), short-answer questions could be well analyzed by using IAS program.

In entering the data from short-answer questions, the researcher changed it to be the format of standardized tests. The procedures were as follows: first, the keys were given number “1”. Second, when one student answered a question correctly, “1” was used to denote his/her answer. When a student was given “2”, that means he/she did not get the correct response.

3.7.3.2 Students’ Written Feedback

Among the 72 students, two students (one from the RJ group, the other from the RO group) were absent when the written feedback for Unit Five was written. Another three students (two from the RS group and one from the RO group) did not write their feedback for Unit Six due to absence. As a result, a total of 139 entries of written feedback were submitted for a qualitative analysis to seek the patterns of the students’ attitudes towards the reading tasks.

3.7.3.3 Semi-structured Interview

All 12 interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and translated by the researcher into English. The students’ interviews were submitted for qualitative analysis aimed at seeking the categories of the students’ attitudes.

3.7.4 Results

This part reports the results of the pilot study. It starts with the results of the RCT, followed by the results of the qualitative analyses of the students’ written feedback and the interviews.

3.7.4.1 Reading Comprehension Test

The results obtained from the 12 language teachers and experts demonstrated that all of the six reading passages used in the test were suitable for the Chinese university EFL students who were the participants of the present study. Table 3.2 shows the results.

Table 3.2 Text Appropriateness According to Teachers (N=12)

Reading Passage	Appropriate	Not Appropriate
1	10/83%	2/17%
2	9/75%	3/25%
3	8/66%	4/34%
4	9/75%	3/25%
5	11/92%	1/8%
6	8/66%	4/34%

The results revealed that the majorities of the experts regarded the six passages appropriate. Of all the six reading passages, the most appropriate was Passage 5, followed by Passages 1, 2 and 4. The results revealed that the texts used for the test items were similar enough to what Chinese university EFL students have to read in their academic reading. However, three experts were afraid that short-answer questions could be difficult for their students owing to inadequate practice.

The students felt that among all of the six passages, Passage 4 was the most difficult and Passage 1 the least difficult. The other passages were reported to be moderately difficult (See Table 3.3 below). The results also demonstrated that all the students were familiar with multiple-choice tests and around two thirds (N=41) students were familiar with short-answer tests.

Table 3.3 Text Difficulty According to Students (N=63)

Reading Passage	Easy (%)	Moderate (%)	Difficult (%)
1	64	25	11
2	29	54	17
3	17	60	23
4	6	26	68
5	25	59	16
6	21	57	22

Furthermore, the results from IAS showed that among all the 36 items, 25 items were appropriate, 11 items were either too difficult or too easy and needed to be improved. The 25 items that fit the model of CTT are as follows with their respective p and r values:

Table 3.4 Items Fitting CTT Model

Item No.	p	r
1	0.461	0.247
2	0.402	0.276
3	0.686	0.374
4	0.686	0.282
6	0.667	0.398
7	0.300	0.465
8	0.390	0.267
9	0.440	0.284
10	0.670	0.259
12	0.590	0.200
13	0.380	0.310
14	0.441	0.216
15	0.412	0.266
16	0.539	0.240
18	0.461	0.401
20	0.569	0.282
21	0.490	0.457
25	0.382	0.260
28	0.588	0.456
29	0.520	0.252
30	0.412	0.406
32	0.402	0.468
34	0.471	0.227
35	0.550	0.275
36	0.370	0.374

From Table 3.4, it can be seen that among the 36 items, 25 items fit CTT model because they met the criteria of difficulty values between 0.3 and 0.7, and discrimination values over 0.2. The KR20 value of these appropriate items was 0.93, which was high as expected.

Table 3.5 Too Difficult Items According to CTT

Item No.	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>
11	0.390	0.140
17	0.186	0.172
19	0.275	0.249
22	0.270	0.290
23	0.176	0.333
26	0.250	0.165
27	0.310	0.154

It can be seen from Table 3.5 that seven of the 36 items were too difficult, because either these items' difficulty levels (*p*) were lower than 0.3 or their discrimination values were below 0.2. These difficult items (11, 17, 19, 22, 23, 26, and 27) were improved and made easier to be suitable for the subjects in the main study.

Table 3.6 Too Easy Items According to CTT

Item No.	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>
5	0.833	0.155
24	0.775	0.401
31	0.890	0.211
33	0.720	0.162

Table 3.6 shows that 4 items were too easy for the testees either because their difficulty indexes were higher than 0.7 or their discrimination indexes were lower than 0.20. These four inappropriate items (No. 5, 24, 31, and 33) were improved or rewritten to be suitable for the subjects of the main study.

In conclusion, all of the six reading texts were considered to be valid as the

instruments to determine students' reading ability for the present study since they had been validated by the language teachers and test takers. Meanwhile, the results obtained from the pilot study of the RCT provided the researcher with insights into how to improve the test for the main study.

3.7.4.2 Students' Written Feedback

The results of the students' written feedback about Unit Five showed that 71% (17 out of 24) students from the RS group had positive attitudes towards the tasks they had done. For Unit Six, the number was quite the same in that 82% (18 out of 22, two absent) students commented positively about their task. The students commented that writing summaries helped them reorganize the text they had read. Some students complained that because they were not required to write summaries regularly, they were not sure how to write an appropriate summary. They also mentioned that a short lecture should be given about the format of a good summary.

Probably due to the students' unfamiliarity with journal writing, only 65% (15 out of 22, one absent) students from the RJ group commented for Unit Five that journal writing helped them with the text structure, difficult words, sentences, and their problems in reading. Also, 16 students commented that they were not sure what to write because they had not done that before. The percentage of students who had positive attitudes towards journal writing increased to 74% (17 out of full 23) for Unit Six.

Compared with the students from the two experimental groups, those from the control RO group demonstrated the lowest percentage of positive attitudes. For both units, 63% (15 out of 24, one absent) commented that orally discussing the Comprehension Questions helped them understand the text better. The low percentage

may be because the students had been too familiar with the task. As mentioned earlier in Section 3.2, the students had already finished the first four books of the textbook *A New English Course* before they started learning Books 5 and 6, whose formats are basically the same and the Comprehension Questions have always been required.

3.7.4.3 Semi-structured Interview

The results from the oral interviews conducted with the 12 interviewees showed that more than half of them had positive attitudes towards the tasks they had done, no matter which group they were from. Two students' comments are: "*I have never tried writing a journal before. It's like a mirror in which I see myself.*" and "*I remember I wrote summaries in Chinese before. Writing summaries in English is quite new to me, but I think it may help me understand the main idea.*" However, some students commented negatively about the tasks. For example, "*I don't know what to write in a journal. What's it for? It's boring.*" Additionally, some students (7 out of all 12) said that 20 minutes was too long for them to do the tasks.

3.7.5 Implications for the Main Study

The results from the pilot study provided the researcher with some implications for the main study, which were mainly about the RCT, the reading tasks and the data collection methods. Four implications about the RCT are as follows.

1. Questions in the RCT should follow the same format.

As suggested by the proposal defense committee, the questions after the texts should follow the same format, thus the students' performance on the RCT would not be the result of question format difference. In addition, three short-answer and three

multiple-choice questions may not be enough to cover the passages designed for the third-year English majors. Therefore, the RCT would follow the same format of five short-answer and five multiple-choice questions in the main study, which would make 60 questions altogether. The table below shows the format of the questions for each passage.

Table 3.7 Summary of the Question Format for Each Passage

Test Type	Main idea/Topic	Vocabulary	Detail	Inferential
Short-answer	1	1	2	1
Multiple-choice	1	1	2	1

Taking into consideration the test takers' possible fatigue resulting from the question addition (from 36 to 60) in the main study, the researcher decided to employ four out of the total six passages. The choice was based on the appropriateness of the passages explained in Section 3.7.4.1 (See Table 3.2). As shown in Table 3.8, Passages 3 and 6 were discarded while the other four passages were chosen for the main study. Consequently, there were 40 questions in the main study - 20 short-answer and 20 multiple-choice questions.

Table 3.8 Overview of the Four Passages for the Main Study

Passages	Text Type	Main Idea
1	Narrative	Slums in the city of Birmingham
2	Expository	How shops increase sales
3	Narrative	The Gypsies of Europe
4	Expository	Dowsing

2. Some items of the RCT needed to be improved.

Some items (No. 5, 11, 17, 19, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 31 and 33) were found not appropriate. They were either improved or rewritten to suit the participants for the main study.

3. More time was needed for each passage of the RCT.

About the time allotment of the test, some students (N=43) commented that 60 minutes was not enough for them. Therefore, more time (65 minutes) should be given to the subjects for reading the six passages and answering the questions, which means that the participants needed about 11 minutes for each passage together with answering questions. However, since the passage number had been cut to four for the main study, instead of the original six passages, the time limit for the main study was set at 50 minutes.

As discussed above, changes were made in the RCT with regard to passage number and question format. The number of reading passages was reduced from six passages in the pilot study to four in the main study, while the questions following each passage was extended from six ones in the pilot study to the present ten ones. And, the time allocated for the RCT was changed from 60 minutes in the pilot study to 50 in the main study. Taking into account the changes made, the researcher regarded it necessary to test the reliability of the modified RCT again. To avoid practice effect, 27 students were tested by the modified RCT. These students had similar demographic features with those in the main study, except that they were from a group which was not chosen for the main study. The Cronbach alpha was found to be 0.73 in the SPSS program, 15.0. Even though this value was lower than that of the piloting stage ($\alpha=0.76$), it was

considered acceptable according to the criteria of 0.70 as suggested by Fliess (1981, as cited in Robson, 1993). Implications 4, 5 and 6 about the reading tasks are as follows.

4. The time for the three reading tasks should be shorter.

Many students involved in the pilot study felt that the time recommended for their reading tasks (20 minutes) was too long. They mentioned that they could finish their tasks within 15 minutes. Thus, the time allocated to each group would be changed. And, the time allocation would be explained to the students before they took the tasks.

5. A brief review about how to write summaries was needed.

Some students in the group of reading with summary writing felt that they were not clear about the format of a summary. They suggested that a brief introduction should have been given, at the beginning of the study, concerning how to write a summary.

6. A suggested format of journals should be applied.

Some students from the RJ group felt at a loss and did not know what to write in their journals. To help the students have a better understanding of what to write in a journal, the researcher adopted Redmann's (2005) format (See Appendix F) as a guide for the participants in the main study. The students from did not have to follow the format, however, as long as they included crucial information such as their understanding of the text, their reactions, comments, questions and feelings, their difficulties, if any, with the reading.

Finally, three implications emerged from the pilot study about the data collection methods as follows.

7. Three entries of written feedback would be analyzed.

The researcher proposed to ask each student to write three instead of the originally designed 11 entries of feedback on the tasks, because there was a worry that the students, especially those in the experimental groups of reading with summary writing and journal writing, would be bored with excessive writing. The three entries of feedback would be written at the beginning, the middle, and the end of the experiment. That is, in the first, ninth, and the eighteenth weeks, respectively. Therefore, the researcher could keep track of the potential changes of the students' attitudes towards the reading tasks.

8. Written questionnaires were needed before the interviews.

In order to collect more data about the students' attitudes and to elicit the guide questions of the semi-structured interviews, self-report written questionnaires needed to be administered. A written questionnaire is one of the most widely used techniques for collecting either quantitative or qualitative data. It is used to elicit learner responses to a set of questions or statements, and it is also used as a technique of data collection in which each person is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a predetermined order (DeVaus, 2002). The questions frequently asked are concerned with facts, opinions, attitudes or preferences of the respondents. In terms of the type of questionnaire, Nunan (1992) indicated that depending on the research objectives, questionnaires can be close-ended or open-ended. Compared with interviews and observation, written questionnaires can be used conveniently when a large number of respondents must be reached, requiring less time and less expense (Dornyei, 2003). In addition, written questionnaire data is more amendable to quantification than data through written feedback.

The self-report questionnaire was regarded appropriate for this study because it could draw the information directly from the students to identify the patterns of their attitudes. In the main study, five close-ended Likert-scale questions and five open-ended questions would be conducted with all of the 81 students (See Appendix G for a sample of the written questionnaire). Likert-scale questionnaires were used as the items were close-ended questions requiring choices which could be clearly presented only if questionnaires were used. Also, open-ended questions were utilized to elicit more information about the students' attitudes. Before the main study, the researcher conducted the questionnaire with the participants of the pilot study and made some adjustments in response. Even though it was done after the pilot study was over, the researcher regarded it necessary for the purpose of validity.

9. Some interview guide questions needed to be improved.

The results of the pilot study indicated that some guide questions of the interview needed to be improved for the main study. First, since a written questionnaire was to be conducted before the interview, question number 2 about the task time should be asked in the questionnaire instead. The reason was that the questionnaire was conducted with all the participants and a more complete picture could be drawn about the task time. Second, question number 3 asking about the students' attitudes towards the tasks seemed to be too broad, which may be the explanation why not much information about the students appeared in the pilot study. Therefore, the more concrete question "Do you like the task you've done? Can you tell me why (why not)?" was employed instead.

3.8 The Main Study

After the dissertation proposal had been approved, the researcher went back to China to conduct the main study and collect data. This part describes the research methods employed in the main study.

3.8.1 Participants

A demographic survey was conducted with the 81 participants before the pretest. Because the questionnaire was conducted in a normal course which was compulsory for all the third-year English majors, no student was absent. Therefore, the researcher could collect data about all the 81 participants' background. A detailed description of the participants' demographic characteristics and English learning background is as follows.

Data from the demographic survey were coded and analyzed quantitatively to establish patterns describing the population under study. Results from the first two questions of the demographic questionnaire showed that the age of the participants was on a range between 19 and 23 years old, with a median age of 21. As was anticipated, most of the participants were females (68%), while 32% were males. The percentage of the participants' gender corresponding to each group is presented in the table below.

Table 3.9 Background of the Participants (N=81)

Group	Male	Female
1(27)	9(33%)	18(67%)
2(27)	9(33%)	18(67%)
3(27)	8(30%)	19(70%)
Average	26(32%)	55(68%)

With regard to question number 3 in the background survey, which was about the students' years of English learning, the totality of the participants reported having learned English for at least eight years. In China, English is compulsory for students studying in secondary schools, which means that all third-year undergraduate students have learned English for at least eight years (three years in secondary school, three years in high school, and two years in university). The longest time of the participants' English learning was 14 years. One interesting thing was found about the participants in group 3, where 14% of the participants had learned English for 11 years, while only 11% had learned for 10 years. The reason could be that many Chinese parents believe that the third grade in the primary school is the right time to start learning a foreign language, when their first language acquisition has been developed to a certain degree. This trend contributed to the fact that in group 3 more students had learned English for 11 years rather than 10 years. Another noteworthy point was that nearly half of the students (47%) from the second group had started learning English before the secondary school, while about 40% of their counterparts in the other two groups had that experience. Table 3.10 shows the percentage of the participants' years of English learning in each group.

Table 3.10 English Background of the Participants in Percentage (N=81)

Years of English Learning	Group 1 (%)	Group 2 (%)	Group 3 (%)	Average (%)
8	59	53	58	57
9	16	16	15	15
10	13	14	11	11
11	5	8	14	9
12	5	5	5	5
Beyond 12	2	4	3	3

Question number 4 in the background survey addressed the students' perceived reading ability. The participants were required to choose one of the three levels - good, fair, and poor - to describe their reading ability. The results indicated that most of the students considered their reading ability in English as "fair" (75%). Just 13% of the participants considered their reading ability as "poor" and 12% considered their reading ability as "excellent". Table 3.11 shows the percentage corresponding to each group in regard to the students' perception of reading ability.

Table 3.11 Participants' Perception of their Reading Ability (N=81)

Reading Ability	Group 1 (%)	Group 2 (%)	Group3 (%)	Average (%)
Good	15	15	7	12
Fair	70	74	81	75
Poor	15	11	12	13

3.8.2 Data Collection Procedures

The methodological design implemented for the main study consisted of pretest, treatment, and posttest. Before the pedagogical intervention, all the 81 participants were pretested by the RCT, thus to identify possible non-linguistic factors that may affect reading comprehension, and to set the baseline of comparison. After the pretest, the researcher conducted the treatment by herself and taught the three groups of students in the normal classroom environment of the Advanced English Course. The course involved two 2-hour class sessions per week for a semester (18 weeks). To obtain a valid and reliable picture of the effects of the reading tasks, four different types of instruments were used: 1) a reading comprehension test utilized for the pretest and posttest, 2) students' written feedback, 3) a student questionnaire, and 4) a student

interview. Each instrument underwent extensive piloting, which was described previously in Section 3.7.

Before the pedagogical intervention, the teacher gave a 20-minute introduction to the RS group about summary writing. The students were taught to write summaries in their own words while paying attention to connectors, the main points, and avoiding redundancy and copying. Also, the students were given examples of summaries. The purpose was to clarify the students' difficulties in summary writing before the intervention.

During the 18-week semester, the 81 participants enrolled in the Advanced English Course read three narrative texts and eight expository texts (see Appendix A) which were required in *A New English Course*, book 5. There were more expository texts than narrative ones because this textbook was designed for third-year English major students at university level. All of the texts were new to the participants, but they had some related background knowledge.

The teaching procedures in the three groups were all composed of three steps: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading, as proposed by Yiğiter, Sariçoban, and Gürses (2005). Based on the elements suggested by Brown (1994), which include five sections of teaching procedures - goals, objectives, materials and equipment, procedures, and evaluation - the researcher created the lesson plan for each class session (See Appendix C for a sample). During the pedagogical intervention of this study, the pre-reading and during-reading stages were the same among the three groups, except at the post-reading stage when the experimental groups wrote summaries or journals, while the control group did not write but orally discussed questions. The teaching procedures of

reading with summary writing, reading with journal writing, and reading with oral discussion are as follows.

At the pre-reading stage, the teacher divided the students into small groups of five or six members. The students were allowed to choose their groups. After that, the teacher introduced the text that students were going to read by showing them the title, and had them predict what the text would be about based on the text title and Pre-reading Questions in the textbook. For example, before the students read Text I, Unit Six, *Preparing for College*, they discussed their experiences about the National College Entrance Examination, how they felt about that experience, how they thought students in the western countries prepare for college, etc. After that, the teacher and students discussed Dictionary Work in the textbook, where there were some of the new words and expressions of the text. Then a few minutes were given to the students to look up the words in the dictionaries in case they still had questions. The teacher walked around and helped the students with the vocabularies if needed.

At the while-reading stage, the students read the text for the first time. The researcher told the students they must try their best to read the text within the time limit. She calculated the time limit based on the word number of the text and the standard set by the National Curriculum for College English Majors of Higher Education in P. R. C (2002, p. 13), which is “on the basis of understanding the main idea of the text, the third-year English major students read 140-180 English words per minute.” The purpose of giving the students time limit was to avoid the possibility that the students’ reading comprehension was affected by the time designated to reading. The students then reread the text. During this stage, the teacher explained the reading strategies which may be employed, and explained the text intensively.

At the post-reading stage, the teacher gave the RS and RJ groups 15 minutes each to write summaries or journals. It should be noted that students in the RJ group could choose to follow the suggested format of journals (see Appendix F) or write without referring to it. The control group, on the other hand, orally discussed with their group members the Comprehension Questions on the same texts within the same time limit.

In the control group, the teacher gave the correct answers on the board immediately after the students had finished their discussion, concerned that they might have forgotten their discussion if the answers were withheld until the next meeting. Within the same time, the students in the experimental groups shared summaries or journals with their group members and then submitted their writings to the teacher, which means summaries from the RS group and journals from the RJ group. For the experimental groups, the teacher's feedback was given to the students the next time.

One noteworthy thing is that teacher's feedback, but not grades, were given for the students' tasks. In her feedback regarding the summaries, the teacher commented on how the students had understood the text, how they had used the methods of selection, abstraction, cohesion, and addition, and gave suggestions on how to improve the summary. In her feedback regarding the journals, the teacher dialogued with the students in regards to their ideas. Suggestions were also given if some misunderstandings were identified. For the oral discussion group, the teacher checked the answers to the Comprehension Questions with the students when their group discussion was over. The reason why no grades were given was that the researcher always kept in mind the purpose of the present study, which was to improve students' reading comprehension, and that the students' continuous learning was central to the

study. The worry that some students might be discouraged by low grades made the researcher decide to give only feedback.

Students' written feedback was administered three times during the 18-week pedagogical intervention. The first written feedback was conducted after the students had finished reading Text I of Unit One - *Hit the Nail on the Head*, and had completed their reading tasks. The second entry of written feedback was written after Unit Five - *The Plug-in Drag: TV and the American Family*, and the third entry of feedback was conducted after Unit Eleven, *Cultivating a Hobby* (see Appendix J for students' sample feedback entries).

The questionnaire was administered at the end of the pedagogical intervention, when the participants had finished the posttest. The students answered five Likert-scale questions and five open-ended questions concerning their attitudes towards the tasks.

One week after the pedagogical intervention, the semi-structured oral interviews were conducted with 18 students. Based on the students' responses to the questionnaire and to the written feedback, two guided questions addressing the students' suggestions and their perceptions of good reading tasks were added, namely, "If you could change one thing about the task of reading with summary writing, what would it be?" and "What do you think is the best way to improve reading ability?" That is, there were seven guide questions in the interview (see Appendix H). The researcher asked the 18 respondents if they could be in the present study. When they agreed to that, the researcher made appointments with them to conduct the interviews. All the semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted in January, 2008. The interviews were conducted individually in Chinese and each of the interviewees knew what the interviews would be like and that the interviews would be recorded. Prior to the

recording, the researcher told each interviewee that the interview was for collecting data for the researcher's dissertation and that it was not going to affect their grade. In addition, they were informed that there were no right or wrong answers, no scores, and no student evaluations.

Although the open-ended questions were based on a predetermined interview schedule, questions were open-ended for the purpose of eliciting deep information (see Appendix I for a sample interview script). Each interview started with a short warming-up question such as "How are you today?", "How's everything going?" The purpose was to make the respondents relax and feel comfortable. Some other questions were improvised, based on the nature of each conversation. The interview time for each respondent was varied, depending on how much information he/she was willing to share. On average, each interview lasted about 15-20 minutes.

3.9 Summary

This chapter described the research methodology employed for the present study. This study was conducted with 81 students from three intact groups: RS, RJ, and RO groups. The instruments used to elicit the data were the Reading Comprehension Test, students' written feedback, written questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. The results of the data analyses will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The main purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of the current study in response to the seven research questions postulated in Chapter One. This chapter is organized into two sections. The first section deals with the quantitative analysis of the participants' performance on the pretest and posttest by using statistical methods. The second section reports the results of the data elicited through the questionnaire, the students' written feedback, and the semi-structured interview from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives.

4.1 Assessment of Reading Comprehension

The quasi-experimental design of this study made it possible to find answers to the first five research questions (see Section 1.4). This part describes the students' performance on the pretest and posttest as assessed by the RCT. It is necessary to note that all the 81 students took part in the pretest and posttest. The reason is that this quasi-experiment was conducted in the regular class time of the Advanced English Course, which was compulsory for all the third-year students. Attendance was required.

4.1.1 Pretest Results

As was mentioned before in Section 3.4.2, the RCT was employed to evaluate the participants' reading comprehension ability before the pedagogical intervention. The

findings of the pretest would be used to set the baseline for comparison and to help interpret the findings, particularly if any improvement or difference occurred at the end of the experiment.

The pretest was carried out during the first class session of the regular Advanced English Course of the first semester, the academic year of 2007 and 2008. Scoring of the RCT conformed to that of the pilot study. To be specific, each question was allocated one point, which means the maximum score for the RCT was forty.

Descriptive analysis of data was employed to get an overview of the participants' performance on the pretest. Table 4.1 below shows that the average score of the 81 participants on the pretest was 26.33 with 3.11 as the standard deviation. Of all the participants, the highest score was 35 and the lowest 20.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics for the Participants' Performance on the Pretest

(N=81)

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	26.48	2.694
2	25.89	3.042
3	26.63	3.596
Average	26.33	3.110

To compare the average scores (Mean=26.48, 25.89, 26.63) from the three groups, a one-way univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) in SPSS version 15.0 was employed. This method was found to be the most effective because three means were compared and that the samples under comparison were interval and normally distributed. The null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis were set as follows, and the level of significance for testing these hypotheses was set at 0.05.

1) the mean scores of reading comprehension of these three groups of students were not different: $H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3$, where

H_0 = the null hypothesis
 μ_1 = the mean of group 1
 μ_2 = the mean of group 2, and
 μ_3 = the mean of group 3

2) the mean scores of the experimental groups were significantly different from that of the control group: $H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2 \neq \mu_3$, where

H_1 = the alternative hypothesis
 μ_1 = the mean of group 1
 μ_2 = the mean of group 2, and
 μ_3 = the mean of group 3.

Table 4.2 Comparison of the Participants' Performance on the Pretest (N=81)

	Sum of Squares	df.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.296	2	4.148	.423	.657
Within Groups	765.704	78	9.817		
Total	774.000	80			

Not significant at the 0.05 level ($p > 0.05$)

Table 4.2 shows the results of the one-way ANOVA. It was found that the differences between the experimental groups and the control group were not significant ($F_{(2, 78)}=0.42$, $P > 0.05$). The probability of accepting the null hypothesis was that the p value must be greater than 0.05, the level of significance set before. In this case, the p value (0.657) was higher than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis that the mean scores of the experimental groups and that of the control group were equal was accepted. That is, the three groups were not different in their overall reading ability before the pedagogical intervention. Consequently, the three treatment types - treatment 1: RS (reading with summary writing), treatment 2: RJ (reading with journal writing), and treatment 3: RO (reading with oral discussion) - were randomly assigned to the three

groups of this research study. Treatments 1 and 2, consisting of training of source-based writing, were assigned to Groups 2 and 3, respectively. Treatment 3 consisting of oral discussion of the Comprehension Questions was assigned to group 1.

4.1.2 Posttest Results

The posttest served to measure the effects of the pedagogical intervention on the students' reading ability. It was administered when the pedagogical intervention was finished. The same RCT used for the pretest was used for the posttest. Scoring of the assessments also conformed to the same criteria employed for the pretest.

The null hypotheses to be verified were as follows. First, the multivariate means of the three groups were not significantly different. The corresponding alternative hypothesis was that those means were significantly different. Second, MANOVA results testing interactions among the three independent variables, namely, reading tasks, text types, and gender, indicated no significant interactions. The alternative hypothesis in that case was that those variables significantly interacted with each other. The level of significance was set at 0.05 for all the hypotheses. These statistical methods were also used for the global and individual comparisons of the means between and among groups for the posttest.

4.1.2.1 Answer to Research Question 1:

Do reading-writing connections facilitate the reading comprehension development of Chinese EFL students?

The participants' performances on the pretest and posttest were compared in order to verify if there were any improvements in the students' reading comprehension,

thus to examine the effects of the pedagogical intervention. Descriptive statistics was used as a tool to get an overall picture of the students' performance. As shown in Table 4.3 below, the average mean score (Mean=29.06) of the 81 participants on the posttest was 2.73 higher than that on the pretest (Mean=26.33). As for specific groups, all of the three groups improved on the posttest. Among them, the RS group improved the most from 26.48 to 30.41 by 3.93 points, followed by the RJ group which improved 2.60 points (from 25.89 to 28.49), followed by the RO group which improved 1.67 points (from 26.63 to 28.30).

Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics for the Results from the Pretest and Posttest (N=81)

Group	Tests	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
RS	Pretest	26.48	2.694
	Posttest	30.41	3.092
RJ	Pretest	25.89	3.042
	Posttest	28.49	3.732
RO	Pretest	26.63	3.596
	Posttest	28.30	3.156
Average	Pretest	26.33	3.110
	Posttest	29.06	3.507

With regard to the improvement of each group, paired-sample *t*-tests were used to perform the comparison of the pretest and posttest, thus to verify the potential effects of the pedagogical intervention on the EFL learners. This statistical analysis was appropriate because they compared the means of two variables - the pretest and posttest - for each group. The null hypothesis to be verified was that the means from the pretest were equal to those from the posttest. The alternative hypothesis was that the means of the posttest were higher than those of the pretest.

Table 4.4 Comparison of Participants' Performance on the Pretest and Posttest

Group	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.
RS	-3.926	2.183	-9.347	26	.001*
RJ	-1.926	2.645	-3.784	26	.001*
RO	-1.333	1.687	-4.107	26	.001*

*Significant at 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$)

Results of paired-sample t tests as shown in Table 4.4 indicated that all the three groups improved on the posttest. For the RS group, the difference of the two means (-3.926) was from 26.48 to 30.41. For the RJ group, the mean difference (-1.926) was from 25.89 to 28.49, while the difference (-1.333) for the RO group was from 26.63 to 28.30. The t values (-9.347, -3.784, -4.107) were used in these tests because the assumption of homogeneity of variance were all met. This means that the variances of the samples were equal. Further, Table 4.4 shows that the p values were all less than the significance level (0.05) set before. Therefore, the null hypotheses were rejected. That is, the means of the three groups' pretest and posttest performance were significantly different, which suggests that the reading performance of the participants in all the groups improved after the 18-week intervention.

4.1.2.2 Answer to Research Question 2:

Do students in the experimental groups show greater reading comprehension than those in the control group?

Table 4.5 below shows the results of the descriptive analysis of the participants' performance on the posttest, which include the mean scores and standard deviations.

Table 4.5 Descriptive Statistics for the Participants' Performance on the Posttest

Scores	Group	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
Short-answer Questions	RS	15.37	1.786
	RJ	14.49	2.202
	RO	13.93	2.080
	Average	14.59	2.104
Multiple-choice Questions	RS	15.04	2.514
	RJ	14.00	2.617
	RO	14.37	2.239
	Average	14.47	2.499
Total	RS	30.41	3.092
	RJ	28.49	3.732
	RO	28.30	3.156
	Average	29.06	3.507

According to Table 4.5, the average score of the 81 participants was 29.06, and the standard deviation was 3.51. The two experimental groups had average scores of 30.41 (RS) and 28.49 (RJ), respectively, while the control group achieved 28.30 points as its average score. Results also indicated that of all the three groups, the group which received treatment 1 – the RS group- performed the best on short-answer (Mean=15.37) and multiple-choice questions (Mean=15.04). Another noteworthy finding was that the students' average score of short-answer questions (Mean=14.59, SD=2.10) was higher than that of multiple-choice questions (Mean=14.47, SD=2.50). In addition, the highest score (38) was achieved by one student in the RJ group, while the lowest (22) was given to one student from the RO group.

Table 4.6 below shows the students' average scores in terms of different question types. It was found that students from the RS group performed best in all four categories of questions. Overall, the students from all three groups achieved the highest score on main idea questions (Mean=8.12), followed by inferential ones (Mean=7.52), and they performed the worst in answering questions about vocabulary (Mean=6.51).

Further examination revealed that the experimental groups performed better than the control group in all the question types except the detail questions.

Table 4.6 Participants' Average Scores in Terms of Question Types (N=81)

Question Type	RS	RJ	RO	Average
Main Idea	8.84	8.02	7.52	8.12
Vocabulary	6.75	6.43	6.35	6.51
Detail	7.02	6.72	7.01	6.91
Inferential	7.56	7.54	7.50	7.52

MANOVA was used to verify whether the differences of means were significant. The null hypothesis to be verified was that the multivariate means of the three groups at each level were not significantly different. The alternative hypothesis was that the multivariate means of the two experimental groups were higher than that of the control group.

The comparison of multivariate means corresponding to the participants' performance is shown in Table 4.7 below, which indicated significant differences among the three groups on the posttest. The p values for Wilks' Lambda multivariate test was 0.03, which was lower than the level of significance (0.05) set before. Therefore, the null hypothesis that the multivariate mean scores of the experimental groups and that of the control group were equal was rejected. That is, the mean scores of the experimental groups were higher than that of the control group. The researcher then concluded that different reading tasks had significantly different effects on the two dependent variables, and that the reading comprehension ability of the three groups of students was statistically different after the pedagogical intervention. The best performance was exhibited by the RS group (Mean=30.41).

Table 4.7 MANOVA Results of the Participants' Performance in Terms of Reading Tasks (N=81)

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	.012	3053.410	2	77	.000
Group	.871	2.746	4	154	.030*

*Significant at 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$)

Results so far support the alternative hypothesis that reading-writing connections contribute to the development of English reading ability. Nonetheless, it was necessary to analyze the three groups' performance on each of the two dependent variables, namely, short-answer and multiple-choice questions. Table 4.8 below shows the results of univariate tests for the effects of reading tasks.

The participants' scores on the short-answer test showed significant difference ($F_{(2, 78)}=3.96, p=0.023$). In contrast, there was no significant difference found on the multiple-choice test scores ($F_{(2, 78)}=2.24, p=0.113$). The findings suggested that different reading tasks had statistically significant effects on the participants' performance on the short-answer test, while the tasks did not have the same effects on their performance on the multiple-choice test.

Table 4.8 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects in Terms of Reading Tasks

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Groups	Short-answer	32.667	2	16.333	3.962	.023*
	Multiple-choice	27.136	2	13.568	2.239	.113
Error	Short-answer	321.556	78	4.123		
	Multiple-choice	472.593	78	6.059		
Total	Short-answer	17719	81			
	Multiple-choice	16568	81			

*Significant at 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$)

Scheffe in the Post Hoc multiple comparisons for observed means was calculated to identify where the significant difference occurred. As shown in Table 4.9

below, the average score of the RS group on the short-answer test was significantly higher than that of the RO group. It is noted that the RJ group was classified both with the higher group of RS and the lower group of RO. Because the mean difference (0.88) between the RJ group (Mean=14.49) and the RS group (Mean=15.37) was greater than that (0.56) between the RJ group (Mean=14.49) and the RO group (Mean=13.93), it was decided that the RJ and RO groups did not have significant difference in their reading comprehension. That is, they performed significantly lower than the RS group.

Table 4.9 Results of Post Hoc Scheffe Test in Terms of Short-answer Questions

Group	Number	Subset	
RO	27	13.93	
RJ	27	14.49	14.49
RS	27	15.37	
Sig.		.93	.922

Results from the descriptive analysis and MANOVA supported the fact that the students' reading ability was significantly different after the 18-week pedagogical intervention. It is interesting to note that even though all the three groups' scores on the posttest improved, the experimental RS group showed more marked improvement than the control RO group, whereas the task of reading with journal writing did not have similar statistically greater effects. Therefore, the researcher concluded the students benefitted more by reading with summary writing than by reading with journal writing or reading with oral discussion.

4.1.2.3 Answer to Research Question 3:

Are there any significant effects of text types on Chinese EFL students' reading comprehension?

Table 4.10 Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Performance in Terms of Text Types (N=81)

Text Type	Test Type	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation
Narrative Texts	Short-answer questions	RS	7.222	1.396
		RJ	6.444	1.948
		RO	6.212	1.350
		Average	6.864	1.595
	Multiple-choice questions	RS	7.519	1.341
		RJ	6.704	1.772
		RO	6.703	1.919
		Average	6.951	1.724
		Total	13.820	2.499
Expository Texts	Short-answer questions	RS	8.148	1.406
		RJ	8.100	1.660
		RO	7.905	1.087
		Average	8.047	1.412
	Multiple-choice questions	RS	7.519	1.051
		RJ	7.185	.834
		RO	6.889	1.013
		Average	7.198	.993
		Total	15.245	2.104

To answer research question 3, descriptive statistics was calculated as the first step in order to get a general picture of the participants' performance on different text types. After that, a MANOVA test was utilized to verify whether or not text types had significantly different effects on the students' reading comprehension. The null hypothesis that the students' scores in narrative and expository texts were not significantly different and the corresponding alternative hypothesis of significant difference were set.

Table 4.10 above shows the students' performances in narrative and expository texts. It was found that the participants' average scores of expository texts (Mean=15.25) were higher than those of the narrative ones (Mean=13.82) by 1.43 points. In addition, the group who received the treatment of reading with summary

writing performed better in both narrative (Mean=14.74) and expository texts (Mean=15.67) than the other two groups.

Table 4.11 MANOVA Results of the Participants' Performance in Terms of Text Types (N=81)

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	.009	3195.826	2	60	.000
Text type	.531	2.483	2	45	.008*

*Significant at 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$)

Table 4.11 shows the MANOVA results. It was found that the students' scores in narrative and expository texts were statistically different ($p=0.008$) for Wilks' Lambda multivariate test. Therefore, the null hypothesis that the students' multivariate mean scores in narrative and expository texts were equal was rejected. That is, the students' mean scores of expository texts were statistically higher than those of the narrative texts. The researcher then concluded that different text types had significantly different effects on the students' reading comprehension, and that the students were more likely to perform better in expository texts than in narrative ones.

Results from tests of between-subjects effects as shown in Table 4.12 below revealed that the differences lay in the short-answer questions ($F_{(1, 79)}=6.09$, $p=0.003$) where the students performed significantly higher in expository texts (Mean=7.198) than they did in narrative ones (Mean=6.951). Nevertheless, the results showed that the students did not demonstrate significant difference as measured by multiple-choice questions ($F_{(1, 79)}=2.698$, $p=0.074$).

Table 4.12 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects in Terms of Text Types

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Text types	Short-answer	45.852	1	22.926	6.089	.003*
	Multiple-choice	21.802	1	10.901	2.698	.074
Error	Short-answer	293.704	79	3.765		
	Multiple-choice	315.185	79	4.041		
Total	Short-answer	17719	81			
	Multiple-choice	16568	81			

*Significant at 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$)

4.1.2.4 Answer to Research Question 4:

Are there any significant effects of gender on Chinese EFL students' reading comprehension?

This section addresses the fourth research question which asks whether gender difference affects reading comprehension. The researcher proposed to employ descriptive statistics and MANOVA tests to answer this research question. By using descriptive statistics, we could get an overall picture of male and female students' performance. By using MANOVA, the difference of the student's performance could be verified.

Table 4.13 Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Performance in terms of Gender (N=81)

Gender	Test Type	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male(26)	Short-answer questions	14.23	2.438
	Multiple-choice questions	14.42	1.880
	Total	29.01	3.334
Female(55)	Short-answer questions	14.88	2.533
	Multiple-choice questions	14.24	2.207
	Total	29.12	3.616

Table 4.13 is a description of male and female students' scores measured by short-answer and multiple-choice questions. The student number, the average score and standard deviation are shown. It was found that female students (Mean=29.12, SD=3.62) performed better than their male counterparts (Mean=29.01, SD=3.33) by 0.11 points. Closer investigation of the data revealed that the female students' mean score on the short-answer test (Mean=14.88) was 0.65 points higher than that of the males (Mean=14.23), while male students performed slightly better on multiple-choice tests (Mean=14.42) than females (Mean=14.24) by 0.18 points.

Table 4.14 Male and Female Students' Scores in Terms of Passages and Question Types (N=81)

Gender	Passage	Mean	Question Type	Mean
Male (26)	I	6.94	Main idea	8.17
	II	7.59	Vocabulary	6.09
	III	7.00	Detail	6.37
	IV	7.48	Inference	8.38
Female (55)	I	6.82	Main idea	7.89
	II	7.65	Vocabulary	7.27
	III	7.09	Detail	7.01
	IV	7.56	Inference	6.95

Also, it was found from Table 4.14 that females outperformed on three of the passages, which were Passage II about the supermarket (Mean=7.65), Passage III about European Gypsies (Mean=7.09), and Passage IV about dowsing (Mean=7.56), while males performed better only on one passage which was about slum clearance in Birmingham (Mean=6.94). Furthermore, female students performed better on the two question types of vocabulary (M=7.27) and detail (Mean=7.01), while males performed better on the main idea questions (Mean=8.17) and inferential questions (Mean=8.38).

MANOVA was conducted to verify the possible effects of gender on EFL

students' reading comprehension. Table 4.15 does not show any significant effects of the gender variable ($F_{(1, 79)}=0.83, p=0.44$).

Table 4.15 MANOVA Results of the Participants' Performance in Terms of Gender (N=81)

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	.016	2368.957	2	78	.000
Gender	.979	.825	2	78	.442

Not significant at 0.05 level ($p>0.05$)

Table 4.16 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects in Terms of Gender (N=81)

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	Short-answer	4.677	1	4.677	.746	.390
	Multiple-choice	2.894	1	2.894	.651	.422
Error	Short-answer	495.052	79	6.266		
	Multiple-choice	315.185	79	4.447		
Total	Short-answer	17719	81			
	Multiple-choice	16568	81			

Not significant at 0.05 level ($p>0.05$)

Table 4.16 shows the results of univariate tests for the effects of gender difference on the students' reading comprehension. It was found that the students' gender difference did not have significant effects on the result of the short-answer test ($F_{(1, 79)}, p=0.39$) or multiple-choice test ($F_{(1, 79)}, p=0.42$). These findings help to support the result of Table 4.13 that female students (Mean=29.12) performed slightly better than the male students (Mean=29.01), although not to the degree of significance. As a result, the researcher concluded that students' gender difference did not have statistically significant effects on the participants' reading comprehension, as measured by short-answer or multiple-choice questions.

4.1.2.5 Answer to Research Question 5:

Are there any significant interactions among the three independent variables: reading tasks, text types, and gender?

Descriptive statistics and MANOVA were employed to answer the fifth research question concerning the interactions among the independent variables. Table 4.17 below gives descriptive statistics for the participants' scores in terms of reading tasks, text types, and gender. It was found that the female students who received the treatment of reading with summary writing performed the highest score (Mean=8.22). Overall, the lowest score went to the female students (Mean=6.58) from the RO group on the multiple-choice test for narrative texts.

Table 4.17 Participants' Performance in Terms of Tasks, Text Types and Gender (N=81)

Tests	Group	Gender	Mean Score	
			Narrative	Expository
Short-answer test	RS	Male	7.222	8.000
		Female	7.214	8.222
	RJ	Male	6.778	7.444
		Female	7.611	7.889
	RO	Male	6.875	7.875
		Female	6.842	7.368
Multiple-choice test	RS	Male	8.000	7.111
		Female	7.279	7.722
	RJ	Male	7.111	7.333
		Female	6.722	7.056
	RO	Male	7.000	7.000
		Female	6.579	6.842
Average			14.15	14.91

Table 4.18 MANOVA Results for Interactions of Tasks, Text types, and Gender

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Tasks *Text types	.832	2.417	3	36	.031*
Tasks *Gender	.961	.751	4	148	.562
Gender*Text types	.870	1.800	3	36	.165
Tasks*Text types*Gender	.993	0.242	1	36	.626

*Significant at 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$)

The MANOVA results shown in Table 4.18 yielded significant interactions between independent variables reading tasks and text types ($F=2.42$, $p=0.031$) for Wilks' Lambda multivariate test. This suggested that the students from various groups performed differently when reading texts of different types. However, no significant interactions were found between reading tasks and gender ($p=0.56$), between gender and text types ($p=0.17$), or among reading tasks, text types and gender ($p=0.63$).

Table 4.19 below shows results of univariate tests for the interactions of the three independent variables on each of the dependent variables. The results indicated significant interactions between reading tasks and text types as measured by the short-answer test ($p=0.032$). Nonetheless, no significant interactions were detected among other variables.

Table 4.19 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects in Terms of the Three Variables

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Group* Text types	Short-answer	1.458	2	.182	1.199	.032*
	Multiple-choice	12.136	2	3.214	.406	.55
Group* Gender	Short-answer	17.199	2	8.600	1.432	.245
	Multiple-choice	.681	2	.340	.080	.923
Gender* Text types	Short-answer	16.216	1	8.108	1.347	.265
	Multiple-choice	4.736	1	2.368	.495	.611
Group*Text types* Gender	Short-answer	.040	2	.040	.242	.626
	Multiple-choice	.566	2	.063	.495	.611

*Significant at 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$)

A simple effects test is generally done after a statistically significant interaction is detected. The computation involves analyzing the effect of one factor on each level of the other factor. In this study, significant interactions were identified between reading tasks and text types. Therefore, it was necessary to answer this question: Does the effect of the reading task factor depend on different levels of the text type factor? There were three simple effects to be performed for this question:

1. Does the text type factor have a significant effect on the scores with the group who received the treatment of reading with summary writing?
2. Does the text type factor have a significant effect on the scores with the group who received the treatment of reading with journal writing?
3. Does the text type factor have a significant effect on the scores with the group who received the treatment of reading with oral discussion?

Unique Sums of Squares in Syntax of SPSS were used to answer the above three simple effects questions. Simple effects of the factor text type for each level of the groups were calculated: Text type Within Task (1), Text type Within Task (2), and Text type Within Task (3). It's noteworthy that the number specified after a "Within" factor refers to the level of that factor.

Results from Unique Sums of Squares (Table 4.20) revealed that the significant interactions occurred in the RJ group ($p=0.009$). That means text types significantly influenced reading comprehension of the participants in the journal writing condition ($F_{(1, 75)}= 4.920, p < 0.05$). The RJ group achieved the average score of 12.93 in the narrative text, which was significantly lower than their average score in the expository texts (Mean=14.89). However, text types did not influence reading

comprehension of the participants in the summary writing treatment, ($F_{(1,75)} = 0.17, p = 0.285$) or those in the reading with oral discussion condition ($F_{(1,75)} = 0.25, p = 0.559$).

Table 4.20 Tests of Significance for Posttest Scores Using Unique Sums of Squares

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig. of F
Within Cells	1326.57	75	20.08		
Text type within group (RS)	2.67	1	2.67	0.17	0.285
Text type within group (RJ)	137.438	1	137.438	4.920	0.009 *
Text type within group (RO)	3.085	1	3.085	0.25	0.559

*Significant at 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$)

4.2 Students' Attitudes towards the Reading Tasks

This section is incorporated into this research in order to answer the last two research questions concerning the students' attitudes towards the reading tasks, the problems they encountered when doing the tasks, and their preference for specific reading tasks. Data obtained from the written questionnaire, the students' written feedback, and the semi-structured interview, were submitted for either quantitative or qualitative analysis. In this part, examples were quoted from the original answers provided by the students. In order to preserve student authenticity, all quotes have been maintained in their original form in cases where students responded in English. For those who responded in Chinese, the researcher translated their responses into English as accurately as possible.

It is noteworthy to mention that participants' real names were replaced with codes in all the examples used to illustrate the patterns found in the data. Students' coding followed the same format. First, the researcher gave a number to each student randomly, and this number was always used for the specific student in the data analysis of the study. Second, the researcher coded each student according to his/her group

followed by the specific number. For example, student number one from the RS group was coded RS1, her counterparts from RJ and RO groups were RJ1 and RO1, respectively.

4.2.1 Answer to Research Question 6:

What are Chinese EFL students' attitudes towards the three reading tasks?

This research question addresses the students' attitudes towards the three reading tasks. Data elicited through the self-report written questionnaires, the students' written feedback, and semi-structured interviews were submitted for qualitative analysis to find out the categories of the students' attitudes.

4.2.1.1 Data from the Written Questionnaire

The written questionnaire was conducted with all of the 81 students when they finished the posttest. The 81 questionnaires distributed were all returned. The researcher checked carefully whenever each respondent submitted their questionnaire, thus to make sure no blank sheet was submitted. As a result, only two questionnaires were discarded for the reason of uncompleted information. The remaining 79 questionnaires were analyzed either quantitatively or qualitatively.

As the first half of the questionnaire, 5-point Likert-scale questions that ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" were utilized in order to make the distinction clear between those students who agreed with the statement and those who did not. The students' responses to the questionnaires were coded and keyed into the SPSS program, 15.0 for statistical analysis. The five-point items were coded into a five-point scale as follows:

Strongly agree = 5
 Agree = 4
 Undecided = 3
 Disagree = 2
 Strongly disagree = 1

In scoring the students' responses, one point was allocated to strongly disagree, two for disagree, three for undecided, four for agree, and five for strongly agree. That is, a higher number of points meant more positive attitudes the students had towards the tasks. It is noteworthy that the students' scores on the questionnaire did not represent their reading comprehension ability but only their attitudes toward the tasks.

In Table 4.21 below, significant variations in frequency of students' reported attitudes are not taken into consideration. Instead, frequency and percentage of choice are shown. These simple descriptive statistical procedures were done to establish the baseline information on each group.

Table 4.21 Students' Responses on the Likert-scale Written Questionnaire (N=79)

Content	Frequency/Percentage of Respondents				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I like the task I've done.	3/3.8%	41/51.9%	15/19%	11/13.9%	9/11.4%
2. The task I've done will improve my reading comprehension.	16/20.3%	30/38%	28/35.4%	3/3.8%	2/2.5%
3. The task I've done helps to improve my reading comprehension of narrative texts more than expository texts.	2/2.5%	36/45.6%	9/11.4%	22/27.8%	10/12.7%
4. The task I've done helps to improve my reading comprehension of expository texts more than narrative texts.	4/5.1%	31/39.2%	20/25.3%	21/26.6%	3/3.8%
5. I will continue doing the task	1/1.3%	41/51.9%	25/31.6%	7/8.9%	5/6.3%

The quantitative analysis of the data elicited through the written questionnaire revealed that more than half of the students were satisfied with the reading tasks. The number of the students shows that 44 (55.7%) of the total 79 students reported liking the reading tasks. Of the five question items, the greatest proportion of respondents agreed with statement number 2 (58.3%) that the reading tasks helped them with their reading comprehension. Interestingly, it was also to this question item that the respondents had the highest percentage of undecided attitudes. Meanwhile, about half of the students felt the reading tasks improved their understanding of different text types. To be specific, 38 students (48.1%) thought their understanding of narrative texts were improved, and 35 (44.3%) felt they understood expository texts better. Also, the participants showed a tendency towards the positive with 42 (53%) agreeing with statement number 5 that they would continue doing the reading tasks. Equally important, 25 respondents (32%) chose “undecided” as their response to this question item.

Table 4.22 below presents the average scores of the students’ responses to the written questionnaire. It was found that the students had the highest average score (Mean=4.68, SD=.933) on item 2, which means that many students thought that the reading tasks could improve their reading comprehension. Close examination of the data revealed that the students in the RJ group had the highest average score (Mean=3.98) followed by the RO group (Mean=3.88), while the students in the RS group received the lowest mean score (Mean=3.85). That means that the students liked the task of reading with journal writing the most, followed by the task of reading with oral discussion. They had the lowest preference for the task of reading with summary writing.

Table 4.22 Means of the Participants' Attitudes in Terms of Groups (N=79)

Group	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item5	Average
RS	4.37	4.74	3.11	2.67	4.37	3.85
RJ	4.70	4.52	3.13	3.07	4.51	3.98
RO	4.48	4.78	3.33	2.63	4.20	3.88
Total	4.52	4.68	3.19	2.79	4.36	3.91

Table 4.23 Means of the Participants' Attitudes in Terms of Reading Ability (N=79)

Reading Ability	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Average
Poor	4.45	4.50	3.08	2.78	4.06	3.77
Fair	4.53	4.71	3.19	2.80	4.45	3.94
Good	4.62	4.86	3.30	2.82	4.55	4.03

Descriptive analysis was conducted to examine the attitudes of the students of different reading abilities. Table 4.23 shows the mean scores of the students' attitudes in terms of their perceived reading ability. The students who perceived their reading ability as good received the highest score of 4.03, followed by those who perceived their reading ability as fair (Mean=3.94). The lowest score was given to the students who perceived their reading ability as low (Mean=3.77). This means that the higher the students perceived their reading ability, the more positive attitudes they tended to have.

A qualitative analysis of the open-ended questionnaire was used as supplementary data to help interpret the results of the statistical analysis. Of all of the 79 respondents, 17 wrote in Chinese, which the researcher translated into English, while the others wrote in English.

The open-ended questionnaire data supported the information obtained from the Likert-scale questionnaire that the students in the RJ group tended to have more positive attitudes than those in the RS and RO groups. Participants' responses to question items number 6 (What do you like/dislike most about the tasks you've done? Why/why not?), and number 7 (How do/don't you think the tasks you've done will help

you improve your reading comprehension?) provided some important insights into why the reading tasks had or had no effects on reading comprehension. As for the use of summary writing on their reading ability, 14 students recognized its importance. For example:

RS13: “By writing summary, I think my reading ability has been improved, especially my ability to generalize the main idea.”

RS15: “My general understanding of the text has been improved.”

The positive comments mentioned above showed students’ appreciation of the degree to which summary writing facilitated their reading comprehension. Nevertheless, 10 students reported not liking the task. As student RS23 put it, *“I just don’t like it because it’s more difficult compared with doing comprehension exercises.”* Student RS26 shared the negative attitude and felt it was boring to write summaries for every text. Instead, he preferred to write when he felt like it.

Seventeen students in the RJ group were satisfied with the tasks. For example, student RJ8 reported that journal writing improved her understanding of the gist because *“that’s what journals needed.”* Similarly, student RJ26 stated, *“Writing journals help(s) me to express myself in ways I have never done before. I can get my feeling out on paper than before.”* Six students in the RJ group had neutral attitudes toward the tasks. They liked the freedom of journal writing, but did not like writing regularly. For example:

RJ10: “I like it because it may remind me to insist on reading, but sometimes I had to write when I didn’t want to at all, just to fulfill the task.”

RJ11: “Through writing journals, I may express my ideas freely and practice writing, but I don’t like reading the texts assigned, it’s too rigid”
(Translated).

Similar to the other two groups, the RO group demonstrated mixed patterns of attitudes. Fifteen students from this group expressed satisfaction with the task. For example:

RO6: "I like answering the True or False Question. They are easy to judge."

RO25: "I like answering comprehension questions. It helps me understand the text, the details, and the main idea."

Nonetheless, some students (N=6) realized that oral discussion of the questions might not improve their reading ability to a large extent. As student RO20 put it: "*Answering the comprehension questions can't improve my understanding of the main idea.*" Similarly, student RO26 reported answering the comprehension questions did not help her grasp the main idea, the author's writing style, or the logic involved in the source text.

The informants' responses to question number 8 (Will your understanding of narrative or expository texts improve as the result of the reading tasks you've done? Why/why not?) were consistent to their responses to questions number 3 and 4 (see Tables 4.21). It was found that students tended to have varied attitudes concerning their understanding of different text types. Some students felt their understanding of narrative texts was improved.

RS3: "I think my understanding of narrative texts will be improved because they are familiar to me."

RJ7: "Narrative is easy to understand and my skills for reading narrative texts get a remarkable improvement."

RO14: "Narrative, because there are less new words in the narrative texts and they are more interesting."

On the contrary, a few respondents reported that the opposite was true with them. Cited below are some representative examples.

RS19: "writing summaries helps to me know the theme and the supporting details, but it isn't helpful for narrative texts because there are big differences in the ways of expression between west and China."

RJ12: "Expository texts, because there are a lot of expository texts in the textbook in the third-year."

RO13: "Expository texts, whose logic is difficult to grasp. Through reading questions, I may understand the writing procedures, and

the importance of the text, so I think I can understand them better. But what matter for narrative texts are the difficult sentences.”

Meanwhile, some informants stated that their understanding to both narrative and expository texts would improve as a result of the reading tasks. Examples are:

RS18: “It depends. No matter what text type you read, the more you read, the more you will improve.”

RO7: “Both. For narrative, questions helped me understand the logic. For expository, questions helped me master the theme I might have ignored otherwise.”

Nevertheless, a few students did not think their understanding of either narrative or expository texts would be improved, or did not have a clear idea about their improvement. Example (RS26) is representative of this pattern. *“I found no improvement, because I’m not interested in the tasks.”* Meanwhile, RJ9 reported, *“I’m not sure. Maybe narrative will be improved.”*

In summary, this part reports the results elicited through the written questionnaire. Such topics as the effects of different reading tasks on reading comprehension in general, the effects of reading tasks on understanding narrative and expository texts respectively were included. The next part will report the results elicited through the students’ written feedback.

4.2.1.2 Data from the Written Feedback

The purpose of the students’ written feedback was to obtain information about the potential changes of the students’ attitudes over the pedagogical intervention. Due to five absentees, 238 pieces of the students’ feedback emerged for qualitative analysis. It should be noted that even though some students did not submit one or two pieces of the feedback, their answers were still included in the data analysis as long as they submitted their feedback entries for the other texts. The students were allowed to write either in

Chinese or English as long as they felt comfortable. It turned out that most of the feedback entries (N=179) were written in Chinese, which the researcher translated into English. Table 4.24 shows the students attitudes demonstrated in the three entries of feedback.

Table 4.24 Frequency of the Students' Attitudes over the Treatment (N=238)

Group	Feedback	Positive	Medium	Negative	Total
RS	Entry 1	16	7	3	26
	Entry 2	14	7	5	26
	Entry 3	14	6	7	27
RJ	Entry 1	14	9	3	26
	Entry 2	15	8	4	27
	Entry 3	17	6	4	27
RO	Entry 1	16	5	5	26
	Entry 2	15	5	6	26
	Entry 3	15	6	6	27

The First Feedback Entry

The first feedback entry was conducted when the students had finished studying Text I of Unit One, *Hit the Nail on the Head*. As shown in Table 4.24, 78 feedback entries (3 absentees) emerged for qualitative analysis. It was noticed that the same number of students (N=16) from the RS and RO groups had positive attitudes. The RS students reported that summary writing helped them understand the main idea. The RO students seemed to like the task because it enhanced their understanding of the text. As one student (RO1) put it, *"I think it is helpful for me to understand the text, because by doing the exercises, we may know whether we have got the true information, about the person"* (Translated). The RJ students felt quite new to the task and the least number of students (N=14) expressed positive attitudes. For example, student RJ26 who stated, *"My reading skill is very poor so I hope writing journals can improve my reading comprehension."*

It was found that 11 students demonstrated negative attitudes. The same number of students (N=3) from the experimental groups disliked the tasks. Student RS9 stated that it was because she was not good at writing summaries. Similarly, student RJ4 stated his doubts about journal writing and commented:

“I’m sorry I have to say writing journal is absolutely not useful for reading comprehension. Generally speaking, writing journal refers to integrated English, which needs patience and careful work, but reading comprehension focus on speed.”

The most students (N=5) from the RO group did not like the task because it was redundant to them. Student RO22, for example, commented,

“I think it’s useless for me, because from the period of preparing NTEM4 (National Test for English Majors, Band 4) to now, I use this way to finish the reading comprehension. But there is no progress for me.”

Some students did not like answering questions because of their reading speed. As student RO6 claimed, *“The time is not enough. When it was time to discuss the questions I had not finished reading.”*

Equally important, the results showed that the most students (N=9) from the RJ group had medium attitudes. These students believed journal writing might be useful but some doubts still existed. The typical comment was by student RJ20: *“I think it may be well worth. Who knows?”*

The Second Feedback Entry

When half of the quasi-experiment had been conducted, 79 feedback entries (2 absentees) emerged for qualitative analysis. The results revealed that most of the students expressed the same attitudes as they had in the first entry. For example, student RO1 expressed a positive attitude again, but from another angle,

“Oral discussion can improve our reading ability. The heated discussion today helped me to understand the text better.”

In contrast, student RJ14 continued her negative attitudes throughout the experiment. In the second piece of feedback, she claimed: *“Generally speaking, I don’t like writing journals. I feel I don’t have anything to write or to say.”* Similarly, student RS21 reported, *“What summaries need is only the important information and no descriptions are allowed, which I don’t like.”* Meanwhile, many students had more concrete ideas compared with the first feedback. For example, student RS26 said,

“Making (Writing) summary (is) good for us to get the main idea, because we must read back in order to get more details. After that I think we can know the book clearly and deeply. For some difficult parts, maybe I should read slowly and clearly. I think interest is very important. Writing summary helps me concentrate myself on the issue because if I want to write the summary well, I should learn the article well.”

Students RJ25 commented that she liked reading the teacher’s feedback and communicating with the teacher through writing journals,

RJ25: “I like asking questions in the journals and I also like reading the teacher’s answers.”

However, three students (RS12, RS16, RO19) changed their attitudes from positive in the first entry to negative in the second one. Student RS12, for example, stated,

“Although I have said I think summary is a good way to understand a piece of article. Today, to such a specific article, I must say no. There are too many details existing in this one and the importance of, I think, must be these details. Summary is helpful to catch the main idea of a piece of article. Referring to the details, maybe taking notes will be more useful.”

One student (RJ11) changed her attitude from medium to positive in the second entry and stated,

“I think this method helps us to understand the article better. First, I can make a clear mind of the passage through writing a journal. Second, I can list the difficulties in it then solve them one by one. And I will not miss them. Finally, it helps a lot in writing. And the shortcoming is that writing in class wastes a lot of time” (Translated).

The Third Feedback Entry

Eighty one feedback entries were elicited for analysis when the students had finished Unit I of Unit 11: *Cultivating a Hobby*. The results revealed that 2 students from the RJ group changed their attitudes to positive and the most students (N=17) liked the task, followed by the RO group (N=15), while the fewest students from the RS group (N=14) expressed positive attitudes.

Furthermore, it was noticed that the students tended to express their general attitudes towards the tasks. The reason could be that the third entry was conducted when the experiment was about to finish. For instance, student RS7 claimed that summary writing was beneficial to her and she wanted to continue doing it in the future.

RS7: “In my opinion, writing summaries benefits me in the practice of writing and generalizing. By writing summaries, I can know whether I have understood the passages or not. On the other hand, it practices my writing skill and the ability of generalizing. I want to keep doing it, though my skill of summarizing is not good” (Translated).

Some students, such as student RO14, reported that they did not like the questions about details or terms because they were time consuming,

RO14: “I don’t like too detailed questions, or questions with terms because detailed questions do not improve my understanding of the general idea. Sometimes, I spent much time finding the details, but don’t understand the text. It influenced my mood. Questions with terms cause difficulty in understanding the questions themselves, not to mention the answers. They are both time wasting.”

4.2.1.3 Data from the Interview

As reported previously in Section 4.1.2.4, no significant gender differences were identified in this study. Therefore, depending on their attitudes demonstrated in the written questionnaire and the feedback, an equal number of students from each group

were selected for the individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews. To be specific, two students from each group who had positive attitudes, two who had medium attitudes, and two who had negative attitudes were randomly selected from each group, which made six respondents from each group and 18 as a total. Table 4.25 is an overview of the 18 students who were selected for the interviews.

Table 4.25 Overview of the Interviewees (N=18)

Group Attitude	Positive	Medium	Negative
RS	10, 23	12, 25	12, 22
RJ	1, 7	16, 21	8, 21
RO	17, 25	9, 18	2, 26

Based on the interview guided questions, the interviewees shared their attitudes towards the tasks assigned. The data were based on the interviewees' own attitudes and own words regarding their perceptions of the reading tasks. Each of the interviewees' responses was tape-recorded, transcribed and translated into English by the researcher as accurately as possible for a qualitative analysis. The following are descriptions of the recorded interview data.

Student RS23 believed that summary writing was helpful to his English learning,

“...because it practices our writing ability. And we can learn the structure of the article, so we learn the writing skill. For reading, eh, I think it's useful, but the use is not so obvious.”

Two students from the RJ group suggested writing journals before class while the students were previewing the text. As student RJ1 commented,

“Writing journal before class gives us a clue and we can get the gist of a text more accurately and faster by following the questions suggested in the format.”

It is not surprising that even though some students preferred having a suggested journal format, other students refused to follow it. Student RJ21 maintained, “*I don’t like the journal format because it limits my ideas. I like to express my ideas freely.*”

Two interviewees from the RO group commented positively on the task assigned to them.

RO17: “Through answering the questions, I could check whether my understanding to the text was right or wrong.”

RO25: “Orally answering the questions helps me grasp the details soon.”

However, student RO26 claimed that orally answering questions did not help her grasp the main idea because many comprehension questions were about details.

“Most of the questions were about details, which didn’t help understand the main idea. In addition, keeping these questions in mind made me focus only on the information related to the questions, but ignore the other information.”

In short, the data derived from the questionnaire, the students’ written feedback, and the follow-up semi-structured interview were analyzed to construct the categories of students’ attitudes towards the reading tasks. It was found that the students had a positive tendency, while medium and negative attitudes exist.

4.2.2 Answer to Research Question 7: *Which reading tasks are most effective?*

To answer this research question, data obtained from the questionnaires, the students’ written feedback, and interviews with the students were submitted for qualitative analysis.

4.2.2.1 Data from the Written Questionnaire

The questionnaire data showed that, in spite of the positive tendency towards the reading tasks, students felt some changes were necessary. The students’ response to

questions number 9 (Do you have any problems with your reading task? If any, what are they?) revealed that they had some problems with the reading tasks. As for the task of reading with summary writing, student number 12 commented that she always used the fixed sentence structures while writing summaries and did not know how to do otherwise. Student RS8 stated her problem as, *“when I was writing summary of a text which I didn’t like, I couldn’t concentrate my mind on it.”*

The problems of the students from the RJ group were mainly about the contents of the journal. As student RJ10 put it, *“I just wrote whatever I thought about, so sometimes I may be far from the topic.”* Similarly, student RJ1 stated, *“I didn’t like to follow the teacher’s format, but sometimes I didn’t know how to start.”*

Some students from the RO group stated that they had such problems as spending too much time on True/False Questions (RO1, RO13), not knowing how to match the answers to the text information (RO9, RO18), or forgetting the relevant information while answering the questions (RO25).

In their responses to question number 10 (If you could change one thing in the task, what would it be and how?), students made some suggestions about the reading tasks. Examples are as follows:

RS10: “We should read texts of more varied types. And we should connect reading and writing together not only through summary writing, but also imitate writing, etc.”

RJ15: “We should read much more texts which suit our reading ability, both with time limit and without.”

RO2: “reading materials should be more varied and that there should be more critical texts thus to arouse the students to think.”

The above excerpts indicated that students recognized the importance of reading broadly and preferred to read texts of more varied types. Meanwhile, some students believed that they should enlarge their vocabulary, and read a lot of English language materials.

One instance was student RJ7 who suggested: *“I think my vocabulary knowledge is limited that sometimes I don’t understand the text very well.”*

Furthermore, students preferred combining the strengths of different reading tasks in order to improve reading comprehension. According to student RJ16, reading with journal writing and answering comprehension questions were good methods to improve reading comprehension. Student RO9 suggested there should be some summary or journal writing, and more after-class reading. Some students, such as student RO18, suggested providing more open-ended questions for the students to share their ideas, or analyze the logic of the text.

In short, the students’ primary suggestions were as follows: there should be more exercises to improve their vocabulary, the types of reading materials should be more varied, there should be more explanation on the writing style of the source texts, and the strengths of different reading tasks should be combined.

4.2.2.2 Data from the Written Feedback

In their written feedback, especially in the third feedback entry, some students went further and suggested the type of tasks they preferred. It was found that the students liked a more flexible way of learning and suggested a combination of writing and speaking tasks. For instance, student RJ20 suggested,

RJ20: “Combining writing journals and oral discussion is good for reading comprehension. As for journals, we must read the article, understand it, thus to write journals, express our ideas and opinions. As for oral discussion, I think it’s more difficult. It practices our ability to express and oral expression”
(Translated).

Some students suggested doing oral, instead of written summaries, in order to save time.

The excerpt below is an example.

RS10: “I think summary can reflect our reading attitudes and understanding. But it will take much time in doing this in class. So please allow me to suggest that my dear teacher ask me to give oral summary in class.”

Some students mentioned the tasks that specific text types were suitable for. According to student RO14, narrative texts were more suitable for oral discussion because they had things to say:

“I think oral discussion suits narratives better than expository texts, especially the biography about great people.”

4.2.2.3 Data from the Interview

The interview data revealed that the interviewees thought that some changes of the reading tasks were necessary. The interviewees’ suggestions were mainly about text type, text difficulty, and after-class reading practice. Student RS12 worried about the contents of her summary and stated, “*I know I should include only the important information in a summary, but sometimes I just can’t decide what information is important.*” Student RS10 suggested other ways of reading-writing connections and said, “*... we should connect reading and writing together not only through summary writing, but also imitating writing, etc.*” According to student RJ16, reading with journal writing and answering comprehension questions were good methods to improve reading comprehension. In student RO2’s opinion, reading materials should be more varied and that there should be more critical texts to arouse the students to think. Student RO9 suggested there should be some summary writing or journal writing, and more after-class reading. Also, nearly half of the students interviewed commented that the amount of reading was important, and suggested more after-class reading.

In short, this part describes what reading tasks the students felt are most effective. The results revealed important information about Chinese students' preference for the reading tasks.

4.3 Summary

In summary, this chapter showed the results of the present study. The findings of the statistical analyses revealed that all the three groups of participants improved their reading comprehension over the course of the study. The experimental group involved in the summary writing treatment was found to perform significantly better than the other experimental group of journal writing, and the control group of oral discussion. Also, the findings indicated that the students had a positive tendency towards the reading tasks. The next chapter will present a discussion of the research findings of this study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings reported in Chapter Four. The discussion is organized based on the research questions presented in Chapter One. First, the results of the Reading Comprehension Test, including the interactions among the three independent variables - reading tasks, text types, and students' gender - are discussed. Second, the students' attitudes towards the tasks are explored. Finally, a proposed teaching model for reading-writing connections in reading instruction is discussed.

5.1 Effects of the Reading Tasks on Reading Comprehension

This part discusses the findings reported in Section 4.1 of Chapter Four, which were related to the effects of the three reading tasks - reading with summary writing, reading with journal writing, and reading with oral discussion - on the students' reading comprehension. It starts with the effects of the three reading tasks on the students' reading comprehension development, followed by a comparison of the three groups' performance on the posttest. Furthermore, the effects of text types and students' gender on reading comprehension and the interactions among the three independent variables are discussed.

5.1.1 Development of the Students' Reading Comprehension

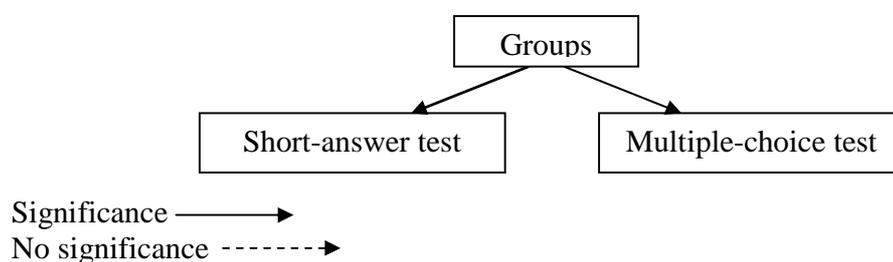


Figure 5.1 Effects of the Reading Tasks on Reading Comprehension Development after the Treatment

The major issue addressed in this study was whether reading-writing connections promoted EFL students' reading ability. As shown in Figure 5.1, regardless of the treatments, all the three groups showed significant improvement in their reading comprehension ($p < 0.05$) after the pedagogical intervention. Therefore, both reading-writing connections and reading without writing promoted the learners' reading comprehension.

Two reasons may account for the students' improvement in reading comprehension. First, it could be that no matter what reading tasks were assigned to the students, they all learned eleven texts during the 18-week quasi-experiment. The duration of this experiment may have been long enough to promote the students' reading comprehension, which was the aim of this study. Second, another explanation might be the utilization of schema. The schema may vary from students' understanding of the language knowledge, content of the text, to their knowledge of the text (Carrell, 1983). As Jiménez, García, and Pearsonet (1996) suggested, the ability to utilize schema greatly influences students' ability to infer and hypothesize about the text. In this study, the treatments may have improved, to some degree, the students' schema in the topics of the RCT, resulting in their higher scores on the posttest. To put it in another way, students'

activated schemata relevant to the text might have reduced the difficulty in reading, which, as a result, led to greater reading comprehension.

Also, it was found that of the four question types, the students performed the greatest on main idea questions (Mean=8.12), and that the experimental groups (Mean=8.84, 8.02) achieved higher than the control group (Mean=7.52). Reading-writing connections might be one explanation for the students' high scores on the main idea questions. As discussed earlier in Section 2.3, summary writing represents macro-level comprehension. Also, the task of journal writing may have similar focus. Consequently, the readers' comprehension of the main ideas may have been improved. Another explanation could be the advanced proficiency placement of the third-year English majors at university level, who were capable of grasping the main idea of the authentic reading materials (Bamford *et al.*, 2004).

Furthermore, of all the four categories of question types, the students obtained the second highest scores on inferential questions (Mean=7.52). The explanation may be that summary writing and journal writing require the writers to infer from the source text, thus to make judgment and draw conclusions. Writing summaries or journals deepened the students' ability to infer from the text, thus led to their high scores on inferential questions. As Yamada (2002) noted, tasks which require a greater degree of inference help writers generate information which is more independent of the source texts.

Since the reading comprehension of all the three groups improved significantly, it could not be concluded that summary writing, journal writing, or oral discussion was a major cause of this improvement. The effects of different reading tasks on the students' reading comprehension will be discussed in the next section.

5.1.2 Different Effects of the Reading Tasks on Reading Comprehension

The second research question set out to investigate whether the tasks which connected reading and writing and those which did not connect them had different effects on Chinese university EFL learners' reading comprehension. It was hypothesized that the students who gained practice in writing from source texts would become more effective readers. Results presented in Section 4.1.2.2 confirmed the existence of such differences.

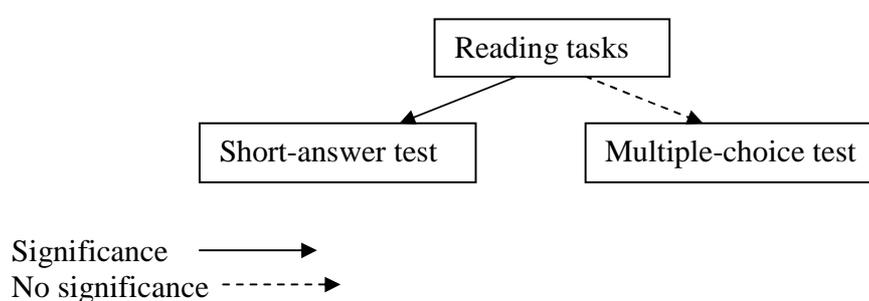


Figure 5.2 Effects of the Reading Tasks on Students' Performance on the Posttest

Effects of Summary Writing

As shown in Figure 5.2, results from the multivariate tests suggested that the three reading tasks had significantly different effects on students' reading comprehension. After the pedagogical intervention, the experimental group involved in summary writing treatment received a significantly higher mean score than the other two groups, as measured by short-answer test ($p=0.023$) (see Table 4.8). These results revealed that writing summaries helped students more efficiently than either writing journals or orally answering questions, as measured by the short-answer test.

Even though some studies (Kozminsky & Graetz, 1986) revealed no significant effects of summary writing, these current findings are in accordance with those of previous studies (Bensoussan & Kreindler, 1990; Brown *et al.*, 1981; Carson,

1993; Cordero-Ponce, 2000; Folkesson & Swalander, 2007; Kern, 2000; Kim, 2001; Pena, 2003; Redmann, 2005), which have provided evidence that summary writing is an effective tool for learning. The following explanations may be possible for the beneficial effects of summary writing in this study.

First, the information processing involved in summarizing may have resulted in reading comprehension improvement. Reading is a complex process consisting of two simultaneous activities: abstracting meaning from texts, and deriving macro-structures or meaning on the global level from micro-structures on the local level (Collins *et al.*, 2005). The purpose of summary writing is to convey correct information in an efficient manner so that the main idea and essential details can be conveyed through a piece that is shorter than the original ones. Writing summaries requires macro-level comprehension ability and promotes the “whole-text, super-macro-level skill” (Bensoussan & Kreindler, 1990, p. 45). Summarizing entails such deep information-processing ability as distinguishing between main and subordinate ideas, drawing inferences, and making judgments (Oded & Walters, 2001).

In this study, summary writing may have helped students gain practice in extracting the main points from the texts, helped them better understand the macro-structures of the texts. Therefore, the students in the RS group became more efficient readers, and performed the best as far as the questions related to the main ideas were concerned (Mean=6.93) (see Table 4.6). Also, the deep information-processing ability required in summary writing may not have been highlighted in the other two types of reading tasks, which possibly led to the better reading ability of the summary writing group. For example, when the students were required to write a summary of text I of Unit Two, *A New English Course: Beware the Dirty Seas*, they had to figure out that the

main idea of the text was about the pollution of the Mediterranean Sea. At the same time, they had to find the supporting details, draw related inferences, and then make correct judgments. As Oded and Walters (2001) argued, the processing required in selecting the main ideas and organizing them in a summary lead to greater reading comprehension.

Second, extended writing tasks connect what students learn to how they write and read (Hirvela, 2005), and thus may promote reading comprehension. Source-based writing may lead students to identify and record information that is necessary to complete a specified task. In this study, writing summaries might help students in a focused, deliberate manner to find and arrange information to solve problems involved in comprehending and writing about their reading. In addition, the targeted reading involved in summary writing was organized, not random. It required the students to look for information in a purposeful fashion. Therefore, summary writing may have motivated the students to read with purpose. Also, writing summaries required the students to have appropriate language proficiency; therefore, they might notice clues given by cohesive markers and sentence structures. They needed to be sensitive enough to notice the semantic, stylistic, and cultural differences included in the texts. Thus, connecting reading and writing assignments through the method of summary writing improved students' reading comprehension.

Third, explicit instruction in the rules of summarization before the pedagogical intervention may have been an effective tool for improving comprehension of foreign language texts. Realizing that some students in the pilot study did not know the rules of summary writing, the researcher gave the summary writing group a brief introduction about how to write summaries appropriately and supplied them with examples. This

may have helped the students learn how to distinguish between main and subordinate ideas, which in turn may have helped their reading comprehension.

Fourth, teacher's feedback may have influenced the students' reading comprehension. In her feedback to the students' summaries, the teacher commented on whether they had correct understanding of the text or not, such as of the main idea, important information, inferences, and judgments. Therefore, teacher's feedback may have enhanced the students' understanding of the text.

Another possible explanation for the superior performance of the summary writing group was the self-regulated learning environment required in summarizing (Folkesson & Swalander, 2007). Nückles, Hübner and Renk (2008) suggested that with appropriate support, writing can serve as a beneficial medium helping students to self-regulate their understanding of subject matter. In a summary, only the main idea and important information of the source text are required and the tight structure of summarization may improve the students' sense of self-regulation (Nuttach, 1996). In order to have a better understanding of the text and fulfill their task of summary writing, the students had to regulate themselves and focus their attention on the text being read. Therefore, self-regulated learning required in summary writing may have promoted the students to read more efficiently.

Additionally, it was found that the RS group (Mean=15.37, SD=2.514) received higher scores on the multiple-choice test than their counterparts from the RO group (Mean=14.37, SD=2.239), although not to the degree of significance. The better performance of the summary writing group on the multiple-choice test may have resulted from the similar requirements of multiple-choice question items and summarizing. Alderson (2000) stated that multiple-choice tests may control test-takers'

thought processes when responding. In addition, multiple-choice questions have the constraints that the reader must match the questions to the appropriate part of the text both linguistically and ideationally, which coincide with the tight nature of summarizing mentioned above. As Olson (2003) suggested, writing such tightly framed assignments as summaries benefits the students in getting them familiar with working within the constraints set by others. Therefore, the summary writing treatment might have familiarized the students with the tight requirement of the task and thus may have helped them to answer the multiple-choice questions, where tight constraints were set.

In short, the reasons discussed above demonstrate the better effects of summary writing on reading comprehension. Whatever the psycholinguistic differences there may be among students' summaries, journals and orally answering the comprehension questions, the group receiving summary writing treatment performed the best among all the three groups. Summarizing appears to be an activity well suited to sensitizing advanced EFL learners to the inner workings of a text and weaning them away from word-to-word decoding.

Effects of Journal Writing

Different from the RS group, the students from the RJ group (Mean=28.49, SD=3.73) did not perform significantly better than their counterparts from the RO group. This result parallels Simard, French, and Fortier's (2007) study, which examined the relationship between the reflections produced by French-speaking students and their actual learning of ESL. The results of their study revealed no specific relationship between the students' gains and their reported reflections. Nevertheless, this current finding contrasts Adams-Boateng (2001), Berthold, Nückles, and Renkl (2007), and Nückles *et al.*'s (2008) studies, which found significant differences between the

experimental group of journal writing and the control group. In this study, four possibilities might have made reading with journal writing yield no greater reading performance.

First, purely metacognitive reactions may not improve learning outcomes (Berthold *et al.*, 2007). Writing journals helps students plan and monitor their comprehension while reading. It may develop readers' awareness of how reading takes place and emphasizes metacognition. In this study, what the students needed to write in the journal were basically their metacognitive reactions to the text. However, it is well recognized that metacognitive knowledge may be acquired unconsciously (Ruiz-Funes, 2001) and may take a long time. Therefore, the effects of journal writing on reading comprehension could not be identified immediately after the intervention. The influence may be subconscious and could be on the readers' motivation or preference for reading, which will be discussed later in the qualitative discussion of the data.

Second, the students' unfamiliarity with journal writing may be another explanation. As discussed later in Section 5.2, some students reported in the first feedback entry that they were not familiar with journal writing because it was not a regular requirement in their classroom. Also, a few students reported not being certain about what to write in their journals, which may have caused their writing without deep thinking and influenced the effects of journal writing.

Third, the free style of journal writing utilized in this study may have explained its insignificant effects. Because the students' journal writing entries were free in style, they covered various areas ranging from their attitudes towards the topic the author discussed to their difficulties in understanding the text (see Section 5.2.3 for details). In response, the teacher's feedback was broader than the understanding of the

text itself. Compared with her feedback to summaries, the teacher's feedback to journals may have been less helpful to the students' reading comprehension.

Finally, the number of journal writing entries could be another explanation. Journal writing requires students to have constant and consistent practice in the target language (Redmann, 2005). Consequently, each student in the journal writing group was required to write 11 entries of journals over the treatment. However, some students complained they did not like writing journals for every single text included in the textbook. Instead, they preferred to write freely whenever they wanted (see Section 5.2.3 for details). Regular journal writing for as many as 11 times might have resulted in some students' fatigue and writing without deep thinking.

Even though no significant differences were found, it is noteworthy that the RJ group had a greater mean gain than the control group. This finding lends support to the prior study of Song (1997), which indicated that even though journal writing group did not outperform the control group always to a degree that was statistically significant, as a part of integrated approach to language teaching, journal writing may be an effective technique in EFL instruction in general and in reading instruction in particular.

In short, it is improper to devalue the importance of journal writing in EFL reading comprehension, even though no significant effects of journal writing were identified in this study. Simard *et al.*, (2007) suggested that there may be some potential connections between reflections in journal writing and specific learning contexts. These current results should be considered together with the other two variables - text types and gender - thus to better explain the effects of journal writing on reading comprehension.

5.1.3 Effects of Text Types on Reading Comprehension

As reviewed in Chapter Two (see Section 2.1.3), the type of the text is one of the major factors for reading comprehension (Richek, Caldwell, Jennings, & Lerne, 2002; Thomas, 1994; Yamada, 2002). Nevertheless, research of comprehension differences between texts of different types in L2 has been slim (e.g. Alderson, 2000; Brantmerer, 2005; Grabe, 1988; Olson, 2003; Perfetti, 1997). Another issue addressed in this study was whether different text types might lead to different reading comprehension. Two different text types were considered: narrative and expository texts. As shown in Figure 5.3, experimental data obtained in the study confirmed such differences.

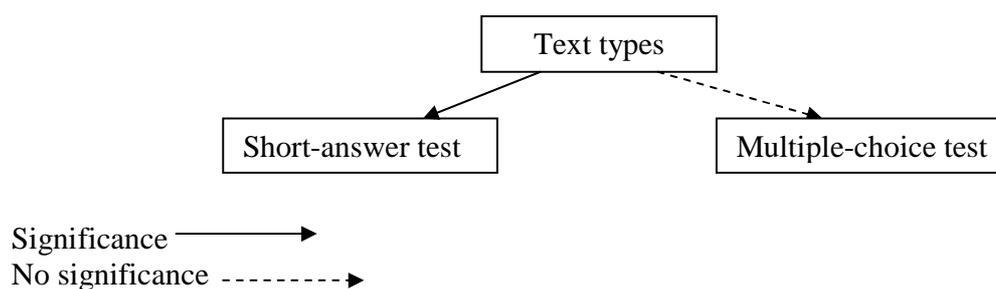


Figure 5.3 Effects of Text Types on Students' Performance on the Posttest

The results of the multivariate tests presented in Chapter Four (see Section 4.1.2.3) indicated the significant effects of text types on the students' reading comprehension, as measured by the short-answer test ($F_{(1, 79)}=6.09, p=0.003$). The students' performance on short-answer questions revealed that they had a better understanding of expository texts (Mean =8.05, SD=1.41) than of narrative texts (Mean=6.86, SD=1.60). Interestingly, this current result contrasts with most studies (e.g. Carrell & Connor, 1991; DuBraval, 2002; Sharp, 2004) that claimed narrative texts

were easier to read and understand. Three reasons may explain the finding of this current study that the students performed better in expository than narrative texts.

First, the result of the current study may be explained by the genre differences of narrative and expository texts. Readers use their schema, memory and learning, to comprehend text of any type (Uzuner, 2005). Thomas (1994) noted the characteristic rhetorical and organizational features and linguistic options which distinguish different genres. Expository texts are generally very systematic in that they follow a “logical argument with explanations, contrasts, cause/effect, etc.” (DuBravac, 2002) organized with typical markers of cohesion. Besides, there are heavy demands on identifying and using text structure to guide comprehension of expository passages. Therefore, Kroll (1990) pointed out that difficulties in the comprehension of expository texts often arise from the reader’s inability to make sense of some linguistic features, such as specific grammatical structures as well as expressions and vocabulary items. Furthermore, expository texts are often decontextualized. They tend to address topics that are far removed from a person’s everyday experience and are normally written for a wider audience who do not need to have shared experiences for understanding. Therefore, expository texts generally call for an extensive use of the readers’ world knowledge. Narrative texts, on the other hand, are more closely related to the reader’s everyday experiences since they “involve people performing actions in pursuit of goals, the occurrence of obstacles to goals, and emotional reactions to events” (Graesser, Singer, & Trabasso, 1994, p. 372). Also, cohesion of English narrative texts is described as text-based, specified, change-oriented, and non-additive (Mohamed & Omer, 2000). In order to understand a narrative text, readers need to activate their schemata very similar to those they use with elements that are contained in the text. Therefore, if the students’

ability to structure text was lacking, their comprehension might well suffer, especially because text structure is one way that readers identify main and important information.

Second, the participants' better understanding of the expository texts might be explained by the fact that they were adult language learners. DuBraval (2002) claimed that the structural composition of expository genres is acquired in formal training, while the structural composition of narrative genres is acquired before school age. Unlike the young language learners in the previous studies of Dubraval (2002) and Graesser *et al.* (1994), whose understanding of a text relies much on activating schemata similar to those in the text, the adult participants of this study were old enough (Mean=20.7 years) to understand the decontextualized information employed in the expository texts. For example, even though dowsing, the topic of Passage IV, was possibly new to most of the participants of this study, they were old enough to infer and understand the text based on the text structure and the linguistic features, since it is expository in nature. Nevertheless, lack of schemata about Gypsies may have caused the students' misunderstanding or not understanding of Passage III, which is narrative in nature.

Finally, another explanation may be the similar inference requirement of expository texts and short-answer tests. Short-answer questions require the students to infer from the information given in the text, which overlaps the knowledge-based inferences of expository texts. As third-year English major students, the participants of this study had had much exposure to the expository texts, which may have improved their skills in inferring information. Therefore, the similar requirement on information inferences by the short-answer test and expository texts might account for the students' better understanding of expository texts when measured by short-answer questions.

5.1.4 Effects of Gender on Reading Comprehension

As revealed in Figure 5.4 below, no significant gender differences were identified as measured by the short-answer or multiple-choice test, even though female students (Mean=29.12, SD=3.62) outperformed the males (Mean=29.01, SD=3.33) slightly. It was found that female students performed greater on the items about vocabulary and details, while males performed better on the main idea and inferential questions. In regard to the passages, females outperformed on the three passages about the supermarket, European Gypsies, and dowsing, while males performed better on the passage about slum clearance in Birmingham.

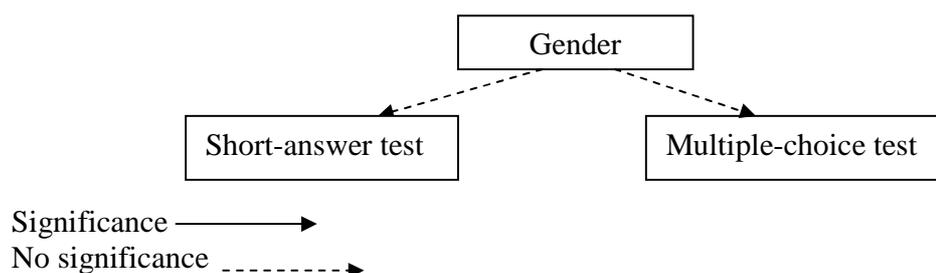


Figure 5.4 Effects of Gender on Students' Performance on the Posttest

This current finding is in line with the previous research of Pae (2003) and Yazdanpahan (2007), which suggested that even though the overall performance of the male and female students on the reading test was not significantly different, males and females performed differently on different items. Yazdanpahan (2007) indicated that females scored higher on identifying the main idea, guessing meaning from context, and text coherence questions. Conversely, males outperformed females in reading for specific information, identifying referential information, and matching titles with paragraph. The study by Brantmeier (2004) showed that male and female readers at advanced levels of instruction indicated being equally familiar with violence-oriented

content of the target culture. Indeed, while Brantmeier's study revealed no significant gender differences in reported topic familiarity levels, females recalled more idea units and scored higher on the multiple-choice questions than the males did. Similarly, in Pae's (2003) study, Korean EFL female learners performed better in items about mood, impression, or tone, but males were better at logical inference.

Two possible explanations may account for the findings of the present study. The first is that the four passages were not obviously gender-oriented ones. As Doolittle and Welch (1989) noted, males and females may perform differently when reading specific gender-oriented passages. Nevertheless, the four passages employed in the RCT were not obviously gender-oriented. The first passage was about slum clearance in Birmingham, the second was about sales of the supermarket, the third and fourth passages were about European Gypsies and dowsing, respectively. Both male and female students might have similar familiarity of the content of passages in the RCT. Therefore, when examining comprehension across multiple passages, males had no advantage over females, and females had no advantage over males, which may have led to the similar performance of male and female students on the RCT as a whole.

The second explanation may be that both male and female students have had much access to texts of various contents. As English major students, the participants of this study were trained, since they were enrolled in the university, to read wide range of materials, which ranged from scientific texts to novels. This is supported by the wide range of the topics of the text in the textbook, *A New English Course* (see Appendix A). Therefore, the students had similar experiences with various contents of texts, whether they were males or females.

5.1.5 Interactions among Reading Tasks, Text Types, and Gender

In this study, it was hypothesized that there were some interactions among the three independent variables: reading tasks, text types, and students' gender. The statistically significant interactions of journal writing treatment and text types ($p < 0.05$) as shown in Figure 5.5 indicated that writing journals influenced the students' reading comprehension of narrative and expository texts.

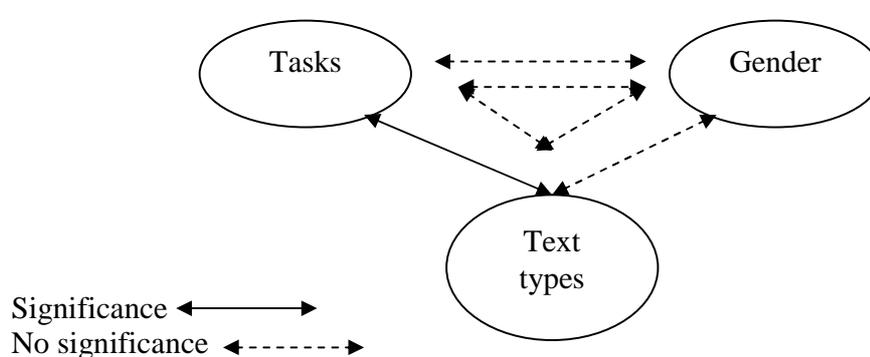


Figure 5.5 Interactions among the Three Independent Variables

Research of interactions among the factors that may affect reading comprehension has been slim in the L2 realm. Brantmeier's (2003) study with advanced-level students revealed significant interactions between readers' gender and passage content on the two assessment tasks of a written recall and multiple-choice questions. Another study in this regard was conducted by Hite (2004), who found significant interactions between gender and cognitive style. To be specific, Hite suggested that males and field independent participants performed significantly better than female or field dependent participants.

Three possibilities may explain these current interactions between reading tasks and text types. First, learners' understanding of a text may be influenced by the specific genre of the text being read. As reviewed in Chapter Two, EFL reading is such

a complex process that learners must be able to handle various types of texts and be able to understand texts of different contents. Further, reading is a transaction between the reader and the text, and readers are given the rights to their own meaning (Goodman, 1989). The reading process is so dynamic and variable that it may differ from reader to reader on different texts at different times and with different purposes (Alderson, 2000). Therefore, individuals tend to have a better understanding of specific text types. In this study, for example, the free style of journal writing may better match the decontextualized characteristic of expository texts than the text-based narrative ones. Consequently, students involved in the journal writing treatment may have had a lot of practice in understanding the decontextualized information of expository texts and thus obtained better scores on the expository-text tests than on those of narrative texts.

Second, motivation may be another reason for the significant interactions between journal writing and text types. In the current study, the free style of journals provided the students with the opportunities to express their ideas freely. As discussed later in Section 5.2, many students preferred to write journals for expository texts because they found it was interesting to express their ideas freely about the topic discussed by the author. Consequently, the students might have had high motivation to read expository texts. Reading motivation has been viewed as a multifaceted construct with multiple constituents. According to a variety of investigators (Gottifried, 1990; Guthrie, McRae, & Klauda, 2007; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997), reading motivation is a substantial correlate of reading comprehension. Guthrie *et al.*'s (2007) study showed students' reading motivation for narrative and information texts were associated. According to Cox and Guthrie (2001), the amount that students read for enjoyment is a major contributor to students' reading achievement. They also

indicated that amount of reading is multiply determined by cognitive and motivational constructs, which is consistent with an engagement perspective on reading development.

Third, the results of research findings are highly controversial due to students being at different levels, with various backgrounds, and from different cultures. The interactions of text types and journal writing in this study may have been due to the particular participants who had a particular background. As previously mentioned in Section 3.8.1, more students from the RJ group reported having learned English for 11 years rather than 10 years. That means many students of this group had had years' experiences with English learning and had much exposure to expository texts, which may have caused the significant interactions of text types and journal writing.

In short, these findings discussed above suggested that the students' improvement on the posttest may be attributed to incorporating writing to reading instruction. It was found that writing summaries may have promoted students' deeper processing of the information, their macro-level comprehension ability, and their self-regulation, thus enhanced reading comprehension. Furthermore, it was found that the students from the experimental RJ group outperformed their counterparts in the control RO group, but not to the degree of significant level. Therefore, the effects of reading and writing connections need to be further considered together with the students' attitudes, which are discussed in the next section.

5.2 Students' Attitudes towards the Reading Tasks

The previous section discussed the results of the quasi-experiment, showing that reading-writing connections promoted Chinese EFL students' reading comprehension. This section describes the students' attitudes towards the reading tasks.

This study triangulated data collection methods including students' self-report questionnaires, students' written feedback, and in-depth semi-structured interviews. For purposes of discussion, students' responses are grouped into categories of similar answers. After the most salient patterns are identified, examples illustrating each of them are quoted from the data and explained.

5.2.1 Overall Attitudes

The findings of the quasi-experiment were illuminated by different data sources, which were especially important in describing some of the results found in the quasi-experiment. It was found that not all students answered all of the questions, because some students were not sure what to express, and some were absent.

The quantitative analysis of data elicited through the Likert-scale questionnaire (see Section 4.2.1) revealed to the researcher that the students had a positive tendency towards agreeing with the statements concerning the reading tasks. Furthermore, the students seemed to have a more positive response to the items about their general attitudes. However, their responses to the items about the specific text types tended to be more negative. Two explanations for these findings could be that the students tended to have clearer attitudes towards the general questions than the ones about details, and that they did not have very clear ideas about the narrative and expository texts.

Close examination of the questionnaire data revealed that only a few respondents tended to choose either "strongly agree" or "strongly disagree" as their response. The reluctance on the part of most of the participants to take a strong stand on agreement and disagreement indicated that they might have had some ambiguous

understanding of the tasks. Before any definite conclusion is drawn, these findings must be considered in relation to the other sources of the data.

Equally important, the questionnaire data demonstrated that the better the students perceived their reading ability, the more positive attitudes they seemed to have. The high-ability students may have had more involvement in the tasks, which may have resulted in their positive attitudes towards the tasks assigned. Interestingly, even though more students felt their understanding of narrative texts improved than expository ones, the students' reading performance in narrative texts (Mean=13.82, SE=2.50) was lower than that in expository ones (Mean=15.25, SD=2.10). As previously discussed in Section 5.1.3, the students might have had much exposure to narrative texts since they were little children (DuBraval, 2002), thus they assumed they understood narratives better. However, as adult EFL learners, the students were old enough to understand the expository texts. Moreover, after 2-year intensive learning at university, where they learned more expository texts than narratives, the students improved their cognition of the linguistic features of expository texts and thus received higher scores in this regard.

As shown in Table 5.1 below, the qualitative analysis of data confirmed the Likert-scale questionnaire results that the students' attitudes could be basically classified into three categories: positive, medium, and negative attitudes. A close examination of the data shed more light on the patterns of the students' attitudes.

Table 5.1 Categories of Students' Attitudes from the Questionnaires, Written Feedback, and Interviews

Positive attitudes:

RS10: If I persist doing (the task) for a long time, my reading ability will be improved.

RS15: Writing summaries improves my general understanding of the text.

RJ17: After writing, I have deeper understanding to the texts. (Translated)

RJ26: It helps me understand how I have grasped the text, to which degree I have understood the text and helps me be clear about my own ideas.

RO15: The inferential questions help me understand the text.

RO19: The questions are normally a generalization of the parts of the text, which help me understand the important parts of the text. Orally discussing the comprehensions helps me to use skimming and scanning skill to get the information. It improves my reading speed and my understanding.

Medium attitudes:

RS3: Writing summaries could broaden my knowledge, enlarge my vocabulary, improve my understanding, but not improve the accuracy of understanding.

RS18: Writing summaries helps me understand the main idea, but not the new words.

RJ12: Journal writing may be helpful, but the effects are not obvious because improvement occurs subconsciously. (Translated)

RJ15: Writing journals may enlarge my vocabulary size, my reading speed, but it doesn't improve my understanding of difficult sentences.

RO2: Reading with oral discussion helps me in my reading speed and understanding of text type. It improves my ability to handle information. But through this task, I couldn't enjoy the writer's word choosing and good writing skills.

RO10: Reading with oral discussion improves my reading speed and improves my understanding of the main idea, but doesn't improve my writing strategies or understanding of the text structures.

Negative attitudes:

RS2: I don't like writing summaries because I like reading without purpose or pressure.

RS21: I don't like it because I can't get the gist. It's difficult for me to write summaries.

RJ16: I don't like it because it's a little time-wasting. I wrote not because I wanted, but just for handling assignments.

RJ19: Writing journals lasts too long time, which I don't like.

RO12: The comprehension questions are not helpful. They only give the students pressures.

RO20: Orally answering the questions can't improve my understanding of the main idea.

5.2.2 Attitudes towards Reading with Summary Writing

Interestingly, even though the participants from the RS group performed the best on the posttest (Mean=30.41, SD=3.09), they received the lowest average score in the 5-point Likert-scale questionnaire (Mean=3.85, SD=0.58). Participants' comments

provided important insights into their attitudes. On the one hand, they recognized the use of summary writing. On the other hand, they still disliked it because it was boring. The tight structure of summarization was the main reason for the students' negative attitudes. Data from the students' written feedback showed that initially a few students (N=3) resented having to do this extra work and were frustrated by their inability to distinguish macro-structure from micro-structure. Example (RS2) is representative of these students. *“Even though I tried to understand the text, sometimes I was not certain about the main points that the author discussed.”* Similarly, student RS19 worried that her summaries might be biased due to her poor reading comprehension. The number of students who did not enjoy writing summaries increased from three at the beginning of the treatment to seven in the end. Student RS7 represented this category and stated in her third entry of feedback that she could learn the text more actively through writing summaries, but she did not enjoying writing summaries because it was dull for her.

These current results appeared to reinforce the finding of Nuttach (1996) that writing summaries has become unfashionable due to its tight structure. Furthermore, summary writing is viewed as a difficult task because it is not part of the usual English course curriculum (Twist, Gnald, Schagen, & Morrison, 2004).

5.2.3 Attitudes towards Reading with Journal Writing

The results of the Likert-scale questionnaire showed that students from the RJ group received the highest mean score (Mean=3.98) in the five-point Likert-scale questionnaire, although they received lower scores on the RCT than their counterparts from the RS group. The explanation may be the different characteristics of summary writing and journal writing. Writing summaries requires the students to not only have

correct understanding of the text, identify the main idea, important sentence structure and important information, but also express correctly in a shorter text than the source text. That is, summarizing has quite a tight requirement on the readers (Nuttach, 1996). On the contrary, journal writing is loose in structure. The students could express themselves freely without just concentrating on the main idea, which the students might enjoy. Consequently, the students in the journal writing group demonstrated the highest mean score in regard to their attitudes.

In this study, the students generally viewed journal writing as a flexible cognitive tool which helped them construct the meaning of the text. They enjoyed the freedom that writing journals provided them. In fact, when the experiment ended, many students expressed nostalgia about journal writing. The students not only reported it to be worthwhile, but also believed that it helped them in other aspects of English learning.

The analyses have shown that writing about learning can be a way of demonstrating what has been learned. Through journals, students can record concrete experiences, reflect on and record their observations about the experiences, integrate the observation into abstract concepts or theories, and use the theories to make decisions or solve problems. Journal writing can be the metacognitive reminders of the learning process and it reveals thought processes and mental habits. It aids memory and provides a context for growth and provides tangible evidence of mental processes. Journals make thoughts visible and concrete, giving a way to interact with, elaborate on, and expand ideas. In this way, the learners could have clearer understanding of their strong and weak points. Thus, journal writing could be a metacognitive tool in understanding texts.

As suggested by Lin (2001), the writers of journals come to know their own writing proficiency, their difficulties, their expectations, and their emotional reactions to

the source text. Therefore, journal writing might play an important role as an appropriate tool in encouraging the students to think about their own learning process and consider ways of improving their reading ability. These current findings are supported by other researchers who have suggested that journal writing engages students in non-threatening exploration and development of ideas (Reid, 1993), and stimulates students' reflections on their learning thus enhancing their EFL learning (Todd *et al.*, 2001).

In regard to teacher's feedback, the students shared similar attitudes that they enjoyed dialoguing with the teacher. Still more, they reported enjoying the realistic task of having active dialogues, which indirectly led them to practice and improve reading. Interestingly, even though some students expressed negative attitudes towards journal writing in general, they still reported enjoying specific aspects of this task. For example, student RJ2 had negative attitudes in general. However, she reported liking communicating with the teacher through journals: *"I like reading the teacher's comments. Sometimes we share the same feeling and experience."* Also, examination and analysis of students' journals revealed to the researcher that the students all wished to discuss recurring problems. Appropriately used, teacher's feedback may help students identify their own areas of strengths and weaknesses in journal writing.

These current findings accord with those by Reid (1993), Smalley, Ruetten and Kozyrev (2001), in which they found that journal writing offers students a casual opportunity to express themselves, and accentuates favorable learning conditions. In addition, as suggested by Yang and Wilson (2006), the dialogic approach empowers readers to position themselves as participants in making meaning together with the text and its authors, rather than remaining as mute outsiders to the reading process.

Nevertheless, the students seemed to have different ideas about the mistakes they made in the journals. Some students, such as student RJ2, reported that they wanted the teacher to point out their mistakes so that they may notice and correct them. However, some other students held a different idea. Example (RJ15) is particularly interesting because she marked the reason.

RJ15: "...I feel embarrassed and worried about my mistakes. As a result, I can't concentrate on expressing my ideas, but just pay attention to the mistakes."

It could be found that these students preferred to write freely without worrying about mistakes.

Furthermore, the students reported having various problems. In the interviews, students reported that journal writing was only worthwhile if it allowed for personal reflections from time to time, not when they had to, and if they were certain the teacher was reading their journal. According to the students, the main disadvantages of writing journals were time-consuming, and that they could think of nothing to write. Additionally, some students attributed their reluctance to write journals to their laziness. Examples are students RJ10 and RJ15, who reported that whenever they finished reading, they felt reluctant to read it again for the journals.

In short, the results revealed that the students regarded journals as places where they had self-communication and communication with others. Also, writing journals could be a useful practice in identifying students' particular areas of difficulty and interest.

5.2.4 Attitudes towards Reading with Oral Discussion

Similar to the students from the experimental groups, more than half of the students from the control group showed positive tendency towards reading with oral discussion. The instance is student RO7, who stated in the questionnaire,

“it helped me understand the parts I ignored while reading, made me know whether I’d understood correctly or not, and made me know whether my reading had improved or not.”

Student RO15 shared the similar attitude that “*inferential questions help me understand the text.*” These findings are supported by Bensoussan and Kreindler (1990) who have indicated that questions may aid comprehension by turning the students’ attention to specific points in the text. Answering questions may relieve students from the task of having to locate important points by themselves, thus may be somewhat easier than writing a summary. That may explain why a greater proportion of students in the control group liked their task than in the summary writing group. Another reason for the students’ preference was that the questions improved their awareness of both macro-level ideas and micro-level vocabulary and expressions since they would be matching the expressions in the questions with the language in the text and figuring out the main idea in order to choose the correct answer. The instance is student RO8, who felt that by answering questions he understood the main idea and the details of the text.

Nevertheless, some students from the RO group had negative attitudes. For example, respondent RO24 stated in the second written feedback entry that answering questions limited her understanding. Further, respondent RO16 commented in the questionnaire that she understood the text, but could not choose the correct answers. As Cohen (1998) noted, being good readers is no guarantee of success in answering questions, since answering questions itself is a skill that needs practice. Some students,

for example student RO14, expressed their dislike of the detailed questions. Also, they commented that the terms involved in the text could be obstacles of successful reading.

In short, an analysis of the students' responses suggested that they had varied attitudes towards the reading tasks. That more than half of students were satisfied indicated that the course had a positive effect on learners' attitudes, which is in essence the ultimate objective of this study.

5.2.5 Strategy Use Reported by the Students

Regardless of their groups, the students mentioned the employment of some reading strategies to varying degrees. Table 5.2 below is a summary of the strategies reported by the students from each group, which is arranged in the order of reported frequency.

Table 5.2 Frequency of Reported Strategy Use by the Students in Each Group
(N=37)

Order	Reported Strategy Use	RS	RJ	RO	Total
1	rereading	13	10	12	35
2	predicting	12	10	13	35
3	thinking about the prior knowledge	14	12	8	34
4	generalizing	13	7	6	26
5	self-questioning	7	6	9	22
6	paying attention to the task	11	3	7	21
7	rethinking	8	9	3	20
8	analyzing the sentence structures	5	6	6	17
9	bringing the questions into reading	No use	No use	13	13
10	Reading selectively	4	3	3	10
11	guessing word meaning	4	No use	5	9
12	focusing on specific aspects of the text	No use	No use	7	7
13	inferring	3	2	2	7
14	paraphrasing	1	1	No use	2
15	adjusting reading speed	No use	2	No use	2

From the students' reports, some notable points emerged about the strategy use. First, the students from the two experimental groups demonstrated sensitivity to global aspects of text by using the strategies of generalizing frequently. An example is student RS11 who stated, "*I try to generalize what I have read and express them in my own words.*" About half of the students (N=13) from the summary writing group reported using rereading to successfully understand the texts. Similarly, 10 students from the journal writing group reported employing the strategy of rereading. For example, student RJ9 stated, "*I reread the part that I didn't quite understand and discussed it in my journal.*" Also, 10 students from the RO group reported using this strategy. These findings are supported by Brown (2002), who has noted that at the university level, rereading is one of the most effective study aids to comprehension of texts.

These two experimental groups demonstrated a higher level of ability to get the main idea (Mean=8.84, 8.02), indicating the need for the control group (Mean=7.52) to develop this strategy. The most salient strategy employed in the oral discussion group was bringing the Comprehension Questions into reading (N=13). Example (RO19) provides us with an extremely interesting observation on this strategy use. "*Before I start reading, I spend a few minutes reading the Comprehension Questions. After that, I read the whole text and keep the questions in my mind.*"

Furthermore, although some students (N=35) reported being able to predict, they could not provide strong reasons for the value in that. As student RO8 commented in the third entry of written feedback, "*I read and guess what will happen next, but I'm not sure if this helps my understanding or not because I feel my reading speed slows down*" (Translated).

However, of all the 81 students, a rather small number of students (N=7) reported using inferring to make the text more comprehensible, despite their high scores on inferential questions on the posttest (Mean=7.52). The lowest scores on the inferential questions were from the RO group, with many of them reporting a focus on text elements only. A general underutilization of the inferring strategies reflected the lack of emphasis on inferential comprehension. As Yamada (2002) noted, students' lack of inference ability may make them not be poised to meet the demands of expository materials, where inferring strategies are necessary. These findings revealed to the researcher that the students may have achieved better reading comprehension if they had used the inferring strategies more frequently, and that more tasks in this regard were needed.

Another notable point about the students' strategy use was the difference identified between successful and unsuccessful students. Compared with the successful students, the unsuccessful students used fewer strategies to gather meaning, orienting themselves to the perceptual and mechanical aspects of the reading task. The successful students appeared to have a developed EFL reading schema, which incorporated declarative knowledge about the reading process and procedural knowledge for implementing strategies when reading in English, while the unsuccessful readers appeared to be more concerned with finishing the task itself. Student RS13 was one of the students who perceived their reading ability as high. She mentioned in the interview,

“When I read the difficult text which I don't quite understand, I try to analyze the sentence structure and think about what I have known about the topic, for example, from the newspapers, magazines, etc.” (Translated).

This shows that she knew how to use her prior knowledge connected with the text being read. Unsuccessful students appeared to lack this strategy. Student RJ18 represented

this type of student and stated in the written feedback, “*What I concern the most is to finish my reading on time, because I’m slow in reading.*”

Equally important, successful readers reported more flexibility by adjusting their reading speed to match the difficulty of the text and slowing down when encountering more dense or difficult text. They used monitoring strategies include paraphrasing, self-questioning, and paying close attention in their reading. Below are the examples from the written feedback.

RJ1: “I change my reading speed or slow down, or even reread when I had difficulty understanding.”

RS23: “I try to be selective to distinguish between main points and supporting details. I also try to paraphrase instead of copying because I think it is very important for English majors” (Translated).

Furthermore, the successful students discussed specific reading strategies they used more than the unsuccessful ones, such as questioning, rereading, and the use of prior knowledge. Student RS13 reported in her second entry of written feedback that

“Before reading, I predict what the text may be about according to the title. When I’m reading, I ask myself what the text meant to me. If I have problems understanding the text, I try to use the context and my prior knowledge to clarify what text means to me.”

However, it was found that although the less-successful ones could monitor and identify problem areas, they did not often resolve the comprehension breaks. An example is student RO8, who stated in his third entry of feedback that “*I become upset when I notice that I don’t understand the text*” (Translated).

One more salient point about the students’ strategy use was that the unsuccessful students reported reading selectively in order to find answers to comprehension questions. For example, student RO26 stated that “*In order to answer the questions correctly and to save time, I only read the information related to the questions asked.*” In addition, they reported using approximately the same strategies

whether reading narrative or expository texts, failing to adjust their use of strategies. Nevertheless, the successful readers used specific strategies such as use of cognates and paraphrasing when reading texts of different types. Paying attention to the task appeared to be a strategy that the unsuccessful students lacked. Student RO24 was one of the students who perceived her reading ability as low. She reported having difficulty getting involved in the reading: *“I can’t focus my attention on the reading and the task. Sometimes I just looked at the text, but I didn’t read or understand it.”*

In short, the findings about the students’ strategy use suggested that reading-writing connections appeared to affect not only students’ reading comprehension but also their use of reading strategies.

5.2.6 Writing Improvement Reported by the Students

As expected, students in the experimental groups reported gaining writing skills. Student RJ17 represented this kind of student and felt that writing journals kept him writing regularly thus improved his writing ability. Another instance is student RJ27 who commented in the interview that *“After writing so many journals. I can write fluently now.”* Interestingly, Compared with the RS group, more students from the RJ group (N=15) reported gaining writing skills. This might be explained by the different characteristics of summary and journal writing. In a summary, what the students needed to write was always the main idea, and important information. In other words, the students could not write freely, so they did not feel obvious writing improvement. In contrast, journal writing provided the students with chances to express themselves freely, which may have led to their writing ability development, and a feeling of improvement.

This current finding can be explored in light of the argument of Anderson (1993), Chanthalangsy and Moskalis (2002), Hirvela (2005), Marefat (2002), Marsh (1998), and Wu (2000) that extended writing improves the writing proficiency. Journal writing might help students improve their writing skills as they are encouraged to “experiment with writing, to experience writing that may be highly personal, relatively unstructured, speculative, uninhibited, tentative, in process, in flux” (Anderson, 1993). It appears that writing journals is effective in raising the writer’s consciousness of their own writing process (Eastman, 1997; Goh & Kwah, 1997). Furthermore, because journals are less formal, less threatening (Sandra, 2002), journal writing provides the learners with a safe place to practice writing regularly without the restrictions of form, audience, and evaluation. Therefore, it can be interpreted that journals may be recommended to teachers and students to facilitate and improve teaching and learning writing.

5.2.7 Suggestions Reported by the Students

In their responses to the questionnaires, feedback, and interviews, the students reported some suggestions concerning the reading tasks. What follows are the students’ suggestions, which were about vocabulary, task type, text type, reading strategy, motivation, and writing content.

Vocabulary

Many students mentioned that they had problems with the new vocabulary.

For example,

RS21: “Sometimes I know nothing after reading because there are so many new words, so it’s difficult for me to summarize the text.”

RJ11: “My vocabulary size is too small. As a result, I can’t grasp the gist of the text”
(Translated).

RO8: “Too many new words slowed down my reading speed.”

It was evident that vocabulary was regarded as a major problem that the students had in their reading comprehension. Students' problems with the new vocabulary may have led to their misunderstanding or not understanding of the text, and therefore they could not fulfill their tasks successfully. Consequently, more than half of the students suggested there should be more methods to learn the new vocabulary.

The crucial role of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension has been well recognized in L2 settings, and the difficulty of vocabulary for EFL learners has been well recognized by linguists. As Zhang and Annual (2008) suggested, students' vocabulary knowledge is correlated to their reading comprehension. Evans and Green's (2007) questionnaire survey with almost 5000 undergraduate students at a university in Hong Kong indicated that students' receptive and productive vocabulary was generally inadequate. Similarly, Gorsuch and Taguchi (2008) suggested that reading in a foreign or second language is often a laborious process, often caused by underdeveloped word recognition skills, and that one major component of reading fluency is fast and accurate word recognition.

Task Type

Most of the students felt that the strengths of different task types should be applied, thus to improve their reading comprehension. Many students mentioned that effective reading tasks should combine reading-writing connections, such as summary writing, journal writing, and imitating source texts, with oral discussion.

Text Type

About half of a total of 81 students reported having difficulties understanding the content of the text. Examples (RS7, RJ8) illustrate the students' problems with specific text type.

RS7: "I don't like reading expository texts. They are too boring for me to have a general idea. I like reading narrative texts because they have clear organization and are closely related to the readers."

RJ8: "I don't like texts about science because they are too far away from me."

This finding is in line with that of Brantmeier (2003), which found that differences in existing knowledge about the content of text materials may be an important source of individual differences in reading comprehension. As Reid (2002) suggested, different contextual and rhetorical schemata may result in ineffective ESL learning. Unlike native speakers of English, L2 learners may experience unexpected comprehension problems related to rhetorical difficulties.

Reading and understanding a text presents a variety of processing problems for L2 learners. Reid (1996) indicated that ESL readers have difficulty predicting the sentence that immediately follows the topic sentence, which may cause ineffective reading comprehension.

The complexity of the text content with regard to rhetorical organization may lead to the students' difficulty in understanding. For example, Shi and Kubota (2007) found that even though many texts have a three-part structure consisting of introduction, body, and conclusion, the introductions in some texts are lengthy, with multiple paragraphs. In addition, the opinion or main idea is not necessarily presented in the introduction but rather in the middle or at the end of the essay.

All these variations in text structure may have led to the students' difficulty with reading, which highlights the problem of explicating constructed rhetorical conventions in EFL teaching and the necessity of more exposures to texts of different types.

Reading Strategy

The data revealed that less than half of the students (N=37) in this sample exhibited a robust use of the strategy of self-questioning. About one third of the students (N=29) reported a lack of appropriate reading strategies, such as predicting and inferring. One explanation for this may be that the successful students have automatized many of their strategic reading processes to the point of lacking awareness of the steps they took to ensure comprehension. Another possibility is that the less successful students did not use strategies much. The last possibility is that learning strategy was not a variable considered in this study and the students were not asked about their strategy use.

Further, A few students (N=16) stated that they had problems with time and worried that they might not finished the tasks on time. It was found that the students' problems with time may have resulted from their lack of appropriate reading strategies. They may have spent too much time on the word-to-word decoding, or could not concentrate on their task.

These findings demonstrated that explicit explanation of the related strategies and more practice in that regard might contribute to the students' better reading comprehension. Cordero-Ponce's (2000) study reported the effects of metacognitive strategy training on the ability of foreign language learners to comprehend expository texts. He suggested that specific teaching methods should be employed to raise reader awareness and improve their strategy use.

Motivation

Motivation has been commonly considered as one of the most important factors affecting L2 learning. Hwang (2001) suggested that strong motivation to learn English could be the key contribution to increase in reading skills. In this current study,

nearly one-third of the students (N=24) expressed their lack of motivation in reading or/and doing the reading tasks. For example, student RS16 stated, *“I don’t like it because it’s a little time-wasting. I wrote not because I wanted, but just for fulfilling assignments.”* Student RO21 not only expressed her lack of motivation but also supplied the reason: *“I don’t like reading books. Whenever I see the thick book, I don’t like. I prefer read on Internet.”*

This study revealed that journals can be valuable tools for fostering adult learning and experience. As Benson (1995) indicated, students write journals to accomplish a variety of real purposes, e.g. requesting information, asking factual questions, asking clarification, expressing opinion, describing a personal problem, activating memory, describing personal events. Writing journals supports the students in attending to details, asking questions, and answering their own questions. It helps students feel a sense of ownership in their writing, and allows them to choose an intrapersonal and interpersonal manner as they express themselves (Marlow, 2001). As a result of this freedom and success in expressing themselves, students may take pride in their journals. Therefore, journal writing may yield ownership and intrinsic motivation.

As discussed above, EFL teaching needs to improve student motivation in reading. Huang (2006) suggested that students are most willing to read when teachers are available to answer questions, key points are highlighted clearly in textbooks, and reading skills are taught.

Writing Content

Yamada (2002) indicated that even though experienced English academic writers are capable of writing with multiple source texts, EFL/ESL writers have a difficult time with it. A few students (N=15) from the experimental groups reported that

they had problems with what to write in their summaries or journals. Student RS12 commented that she always used the fixed sentence structures while writing summaries and did not know how to be varied. Similarly, student RJ23 stated, “*Sometimes I don’t know how to express myself. I understand the article, but I just can’t express myself.*” These findings suggest that students need to get more training to write more efficiently in the target language.

In short, outcomes from the quantitative and qualitative analyses indicated that more than half of the students had positive attitudes towards the tasks assigned. Meanwhile, some students did not enjoy doing the tasks because of the problems either with the reading itself or the reading tasks. In addition, the students reported their suggestions concerning the reading tasks, which the researcher took into consideration when proposing a teaching model of reading-writing connections in reading classrooms.

5.3 Effective Types of Reading Tasks

This section proposes a model for reading-writing connections in reading instruction. It covers a description of the suggested teaching model and the features of the model.

5.3.1 A Proposed Model for Reading-Writing Connections in Reading

Instruction

As previously discussed, writing from sources can be an effective way for the readers to interact with the text, and reading-writing connections have the potential to improve EFL learners’ reading ability. Also, it was found that the students preferred a

flexible method of combining the strengths of reading-writing connections, such as summary writing, journal writing, and imitating the source texts, with oral discussion.

Based on the results of the current study and the principles suggested by Shanahan (1988) (see Section 2.2.2), the researcher proposes a model for connecting reading and writing in reading classrooms. The main purpose of this teaching model is to use writing to reflect on, restructure, and enhance what the students know, and thus to improve reading comprehension. The model follows the same three-phase approach employed in the main study, which are the pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading phases, except that the identified advantages of the reading tasks and students' suggestions are applied (see Appendix C for a lesson plan based on the suggested model). The process of the proposed model illustrated in Figure 5.6 indicates that the three phases are chronologically conducted and jointly contribute to reading comprehension improvement.

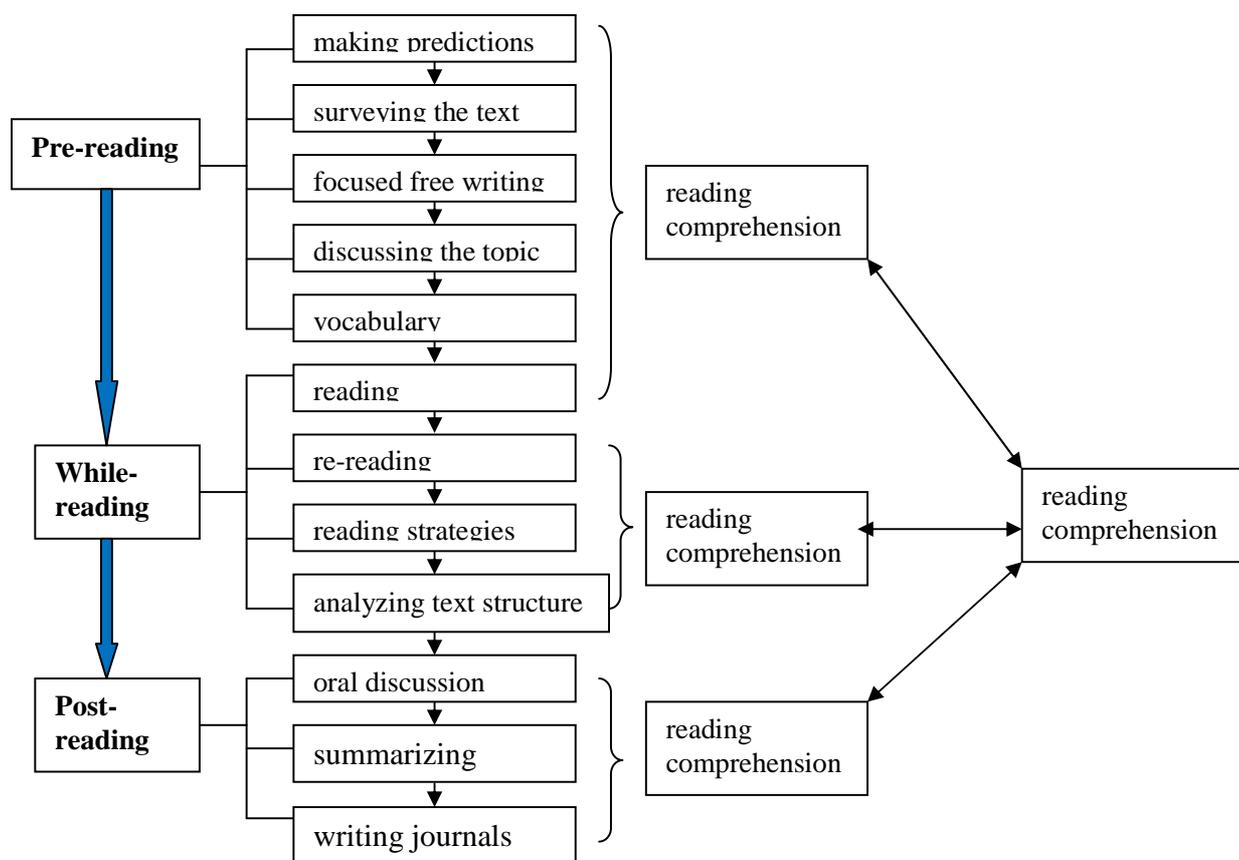


Figure 5.6 Proposed Model for Reading-Writing Connections in Reading Instruction

Phase 1: Pre-reading

The pre-reading phase aims to help students define selection criteria for the central theme of a story or the major argument of an essay. This stage is designed to activate and build the students' background knowledge, activate the schema, provide language preparation that might be needed for coping with the knowledge, motivate the students to want to read the text, and focus students' attention on the task.

Before reading on a new topic starts, five steps of pre-reading activities are suggested. First, a particular text is introduced to the students. The teacher elicits or provides appropriate background knowledge, and activates necessary schemata, and

students make predictions about the text. Second, students survey the text by looking at the length of the text, looking for the meaning of the title, and come up with an overview of what the text is about. Third, students spend five minutes on focused free writing for a journal entry about the specific topic. Then, there is a group discussion about the topic. The purpose is to further gauge the extent of students' prior knowledge of the topic and encourage interaction between and among teacher and students. This improves students' ability to communicate in English. As the last step of the pre-reading stage, the teacher discusses the new words and expressions with students

Phase 2: While-reading

The while-reading stage aims to help students develop reading strategies, improve their control of the target language, and decode problematic passages. The while-reading exercises are designed to set ways for students to interact with text, such as help them understand the author's purpose and intention, help them clarify the text structure and the logical organization of the text, and help them clarify and comprehend the text content. In addition, this stage aims to help students infer and judge, survey the general information, and look for specific information.

As the first step of the while-reading stage, students read the specific text in groups and check whether their prediction is correct or not. Also, the teacher explains metacognitive strategies. Then, students reread the text to develop fluency and build vocabulary. In this step, the teacher explicitly explains the reading strategies that may be employed, such as guessing word meanings by using context and word formation clues, considering syntax and sentence structures by noting the grammatical functions of unknown words, analyzing reference words, predicting text content, reading for specific pieces of information, and using a dictionary appropriately. After that, the teacher

discusses with the class about the text intensively, which includes the background of the text, the style and organization of the text, text content, difficult sentences, and so on.

Phase 3: Post-reading

As the last step of the reading instruction, the post-reading stage is a review of the first two stages. It aims to extend the reading experience; lead students to a deeper analysis of the text, answer the comprehension questions and the critical questions; lead them to respond and make applications of the ideas and information; and lead them to seek additional information, and decide if they have achieved their goals. Post-reading exercises first check the students' comprehension and then lead students to a deeper analysis of the text and deeper ramifications of the texts. The follow-up post-reading exercises take students beyond the particular reading text by transferring reading skills to other texts or by integrating reading skills with other language skills.

As the first step of this stage, students orally discuss the Reading Comprehension Questions in their groups, share their understanding of the text or check understanding by paraphrasing the author's words. The reason for this task is that the students from the oral discussion treatment reported that they became aware of both macro-level ideas and micro-level vocabulary and expressions. Next, the small groups reconvene for a class discussion. Then, during the next 15 minutes of class, the students do the second writing task of summarizing. After that, the students share summaries in their groups and submit their summarization. As the last exercise of the post-reading stage, journal writing is suggested as the after-class activity, where students freely write about their understanding of the text, comment on their problems in reading, ask questions, or share their ideas.

In regard to the teacher's evaluation of students' summaries, it is suggested that the teacher comments on whether students have correct understanding or not, and give suggestions and comments on their strengths and weaknesses. As for teacher feedback to students' journals, it is suggested that the teacher dialogues with the students by commenting on opinions on the topic, difficulties in understanding the text, students' problems, and so on.

5.3.2 Features of the Model

This suggested teaching model of reading differs from others in the pre- and post-reading stages, where reading and writing are connected. First, in the pre-reading stage, students write journals about the specific topic. As shown in this study, the students preferred to write journals before reading in order to help them approach the text in a more meaningful and purposeful manner, and to help them be better prepared for the follow-up group discussion. Second, summary writing is required at the post-reading stage. As previously discussed in this chapter, summary writing improves students' reading comprehension because the students need to figure out the main idea, the important information, and the macro-structure of a text. Third, journal writing is suggested at the post-reading stage as homework. There are two reasons for this. First, as shown in this study, the students preferred after-class writing because it provides them with more freedom in regard to their journals. That is, students appreciate the freedom of expressing themselves freely without worrying about time. Second, the results of the study revealed to the researcher that students may feel more comfortable exploring and developing their ideas after class.

Also, it is suggested that the teacher keeps a journal at first and shares his/her journal with the students. The teacher should model that a good journal is in fact a critical response to the text (Dyment & O'Connelly, 2003), thus to get the students at ease about their own responses. As shown in this study, many students from the journal writing group mentioned that teacher's thorough and detailed feedback was an important reason why they liked journals, where they had active dialogue with the teacher. Therefore, it is also suggested that the teacher dialogue with the students by giving them feedback. This post-reading activity may result in students' awareness of their strengths and weaknesses in reading, which, in turn, may contribute to their reading comprehension.

It is noted that journals are suggested at both the pre- and post-reading stages. Journal writing at both stages is considered necessary because they address different information. The pre-reading journal is in place to help the students get an overview of what the topic is about, and get them ready for the follow-up discussion. The students primarily state their predictions and ask questions about the topic. Compared with journal writing at the post-reading stage, journal writing at this stage takes less time. In contrast, journal writing at the post-reading stage addresses more detailed information, such as students' reactions, feelings, and problems with the text. It is a place for making general comments and writing anything that comes to mind.

In short, the reading instructional model described above is developed by connecting reading and writing in order to improve reading ability. In this teaching model, reading is supported with writing, which, in turn, supports writing. In addition, the strengths of speaking are taken into consideration and the students communicate orally with the teacher and their peers about their understanding. Therefore, the students

merge various skills of reading, writing, and speaking by “writing about ideas found in reading, and speaking about ideas found in writing” (Cobine, 1995).

5.4 Summary

In summary, this chapter discussed some of the important findings which had arisen from the present study, and referred to the research studies and theories which were relevant to those findings. Chapter Six, the final chapter, will discuss the limitations of the study, establish the pedagogical implications and suggests some directions for further research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter concludes the dissertation. It is organized into four sections. Section one summarizes the major findings of the present study. Section two considers the implications of the study for L2 reading and its possible applications to instruction. Section three describes the strengths and limitations of the study. Finally, Section four proposes recommendations for further research in L2 reading.

6.1 Summary of the Study

The current study was conducted to examine the effects of reading tasks on Chinese EFL students' reading comprehension and to depict their attitudes and perceptions of the reading tasks. It employed the mixed method design: the quantitative framework to assess the students' reading ability at the beginning and the end of the pedagogical intervention, and the qualitative framework to explore the students' attitudes towards the reading tasks. The following research questions were examined in this study.

- Do reading tasks facilitate Chinese EFL students' reading comprehension development?
- Do students in the groups of reading-writing connections show greater reading comprehension than those in a group of reading with no writing?

- Do text types have any significant effects on students' comprehension?
- Does gender have any significant effects on students' reading comprehension?
- Are there any significant interactions among the three independent variables?
- What are the students' attitudes and perceptions of the reading tasks?
- What are most effective types of reading tasks?

In order to examine these questions, a quasi-experimental design consisted of pretest-treatment-posttest was used. The duration of the treatment was 72 hours distributed through an 18-week semester. The pedagogical intervention in this study aimed to improve learners' English reading ability through source-based writing. The tasks in the study involved summary writing or journal writing, with a third condition of orally discussing questions. The instruments taken in this study were a Reading Comprehension Test, students' written questionnaires, students' written feedback, and face-to-face semi-structured interviews with the students. The 81 participants of this study belonged to three intact classes, who were enrolled in the Advanced English Course at Guizhou University, China, in the first semester of the academic year 2007 and 2008.

The quasi-experimental design of this study made it possible to find answers to the first five research questions stated above through the quantitative comparison of participants' performance before and after the treatment, and the comparison of the performance on the posttest. The RCT was employed to assess the students' reading performance. The participants' answers to the RCT were analyzed by using SPSS program, 15.0. The means of the students' scores on the pretest were compared and tested by a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The quantitative analysis of the

pretest indicated no significant differences among the three groups in their initial reading competence.

At the end of the pedagogical intervention, the participants' reading comprehension was assessed again by the same RCT used in the pretest. In response to the first research question, results from paired-sample *t* test were analyzed and significant differences were identified between the pretest and the posttest within each group, which means both reading-writing connections and reading without writing improved reading comprehension.

In order to answer research questions two, three, and four, the students' scores on the posttest were calculated and compared by descriptive statistics, MANOVA and Scheffe post hoc analyses. In response to the second research question, the MANOVA results indicated that the students from the RS group performed better than the other two groups of students.

The third research question intended to identify whether there were differential effects of text types. Results from the quantitative discussion suggested text types had significant effects on reading comprehension and that the students performed better in expository than narrative texts.

The fourth research question aimed to determine whether students' gender had different effects on their reading comprehension. The results revealed no significant gender differences either measured by short-answer or multiple-choice test, even though female students slightly outperformed the males.

The fifth research question sought to examine the interactions among the independent variables: reading tasks, text types, and gender. The MANOVA results yielded differential effects of the reading tasks across text types in the group of reading

with journal writing, while no similar significant interactions were found in the RS and RO groups.

Responses to the sixth and seventh research questions were provided by the analyses of the data gathered through written questionnaires with 79 participants, 238 entries of the participants' students' written feedback, and semi-structured interviews with 18 respondents.

A questionnaire written in the participants' first language was addressed to all the participants. The participants' responses to the five Likert-scale questionnaire items about their attitudes towards the reading tasks were analyzed quantitatively. The results revealed that more than half of the students had positive attitudes. The qualitative data elicitation of the study was designed for open-ended written questionnaire, students' written feedback, and oral interview. Outcomes indicated that the students had three types of attitudes towards the tasks. The first type was positive where the respondents commented preferably on the tasks. The second type was medium attitude where the respondents regarded the reading tasks had some effects on their reading comprehension, but there were some specific things they did not like about the tasks. The third type was negative, where the respondents stated their dislike of the tasks. Also, outcomes indicated that students from the RJ group had the highest mean score of their attitudes, while the RS group had the lowest in this regard. Furthermore, the higher the students perceived their reading ability was, the more positive attitudes they tended to have. Also, students reported some use of strategies and the experimental groups reported gaining writing skills. It was found that the students' suggestions were about vocabulary, task type, text type, reading strategy, motivation, and writing content.

6.2 Pedagogical Implications

The research findings summarized earlier in response to the research questions demonstrate that reading and writing are two modes of language and are inextricably related, and that reading-writing connections may benefit students' reading comprehension. The findings of this study formulate specific although not extensive conclusions that will hopefully shed light on the particular issue of reading development in a foreign language. Some significant implications for the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language for Chinese university students may be drawn as follows:

1. Teachers must be careful in employing summary writing in class.

As evidenced in this study, summary writing can be an effective way to improve learners' reading ability. However, teachers need to be careful in their classroom employment. The reason is that students may dislike its tight format.

2. Journals could be employed to increase students' motivation for learning.

One pedagogical implication concerning journal writing is that the understanding about oneself as a learner may increase motivation for writing, which in turn affects reading. Motivation has been commonly considered as one of the most important factors affecting L2 learning (e.g. Shia, 1998). Journal writing could be a good way to arouse students' motivation in learning. As Marsh (1998) noted, journal writing reveals issues that matter to students in the process of learning. Also, Padgett (2000) suggested that engaging students in journal writing could be a way to increase the students' interest in the task. Such applications point out the crucial role that learners' motivation have for the reading comprehension.

3. Thorough and detailed feedback should be given on students' journal.

Another finding of this study revealed that students preferred to write journals if they were sure the teacher was reading their journal and that feedback was given. Teachers who want to capitalize on the potential of journal writing must be willing to spend time and energy to offer students thorough and detailed feedback on the substance of their journal entries. Furthermore, focus of the feedback should not be on the mistakes made unless the same mistakes appear over and over again. The purpose is to avoid embarrassing the students, which may hinder their reading comprehension. In addition to providing time for journal writing, teachers should model good journal writing behaviors for the learners to follow. Finally, the students' privacy should be guarded. In this regard, teachers should make confidentiality and boundary setting essential, provide equitable feedback and guard privacy.

4. Reading strategies should be taught explicitly.

As suggested in the research findings of this study, some students had problems with reading strategies. In this respect, teachers should help students identify effective reading strategies and that students can be encouraged to implement them in their L2 reading. Those strategies should be explicitly taught through simple exercises developed to elicit information via targeted strategies. Such specific teaching methods as collaborative instruction, active learning, strategic modeling, and repeated, increasingly independent practice by students (Beers, 2003; Collins *et al.*, 2005) should be employed to raise student awareness of the reading strategies.

5. More attention should be paid to vocabulary in EFL teaching.

Similar to EFL learners in other culture, Chinese EFL learners reported having problems with vocabulary. The students' scores on questions items about vocabulary

were lower than those of other question types. In this case, EFL teaching may have to provide more opportunities dealing with new vocabulary words.

In short, as can be demonstrated from the above pedagogical implications, results from this study can be directly implemented into important areas of L2 reading. Among these are aspects of students' motivation, teacher feedback, and reading strategies.

6.3 Strengths and Limitations of the Study

This study triangulated data collection techniques including pretest, posttest, students' written feedback, questionnaire, and individual interview. Triangulation through multiple measures enabled the researcher to verify the research findings. Triangulating quantitative and qualitative data and methods contributes to a better understanding of the effects of reading-writing connections on EFL students' reading comprehension. Therefore, triangulation of the data collection procedures made the strength of the study.

Although this study yielded many insights and perspectives about implementing reading and writing connections in an EFL reading class in a Chinese university context, some limitations should be addressed. The limitations of the study concern the research design, the RCT, and the participants.

The following limitations apply to this study. First, the data collecting procedure itself made some participants feel uncomfortable and they complained about writing too much. This problem may have affected the responses that the students gave.

Second, the RCT may also have limited the validity of the results. The number of passages (four) used in the RCT was limited due to the time limitation. The

students might have had some preference or reluctance for specific texts. Therefore, the students' performance in the RCT presented their ability of understanding specific texts. In addition, short-answer and multiple-choice questions were employed in the RCT. Students may have comprehended the text but not understood the thrust of the question. Talbot (1997) noted that a text of a particular level of difficulty does not automatically yield questions reflecting the level of the text. Thus, it cannot be decided whether the exact point of misunderstanding lies in the text or in the question. Alternative approaches, including identifying omitted structural material, unscrambling texts, and identifying and correcting illogical texts, should be employed to assess reading comprehension.

Third, the participants were chosen based on convenience and availability. The inclusion was not randomized and learners were participants in the study based on their classroom enrollment. Consequently, there were not equal numbers of male (26) and female (55) students. Even though an equal number is not required in studies considering gender (e.g. Brantmeier, 2002, 2003, 2004; Bugel & Buunk, 1996; Young and Oxford, 1997), different numbers of male and female students still represented a limitation.

Finally, the participants of this study were 81 third-year undergraduate English majors at Guizhou University, China, who were advanced-level EFL learners. Other majors and levels were not included in this study. Because of this limitation, the findings of this study should be seen with caution for making generalizations about the reading comprehension of L2 learners.

6.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The last limitation discussed above leads to the need to conduct further research that explores the effects of reading tasks on reading comprehension. Based on the information from the study, the researcher offers some recommendations for further research in L2 reading.

First, this study was a preliminary attempt to improve reading comprehension through reading-writing connections. More research in this area is clearly needed. Since this research study explored several aspects of reading comprehension, namely, reading tasks, text types, and students' gender, the questions pinpointed in this research need further explanation and verification.

Second, this study set to measure two types of writing-from-source tasks, namely, reading with summary writing and reading with journal writing. Due to the limited research in tasks which connect reading and writing, the researcher suggests that more empirical studies could be conducted in this regard. Further research could expand this preliminary study, identifying specific factors, and their respective effects on reading comprehension.

Third, since advanced-level students as these populations have been generally ignored in research, more empirical research could be done at this level. This research study was conducted with only a small group of advanced EFL students. As a result, the interpretation and generalizability of the findings are limited. Future research may be administered to a larger group of students or to students at other levels; therefore, the effects of reading tasks on students' reading comprehension could be further interpreted.

Fourth, another issue of concern is about the research in strategies. To date, there has been little research into learning strategies utilized for reading and writing. There should be more empirical studies in this regard.

A final suggestion for future research is to widen the variables considered in this study. The present study considered two variables: text types and students' gender. It is possible that other variables, not accounted for in the present study, may influence students' reading comprehension. Research exploring the effects of other variables could be conducted.

All in all, the effect of reading tasks on EFL learners' reading comprehension is research well worth doing. It is the researcher's hope that this study has made a small but significant contribution to the research in the field of EFL reading comprehension.

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APPENDIX A

Excerpts from the Syllabus for Advanced English Course I

Program Description

Advanced English I will cover the 11 units of the textbook *A New English Course*. This course meets twice a week, during 2 hours daily, for a total of 72 hours.

Objectives

This course corresponds to the fifth of a series of total six courses designed to contribute to the development of reading skills as well as other basic and comprehensive language skills.

Advanced English I is a compulsory course intended to provide students with opportunities to gain expertise in the five language skills, especially reading skills in accuracy, fluency, and grammar, based on the previous 2-year intensive learning at university. Students are expected to develop oral and written skills, expand vocabulary, read and understand authentic English articles of some difficulty, write different types of text, and expand their knowledge of the culture of English speaking countries.

Contents

Unit 1 Hit the Nail on the Head

Unit 2 Beware the Dirty Seas

Unit 3 My Friend, Albert Einstein

Unit 4 The Invisible Poor

Unit 5 The Plug-in Drag: TV and the American Family

Unit 6 Preparing for College

Unit 7 Grouping the Gifted: Pro

Unit 8 Why Nothing Works

Unit 9 Where is the News Leading Us?

Unit 10 Things: The Throw-Away Society

Unit 11 Cultivating a Hobby

Methodology

The Advanced English Course proposes to develop students' English language proficiency through individual and group activities, oral and written reports, reading tasks, participation in projects, listening to audio-taped materials, answering questions from different sources, reflecting on individual and group performance, consulting the internet, encyclopedias, dictionaries, newspapers, magazines, novels, etc.

Evaluation

Evaluation will take into account the accomplishment of the goals outlined for the course, and will encompass the assessment of the five language skills. Regular attendance is required.

APPENDIX B

Sample Texts from *A New English Course*

Text I, Unit One: *Hit the Nail on the Head*

By Alan Warner

Have you ever watched a clumsy man hammering a nail into a box? He hits it first to one side, then to another, perhaps knocking it over completely, so that in the end he only gets half of it into the wood. A skilful carpenter, on the other hand, will drive home the nail with a few firm, deft blows, hitting it each time squarely on the head. So with language; the good craftsman will choose words that drive home his point firmly and exactly. A word that is more or less right, a loose phrase, an ambiguous expression, a vague adjective, will not satisfy a writer who aims at clean English. He will try always to get the word that is completely right for this purpose.

The French have an apt phrase for this. They speak of “*le mot juste*,” the word that is just right. Stories are told of scrupulous writers, like Flaubert, who spent days trying to get one or two sentences exactly right. Words are many and various; they are subtle and delicate in their different shades of meaning, and it is not easy to find the ones that express precisely what we want to say. It is not only a matter of having a good command of language and a fairly wide vocabulary; it is also necessary to think hard and to observe accurately. Choosing words is part of the process of realization, of defining our thoughts and feelings for ourselves, as well as for those who hear or read our words. Someone once remarked: “How can I know what I think till I see what I say?” This sounds stupid, but there is a great deal of truth in it.

It is hard work choosing the right words, but we shall be rewarded by the satisfaction that finding them brings. The exact use of language gives us mastery over the material we are dealing with. Perhaps you have been asked “What sort of a man is so-and-so?” You begin: “Oh, I think he’s quite a nice chap but he’s rather...” and then you hesitate trying to find a word or phrase to express what it is about him that you don’t

like, that constitutes his limitation. When you find the right phrase you feel that your conception of the man is clearer and sharper.

In certain primitive tribes it was thought dangerous to reveal your name to a stranger. It might give him power over you. Even in modern civilized society you find yourself at a slight social disadvantage if someone knows your name but you don't know his. Command of words is ultimately command over life and experience.

Some English words have a common root but are used in very different senses. Consider *human* and *humane*, for example. Their origin is the same and their meanings are related, but their usage is distance. A *human* action is not the same thing as a *humane* action. We cannot speak of a Declaration of *Humane* Rights. – There is a weapon called a *humane* killer, but it is not a human killer.

We don't have to look far afield to find evidence of bad carpentry in language. A student, replying to an invitation to dinner, finished his letter: "I shall be delighted to come and I am looking forward to the day with *anxiety*." *Anxiety* carries with it suggestions of worry and fear. What the writer meant was possibly *eagerness*. *Anxiety* has some kinship with eagerness but it will not do as a substitute in this context.

The leader of a political party in Uganda wrote a letter to the Press which contained this sentence.

Let us all fight this selfishness, opportunism, cowardice and ignorance now rife in Uganda and put in their place truth, manliness, consistency and *singularity* of mind.

This stirring appeal is spoilt by a malapropism in the last phrase, the word *singularity*. What the writer meant, I think, was *singleness* of mind, holding steadfastly to the purpose in mind, without being drawn aside by less worthy objects. *Singularity* means *oddity* or *peculiarity*, something that singles a man out from other men.

Without being a malapropism, a word may still fail to be the right word for the writer's purpose, the "mot juste". A journalist, writing a leader about Christmas, introduced a quotation from Dickens by saying:

All that was ever thought or written about Christmas is *imprisoned* in this sentence...

Imprisonment suggests force, coercion, as if the meaning were held against its will. It would be better to write *contained* or *summed up*. Epitomized might do, though it is rather a clumsy-sounding word. Searching a little farther for the "mot juste" we might hit

on the word *distilled*. This has more force than *contained* or *summed up*. Distillation suggests *essence* and we might further improve the sentence by adding this word at the beginning:

The essence of all that was ever thought or written about Christmas is distilled in this sentence.

English has a wide vocabulary and it is a very flexible language. There are many different ways of making a statement. But words that are very similar in meaning have the shades of difference, and a student needs to be alive to these differences. By using his dictionary, and above all by reading, a student can increase his sensitivity to these shades of difference and improve his ability to express his own meanings exactly.

Professor Raleigh once stated: "There are no synonyms, and the same statement can never be repeated in a changed form of words." This is perhaps too absolute, but is not easy to disprove. Even a slight alteration in the wording of a statement can subtly shift the meaning. Look at these two sentences:

- (1) In my childhood I loved to watch trains go by.
- (2) When I was a child I loved watching trains go by.

At first glance these two sentences are exactly the same. But look more closely and you will see that there are very tiny differences. *In my childhood* is a shade more abstract than *When I was child*. *Watching* perhaps emphasizes the looking at trains a little more than *to watch*. This is a very subtle example, and it would be possible to argue about it, but everyone would at once agree that there is a marked difference between the next two statements:

- (1) He died poor.
- (2) He expired in indigent circumstances.

In one sense *expired* is a synonym for *died* and *in indigent circumstances* for *poor*, but when the whole statement is considered, we cannot maintain that the two are the same. The change in words is a change in style, and the effect on the reader is quite different. It is perhaps easier to be a good craftsman with wood and nails than a good craftsman with words, but all of us can increase our skill and sensitivity with a little effort and patience. In this way we shall not only improve our writing, but also our reading.

(1169 words)

APPENDIX C

Lesson Plan

Text I, Unit One: *Hit the Nail on the Head*

(A Sample Lesson Plan for the Main Study)

Time: Monday 10th, Wednesday 12th, September 2007

Goal: Students should be able to understand the expository passage that they read thoroughly

Objectives:

1. Students should be able to understand the main idea, the purpose and tone of the text, organization and development of the text.
2. Students should know the meaning of all new words, and difficult sentences.
3. Students should be able to write a summary (for the summary writing group only)
Students should be able to write a journal (for the journal writing group only).
Students should be able to orally answer the Comprehension Questions on P. 23 of the textbook (for the control group only).

Materials and equipment:

1. Student Book of *A New English Course*, Book 5
2. Work Book of *A New English Course*, Book 5
3. *Advanced Oxford Dictionary*
4. Blackboard

Teaching Procedures

Pre-reading

1. Teacher divides students into 5 groups (5 or 6 members each). Students choose their groups.
2. Teacher tells students that they will read *Hit the Nail on the Head* today, and asks them to predict what the text will be about.
3. Teacher explains the meanings of the new words in Dictionary Work (P. 19) of the Student's Book, *A New English Course*.
4. Teacher tells students to read *Hit the Nail on the Head* on pages 19-21 silently and finish their reading within 7 minutes.
5. Teacher tells students in the summary writing group that they will be required to write a summary after reading, the students in the journal writing group that they will write a journal after reading.

While-reading

6. Each student read the text silently for the first time.
7. Each student reread the text thoroughly.
8. Teacher helps students with vocabulary, grammar, or others.
9. Teacher discusses the reading strategies that students like to use and suggests some more by telling them the strategies to construct the meaning.
10. Teacher discusses the text with the students intensively.

Post-reading

11. Students in the summary writing group write summaries; students in the journal writing group write journals; students in the oral discussion group discuss the Comprehension Questions within their group in English. Teacher walks around, helps them if they need assistance.
12. Students share the summaries or journals with their group members (experimental group only).
Teacher discusses the Comprehension Questions with the students (control group only).

Evaluation

- Teacher assesses the students' writing (experimental groups only).
- Teacher discusses the Comprehension Questions with the students by having them tell how they find the answers (control group only).

Text I, Unit One: *Hit the Nail on the Head*

(A Proposed Lesson Plan)

Goal: Students should be able to understand the expository passage that they read thoroughly

Objective:

1. Students should be able to understand the main idea, the purpose and tone of the text, organization and development of the text.
2. Students should be able to identify, comprehend, and interpret details from written materials.
3. Students should know the meaning of all new words, and difficult sentences.
4. Students should be able to orally answer the Comprehension Questions on P. 23 of the Student Book, write a summary, and a journal.

Materials and equipment:

1. Student Book of *A New English Course*, Book 5
2. Work Book of *A New English Course*, Book 5
3. *Advanced Oxford Dictionary*
4. Blackboard

Teaching Procedures

<p>Pre-reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Making Predictions ● Surveying the Text ● Getting Ready to Read ● Group Discussion ● Introducing Vocabulary 	
<p>Objective: To help students make predictions about the text.</p>	<p><i>Making Predictions and Asking Questions</i> Discuss the pre-reading questions on page one of the Students' Book:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have you ever heard of the English proverb "Hit the nail on the head"? What does it mean? ● This is an essay on English style. What do you think the author advises the English student to do in his/her writing?
<p>Objective: Students should have an overview of what the text is about.</p>	<p><i>Surveying the Text</i> Students will read "Hit the nail on the head" on pages 1-4 from <u><i>A New English Course: Book 5</i></u> by Alan Warner. Surveying involves the following tasks to be done orally with the class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Look at the length of the reading (13 paragraphs).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Look for the title “Hit the nail on the head” (<i>A New English Course</i>, pages 1-4). ● Note the topic and main idea
Objective: Students should be ready for the follow-up group discussion	<p>Getting Ready to Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students write a focused free journal entry about the specific reading
Objective: To gauge students’ prior knowledge and encourage interaction	<p>Group Discussion</p> <p>Students discuss about the topic in groups</p>
Objective: Students should be able to understand the key vocabulary of the text	<p>Introducing Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Before students start reading the text, go over the Dictionary Work on Page one of the Student Book with the students: ● Ask students to record the meanings of key words from the context of their reading in a vocabulary log.
<p>While-reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● First Reading ● Rereading the Text ● Analyzing Stylistic Choices ● Considering the Structure of the Text 	
Objective: Students should be able to identify, comprehend, and interpret details from the written text.	<p>First Reading</p> <p>Students read the text in groups of five or six Teacher explains metacognitive strategies. Ask students questions like the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Which of your predictions turned out to be true? ● What surprised you?
Objective: Students should be able to -recognize word meanings in context. -respond to tone and connotation. -apply context clues -correctly define and spell vocabulary	<p>Rereading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students reread a text to develop fluency and build vocabulary ● Teacher explain reading strategies, such as guessing word meanings by using context and word formation clues, considering syntax and sentence structures, analyzing reference words, predicting text content; reading for specific pieces of information, and using dictionary appropriately.
Objective: Students should be able to draw inferences and conclusions, respond to tone and	<p>Analyzing Stylistic Choices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask the students this question: How did the author use the method of “analogy”? ● Teacher explain “analogy” and students find out the use of analogy in the text

connotation	<p><i>Considering the Structure of the Text</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In small groups, students discuss how the text is organized what the major parts of the text and their purposes are. • On the board, outline elements that are common and those that are different from groups.
<p>Post-reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussing understanding ● Summarizing ● Writing journals 	
<p>Objective: Students should be able to orally share their understanding of the text</p>	<p><i>Discussing understanding of the text</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students discuss the Comprehension Questions in small groups • Discuss the Comprehension Questions in the whole class. Draw students' attention to the differences between groups. • Paraphrasing sentences thus to check understanding
<p>Objectives: Students should be able to summarize the text</p>	<p><i>Summarizing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students write summaries • Students share their summaries in groups
<p>Objectives: Students should be able to dialogue with teacher in journals</p>	<p><i>Writing journals</i> After class, students write their reactions, comments, questions and feelings about the text</p>
<p>Evaluating and Responding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to Student Writing • Using Portfolios 	
<p>Objective: To give students appropriate feedback to their writing</p>	<p><i>Responding to students' summaries</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher comments on whether students have correct understanding of the text or not, which may include the important information, inferences, and judgments. • Teacher comments on students' strengths and weaknesses. <p><i>Responding to students' journals</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher dialogues with the students by commenting on opinions on the topic, difficulties in understanding the text, students' problems, etc.

APPENDIX D
Demographic Survey
(English Version)

Name: _____

Group: _____

Directions: *This questionnaire is designed to gather information on your background. Please kindly spare a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire. Your personal information and response to this questionnaire will be kept confidential.*

Suggestions for answering the questionnaire

1. Please tick (✓) one of the answers which best indicates your reality.
2. Please do all the items. If any of the items is undone, the analysis of the data will be in trouble.

Questions about students' status or background information

1. Your gender: Male Female
2. Your age (years-old):
 19 20 21 22 23 Others; please specify: _____
3. How many years have you learned English?
 8 9 10 11 12 Others; please specify: _____
4. How do you rate your reading ability in English?
 Good or very good
 Fair
 Poor or needs improvement

Demographic Survey (Chinese Version)

姓名 _____

班级 _____

说明：该问卷调查旨在调查你的个人信息，请认真填写。我们将严格保密你的个人信息和你的回答。

问卷调查指南

1. 请在你认为符合你的实际情况的答案前打√。
2. 请回答全部问题。如果问题回答不全，将会影响我们的数据分析。

关于个人信息的调查

1. 性别 Male Female
2. 年龄(岁)
 19 20 21 22 23 其它; 请注明: _____
3. 你学了多久英语?
 8 9 10 11 12 其它; 请注明: _____
4. 你如何定位你的阅读能力?
 好/很好
 一般
 差/很差

APPENDIX E

Reading Comprehension Test

Reading Comprehension Test for the Pilot Study

Name: _____

Group: _____

Directions: *This is a test of how well you understand written English. There are 6 passages in this test. Each passage is accompanied by 3 short-answer questions and 3 multiple-choice questions. You are required to answer all.*

Passage I

In the immediate post-war years, the city of Birmingham scheduled some 50,000 small working class cottages as slums due for demolition. Today that process is nearly complete. Yet it is clear that, quite apart from any question of race, an environmental problem remains. The expectation built into the planning policies of 1945 was that in the foreseeable future the city would be a better place to live in. But now that slum clearance has run its course, there seems to be universal agreement that the total environment where the slums once stood is more depressing than ever.

For the past ten years the slum clearance areas have looked like bomb sites. The buildings and places which survived on islands in a sea of rubble and ash. When the slums were there they supported an organic community life and each building, each activity, fitted in as part of the whole. But now that they have been destroyed, nothing meaningful appears to remain, or rather those activities which do go on do not seem to have any meaningful relation to the place. They happen there because it is an empty stage which no one is using any more.

Typical of the inner-city in this sense is the Birmingham City Football Ground. Standing in unsplendid isolation on what is now wasteland on the edge of Small Heath, it brings into the area a stage army on twenty or so Saturdays a year who come and cheer

and then go away again with little concern any more for the place where they have done their cheering. Even they, however, have revolted recently. “The ground”, says the leader of the revolt, “is a slum”, thus putting his finger on the fact that the demolition of houses creates rather than solves problems of the inner-city.

A new element has now come upon the scene in the inner-city in the form of the tower block. Somehow it doesn't seem to be what Le Corbusier and planners who wrote those post-war Pelicans intended. The public spaces either haven't yet been developed or are more meanly conceived, and the corridors and lifts are places of horror. In fact these places were always suspected. They had no legitimacy in the minds of the public as suburban family housing had, and those who were placed there felt that they had been cheated. Along with the decaying elements, therefore, that which had been conceived as part of the brave new world was part of the problem.

(414 words)

Questions 1-3

Directions: Use NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS to answer each question.

01. What problem remains today when the slum demolition almost finish?
02. What does the slum clearance areas look like?
03. How do the people who move to the tower block feel?

Questions 4-6

Directions: Choose ONE best answer to the following question.

04. According to the passage, now that the slum dwellings have gone, _____.
 - A. no one does anything at all in those areas
 - B. urban theatrical life has gone, too
 - C. rebuilding can start almost immediately
 - D. the area is extremely unattractive
05. What did people think about tower blocks when they were first built?
 - A. Town planners thought they were badly conceived.
 - B. The public compared them with rural housing.
 - C. The man in the street mistrusted them.
 - D. People thought them an improvement on suburban housing.

06. From the style in which it's written, this passage was almost certainly taken from

_____.

- A. an official local planning report
- B. a novel set in Birmingham
- C. a history of the Industrial Revolution
- D. a sociology textbook

Passage II

A trip to the supermarket may not seem like an exercise in psychological warfare—but it is. Shopkeepers know that filling a store with the aroma of freshly baked bread makes people feel hungry and persuades them to buy more food than they had intended. Stocking the most expensive products at eye level makes them sell faster than cheaper but less visible competitors. Now researchers are investigating how “swarm intelligence” (that is, how ants, bees or any social animal, including humans, behave in a crowd) can be used to influence what people buy.

At a recent conference on the simulation of adaptive behavior in Rome, Zeeshan-ul-hassan Usmani, a computer scientist from the Florida Institute of Technology, described a new way to increase impulse buying using this phenomenon. Supermarkets already encourage shoppers to buy things they did not realize they wanted: for instance, by placing everyday items such as milk and eggs at the back of the store, forcing shoppers to walk past other tempting goods to reach them. Mr. Usmani and Ronaldo Menezes, also of the Florida Institute of Technology, set out to enhance this tendency to buy more by playing on the herd instinct. The idea is that, if a certain product is seen to be popular, shoppers are likely to choose it too. The challenge is to keep customers informed about what others are buying.

Enter smart-cart technology. In Mr. Usmani's supermarket every product has a radio frequency identification tag, a sort of barcode that uses radio waves to transmit information, and every trolley has a scanner that reads this information and relays it to a central computer. As a customer walks past a shelf of goods, a screen on the shelf tells him how many people currently in the shop have chosen that particular product. If the number is high, he is more likely to select it too.

Mr. Usmani's "swarm-moves" model appeals to supermarkets because it increases sales without the need to give people discounts. And it gives shoppers the satisfaction of knowing that they bought the "right" product—that is, the one everyone else bought. The model has not yet been tested widely in the real world, mainly because radio frequency identification technology is new and has only been installed experimentally in some supermarkets. But Mr. Usmani says that both Wal-Mart in America and Tesco in Britain are interested in his work, and testing will get under way in the spring.

Another recent study on the power of social influence indicates that sales could, indeed, be boosted in this way. Matthew Salganik of Columbia University in New York and his colleagues have described creating an artificial music market in which some 14,000 people downloaded previously unknown songs. The researchers found that when people could see the songs ranked by how many times they had been downloaded, they followed the crowd. When the songs were not ordered by rank, but the number of times they had been downloaded was displayed, the effect of social influence was still there but was less pronounced. People thus follow the herd when it is easy for them to do so.

In Japan a chain of convenience shops called RanKing RanQueen has been ordering its products according to sales data from department stores and research companies. The shops sell only the most popular items in each product category, and the rankings are updated weekly. Icosystem, a company in Cambridge, Massachusetts, also aims to exploit knowledge of social networking to improve sales.

And the psychology that works in physical stores is just as potent on the internet. Online retailers such as Amazon are adept at telling shoppers which products are popular with like-minded consumers. Even in the privacy of your home, you can still be part of the swarm.

(627 words)

Questions 7-9

Directions: Use NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS to answer each question.

07. What do shopowners use to makes people feel hungry and thus to increase sales of food products?
08. According to "swarm intelligence," if the number tells a customer many people in the shop have chosen one particular product, what is he likely to do?

09. What model did Mr. Usmani develop to increase sales without giving people discounts?

Questions 10-12

Directions: Choose ONE best answer to the following question.

10. Which statement about “swarm intelligence” is true?
- A. It is a kind of intelligence
 - B. It is how intelligence works
 - C. It is how social animals behave in a crowd
 - D. It is an organ
11. Supermarkets encourage shoppers to buy things by _____.
- A. placing everyday items at the back of the store
 - B. forcing shoppers to walk past other tempting goods
 - C. informing customers about what others are buying
 - D. All of the above
12. How do online retailers increase sales?
- A. They sell only the most popular items
 - B. They tell shoppers which products are popular
 - C. They broadcast music
 - D. Every product has a radio frequency identification tag

Passage III

On the 36th day after they had voted, Americans finally learned Wednesday who would be their next president: Governor George W. Bush of Texas.

Vice President Al Gore, his last realistic avenue for legal challenge closed by a U. S. Supreme Court decision late Tuesday, planned to end the contest formally in a televised evening speech of perhaps 10 minutes, advisers said. They said that Senator Joseph Lieberman, his vice presidential running mate, would first make brief comments. The men would speak from a ceremonial chamber of the Old Executive office Building, to the west of the White House. The dozens of political workers and lawyers who had helped lead Mr. Gore’s unprecedented fight to claw a come-from-behind electoral victory in the pivotal state of Florida were thanked Wednesday and asked to stand down.

“The vice president has directed the recount committee to suspend activities,” William Daley, the Gore campaign chairman, said in a written statement. Mr. Gore authorized that statement after meeting with his wife, Tipper, and with top advisers including Mr. Daley. He was expected to telephone Mr. Bush during the day.

The Bush campaign kept a low profile and moved gingerly, as if to leave space for Mr. Gore to contemplate his next steps. Yet, at the end of a trying and tumultuous process that had focused world attention on sleepless vote counters across Florida, and on courtrooms from Miami to Tallahassee to Atlanta to Washington the Texas governor was set to become the 43d U. S. president. The news of Mr. Gore’s plans followed the longest and most rancorous dispute over a U. S. presidential election in more than a century, one certain to leave scars in a badly divided country.

It was a bitter ending for Mr. Gore, who had outpolled Mr. Bush nationwide by some 300000 votes, but, without Florida, fell short in the Electoral College by 271 votes to 267—the narrowest Electoral College victory since the turbulent election of 1876. Mr. Gore was said to be distressed by what he and many Democratic activists felt was a partisan decision from the nation’s highest court. The 5-to-4 decision of the Supreme Court held, in essence, that while a vote recount in Florida could be conducted in legal and constitutional fashion, as Mr. Gore had sought, this could not be done by the Dec. 12 deadline for states to select their presidential electors. James Baker 3rd, the former secretary of state who represented Mr. Bush in the Florida dispute, issued a short statement after the U. S. high court ruling, saying that the governor was “very pleased and gratified.

Mr. Bush was planning a nationwide speech aimed at trying to begin to heal the country’s deep, aching and varied divisions. He then was expected to meet with congressional leaders, including Democrats. Dick Cheney, Mr. Bush’s running mate, was meeting with congressmen Wednesday in Washington. When Mr. Bush, who is 54, is sworn into office on Jan. 20, he will be only the second son of a president to follow his father to the White House, after John Adams and John Quincy Adams in the early 19th century. Mr. Gore, in his speech, was expected to thank his supporters, defend his five-week battle as an effort to ensure, as a matter of principle, that every vote be counted, and call for the nation to join behind the new president. He was described by an aide as “resolved and resigned.” While some constitutional experts had said they believed states

could present electors as late as Dec. 18, the U. S. high court made clear that it saw no such leeway.

The Bush team welcomed the news with an outward show of restraint and aplomb. The governor's hopes had risen and fallen so many times since Election night, and the legal warriors of each side suffered through so many dramatic reversals, that there was little energy left for celebration.

(650 words)

Questions 13-15

Directions: Use NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS to answer each question.

13. What were the political workers and lawyers who had supported Mr. Gore asked to do?
14. What was the result of the 5-4 decision of the supreme court?
15. Why Mr. Bush has little energy left for celebration?

Questions 16-18

Directions: Choose ONE best answer to the following question.

16. The main idea of this passage is _____.
 - A. Bush's victory in presidential election bore a political taint.
 - B. The process of the American presidential election.
 - C. The Supreme court plays a very important part in the presidential election.
 - D. Gore is distressed.
17. Why couldn't Mr. Gore win the presidential election after he outpolled Mr. Bush in the popular vote?
 - A. Because the American president is decided by the supreme court's decision.
 - B. Because people can't directly elect their president.
 - C. Because the American president is elected by a slate of presidential electors.
 - D. Because the people of each state support Mr. Bush.

18. What did the “turbulent election of 1876” imply?

- A. The process of presidential election of 2000 was the same as that.
- B. There were great similarities between the two presidential elections (2000 and 1876).
- C. It was compared to presidential election of 2000.
- D. It was given an example.

Passage IV

For a long time dowsing has been looked upon by many people with skepticism and suspicion, or simply designated under the label of the supernatural which defies logical explanation. Both these viewpoints do little justice to what is now becoming appreciated as a skill, although a paranormal skill, but one which is not beyond the man in the street. Indeed the art of dowsing has undergone a considerable revival of interest. But can anyone really dowse? Well, it is said that no one can teach you, the most anyone can do is help you to learn. It would appear that an awareness and feel for the medium is very important, but as any other skill, practice is the governing factor.

What exactly is dowsing? Many of us will associate it with the image of a man holding a folk hazel twig in his hands, by forcing the end of the stick downwards to the ground. While this image is by no means inaccurate, it is nevertheless a popular myth which has obliterated the true nature of dowsing with its far wider implication. In simple terms, dowsing is a method of using an implement to find hidden material by a non-physical means. The dowser concentrates his mind on the subject of his search while the implement in his hands focuses the unconscious awareness of the dowser’s perception of that subject. Although searching for underground water supplies is the most popular application of dowsing, it is also widely used for discovering mineral deposits such as coal, iron and precious metals. It is also used to find lost objects, or dead bodies in police investigations, to determine the position of archaeological remains, and to find missing relatives. In fact there is no end to the practical uses to which dowsing can be applied.

The forked hazel stick is another popular myth because not only will any forked stick serve as a dowsing instrument but also bent metal rods or wires, or even one long rod with a right-angle bend to hold. There are a number of plausible explanations of how it works and many dowsers have their own ideas as to what causes their particular

reaction and response to the presence of the material being searched for. Some say it is unconscious neuro-muscular contractions which effect the stick or rod, while another explanation claims the dowser actually “tunes in” the material through his paranormal awareness of its presence. Some dowsers claim they are even able to see the underground material of their search. Yet others say it is an instinct, the same as that used by some animals who live in the desert to discern water under the sand. A recent explanation is that all substances give off radiations which the dowser with his paranormal perception picks up through the medium of his stick or rod. And yet there is no concrete or scientific explanations as to how dowsing really works, but no doubt, in time, scientists will be able to rationalize what actually happens and enlighten us all.

(506 words)

Questions 19-21

Directions: Use NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS to answer each question.

19. How do many people react to dowsing?
20. What is the decisive factor of using dowsing?
21. According to a recent explanation, what do all substances give off thus the dowser could pick them up?

Questions 22-24

Directions: Choose ONE best answer to the following question.

22. As well as indicating the source of underground water, dowsing is also used for _____.
 - A. discovering antiques
 - B. uncovering buried corpses
 - C. locating ancient ruins
 - D. finding precious stones
23. Most people think that a dowsing tool is _____.
 - A. shaped like the letter Y
 - B. bent into a letter T
 - C. formed like the letter L
 - D. joined to from a V

24. One explanation given by the dowzers to explain their powers is that they

_____.

- A. have X-ray eyesight
- B. are radioactive
- C. have extrasensory perception
- D. D. have well-developed muscles

Passage V

The striving of countries in Central Europe to enter the European Union may offer an unprecedented chance to the continent's Gypsies (or Roman) to be recognized as a nation, albeit one without a defined territory. And if they were to achieve that they might even seek some kind of formal place—at least a total population outnumbers that of many of the Union's present and future countries. Some experts put the figure at 4m-plus; some proponents of gypsy rights go as high as 15m. Unlike Jews, Gypsies have had no known ancestral land to hark back to. Though their language is related to Hindi, their territorial origins are misty. Romanian peasants held them to be born on the moon. Other Europeans (wrongly) thought them migrant Egyptians, hence the derivative Gypsy. Most probably they were itinerant metal workers and entertainers who drifted west from India in the 7th century.

However, since communism in Central Europe collapsed a decade ago, the notion of Romanestan as a landless nation founded on Gypsy culture has gained ground. The International Romany Union, which says it stands for 10m Gypsies in more than 30 countries, is fostering the idea of “self-rallying”. It is trying to promote a standard and written form of the language; it waves a Gypsy flag (green with a wheel) when it lobbies in such places as the United Nations; and in July it held a congress in Prague, The Czech capital. At the congress a Slovak-born lawyer, Emil Scuka, was elected president of the International Tomany Union. Later this month a group of elected Gypsy politicians, including members of parliament, mayors and local councilors from all over Europe (OSCE), to discuss how to persuade more Gypsies to get involved in politics.

The International Romany Union is probably the most representative of the outfits that speak for Gypsies, but that is not saying a lot. Of the several hundred delegates who gathered at its congress, few were democratically elected; oddly, none

came from Hungary, whose Gypsies are perhaps the world's best organized, with some 450 Gypsy bodies advising local councils there. The union did, however, announce its ambition to set up a parliament, but how it would actually be elected was left undecided.

So far, the European Commission is wary of encouraging Gypsies to present themselves as a nation. Besides, acknowledging Gypsies as a nation might backfire, just when several countries, particularly Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, are beginning to treat them better, in order to qualify for EU membership. "The EU's whole premise is to overcome differences, not to highlight them," says a nervous Eurocrat.

But the idea that the Gypsies should win some kind of special recognition as Europe's largest continent wide minority, and one with a terrible history of persecution, is catching on. Gypsies have suffered many pogroms over the centuries. In Romania, the country that still has the largest number of them (more than 1m), in the 19th century they were actually enslaved. Hitler tried to wipe them out, along with the Jews.

"Gypsies deserve some space within European structures," says Jan Marinus Wiersma, a Dutchman in the European Parliament who suggests that one of the current commissioners should be responsible for Gypsy affairs. Some prominent Gypsies say they should be more directly represented, perhaps with a quota in the European Parliament. That, they argue, might give them a boost. There are moves afoot to help them to get money for, among other things, a Gypsy university. One big snag is that Europe's Gypsies are, in fact, extremely heterogeneous. They belong to many different, and often antagonistic, clans and tribes, with no common language or religion. Their self-proclaimed leaders have often proved quarrelsome and corrupt. Still, says, Dimitrina Petrova, head of the European Roma Rights Center in Budapest, Gypsies' shared experience of suffering entitles them to talk of one nation; their potential unity, she says, stems from "being regarded as sub-human by most majorities in Europe." And they have begun to be a bit more pragmatic. In Slovakia and Bulgaria, for instance, Gypsy political parties are trying to form electoral blocks that could win seats in parliament. That is far from saying that they have the people or the cash to forge a nation. But, with the Gypsy question on the EU's agenda in Central Europe, they are making ground.

(721 words)

Questions 25-27

Directions: Use NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS to answer each answer.

25. Where are the most probable Gypsy territory origins?
26. What idea is the International Romany Union cultivating?
27. Which country has the largest number of Gypsies?

Questions 28-30

Directions: Choose ONE best answer to the following question.

28. The best title of this passage is _____.
 - A. Gypsies want to form a nation
 - B. Are they a nation
 - C. EU is afraid of their growth
 - D. They are a tribe
29. What does the International Romany lobby for?
 - A. It lobbies for a post in any international Romany Union.
 - B. It lobbies for the right as a nation.
 - C. It lobbies for the right as a nation.
 - D. It lobbies for a place in such international organizations as the EU or UN.
30. Why is the Europe Commission wary of encouraging Gypsies to present themselves as a nation?
 - A. It may open a Pandora's Box.
 - B. Encouragement may lead to some unexpected results.
 - C. It fears that the Basgnes, Corsicans and other nations seeking separation may raise the same demand.
 - D. Gypsies' demand may highlight the difference in the EU.

Passage VI

Painting your house is like adding something to a huge communal picture in which the rest of the painting is done either by nature or by other people. The picture is not static, it changes as we move about, with the time of day, with the seasons, with new planting, new buildings and with alterations to old ones. And an individual house is just a fragment of this picture, nevertheless it has the power to make or mar the overall

scene. In the past people used their creative talents in painting their homes, with great imagination and in varied but always subtly blending colors. The last vestiges of this great tradition can still be seen in the towns of the extreme west of Ireland. It has never been recognized as an art form, partly because of the physical difficulty of hanging a street in a gallery and partly because it is always changing, as paint fades and is renewed. Also it is a communal art which cannot be identified with any one person, except in those many cases where great artists of the past found inspiration in ordinary street scenes and recorded them in paint.

Following the principles of decoration that were so successful in the past, you should first take a long look at the house and its surroundings and consider possible limitations. The first concerns the amount of color and intensity in the daylight in Britain. Colors look too harsh in the grayer light of the north. Since bright light is uncomfortable for the eyes, colors must be strong in order to be seen clearly. Viewed in a dimmer light they appear too bright. It is easy to see this if you look at a brick house while the sun is alternatively shining and then going behind a cloud. The brickwork colors look much more intense when the sun is hidden.

The second limitation is the colors of the surroundings: the color that may be a useful guide. The eastern countries of England and Scotland, particularly those with a local tradition of rendering or plastering, use colors applied solidly over the wall. Usually only the window-frames and doors are picked out in another color, often white or pale grey. Typical wall colors are the pink associated with Suffolk and pale buffs and yellows of Fife. Much stronger colors such as deep earth red, orange, blue and green are also common. In the coastal villages of Essex, as well as inland in Hertfordshire, the house-fronts of overlapping boards are traditionally painted black – originally tarred like ships – with windows and doors outlined in white. In Kent these weather boarded houses are usually white. In stone areas of Yorkshire and farther north, color is rarer: the houses are usually left in their natural color, though many are painted white as they probably all were once.

In the western counties of England, Wales and Scotland, the strongest traditions are black-and-white, especially in the upland areas. In central Wales, Cumbria, and on the west coast of Scotland there are many cottages and farms painted white with the corner-stones, windows and doors painted black. They look very effective against a

mountainous landscape. In Cheshire there is a more recent tradition of black-and-white half-timbered houses that has spread throughout the country. In lowland areas, the use of color is much more adventurous, nowhere more so than in the far west of Ireland.

(565 words)

Questions 31-33

Directions: Use NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS to answer each answer.

31. What does the passage suggest to take into account when putting paint on the outside of your house?
32. What does the word “vestiges” probably mean?
33. Where is color used the most adventurous?

Questions 34-36

Directions: Choose ONE best answer to the following question.

34. The reason the painting of houses has not been looked on as an art-form seems to be _____.
 - A. the public’s inability to appreciate the range of colors involved
 - B. the failure of art galleries to convince the critics
 - C. the impossibility of displaying it to the gallery-going public
 - D. a tendency to put communal art in a less serious category
35. The writer assumes that to a great extent your choice of color will be determined by _____.
 - A. the characteristic local colors
 - B. a need to make your home look artistic
 - C. the limited number of colors available locally
 - D. your desire to make your house look different
36. According to the passage, what we may expect to see in the western areas of Britain?
 - A. little black paint on houses, and most of them left without paint
 - B. little white and even less black paint used on houses
 - C. many buildings given black framework, and white for the main parts
 - D. white corner-stones on houses, and black woodwork

**Answers to the Reading Comprehension Test
(For the Pilot Study)**

Passage I

- 01. an environmental problem
- 02. bomb sites
- 03. cheated
- 04. C 05. A 06. B

Passage II

- 07. (freshly baked) bread
- 08. take it
- 09. “swarm-moves” model
- 10. C 11. D 12. B

Passage III

- 13. to stand down
- 14. against vote recount
- 15. too tired
- 16. A 17. C 18. B

Passage IV

- 19. skeptical and suspicious
- 20. practice
- 21. radiations
- 22. C 23. A 24. C

Passage V

- 25. from India
- 26. “self-rallying”
- 27. Hungary
- 28. A 29. B 30. A

Passage VI

- 31. signs
- 32. area appearance
- 33 far west of Ireland
- 34. C 35. A 36. C

Reading Comprehension Test for the Main Study

Name: _____

Group: _____

Directions: *This is a test of how well you understand written English. There are 4 passages in this test. Each passage is accompanied by 5 short-answer questions and 5 multiple-choice questions. You are required to answer all. Questions concerning the test content will not be allowed, nor will the use of dictionaries.*

Passage I

In the immediate post-war years, the city of Birmingham scheduled some 50,000 small working class cottages as slums due for demolition. Today that process is nearly complete. Yet it is clear that, quite apart from any question of race, an environmental problem remains. The expectation built into the planning policies of 1945 was that in the foreseeable future the city would be a better place to live in. But now that slum clearance has run its course, there seems to be universal agreement that the total environment where the slums once stood is more depressing than ever.

For the past ten years the slum clearance areas have looked like bomb sites. The buildings and places which survived on islands in a sea of rubble and ash. When the slums were there they supported an organic community life and each building, each activity fitted in as part of the whole. But now that they have been destroyed, nothing meaningful appears to remain, or rather those activities which do go on do not seem to have any meaningful relation to the place. They happen there because it is an empty stage which no one is using any more.

Typical of the inner-city in this sense is the Birmingham City Football Ground. Standing in unsplendid isolation on what is now wasteland on the edge of Small Heath, it brings into the area a stage army on twenty or so Saturdays a year who come and cheer and then go away again with little concern any more for the place where they have done their cheering. Even they, however, have revolted recently. "The ground", says the leader of the revolt, "is a slum", thus putting his finger on the fact that the demolition of houses creates rather than solves problems of the inner-city.

A new element has now come upon the scene in the inner-city in the form of the tower block. Somehow it doesn't seem to be what Le Corbusier and planners who wrote those post-war Pelicans intended. The public spaces either haven't yet been developed or are more meanly conceived, and the corridors and lifts are places of horror. In fact these places were always suspected. They had no legitimacy in the minds of the public as suburban family housing had, and those who were placed there felt that they had been cheated. Along with the decaying elements, therefore, that which had been conceived as part of the brave new world was part of the problem.

(414 words)

Questions 1-5

Directions: Use NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS to answer each question.

01. What do you think this passage is about?
02. What does the word "depressing" probably mean?
03. What problem remains today when the slum demolition almost finish?
04. What does the slum clearance areas look like?
05. Based on slum clearance in Birmingham in the past few decades, how long do you think it may take?

Questions 6-10

Directions: Choose ONE best answer to the following question.

06. The best title of this passage is _____.
 - A. Birmingham City Football Ground
 - B. Slum Clearance in the City of Birmingham
 - C. Tower Block in the City of Birmingham
 - D. Change of Buildings in the City of Birmingham
07. What does the word "revolt" probably mean?
 - A. take actions supporting the authority
 - B. go around a central point

- C. have something as the subject
 - D. take actions against the authority
08. According to the passage, now that the slum dwellings have gone, _____.
- A. no one does anything at all in those areas
 - B. urban theatrical life has gone, too
 - C. rebuilding can start almost immediately
 - D. the area is extremely unattractive
09. What did people think about tower blocks when they were first built?
- A. Town planners thought they were badly conceived.
 - B. The public compared them with rural housing.
 - C. The man in the street mistrusted them.
 - D. People thought them an improvement on suburban housing.
10. From the style in which it's written, this passage was almost certainly taken from _____.
- A. an official local planning report
 - B. a novel set in Birmingham
 - C. a history of the Industrial Revolution
 - D. a sociology textbook

Passage II

A trip to the supermarket may not seem like an exercise in psychological warfare—but it is. Shopkeepers know that filling a store with the aroma of freshly baked bread makes people feel hungry and persuades them to buy more food than they had intended. Stocking the most expensive products at eye level makes them sell faster than cheaper but less visible competitors. Now researchers are investigating how “swarm intelligence” (that is, how ants, bees or any social animal, including humans, behave in a crowd) can be used to influence what people buy.

At a recent conference on the simulation of adaptive behavior in Rome, Zeeshan-ul-hassan Usmani, a computer scientist from the Florida Institute of Technology, described a new way to increase impulse buying using this phenomenon. Supermarkets already encourage shoppers to buy things they did not realize they wanted: for instance, by placing everyday items such as milk and eggs at the back of the store, forcing shoppers

to walk past other tempting goods to reach them. Mr Usmani and Ronaldo Menezes, also of the Florida Institute of Technology, set out to enhance this tendency to buy more by playing on the herd instinct. The idea is that, if a certain product is seen to be popular, shoppers are likely to choose it too. The challenge is to keep customers informed about what others are buying.

Enter smart-cart technology. In Mr Usmani's supermarket every product has a radio frequency identification tag, a sort of barcode that uses radio waves to transmit information, and every trolley has a scanner that reads this information and relays it to a central computer. As a customer walks past a shelf of goods, a screen on the shelf tells him how many people currently in the shop have chosen that particular product. If the number is high, he is more likely to select it too.

Mr Usmani's "swarm-moves" model appeals to supermarkets because it increases sales without the need to give people discounts. And it gives shoppers the satisfaction of knowing that they bought the "right" product—that is, the one everyone else bought. The model has not yet been tested widely in the real world, mainly because radio frequency identification technology is new and has only been installed experimentally in some supermarkets. But Mr Usmani says that both Wal-Mart in America and Tesco in Britain are interested in his work, and testing will get under way in the spring.

Another recent study on the power of social influence indicates that sales could, indeed, be boosted in this way. Matthew Salganik of Columbia University in New York and his colleagues have described creating an artificial music market in which some 14,000 people downloaded previously unknown songs. The researchers found that when people could see the songs ranked by how many times they had been downloaded, they followed the crowd. When the songs were not ordered by rank, but the number of times they had been downloaded was displayed, the effect of social influence was still there but was less pronounced. People thus follow the herd when it is easy for them to do so.

In Japan a chain of convenience shops called RanKing RanQueen has been ordering its products according to sales data from department stores and research companies. The shops sell only the most popular items in each product category, and the rankings are updated weekly. Icosystem, a company in Cambridge, Massachusetts, also aims to exploit knowledge of social networking to improve sales.

And the psychology that works in physical stores is just as potent on the internet. Online retailers such as Amazon are adept at telling shoppers which products are popular with like-minded consumers. Even in the privacy of your home, you can still be part of the swarm.

(627 words)

Questions 11-15

Directions: Use NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS to answer each question

11. What do you think this passage is about?
12. What do shopowners use to make people feel hungry and thus to increase sales of food products?
13. What does the word “impulse” probably mean?
14. What model did Mr. Usmani develop to increase sales without giving people discounts?
15. What do the online retailers do to make consumers at home be part of the swarm?

Questions 16-20

Directions: Choose ONE best answer for each question

16. The best title of this passage is _____.
 - A. How to Shop in a Supermarket
 - B. The Arrangement of a Supermarket
 - C. How Shops can Exploit People's Herd Mentality to Increase Sales
 - D. What is “Swarm Move”
17. Which statement about “swarm intelligence” is true?
 - A. It is a kind of intelligence
 - B. It is how intelligence works
 - C. It is how social animals behave in a crowd
 - D. It is an organ
18. Supermarkets encourage shoppers to buy things by _____.

- A. placing everyday items at the back of the store
 - B. forcing shoppers to walk past other tempting goods
 - C. informing customers about what others are buying
 - D. All of the above
19. How do online retailers increase sales?
- A. They sell only the most popular items
 - B. They tell shoppers which products are popular
 - C. They broadcast music
 - D. Every product has a radio frequency identification tag
20. From the style in which it's written, this passage was almost certainly taken from _____.
- A. an official local planning report
 - B. a newspaper
 - C. a psychology textbook
 - D. a sociology textbook

Passage III

The striving of countries in Central Europe to enter the European Union may offer an unprecedented chance to the continent's Gypsies (or Roman) to be recognized as a nation, albeit one without a defined territory. And if they were to achieve that they might even seek some kind of formal place -- at least a total population outnumbers that of many of the Union's present and future countries. Some experts put the figure at 4m-plus; some proponents of gypsy rights go as high as 15m. Unlike Jews, Gypsies have had no known ancestral land to hark back to. Though their language is related to Hindi, their territorial origins are misty. Romanian peasants held them to be born on the moon. Other Europeans (wrongly) thought them migrant Egyptians, hence the derivative Gypsy. Most probably they were itinerant metal workers and entertainers who drifted west from India in the 7th century.

However, since communism in Central Europe collapsed a decade ago, the notion of Romanestan as a landless nation founded on Gypsy culture has gained ground. The International Romany Union, which says it stands for 10m Gypsies in more than 30 countries, is fostering the idea of "self-rallying". It is trying to promote a standard and

written form of the language; it waves a Gypsy flag (green with a wheel) when it lobbies in such places as the United Nations; and in July it held a congress in Prague, The Czech capital. At the congress a Slovak-born lawyer, Emil Scuka, was elected president of the International Romany Union. Later this month a group of elected Gypsy politicians, including members of parliament, mayors and local councilors from all over Europe (OSCE), to discuss how to persuade more Gypsies to get involved in politics.

The International Romany Union is probably the most representative of the outfits that speak for Gypsies, but that is not saying a lot. Of the several hundred delegates who gathered at its congress, few were democratically elected; oddly, none came from Hungary, whose Gypsies are perhaps the world's best organized, with some 450 Gypsy bodies advising local councils there. The union did, however, announce its ambition to set up a parliament, but how it would actually be elected was left undecided.

So far, the European Commission is wary of encouraging Gypsies to present themselves as a nation. Besides, acknowledging Gypsies as a nation might backfire, just when several countries, particularly Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, are beginning to treat them better, in order to qualify for EU membership. "The EU's whole premise is to overcome differences, not to highlight them," says a nervous Eurocrat.

But the idea that the Gypsies should win some kind of special recognition as Europe's largest continent wide minority, and one with a terrible history of persecution, is catching on. Gypsies have suffered many pogroms over the centuries. In Romania, the country that still has the largest number of them (more than 1m), in the 19th century they were actually enslaved. Hitler tried to wipe them out, along with the Jews.

"Gypsies deserve some space within European structures," says Jan Marinus Wiersma, a Dutchman in the European Parliament who suggests that one of the current commissioners should be responsible for Gypsy affairs. Some prominent Gypsies say they should be more directly represented, perhaps with a quota in the European Parliament. That, they argue, might give them a boost. There are moves afoot to help them to get money for, among other things, a Gypsy University. One big snag is that Europe's Gypsies are, in fact, extremely heterogeneous. They belong to many different, and often antagonistic, clans and tribes, with no common language or religion. Their self-proclaimed leaders have often proved quarrelsome and corrupt. Still, says, Dimitrina Petrova, head of the European Roma Rights Center in Budapest, Gypsies' shared

experience of suffering entitles them to talk of one nation; their potential unity, she says, stems from “being regarded as sub-human by most majorities in Europe.”

And they have begun to be a bit more pragmatic. In Slovakia and Bulgaria, for instance, Gypsy political parties are trying to form electoral blocks that could win seats in parliament. That is far from saying that they have the people or the cash to forge a nation. But, with the Gypsy question on the EU’s agenda in Central Europe, they are making ground.

(721 words)

Questions 21-25

Directions: Use NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS to answer each answer.

21. What do you think this passage is about?
22. What does the word “collapse” probably mean?
23. Where are the most probable Gypsy territory origins?
24. What idea is the International Romany Union cultivating?
25. Which country has the largest number of Gypsies?

Questions 26-30

Directions: Choose ONE best answer to the following question.

26. The best title of this passage is _____.
 - A. Europe’s Gypsies
 - B. Are Gypsies a nation
 - C. Gypsies: A Tribe
 - D. European Union’s Worry: Gypsies
27. What does the International Romany lobby for?
 - A. It lobbies for a post in any international Romany Union.
 - B. It lobbies for the right as a nation.
 - C. It lobbies for the right as a province.
 - D. It lobbies for a place in such international organizations as the EU or UN.
28. Why is the Europe Commission wary of encouraging Gypsies to present themselves as a nation?

- A. It may open a Pandora's Box.
 - B. Encouragement may lead to some unexpected results.
 - C. It fears that the Basgnes, Corsicans and other nations seeking separation may raise the same demand.
 - D. Gypsies' demand may highlight the difference in the EU.
29. What does the word "heterogeneous" probably mean?
- A. giving freely
 - B. consisting of the same type of people or things
 - C. coming out of the same gene
 - D. consisting of different people or things
30. What may be the opinion of the author?
- A. Gypsies have already formed a nation
 - B. Gypsies are ready for their own nation
 - C. Gypsies should not form a nation
 - D. Gypsies are now more united than they were before

Passage IV

For a long time dowsing has been looked upon by many people with skepticism and suspicion, or simply designated under the label of the supernatural which defies logical explanation. Both these viewpoints do little justice to what is now becoming appreciated as a skill, although a paranormal skill, but one which is not beyond the man in the street. Indeed the art of dowsing has undergone a considerable revival of interest. But can anyone really dowse? Well, it is said that no one can teach you, the most anyone can do is help you to learn. It would appear that an awareness and feel for the medium is very important, but as any other skill, practice is the governing factor.

What exactly is dowsing? Many of us will associate it with the image of a man holding a fork hazel twig in his hands, by forcing the end of the stick downwards to the ground. While this image is by no means inaccurate, it is nevertheless a popular myth which has obliterated the true nature of dowsing with its far wider implication. In simple terms, dowsing is a method of using an implement to find hidden material by a non-physical means. The dowser concentrates his mind on the subject of his search while the implement in his hands focuses the unconscious awareness of the dowser's perception of

that subject. Although searching for underground water supplies is the most popular application of dowsing, it is also widely used for discovering mineral deposits such as coal, iron and precious metals. It is also used to find lost objects, or dead bodies in police investigations, to determine the position of archaeological remains, and to find missing relatives. In fact there is no end to the practical uses to which dowsing can be applied.

The forked hazel stick is another popular myth because not only will any forked stick serve as a dowsing instrument but also bent metal rods or wires, or even one long rod with a right-angle bend to hold. There are a number of plausible explanations of how it works and many dowsers have their own ideas as to what causes their particular reaction and response to the presence of the material being searched for. Some say it is unconscious neuro-muscular contractions which effect the stick or rod, while another explanation claims the dowser actually “tunes in” the material through his paranormal awareness of its presence. Some dowsers claim they are even able to see the underground material of their search. Yet others say it is an instinct, the same as that used by some animals who live in the desert to discern water under the sand. A recent explanation is that all substances give off radiations which the dowser with his paranormal perception picks up through the medium of his stick or rod. And yet there is no concrete or scientific explanations as to how dowsing really works, but no doubt, in time, scientists will be able to rationalize what actually happens and enlighten us all.

(506 words)

Questions 31-35

Directions: Use NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS to answer each question.

31. What do you think this passage is about?
32. How do many people react to dowsing?
33. What is the decisive factor of using dowsing?
34. What does the word “perception” probably mean?
35. Why does the writer think it is possible for anyone to become a dowser?

Questions 36-40

Directions: Choose ONE best answer to the following question.

36. A popular myth about dowsing is _____.
- A. not everyone can do it
 - B. it can only be done in fields
 - C. it only works for men, not women
 - D. only one type of implement can be used
37. What does the word “skepticism” probably mean?
- A. an attitude of disappointment
 - B. an attitude of doubting
 - C. an attitude of disagreement
 - D. an attitude of despair
38. As well as indicating the source of underground water, dowsing is also used for _____.
- A. discovering antiques
 - B. uncovering buried corpses
 - C. locating ancient ruins
 - D. finding precious stones
39. Most people think that a dowsing tool is _____.
- A. shaped like the letter Y
 - B. bent into a letter T
 - C. formed like the letter L
 - D. joined to form a V
40. One explanation given by the dowsers to explain their powers is that they _____.
- A. have X-ray eyesight
 - B. are radioactive
 - C. have extrasensory perception
 - D. have well-developed muscles

**Answers to the Reading Comprehension Test
(For the Main Study)**

Passage I

- 01. slums in Birmingham
- 02. making sad/missing of enthusiasm
- 03. an environmental problem
- 04. bomb sites
- 05. longer than expected
- 06. B 07. D 08. C 09. A 10. B

Passage II

- 11. supermarkets increase sales/shops increase sales
- 12. (freshly baked) bread
- 13. sudden wish
- 14. “swarm-moves” model
- 15. telling popular items/products
- 16. C 17. C 18. D 19. B 20. C

Passage III

- 21. Europe’s Gypsies
- 22. fall down/fall in suddenly
- 23. India
- 24. Self-rallying
- 25. Romania
- 26. A 27. B 28. A 29. D 30. D

Passage IV

- 31. dowsing
- 32. to stand down
- 33. practicing
- 34. skepticism and suspicion
- 35. no sensitivity required/ no sensitivity needed
- 36. A 37. B 38. C 39. A 40. C

APPENDIX F

Suggested Format of the Reading Journal

Directions: *You are asked to write your reactions to the text you've read. Do take risks and get voice on paper. I read for ideas only and no grades for that.*

Name: _____

Date: _____

Title: _____

1. How long did you spend reading the text? Did you reread any part of it? Please specify.
2. Did you enjoy reading this text? Why or why not? What did you find interesting or meaningful?
3. What words or phrases were important in this text? Were there any words, phrases, or paragraphs that you could not figure out? If so, what were they? If you had to look up any of these words/phrase, include the English equivalent(s).
4. Was there anything in the text that you want to remember or explore?
5. Did you have any problems in reading the text? If so, what were they?
6. What suggestions do you have for the author?
7. What questions do you have for the author?

Other Comments

APPENDIX G

Questionnaire of Students' Attitudes towards the Reading Tasks (English Version)

Name: _____

Group: _____

Directions: *This questionnaire is designed to gather information on how you think about the reading tasks you have done. Please kindly spare a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire. Your personal information and response to this questionnaire will be kept confidential.*

Suggestions for answering the questionnaire

A. This questionnaire is of two parts:

Part I: Please tick (√) one of the answers which best indicates your reality or attitudes.

Part II: Please answer questions about your attitudes towards the reading tasks

B. Please do all the items. If any of the items is undone, the analysis of the data will be in trouble.

1. Can you finish the reading task assigned to you (reading with summary writing, reading with journal writing, or reading with oral discussion) within 15 minutes?

Yes

No If so, how many minutes do you need? _____

Part I: Please tick (✓) one of the answers which best indicates your reality or opinion.

Instructions: *Please read statements 1 through 5 carefully and choose the answers ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Please also note that there are no right or wrong answers for your response.*

Item	Content	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I like the task I've done.					
2	The task I've done will help to improve my reading comprehension.					
3	The task I've done helps to improve my reading comprehension of narrative texts more than expository texts.					
4	The task I've done helps to improve my reading comprehension of expository texts more than narrative texts.					
5	I will continue doing the task I've done.					

Part II: Please answer questions about your opinions on the reading tasks

Instructions: *Please read questions 6 through 10 carefully and answer the questions.*

Please also note that there are no right or wrong answers for your response.

6. What do you like/dislike the most about the tasks you've done? Why/why not?

7. How do (don't) you think the tasks you've done will help you improve your reading comprehension?

8 Do you think your understanding of narrative or expository texts will improve as the result of the reading tasks? Why/why not?

9. Do you have any problems with your reading task? If any, what are they?

10. If you could change one thing in the task, what would it be? How?

Thank you for your co-operation!

Questionnaire of Students' Attitudes towards the Reading Tasks (Chinese Version)

说明：该问卷调查旨在收集有关你对所做的阅读任务的看法，请认真填写。我们将严格保密你的个人信息和你的回答。

问卷调查指南

A. 该问卷调查由两部分组成：

第一部分：(1-5 题) 请在符合你观点的方框内打√；

第二部分：(6-10 题) 请写出你对所做的阅读任务的看法

B. 请回答全部问题。如果问题回答不全，将会影响我们的数据分析。

1. 你能在规定的 15 分钟内完成你的阅读任务（阅读加写概要、阅读加写阅读日志、或阅读加回答阅读理解问题）吗？

能

不能 如果不能，你需要多长时间？ _____

关于学生对阅读任务看法的调查

第一部分：请仔细阅读 1-5 题，并选择符合你看法的选项。

题号	内容	非常同意	同意	不确定	不同意	非常不同意
1	我喜欢我所做的阅读任务					
2	我所做的阅读任务能提高我的阅读能力					
3	我所做的阅读任务对提高我阅读记叙文的能力比说明文作用大					
4	我所做的阅读任务对提高我阅读的说明文能力比记叙文的作用大					
5	今后我将继续做该阅读任务					

第二部分：请仔细阅读 6-10 题，并回答问题。请注意回答不分对错。

6. 关于你所做的阅读任务，你最喜欢/不喜欢的是什么？为什么？

7. 你认为你所做的阅读任务在哪方面能够/不能够帮助你提高阅读能力？

8. 你认为在完成阅读任务后，你阅读记叙文还是说明文的能力会得到提高？为什么？

9. 你在做阅读任务时有什么困难吗？如果有，是什么？

10. 你认为阅读任务中的哪一方面最需要改善？如何改善？

谢谢合作！

APPENDIX H

The Interview Guide: The Pilot Study

(English Version)

1. What reading task you were assigned to do?
2. Can you finish the reading tasks within 20 minutes?
3. What are your attitudes toward the task you've done (RS, RJ, or RO)?
4. How do you think writing summaries/journals/answering questions can (can't) improve your reading ability?
5. Do you have any problems doing your tasks? If any, what are they?
6. Do you have any comments or suggestions? If any, what are they?

(Chinese Version)

1. 这个学期你做的是哪一种阅读任务？是阅读加写概要，阅读加写阅读日志，还是阅读加回答问题？
2. 你能在规定的 20 分钟内完成你的阅读任务吗？
3. 你怎么看待你的阅读任务？
4. 你认为你做的阅读任务能帮助你提高英语阅读能力吗？为什么？
5. 在做阅读任务时有什么困难吗？如果有，是什么？
6. 你认为阅读任务的哪一方面最需要改善？如何改善？

The Interview Guide: The Main Study

(English Version)

1. What reading task you were assigned to do this term?
2. Do you like the task you've done? Can you tell me why (why not)?
3. How do you think writing summaries/journals/answering questions can (can't) improve your reading ability?
4. Do you have any problems when you are writing summaries/journals/answering questions? Can you tell me what it is? And why?
5. In the future, will you write summaries/journals/answering questions after reading?
6. If you could change one thing of the reading task, what would it be?
7. What do you think is a good way to improve reading ability?

(Chinese Version)

1. 这个学期你做的是哪一种阅读任务？是阅读加写概要，阅读加写阅读日志，还是阅读加回答问题？
2. 你喜欢做你的阅读任务吗？请说一下为什么？
3. 你认为你做的阅读任务能帮助你提高英语阅读能力吗？为什么？
4. 在做阅读任务时有什么困难吗？如果有，是什么？
5. 今后你会继续做该阅读任务吗？问什么？
6. 你认为阅读任务的哪一方面最需要改善？如何改善？
7. 你认为什么方法最能提高英语阅读能力？

APPENDIX I

A Sample Interview Script

A Sample Interview Script (The Translated Version)

Interviewer: Lin Zhou (LZ)

Interviewee: Student number 23 in the group of reading with summary writing (RS23)

Date: January 6, 2008

Time: 15:00 PM

Place: Guizhou University, Guiyang, China

LZ: Good afternoon.

RS23: Good afternoon.

LZ: Take a seat please.

RS2: Thank you, teacher.

LZ: How are you doing?

RS2: I'm fine. Thank you. And you?

LZ: I'm fine too, thank you.

RS2: Teacher, what is this interview about? Will it be graded?

LZ: No. Please do not worry about it. OK? This interview is for collecting data of my Ph.D. thesis. And I will record the interview in order to analyze it. Is that all right with you?

RS2: Yes.

LZ: OK, let's start now. **(Q1) What reading task you were assigned to do this term, I mean, reading with summary writing, reading with journal writing, or reading and orally discussing the comprehension questions?**

RS: Reading with summary writing.

LZ: **(Q2) Do you like it?**

RS: Yeah.

LZ: **(Q3) Can you tell me why?**

RS: Because it practices our writing ability. And we can learn the structure of the article, so we learn the writing skill. For reading, eh, I think it's useful, but the use is not so obvious.

LZ: **(Q4) How do you think writing summary can improve your reading ability?**

RS23: Normally we just do extensive reading, but I think we also need intensive reading.

LZ: Can you give me an example.

RS23: For example, sometimes we want to express ourselves, but we are not capable enough. Writing summary can make me read more carefully, and learn something from the text.

LZ: Do you think reading with summary writing can improve your reading ability?

RS23: Yes.

-Why?

-Because I read with some purpose. I know I must read carefully in order to write the summary. And I pay special attention to the main idea, because it's the most important for writing a summary. I think the more we read, the better our reading ability will be.

LZ: How do you think writing summaries improves your reading ability?

RS23: I think summary writing can help me guess the new words, because I need to guess the meaning of the new words before I write the summary. So I think it's useful for my prediction of the new words.

LZ: Do you have any problems when you are writing summaries?

RS: Yes

LZ: **Can you tell me what is it? And why?**

Time is a problem. My reading speed is slow. Sometimes I spent too much time reading. And when it's time to write summaries, I had not finished reading. So I didn't have enough time to write the summaries. Vocabulary is also a problem. There are so many new words. And, sometimes I don't know how to express myself. I understand the article, but I can't say it out.

LZ: Anything else?

RS23: Yes. I think I missed many details because I only focused on the main idea and the gist. They are the most important for summaries. But I missed the details. I think details are also important for understanding the text.

LZ: If possible, **will you write summaries after reading in the future?**

RS23: In fact, I have already had the habit of writing summaries now. I think it's good for me. Sometimes, I copy some good sentences and recite them.

LZ: OK. **(Q5) If you could change one thing of the task of reading with summary writing, what would it be?**

RS23: I think after writing summaries, we can express our ideas about the topic the author discussed.

LZ: Why do you think so?

RS: Because in summaries, we only generalize the main idea and summarized the author's idea. We do not express our ideas in summaries. So I think we should express ourselves after summary. Anyway, we need to express ourselves after reading. Maybe writing journals is good, because we can express our ideas freely. It's interesting.

LZ: (Q6) What do you think is the best way to improve reading ability?

RS: Reading extensively is the best way. We need to read all kinds of things, for example, China Daily, magazines, literature, and so on. If we read a lot, then quantity change can cause quality change. In this way, our reading ability will be improved. And habit is also very important.

LZ: What do you mean by that?

RS23: I think we need to have a very good reading habit, and insist on doing it every day. Then our reading ability will be better.

LZ: Anything else?

RS23: No. That's it.

LZ: Well, thank you very much for your cooperation. That's the end of our interview. Thank you again and see you.

RS23: You are welcome. See you.

LZ: What do you think is the best way to improve reading ability?

RS: Reading extensively is the best way. We need to read all kinds of things, for example, China Daily, magazines, literature, and so on. If we read a lot, then quantity change can cause quality change. In this way, our reading ability will be improved. And habit is also very important.

LZ: What do you mean by that?

RS23: I think we need to have a very good reading habit, and insist on doing it every day. Then our reading ability will be better.

LZ: If possible, will you write summaries after reading in the future?

RS23: In fact, I have already had the habit of writing summaries now. I think it's good for me. Sometimes, I copy some good sentences and recite them.

LZ: OK. If you could change one thing of the task of reading with summary writing, what would it be?

RS23: I think after writing summaries, we can express our ideas about the topic the author discussed.

LZ: Why do you think so?

RS: Because in summaries, we only generalize the main idea and summarized the author's idea. We do not express our ideas in summaries. So I think we should express ourselves after summary. Anyway, we need to express ourselves after reading. Maybe writing journals is good, because we can express our ideas freely. It's interesting.

LZ: Anything else?

RS23: No. That's it.

LZ: Well, thank you very much for your cooperation. That's the end of our interview. Thank you again and see you.

RS23: You are welcome. See you.

APPENDIX J

Samples of Students' Written Feedback

Respondents: Student number 26 in the group of reading with summary writing (RS26)

Student number 10 in the group of reading with journal writing (RJ10)

Student number 18 in the group of reading with oral discussion (RO18)

Place: Guizhou University, Guiyang, China

RS26

Unit 1

I think do (doing) summarizing in this way can not insure the quality of our learning. Maybe oral summarizing will be a better way. So I just suggest we don't always do everything in writing, that will waste a lot of time. Try to replace in some good ways.

Unit 5

Summary is a kind of work which will impose the students or reader to read the text carefully and understand it well. Only in this way, can them (they) finish their task successfully. Summary can also improve one's writing skill. The reader will try his best to express his or her thought about the passage, but too much summary work may make the students tired of it.

Unit 11

Summary is a good way of promoting one's writing ability. Summary should also pay more attention to its quality rather than its quantities. The training of summary writing should also provide some better methods.

RJ10

Unit 1

I believe that this kind of learning has both positive and negative effects. It can help us make use of our brain and hand, thus to cultivate our interesting and encourage us to think more. As a result, we do learn more. But this way of reading contains many potential problems. We always loose some important think without guide. Hence we

may get lost in the passage painful but no gain or less gain than we are supposed to get. As is known to us, one will lose if he has no target.

Unit 5

It has a certain help for us to understand the narration passage better. As for me, I gain a clear mind about the main idea after I write the journal. Also I have a better appreciation of the beauty of the text. However, when I finish one time reading I feel unwilling to read it again. Maybe because I am lazy. I have to say that write a journal cost some time. And I like to write down whatever I like but not the questions on the paper.

Unit 11

I think oral debate is more helpful. We write book reports every week and that's enough for our practicing writing skills. During oral debate, we feel relax and thoughtful. What's more important is that we can tough each other's minds, not only the aggressive ideas but also the opposite opinions. This enables us to think more.

RO18

Unit 1

Firstly, the question about the main idea is a quite good one, through this question, I can get an exact understanding of an article. It also can help me to control this article more easily. Secondly, through the True or False questions I can quickly get the details about this passage.

Unit 5

Firstly, as for narratives, they aim to state some facts or describe people. While doing comprehension exercises, we can clearly grasp the main idea and people through the main idea questions. Before reading the text, reading questions can guide us, thus making us understanding the text correctly and fast. True or False exercise makes us understand the details better and understand the people better.

Unit 11

Oral discussion helps understand the text a little. First, in order to discuss, we must understand the text beforehand, base on the text. Second, discussion based on the text helps us to find details to support ourselves. However, oral discussion may lead to ambiguity because different people have different ideas, this may leads to our misunderstanding.

APPENDIX K

Sample Writings by the Students

A Sample Summary Written by Students from the Group of Reading with Summary Writing

Writer: Chen Ronghong (RS27)

Date: September 28, 2008

Time: 8:30 AM

Place: Guizhou University, Guiyang, China

Beware the Dirty Sea

It is true that the Mediterranean is really dirty, though it is the most popular of all the holiday destinations. Factories pour the poison into Mediterranean and all the cities on the coast also sluice the sewage into the sea. So many kinds of terrible diseases are threatening the people who inhabit and visit its shores. As two vital causes of the pollution, sewage and industry pollution are too serious to declean for the sea itself. For the sake of that, the shape of Mediterranean is almost close, it just has a small opening side – the nine-mile-wide strait of Bigraltor. But nowadays, the countries of the Mediterranean have been coming together to save their sea.

A Sample Journal Written by Students from the Group of Reading with Journal Writing

Writer: Wei Haiying (RJ17)

Date: March 28, 2008

Time: 11:40 AM

Place: Guizhou University, Guiyang, China

Beware the Dirty Sea

What is your impression on the Mediterranean? In my impression, it is beautiful, romantic, multicultural, etc., (as) many people consider. For the author Geoffrey Lean, however, he is on the opposite side holding that the Mediterranean is gravely ill.

But this article startled me a lot. From the author's eyes, I saw a dirty sea, which was polluted by us stupid people awfully. The author used a lot of numbers and facts to tell us how dirty and dangerous the Mediterranean is now. That's true. We don't seek to the essence of the Mediterranean. From the map the author points out the surroundings of it – many countries are around, which means the Mediterranean should have to be divided into several parts for providing the countries.

For countries, as they develop and undertake their productivity, a lot of sewage will be flushed to (the) sea because they are coastal ones. So how terrible it is we can imagine. Besides, it is a great scenic spot providing a lot of tourists to have fun. How can they bear the plankton, pesticides, oil, tar and many, many hazardous things.

The author is very worry (worried) about the situation and elaborates people in detail to remind them how terrible it is now (and elaborates the problem in detail, thus to remind people of the seriousness of the problem). (Even though) there (There) is a piece of comforted (good) news that the countries of the Mediterranean have been coming together to work out how to save their common sea. At the end of the article, the author kept an optimistic attitude on the sea. Therefore we should have confidence that the future of the Mediterranean will be better than before.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Lin Zhou was born on April 10, 1973 in Bijie, China. She graduated from Beijing Language University in 1994 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Language and Literature. In 1997, she successfully completed the College English Teacher Training Program jointly conducted by Nanjing University, China, and Columbia University, the United States of America. In 2000, she earned a Master of Arts in Teaching degree from Oakland University, the United States of America.

Upon graduation from Beijing Language University in 1994, Lin Zhou started her teaching career at Guizhou University of Technology. She transferred to Guizhou University in 2001. She is currently an associate professor at the College of International Studies, Guizhou University, China. She is on the board of directors of the Association of Foreign Languages Studies, Guizhou Province, China.

Since 2005, she has been enrolled in the Ph.D. program of English Language Studies at the School of English, Institute of Social Technology, Suranaree University of Technology, Thailand. She got straight A's in all the classes she took while working for her Ph.D. degree. Her research interests in the field of applied linguistics include language teaching, literacy acquisition, and language learning strategy.