

THE EFFECT OF EXTENSIVE READING ON WRITING FLUENCY AND CREATIVITY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effect of extensive reading on the development of writing fluency and creativity among advanced-level 7th-grade English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in a primary school context in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The research employed a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test design over six weeks, integrating an extensive reading program with self-selected graded readers. Data were collected through timed writing tasks administered before and after the intervention, complemented by creativity rubrics and student attitude surveys. Quantitative analysis revealed statistically significant improvements in writing fluency, as evidenced by increased word count, sentence complexity, and lexical variety. Creativity scores also rose substantially, with learners demonstrating more originality and expressive language use. Qualitative data indicated enhanced learner motivation, confidence, and autonomy. The findings suggest that extensive reading is a powerful pedagogical tool for improving both the linguistic and creative dimensions of young EFL learners' writing.

**Keywords:** extensive reading, writing fluency, creativity, EFL learners, language acquisition, young learners

**INTRODUCTION:** Developing writing fluency and creativity is a persistent challenge in foreign language education, particularly in contexts where learners have limited exposure to authentic linguistic input. While traditional instruction often emphasizes accuracy and grammar, recent pedagogical trends advocate for communicative and meaning-oriented approaches that foster both fluency and expressive capacity. One such approach is extensive reading (ER) — a method that encourages learners to read large amounts of easy and enjoyable material at their own pace.

Reading and writing are closely interconnected. Reading provides models of discourse, structure, and vocabulary, while writing allows learners to apply and internalize these features. As Krashen (1985) posited in his Input Hypothesis, language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to meaningful, comprehensible input in low-anxiety environments. ER programs provide precisely such conditions, helping learners internalize language naturally rather than through explicit instruction.

The current study examines how extensive reading affects two key aspects of EFL writing: fluency (the ability to write smoothly and effortlessly) and creativity (the capacity to generate original and expressive ideas). The research addresses the following questions:

1. To what extent does extensive reading improve students' writing fluency?
2. How does extensive reading influence students' writing creativity?
3. What are students' attitudes toward extensive reading as a learning tool?

The findings aim to contribute to the growing body of research on ER and provide practical insights for teachers seeking to integrate reading into writing instruction.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

The theoretical underpinnings of this study are grounded in Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, which asserts that comprehensible input is the essential driver of language acquisition. Extensive

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reading provides a rich source of such input by exposing learners to vocabulary, grammatical structures, and discourse patterns in authentic contexts. Through repeated exposure, learners gradually acquire language features that later appear in their written output.

Extensive reading has long been associated with improved reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and grammatical awareness (Day & Bamford, 1998; Elley, 1991). More recent studies have demonstrated that its benefits extend to writing fluency. Mason and Krashen (1997) found that Japanese EFL students who engaged in sustained ER produced significantly longer and more cohesive writing compared to those in traditional instruction. Similarly, Nation (2009) argued that reading promotes automatization of language use, enabling writers to generate text more efficiently. Beyond fluency, ER nurtures creativity by exposing learners to diverse linguistic styles and imaginative content. Hedge (2005) suggests that wide reading stimulates creative thinking and broadens learners' conceptual repertoires. Yamashita (2013) also emphasizes the affective benefits of ER, noting that motivation, confidence, and curiosity are essential components of creative expression. When learners read engaging stories, they not only absorb language but also develop narrative awareness, imagery, and emotional resonance — all vital for creative writing.

Although numerous studies have examined ER in secondary and tertiary contexts, limited research has focused on young EFL learners at the primary level, particularly in Central Asian settings. This study addresses that gap by exploring how an ER program influences writing fluency and creativity among 7th-grade pupils in Uzbekistan, where English exposure is largely confined to the classroom.

### METHODOLOGY

#### Participants

The participants were 24 advanced-level 7th-grade pupils (aged 12–13) from a primary school in Tashkent. All students had been studying English for approximately five years and demonstrated solid reading comprehension and grammatical knowledge but limited writing fluency and creativity. Participation was voluntary, and parental consent was obtained prior to the study.

#### Research Design

A quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test design was employed. The independent variable was the implementation of an extensive reading program, while the dependent variables were writing fluency and creativity. No control group was used, as the focus was on within-group developmental changes.

#### Materials

The reading materials consisted of graded readers (Oxford Bookworms and Penguin Readers) appropriate to students' proficiency levels (A2–B1). Titles included *The Secret Garden*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and *A Ghost in Love and Other Plays*. Each book contained simple, high-frequency language and engaging plots suitable for young learners.

#### Procedure

The program lasted six weeks, integrating both in-class and independent reading activities.

- **In-Class Sessions:** Once a week, students participated in 40-minute ER sessions where they selected books of their choice and read silently.
- **At-Home Reading:** Students were encouraged to read for at least 30 minutes weekly outside class.
- **Reading Journals:** Participants maintained journals summarizing stories, noting new vocabulary, and reflecting on characters and themes.

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• **Writing Tasks:** Students completed two 20-minute writing tasks — a pre-test on “*My Favorite Day*” and a post-test on “*An Unforgettable Experience*.”

#### **Instruments and Data Analysis**

1. **Writing Fluency Assessment:** Fluency was measured by total word count, mean sentence length, and syntactic variety.
2. **Creativity Rubric:** Creativity was rated on a five-point scale adapted from Torrance (1990) and Richards (2013), assessing originality, elaboration, and lexical richness.
3. **Attitude Questionnaire:** A post-program survey gathered students’ perceptions of ER.

Quantitative data were analyzed using paired-sample t-tests via SPSS, while qualitative responses were analyzed thematically.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

##### **Quantitative Results**

The average word count increased from 145.21 words ( $SD = 22.45$ ) in the pre-test to 203.17 words ( $SD = 27.84$ ) in the post-test, representing a 40% improvement. This increase was statistically significant ( $t(23) = 9.26, p < .001$ ). Mean sentence length also rose from 10.4 to 13.7 words, and the variety of sentence types expanded, indicating enhanced linguistic competence and fluency.

Creativity scores improved from 3.1 ( $SD = 0.52$ ) to 4.4 ( $SD = 0.47$ ) ( $t(23) = 8.42, p < .001$ ). Students’ later compositions exhibited greater imagination, originality, and lexical depth. Descriptions became more vivid and narrative structures more complex, suggesting that exposure to diverse reading materials facilitated both linguistic and cognitive growth

##### **Qualitative Results**

Students’ reading journals and survey responses corroborated the quantitative findings. Eighty-seven percent of participants expressed positive attitudes toward the ER sessions, describing reading as “enjoyable” and “motivating.” Many reported that they began to “think in English” and felt more confident writing creatively.

Sample journal comments included statements such as:

“When I read many stories, I get new ideas for my own writing.”  
“Books help me use more beautiful words and write longer sentences.”

These reflections reveal that ER not only improved writing outcomes but also cultivated intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy, both essential for sustained language development.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The data provide robust evidence that extensive reading enhances both writing fluency and creativity among young EFL learners. The findings support Krashen’s (1985) theory that abundant, meaningful input contributes to language output. As students encountered authentic narrative models, they internalized syntactic and stylistic patterns, which later emerged in their writing. Moreover, the improvement in creativity highlights the affective dimension of reading. Engaging narratives stimulate imagination, while the autonomy of text selection increases emotional involvement and personal expression. This observation aligns with Hedge (2005) and Yamashita (2013), who emphasized the link between reading motivation and creative linguistic output.

Although the six-week program was relatively short, the observed progress suggests that even limited ER exposure can produce measurable benefits in writing development. Longer interventions and cross-age comparisons could further validate these effects.

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### Summary of Findings

Category	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	% Improvement	Significance (p)
Word Count	145.21	203.17	+40%	< .001
Sentence Length (words)	10.4	13.7	+32%	< .001
Creativity Score (1–5)	3.1	4.4	+41%	< .001
Positive Attitude (%)	—	87% of students	—	—

### CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that extensive reading significantly improves writing fluency and creativity among advanced 7th-grade EFL pupils. The findings confirm that reading a wide range of engaging and comprehensible texts promotes linguistic automatization and creative thought, resulting in more fluent, expressive, and original writing. Pedagogically, the integration of ER into EFL writing curricula is strongly recommended. Teachers should:

- Provide a variety of level-appropriate reading materials;
- Encourage student choice to enhance motivation;
- Connect reading themes to creative writing tasks;
- Use reflective journals to deepen comprehension and expression.

Future studies could explore long-term ER interventions, comparisons across proficiency levels, and correlations between reading volume and specific writing subskills.

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