Is Summary Writing Ability a Valid Measure of Reading Comprehension for EFL Students?

Samiha Mokeddem
DjillaliLiabes University,Sidi Bel Abbes, Algeria

Samira Houcine
DjillaliLiabes University,Sidi Bel Abbes, Algeria

Abstract :

Summary writing both boosts and measures reading comprehension. When learners write a summary of a reading, they are supposed to demonstrate their comprehension of the target text through writing. And they are required to attend more closely to what they are reading to be able to communicate it in their own words. Summary writers are; therefore, involved in an active process where reading and writing are closely interrelated, and readers' inability to summarize a reading is an indicator of inappropriate comprehension. Based on the strong connection between reading and writing, the current research work is an attempt to examine the extent to which EFL learners' summary writing ability correlates with their comprehension of the original reading material. In order to carry on the study, sixty EFL university students at intermediate level of language proficiency were involved. The participants taught by the teacher researcher in the English Language Department of the Faculty of Letters, Languages and Arts, at DjillaliLiabes University of Sidi Bel Abbes, first received an explicit instruction on summarizing, then were subject to a text summarizing assignment, then to a post-summarizing reading comprehension test involving the same text used in the summarizing assignment. Students' written summaries as well as their written answers to the comprehension questions were collected to be scored and compared**.**

Key Words: reading;writing relationship; writing-to-read; summarizing.

ملخص :

لطالما ارتبطت القراءة لأغراض أكاديمية ارتباطا وثيقا بالكتابة. فعادة ما يطلب من الطلاب قراءة المواد التي توفر لهم معلومات قيمة فيما يتعلق بتخصصاتهم، وغالبا ما تكون هذه القراءات مصحوبة بكتابات.فمنهم من يدون بعض الشروحفي هوامش النص، ومنهم من يعيد صياغة بعض الأفكار أو يقوم بالاقتباس من النص المصدر، فيما يستعين البعض بالقراءة لكتابة بحث أو مقال، أو للإجابة على مجموعة من الأسئلة كتابيا. في كل من الحالات المذكورة وغيرها، تحول الكتابة دون مضي قراءتهم بطريقة عشوائية.

إستراتيجية التلخيص هي واحدة من الاستراتيجيات الأولية التي تجمع مهارتي الكتابة و القراءة. وهي في الوقت نفسه من الاستراتيجيات التي يعتمد فيها الطالب على الكتابة لتعزيز القراءة. عند كتابته لملخص نص ما يفترض أن يظهر الطالب مدى فهمه لمحتوى ما قرأه، وعليه فان عدم قدرة القاريء على تلخيص نص قرأه قد يكون مؤشرا عن عدم فهمه للنص.

بناءا على العلاقة القوية بين القراءة و الكتابة، تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى دراسة مدى ارتباط قدرة طلبة اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية على كتابة ملخص لنص معين باللغة الهدف بقدرتهم على فهم نفس النص الهدف. عينة الدراسة تضم 60 طالبامن طلبة السنة الأولى تخصص لغة انجليزية بكلية الآداب و اللغات و الفنون بجامعة جيلالي ليابس بسيدي بلعباس.

Introduction

More often than not reading for academic purposes is closely connected to writing (Leki& Carson, 1997; Rosenfeld, Leung &Oltman, 2001). They go hand in hand as the former precedes and informs the latter and the latter shapes and directs the former. Students are usually required to read materials that provide them with valuable information in relation to their target disciplines. And in conjunction with this, they might jot down some annotations in the text's margins, paraphrase or quote from the source text, synthesize relevant information, respond to text input, write a research paper, answer a series of post-reading questions in writing, or turn to any other act of writing that helps prevent their reading from proceeding in a haphazard way (Zamel, 1992; Blanton, 1993; Hirvela, 2007). And even though the focus in L2 reading-writing connection research is mostly on reading-for-writing strategies (as it is writing that functions as the end point or aim of the reading), writing from sources can also be approached from a writing-to-read perspective (Hirvela, 2007). Indeed, writing before, during, or after reading serves reading and readers in a variety of ways just as reading sustains writing (Leki, 1993; Lent, 1993; Kauffman, 1996; Faust, 2000). Summarizing, one of the primary writing-to-read strategies in academic settings, offers tremendous opportunities for writing to enhance reading (Rumelhart, 1977; Kintsch& Van Dijk, 1978; Trites&McGroarty, 2005). Many investigations in L1 settings have demonstrated that summary writing improves reading comprehension of texts (Kim, 2001; Keck, 2006), L2 research has also found substantial impact of summarization on the reading comprehension of EFL learners (Baleghizadeh&Babapur, 2011; Trabasso& Bouchard, 2002; Shokrpour, Sadeghi&Seddigh, 2013). However, seldom has research been done to include summary writing as part of the instruction to ascertain whether it can in fact lead to better reading comprehension in EFL settings (Huang, 2014).The current study was conducted to investigate the effects of EFL students' summary writing ability in measuring their reading comprehension of texts. It was an endeavour to shed light on the relationship between reading and writing from a writing-to-read perspective.

Theoretical Background

Reading-Writing Relationships

For Centuries, reading and writing were kept separate from each other both in theoretical perspectives and instructional practices. However, with the advent of the 'cognitive rode of learning' in the mid 1970s, reading was perceived as consisting of a complex set of coordinated mental processes, involving perceptual, linguistic, and conceptual operations; and hence the information the reader brings to the text as well as the information found in the text were claimed to influence each other to produce comprehension (Tierney & Pearson, 1994)). This new conceptualization was later known as 'schema theory', and inspired by this schematic notion, research in a number of disciplines have contributed to view the sub-skills of both reading and writing as virtually the same (Simmons, 1977; Hill, 1979; Taylor, 1981). Indeed, some educators began to see reading and writing as similar patterns of thinking (Janopoulos, 1986), and as aspects of the same activity (Singh, 1989) in that they both require the active construction of meaning being dependent on prior knowledge structures or schemata (Squire, 1983; Tierney and Person, 1984). Rosenblatt (1988) even contended that both reading and writing are acts of composing - writers compose a meaningful text, while readers compose an interpreted meaning.

Enthusiasms, during the period from the mid 1970s to the 1980s, led researchers to conduct a number of seminal studies on reading-writing relationships in L1 contexts. These studies gave birth to three major interrelated hypotheses: the directional hypothesis, the non-directional hypothesis, and the bidirectional hypothesis (Carson, 1990; Grabe, 2003; Ferris &Hedgcock, 2005). The directional perspective, also known as the input-based view, presupposes that the connection between reading and writing is directional, so that knowledge acquired from one of these two major language skills can be transferred to and thus inform the other. Yet, the key feature of this model is that the transfer of structural information from one skill to another can proceed only in one direction, that is, either from reading to writing or from writing to reading. That is, reading provides

input for writing or writing provides input for reading. This theoretical construct suggests two lines of research direction: reading-to-writing model and writing-to-reading model. The reading-to-write model assumes that reading affects writing but the writing knowledge is not particularly useful in improving reading (Stotsky, 1983; Taylor & Beach, 1984). In support of this claim was a study by Eckhoff (1983) which examined the influence that instructional reading material had on the writing development of primary schoolchildren – second grade learners. The study found that children's writing reflected features (i.e., the style and structure) of the materials (i.e., basal readers) read in the classroom. In similar vein, Smith (1983) claimed that a person can become a good writer only if he reads like a writer. He argued that "writing requires an enormous fund of specialized knowledge which cannot be acquired from lectures, textbooks, drill, trial and error, or even from the exercise of writing itself" (Smith, 1983: 558). In other words, only through reading can a writer learn all the intangibles he should know. The knowledge of writing can only be acquired from a particular kind of writing, e.g., if one wants to write for a newspaper, he should read the newspaper as a "writer" for that specific purpose. Further support for the reading-to-writing direction was gained from Taylor and Beach (1984) who looked at the effects of instruction in using text structure to recall expository text and instruction that emphasized writing that type of texts. The two researchers contended that seventh grade learners improved not only their recall of content but also their expository writing quality after seven weeks of reading instruction in informational text structure accompanied by opportunities to write hierarchical summaries of the materials being read. The second basic direction, the writing-to-reading directional model, however, acknowledges the important influence of L1 writing on L1 reading. For example, Taylor and Berkowitz (1980) found that grade six students who wrote a one-sentence summary after reading a passage from a social studies textbook did better on measures of comprehension and memory than students who answered questions after reading the passage, or students who simply read the passage. Glover et al. (1981) also found that college level students instructed to paraphrase or write "logical extensions" of an essay they were asked to read re-called significantly more ideas from the essay than students instructed to write only key words or nothing at all while reading the essay.Besides, Belanger (1987) showed that direct instruction in sentence, paragraph, and discourse structure for writing results in significant improvement in reading. It is important to recognize, then, that most of the research that supported the directional hypothesis focused on transfer resulted from instruction (Belanger, 1987). Therefore, transfer of structural components from one domain to the other is not necessarily automatic.

Although the directional model has its strong advocates, further research on cognitive processes involved in reading and writing offered an alternative means of describing how reading and writing may be related in L1 namely the non-directional hypothesis. This hypothesis can be viewed as an interactive model, where "reading and writing are said to derive from a single underlying proficiency, the common link being that of the cognitive process of constructing meaning." Carson (1990:90). The model was supported by Squire (1983) who described reading and writing (comprehending and composing) as two sides of the same basic process of meaning construction. The educator pointed out that writing actively engages the writer "in constructing meaning, in developing ideas, in relating ideas, in expressing ideas" Squire (1983: 582), while reading requires the reader to "reconstruct the structure and meaning of ideas expressed by another writer." Squire (1983: 582). Accordingly, reading and writing are perceived as mutually reinforcing interactive processes that supplement each other. They interact with each other and hence their skills can be transferred to each other. Therefore, unlike the directional model, transfer can occur in either direction (i.e., from reading to writing or from writing to reading). And training in one skill will necessarily result in the refinement of the other for the reason that they work with the same resources.

The second half of the 1980s and the early part of the 1990s was marked by the transactional conception of reading and writing resulting from Rosenblatt's (1988) transactional theory. Indeed, instead of using the term 'interaction' which means a relationship in which separate entities act on

one another, Rosenblatt (1988:2) suggested the term 'transaction' to designate "relationships in which each element conditions and is conditioned by the other in a mutually-constituted situation". In the light of the translational theory, reading was perceived as a transaction involving a particular reader and a particular text, and occurring at a particular time in a particular context. This means that in comprehending the text the reader actively creates meaning, and in so doing he brings into the text his background knowledge about the topic, about sociolinguistic conventions, his intentions, expectations and purposes of reading, and his values and beliefs that he already has in mind (Musthafa, 1994). Likewise, writing was also perceived as a transaction "occurring at a particular moment in the writer's biography, in particular circumstances, under particular pressures, external as well as internal." Rosenblatt (1988:7). One major theoretical construct of this transactional conception of reading and writing is that, as a process, reading and writing mutually condition each other, and in transaction, each of the transacting elements conditions and is conditioned by the other. This third hypothesis about the reading-writing relationships was called 'the bidirectional hypothesis' (Shanahan, 1984). The bidirectional hypothesis is the most complex of the three. It claims that reading and writing are interactive as well as interdependent. The main contentions of the bidirectional hypothesis are that there exist multiple relations between the two processes and that the nature of the relationship changes depending on one's proficiency in reading or writing. In other words, the reading-writing relationship is developmental and "what is learned at one stage of development can be qualitatively different from what is learned at another stage of development." Shanahan (1984: 467).

Though these models of reading-writing connections centered on reading and writing within the L1 context, they have served as the foundation from which much of the L2 reading-writing connections research has been conducted. Yet,in accordance with the fact that L2 readers and writers are subject to some different influences than those influencing L1 readers and writers, differences in reading-writing relationships in L2 are to be expected. Therefore, L2 reading-writing scholarship has branched off in a number of new and intriguing directions. Indeed, for L2 learners the interaction between reading and writing maynot be so straightforward, and other factors, like proficiency in the target language and L1 literacy skills may also play a relevant role.

Two early topics of research, among L2 teachers and researchers in the reading-writing connections field, involved the Interdependence Hypothesis and the Language Threshold Hypothesis (Cummins, 1979, 1981; Durgunoglu and Verhoeven, 1998; Connor, 1996; Johns & Mayes, 1990; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996). The former approach suggests that literacy transfers from the L1 to the L2, while the latter hypothesis argues against supportive transfer until a certain variable level of L2 proficiency is attained. Two further topics of research have also been identified; one being the argument that extensive reading directly improves writing abilities (Krashen, 1984, 1993), and the second referring to the role of directionality between reading and writing (Hirvela, 2007). To date, L2 research seems to have reached a consensus on this issue supporting the notion of directionality (Asencion, 2008; Plakans, 2008; Yoshimura, 2009); and mainly the reading-to-writing directional model which suggests that reading can positively impact written performance (Carson &Leki, 1993). Though all these perspectives, it should be noted that a comprehensive or definite model of L2 reading-writing connections from which to base our continued investigations, in research and practice, of such connections does not exist. Indeed, Hirvela (2007:36) contended that a complete L2 reading-writing connections model building "is problematic because a true model of this type must account, simultaneously, for the inclusion of reading in a theory of writing instruction and a theory of writing in reading instruction". Building a model that binds these two directions (reading to write and writing to read) into one unified whole is "an elusive business" (Hirvela, 2007:36), particularly as we must take into consideration, in the L2 field, the characteristics that separate it from the L1 field. In fact, the situation where the L2 reading-writing field now stands in its understanding and practice is perhaps best described by Grabe (2001:25) who stated: "One of the most consistent implications of the two decades of research on reading and

writing relations is that they should be taught together and that the combination of both literacy skills enhances learning in all areas."

Writing to Read

Approaching reading-writing relations from a directional perspective is the most relevant model for pedagogical concerns as it helps teachers decide whether reading should lead to writing or whether writing should lead to reading in their instruction (Eisterhold, 1990). There is strong agreement among researchers, teachers, and writers that reading improves writing. Indeed, "probably no one doubts that reading plays a major role in learning to write." (Bereiter&Scardamalia, 1984:163), and "everything points to the necessity of learning to write from what we read." (Smith, 1983:560). Accordingly, it was claimed that "teaching writing without teaching reading is not teaching writing at all." (Kroll, 1993:75).

Similarly, the use of writing to enhance reading has also generated a great deal of debate among those searching for methodologies that increase improvement in reading proficiency. Indeed, writing before, during, or after reading, was shown to assist reading and readers in a number of ways (Leki, 1993; Kauffman, 1996). Many studies have proved the contribution that writing gives to a reader. Taylor and Beach (1984, in Tierney and Leys, 1984), for instance, were able to improve their students' reading of expository texts by involving them in writing paragraphs with the same structures, while Petrosky (1982, in Tierney and Leys, 1984) found that the quality of reading of his students was enhanced by involving them in writing essay responses to stories they had read. Wittrock's (1983) study of high school and college students found that writing summaries after reading improved comprehension. In another study, Salvatori (1996) asked her students to write essay responses to texts they read where they are required to reflect on their reading processes, and even on the difficulties they encounter while reading. Reflecting on the thinking strategies they use to enhance understanding allows students to engage in a kind of self-examination through which they become aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Such a writing-to-reading task can be viewed as "…a way of breaking the silence between the text and the students; it brings to words the solitary activity of student-with-reading, and, at the same time, becomes a means of empowerment." Lent (1993:233). Similarly, in a study conducted by Shokrpour and Fotovatian (2007), they found that students relying on strategies involving writing like note-taking, summarizing, understanding text-structure are shown to be better readers than those who do not. In fact, jotting down written annotations in texts' margins while reading, was shown to be a powerful writing-to-read tool as it "helps readers reach a deeper level of engagement and promotes active reading." (Porter-O'Donnell, 2004:82). Annotating forces the reader to concentrate better, and consequently, allows him or her to notice main ideas, and draw conclusions that a cursory reading could miss. Besides,synthesizing, - orworking with two or more source texts at the same time (especially through comparison and contrast) and creating sophisticated connections between them- is probably a hard task even for the best readers if they rely on reading merely. Hence, "the more effective approach would be to synthesize these texts through some kind of analytic writing." (Hirvela, 2007:94). When synthesizing, the student can also turn to writing paraphrases of key sentences and quoting from the source texts too as helpful ways to strengthen reading (Campbell, 1990). All this can facilitate students' reading of texts through the medium of writing.

Indeed, written texts leave readers with gaps that may be filled by active, meaning-making reading, which is often guided most effectively by writing (Hirvela, 2007). In other words, writing "… provides a way into reading, extends reading, and consolidates understanding a text just as reading sustains writing and furnishes, for the writer, the counterpart of another voice." (Carson &Leki, 1993:2).

The Effects of Summary Writing on Reading Comprehension

Summary writing is one of the primary contact points between reading and writing in academic settings. Such an instance of academic behaviour where reading and writing are intimately interrelated (Hidi& Anderson, 1986) has recently received much attention in the literature. This growing interest has evolved as researchers have attempted to describe the strategies readers use

when processing and summarizing a passage. Most of the studies undertaken were guided by the assumption that summarization is closely connected to a key reading skill, extraction of the main idea from a text (Williams, 1988). Indeed, when readers comprehend a reading material, they construct the gist or "the main point" (Olson, 2011:25) that has been understood about the text. This overall understanding of the reading material is often expressed through a tight, precise summary, and hence "the inability of the reader to summarize text indicates that comprehension is incomplete." (Padma, 2008:15). That is why, there is considerable evidence that summary writing both encourages and measures reading comprehension (Taylor, 1982; Hill, 1991; Friend, 2001; Thiede& Anderson, 2003).

A summary is "the simplest text that attempts to represent in some form what another text says." Geisler (1995:105), it is "a condensed version, in your own words, of the writing of someone else, a condensation that reproduces the thought, emphasis, and tone of the original. It abstracts all the significant facts of the original – overall thesis, main points, important supporting details –, but, unlike a paraphrase, it omits and/or condenses amplifications such as descriptive details." (McAnulty, 1981, p.50 cited in Johns & Mayes, 1990). Accordingly, when learners summarize their reading, they are involved in a process of reproduction that requires them to perform many reading-writing tasks that entails complex cognitive, linguistic, and rhetorical operations including: "(a) thorough comprehension of the original source; (b) selection of the text's most salient information; (c) deletion of less-than-essential information; (d) comprehension and integration of the selected information; and (e) arrangement of selected material in a way that reflects the rhetorical structure of the original." (Ferris &Hedgcock, 2005:106). Engaging in these operations can add much-direction to the reading process. In fact, in situations where the reading material is long or complex, reading becomes more difficult and challenging for many L1 and L2 learners as well, and here writing can serve reading. The summary writing-based sub-activities can allow the reader to see the source reading material in a more focused way. In other words, the reader turns to writing as a way to both recording and guiding the reconstruction of the original text into a new and more manageable version (Hirvela, 2007). Summarizing, then, cultivates active reading and minimizes passive reading, and this influences comprehension. It is thus an inherent part of comprehension. Moreover, summarization appears to enhance cognition which will affect one's understanding of texts being read. Research in the field of cognitive processing (how information is stored and retrieved) showed that if students summarize a passage rather than simply reading it, the quality of their information storage will be stronger (Rosenshine, 1997). Besides, summarizing reinforces readers' ability to build relations among ideas contained in a text and helps them link these ideas to prior knowledge (Friend, 2000, 2001). All in all, the reading experiece can be made more meaningful and productive for students through summarizing tasks involving writing.

From another perspective, research has shown that using summary writing for reading-related purposes provides teachers (and learners) with a better understanding of students' reading processes and strengths or weaknesses (Johns and Mayes, 1990; Sarig, 1993). Indeed, while involved in the process of summary writing, learners are self testing their reading comprehension and applying strategies to remedy comprehension breakdowns (Brown & Day, 1983; Palinscar, 1986; Thiede& Anderson, 2003), and "by examining, in the written summaries, the students' choices in terms of what information has or has not been transferred from the source text to the summary and what passages from the original text students have chosen for paraphrasing, reading and writing researchers and teachers have gained deeper insight into students' L2 literacy skills and practices." (Hirvela, 2007:91).

In fact, as it requires much more active meaning construction compared to other reading-related learning activities - like writing short answers to post-reading questions or choosing the best response from a set of choices - , summarizing has been identified as a more authentic method for assessing what readers do or do not understand about a text than traditional tests of reading comprehension (Kintsch et al., 2000).

It is worth noting, however, that writing an effective summary is a difficult task which is rarely done satisfactorily, even by students at university level (Grellet, 1999; Duke & Pearson, 2002). This might be attributed to the fact that many teachers incorrectly assume that students know how to summarize, and hence, they do not teach them how to do so (Hill, 1991). Yet, research that has identified summary writing as one of the essential skills which improves reading comprehension, has also indicated that the skill of summarization needs to be explicitly taught in order for students to turn into effective and critical readers (Taylor & Beach, 1984, Baumann, 1984; Cordero-Ponce, 2000).

The scope of the current study is to examine the relationships between EFL students' summary writing ability and their reading comprehension in an effort to explain the close connection between reading and writing, and the effect of writing on reading in particular.

The Present Study

Research Instruments and Procedures

As stated previously, the current investigation tends to obtain empirical evidence which serves either to support or reject the claim that the reader's ability to summarize a text contributes to his/her overall comprehension of the target reading material. To fulfill this aim a set of steps was required. The participants (a total of 60 first-year students of English at DjillaliLiabes University of Sidi Bel Abbes) firstreceived an explicit instruction on summarizing. By the end of the instruction, the students were subject to a text summarizing assignment, then to a post-summarizing reading comprehension test involving the same text used in the summarizing assignment. Finally, students' written summaries as well as their written answers to the comprehension questions were collected to be scored. And in order for the researcher to analyze, compare, and interpret the results, each student was required to write his/her name in the top of both his/her written summary, and his/her written answers to the reading comprehension questions. This would enable the researcher to identify the relationship between each participant's summary writing ability and his/her reading comprehension of the target reading material.

Explicit Instruction on Summarizing

This explicit instructional practice was implemented following the teaching steps below adapted from Irwin (2006)'s model of direct instruction:

a. Explanation: as a starting point, the researcher (the teacher) made an attempt to define the strategy of summarizing. It was explained that summarizing is the strategy of shortening a long text into a brief version while maintaining the main points of the text and using one's own words. Besides, the researcher tried to make the students aware of the merits of such a strategy in helping them be effective readers - as summary writing requires them to organize and recollect information of the target reading material and therefore, helps them improve their overall comprehension of text content. Then, students received a rule sheet with rules for how to write a good summary (see appendix A). These rules or steps were read loudly and explained by the teacher at the same time.

b. **Modeling:** at this stage, the instructor distributed a text to the students, and started modeling and demonstrating the strategy of summarizing using think-aloud procedure (i.e., the vocalization of the internal thought process) while reading that sample text to them. The researcher said each step of the strategy as she modeled it, asked questions, identified important information, deleted useless information, etc., and most importantly, the instructor paused each time to explain how she made each decision as she modeled. When the teacher finished vocalizing the process of summarizing, students were given a copy of the product or the written summary of text produced by the instructor.

c. Transferring (Guided Practice): now as students became aware of the stages involved in the process of summarizing, the teacher instructed them to work in pairs or small groups to summarize another text. They were required to highlight the main idea, strike through

repeated or less important details, etc., then, collaboratively write a summary of the given text. The instructor walked around the class to provide guidance when necessary, and asked students guiding questions to scaffold their use of the target strategy. When the pairs or small groups of students finished writing their summaries, they were instructed to read and self-evaluate their final products by asking themselves questions like: does our summary include all of the important details? Did we leave out details that weren't important? Did we combine some details or events that go together? Did we put the ideas in our own words? Are our details in logical order? Did we write in complete sentences?

d. Application: after being involved in the above guided practice, students were offered an opportunity to apply the strategy independently writing a summary of a new text individually with no scaffolding.

It is worth noting that explicit instruction on summarizing that participants received lasted four sessions of one hour and a half each (explanation in the first session, modeling in the second, guided practice in the third one, and application or independent practice in the last session). The papers of the summary writing assignment of the independent practice phase were collected to be read and scored by the researcher.

Text summarizing assignment

As mentioned above, participants were given a text to be read and summarized in the last phase of the explicit summarizing instruction they were involved in. They were supposed to read the text, understand its main idea and supporting points, and produce a written summary in their own words. The text used for the assignment (see appendix B) was of intermediate level difficulty, and it was an expository one (using problem/solution as a form of informational organization) on purpose as research has shown that summarization instruction is beneficial in working with expository texts (Brown and Day, 1981; Taylor and Beach, 1984). The sixty written summaries were collected by the researcher to be read and scored. They were to be evaluated on the extent to which students effectively convey the relevant information of the original reading material accurately, clearly and concisely using their own words but without introducing their own ideas and opinions.

Indeed, each summary was scored according to a holistic rubric, i.e., based on holistic criteria rather than on specific dimensions of summary writing. Unlike the analytic rubric that gives separate scores for each criterion, the holistic rubric gives a single score for each summary. The use of holistic rubrics is probably more appropriate when performance tasks require students to create some sort of response and where there is no definite correct answer (Nitko, 2001). Moreover, using such a type of scoring rubrics can result in a somewhat quicker scoring process than using analytic ones. The teacher is required to read through or examine the student product or performance only once, in order to get an "overall" sense of what the student was able to accomplish (Mertler, 2001). The scores were assigned on a 4-point scale (see appendix C).

Reading Comprehension post-summarizing test

As explained earlier, the same sample of participants (i.e, the sixty students) who received an explicit instruction on summarizing and who were subject to the text summarizing assignment, took a reading comprehension test at the end of this investigation. This post-summarizing test consisted of the same expository text used in the summarizing assignment and a set of six comprehension questions (see appendix D) to which students had to provide answers in one hour. Question one and six of the test aimed at assessing learners' ability to skim for the main idea of the text and therefore, provide a suitable title to the text as well. Questions two, three, and five assessed learners' ability to scan for details and locate specific information in the text. Question four, however, assessed their ability to elaborate by associating text information or text topic to their personal knowledge. Thus, the reading sub-skill of inferring was assessed through this question. Participants' answers were collected to be scored by the researcher using an analytic scoring scale. Each question is worth 2

points, and thus, if all his/her responses are both accurate and complete, one will get a total of 12 points as a score. If a question is partially answered, the student may get 1 point out of 2 for it. Scores less than 6 were classified as limited, scores between 6 and 8 were classified as intermediate, and scores above 8 were classified as good.

The test sought to measure students' overall understanding of the text they have summarized. The aim was to determine the correlation between the written summary and the comprehension questions' responses performed by each participant.

Participants

The sample for the present study consisted of sixty students from the first-year LMD students enrolled in the English Licence degree courses offered by the English Language Department of the Faculty of Letters, Languages and Arts, at DjillaliLiabes University of Sidi Bel Abbes, during the academic year 2013-2014. They were baccalaureate holders of mixed gender, aged between 19-36 years old, coming from different streams of secondary school, mainly from the literature and foreign languages stream, the literature and philosophy, the literature and human sciences, the experimental sciences, and the technical mathematics stream. Each student had completed seven years of English study prior to entering university. Arabic is their first language, French is their first foreign language, and English is their second foreign language. It can be supposed, then, that their mastery of Arabic and French is better than that of English. Therefore, their reading and writing skills in English are more recent, less practised and less mastered than that in Arabic and French. And this might be a possible reason for the difficulties they encounter while reading and writing in the target language.

The choice of the subjects was due to certain reasons indeed. The researcher had taught the 'Reading Comprehension' module for students in the English language department for one year beforeadopting the LMD system in the faculty, and the 'Written Expression' module for four years already within the new system. And it is worth noting that within the classical system of higher education in Algeria, 'Reading Comprehension' and 'Written Expression' were taught to first-year students of English as two distinct modules. In other words, reading and writing were taught through a segregated-skill instruction. Within the LMD system, however, the module of 'Reading Comprehension' was deleted completely from the curriculum while the module of 'Written Expression' remained. Yet, reading was not an integral part of those written expression sessions. **All in all**, no integration between reading and writing was adopted in instruction. Since the academic year 2013-2014 in which the present study took place, a new module namely 'Comprehension and Written Expression' was introduced for the first time to first-year LMD students of English enrolled in the department. As its name implies, the module was based on an integrated reading-writing instructional approach. The choice of the participants for the current study was, thus, determined by the fact that the researcher was teaching that module in particular for two groups of students (a total of sixty students) from that promotion in particular, and wanted to investigate the benefits that learners can gain from instructional practices involving a connection between reading and writing. During the whole year of instruction, students were trained and engaged in many practices involving reading and writing. Right from the beginning, it was made clear to them that the core/main objectives of the module are to make them able to understand written language, produce their own pieces of writing, and of course, aware of the relationships between these two basic language skills (reading and writing). Many reading-to-write and writing-to-read classroom activities were used indeed, yet the present study is concerned merely with the act of 'summarizing' approached from a writing-to-read perspective.

Conclusion

Reading and writing are closely interrelated, and mixing them together in instruction will be of great benefits to EFL learners. Our goal in this study was to examine the extent to which EFL learners' summary writing ability correlates with their reading comprehension of the material being summarized. This was an attempt to look at the contribution writing makes to reading and therefore, to illustrate why it is important to link reading and writing in EFL instruction. Indeed, if a strong

positive correlation is revealed between the two variables (i.e., students' summary writing ability and their reading comprehension) after the analysis and interpretationof the results gained, we may come to the conclusion that if EFL learners are helped to work on their summarizing skills, they will become more active, critical readers of materials they are exposed to in the target language.

References:

Asención, Y. (2008). Investigating the reading-to-write construct. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 7, 140-150.

Baleghizadeh, S., &Babapur, M. (2011). The effect of summary writing on reading comprehension and recall of EFL students. *New English Reading Association Journal*, 47(1), 44-57.
Baumann, J.F. (1984). The effectiveness of a direct instruction paradigm for teaching main idea comprehension. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 20, 93-115.

Belanger, J. (1987). Theory and research into reading and writing connections: A critical review. Reading-Canada-Lecture, 5, 10-18.
Bereiter, C., &Scardamalia, M. (1984). Learning about writing from reading. *Written Communication*, 1, 163-188.
Blanton, L. L. (1993). Reading as performance: Reframing the function of reading. In J. G. Carson & I. Leki (Eds.), *Reading in the composition classroom: Second language perspectives,* 234-242. Boston: Heinle&Heinle.
Brown, A. L., & Day, J. D. (1983). Macrorules for summarizing texts: the development of expertise. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*,*22*(1), 1-14.
Campbell, C. (1990). Writing with other's words: Using background reading text in academic compositions. In B. Kroll (ed.): *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom* (pp. 211-230). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Carson, J. (1990). Reading-writing connections: toward a description for second language learners. In Kroll, B. (ed.) Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom. New York: Cambridge University Press, 88-107.

Carson, J., &Leki, I. (eds) (1993). Reading in the Composition Classroom:Second Language Perspectives. Boston, Mass.: Heinle&Heinle.

Connor, U. (1996). Contrastive rhetoric: Cross-cultural aspects of second language writing.Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cordero-Ponce, W. L. (2000). Summarization instruction: Effects on foreign language comprehension and summarization of expository texts. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 39(4), 329-350.

Cummins, J. (1979) Cognitive/academic language proficiency, linguistic interdependence, the optimum age question and some other matters. *Working Papers on Bilingualism*, 19, 121-129.
Cummins, J. (1981). The role of primary language development in promoting educational success for language minority students. In *Schooling and language minority students: A theoretical framework* (pp. 3-49). Office of Bilingual Bicultural Education, California State Department of Education, Sacramento. Los Angeles: Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center, California State University.
Duke, N., & Pearson, D. (2002). Effective practices for developing reading comprehension. In A. Farstrup& S. Samuels (Eds.),What research has to say about reading instruction. (3rd ed.) 205–242. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Durgunoglu, A. Y., &Verhoeven, L. T. (1998). *Literacy development in a multilingual context: cross-cultural perspectives*. Mahwah, N.J., L. Erlbaum Associates.
Eckhoff, B. (1983). How reading affects children's writing. *Language Arts*, 60, 607-616.
Eisterhold, J. (1990). Reading-writing connections: Toward a description for second language learners. In B. Kroll (Ed.), Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom (88 -101). New York: NY: Cambridge University Press.

Faust, M. (2000). Reconstructing familiar metaphors: John Dewey and Louise Rosenblatt on literary art as experience. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 35, 9-34.
Ferris, D. &Hedgcock, J. S. (2005). *Teaching ESL Composition: Purpose, Process, and Practice* (2nd ed). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
Fotovatian, S. &Shokrpour, N. (2007). A Comparison of the Efficacy of Reading Comprehension Strategies on EFL Readers' Comprehension; *Journal of College Reading and learning,*16 (1), 213-230.
Friend, R. (2001). Effects of strategy instruction on summary writing of college students. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*,*26*(1), 3-24.
Friend, R. (2002). Summing it up. Science Teacher, 69(4), 40–43.

Geisler, C. (1995). Writing and learning at cross purposes in the academy. In J. Petraglia (Ed.), *Reconceiving writing, rethinking writing instruction,* 101-120. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrance Erlbaum.

Grabe, W. (2001). Notes toward a theory of second language writing. In T. Silva & P. Matsuda (eds), *On Second Language Writing*, 39-57. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum Erlbaum Associates.
Grabe, W. (2003). Reading and writing relations: second language perspectives on research and practice. In Kroll, B. (ed.) Exploring the Dynamics of Second Language Writing. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 242-262.
Grellet, F. (1999). *Developing Reading Skills.A Practical Guide to Reading Comprehension Exercise.*New York: Cambridge University Press.
Hidi, S, & Anderson, V (1986). Producing written summaries: task demands, cognitive operations, and implications for instruction. *Review of Educational Research*, *56*(4), 473–493.
Hill, M. (1991). Writing summaries promotes thinking and learning across the curriculum -- but why are they so difficult to write? *Journal of Reading*,*34*(7), 536-639.
Hill, W. (1979). Secondary School Reading. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
Hirvela, A. (2007). Connecting reading and writing in second language instruction. Ann Harbor: University of Michigan Press.

Huang, W. C. (2014). The effects of multi-media annotation and summary writing on Taiwanese EFL students' reading comprehension. *The Reading Matrix*, 14, 136–153.

Irwin, J. (2006).Teaching reading comprehension processes (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Janopoulos, M. (1986). The relationship of pleasure reading and second language writing proficiency. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20 (4), 247-265.

Johns, A., & Mayes, P. (1990). An analysis of summary protocols of university ESL students. *Applied Linguistics*, 11, 253-271.

Kauffman, R. A. (1996). Writing to read and reading to write: Teaching literature in the foreign language classroom. *Foreign LanguageAnnals*, 29, 396-402.

Keck, C. (2006). The use of paraphrase in summary writing: A comparison of L1 and L2 writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 15(4), 261-278.

Kim, S. (2001). Characteristics of EFL readers' summary writing: A study with Korean university students. *Foreign Language Annals*, 34(6), 569-581.
Kintsch, E., Steinhart, D., Stahl, G., LSA Research Group, Cindy Matthews, and Ronald Lamb (2000). Developing summarization skills through the use of LSA-based feedback. *Interactive Learning Environments, 8*, 87-109.

Kintsch, W. & Van Dijk, T.A. (1978). Toward a model of text comprehension and production. *Psychological Review,* 85 (5*)*, 363-394.

Krashen, S. (1984). Writing: Research, Theory, and Applications. Oxford: Pergamon.

Krashen, S. 1993. The power of reading. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.

Kroll, B. (1993). Teaching writing IS teaching reading: Training the new teacher of ESL composition. In J. G. Carson & I. Leki (Eds.), Reading in the composition classroom: *Second Language Perspectives* (pp. 61-81). Boston: Heinle&Heinle.
Leki, I. (1993).Reciprocal themes in ESL reading and writing. In J. G. Carson & I. Leki (Eds.), *Reading in the composition classroom: Second language perspectives*, 9-32. Boston: Heinle&Heinle.
Leki, I. and Carson, J. (1997) "Completely Different Worlds": EAP and the Writing Experiences of ESL Students in University Courses. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31 (1), 39-70.
Lent, R. (1993). "I can relate to that …": Reading and responding in the writing classroom. *College Composition and Communication*, 44, 232-240.
McAnulty, S.J. 1981. "Paraphrase, summary, precis: Advantages, definitions, models."*Teaching English in the Two-year Colleges*, 8, 47–51.

Mertler, C. A. (2001). Using performance assessment in your classroom. Unpublished manuscript, Bowling Green State University.

Musthafa, B. (1994). Literary response: A way of integrating reading-writing activities. *Reading Improvement*, 31 (1), 52-58.
Nitko, A. J. (2001). Educational assessment of students (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
Olson, C.B. (2011). The reading/writing connection: Strategies for teaching and learning in the secondary classroom (3rd ed). New York: Allyn & Bacon/Pearson.

Padma, B. (2008). Reciprocal Teaching Techniques. New delhi: Balaji Offset.

Palincsar, A.S. (1986). Reciprocal teaching. In Teaching reading as thinking. Oak Brook, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

Petrosky, A. R. (1982). From story to essay: Reading and writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 23, 19-36.

Plakans, L. (2008). Comparing composing processes in writing-only and reading-to-write test tasks. *Assessing Writing,*13, 111-129.

Porter-O'Donnell, C. (*2004*). Beyond the Yellow Highlighter: Teaching Annotation Skills to Improve Reading Comprehension. *English Journal*, 93, 82-89.

Rosenblatt, L.(1988). Writing and reading: The transactional theory. *Reader*, 20, 7-31.

Rosenfeld, M., Leung, S., &Oltman, P. (2001). The reading, writing, speaking, and listening tasks important for academic success at the undergraduate and graduate levels (TOEFL Monograph Series MS-21). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
Rosenshine, B. (1997). Advances in research on instruction. In J. W. Lloyd, E. J. Kameanui, & D. Chard (Eds.) *Issues in educating students with disabilities*, 197-221, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
Rumelhart, D. E. (1977). "Toward an interactive model of reading". In S. Dornic (Ed.), Attention and performance, Vol. VI, New York: Academic Press, pp. 573-603.
Salvatori, M. (1996). Conversations with texts: Reading in the teaching of composition. *College English*, *58*, 440-454.
Sarig, G. (1993). Composing a study summary: A reading-writing encounter. In JG Carson & I Leki (Eds.),Reading in the composition classroom: Second language perspectives. New York: Newbury House.

Sasaki, M., & Hirose, K. (1996). Explanatory variables for EFL students' expository writing. *Language Learning*, 46(1), 137-174.

Shanahan. T. (1984). Nature of the reading-writing relation: An exploratory multivariate analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 76 (3). 466-477.
Shokrpour, N., Sadeghi, A., &Seddigh, F. (2013). The effect of summary writing as a critical reading strategy on reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. *Journal of Studies in Education*, 3(2), 127-138.
Simmons, R. (1977). An analytical study of the relationship of reading abilities and writing abilities of tenth-grade students. Unpublished doctoraldissertation, West Virginia University.

Singh, B. (1989). What the gap and how we bridge it. In R. Blake (Ed.), Reading,Writing, and Interpreting Literature. New York State University: NewYork State English Council.

Stotsky. S. (1983). Research on reading/writing relationships: A synthesis and suggested directions. *Language Arts*, 6ll (5), 627-642.
Smith, F (1983), Reading like a writer. *Language Arts*, 60(5), 558-567.
Squire. J.R. (1983). Composing and comprehending: Two sides of the same basic processes. *Language Arts*, 60 (5), 581-589.
Taylor, B. M. (1982). A summarizing strategy to improve middle grade students' reading and writing skills. *The Reading Teacher, 36*, 202-205.
Taylor. B.M.,& Beach. R.W. (1984). The effects of text structure instruction on middle-grade students' comprehension and production of expository text. *Reading Research Quarter1y*, 19 (2), 134-146.
Taylor, B. M., & Berkowitz, S. (1980). Facilitating children's comprehension of content material. In M.L. Kamil& A. J. Moe (Eds.), Perspectives on reading research and instruction. Twenty-ninth yearbook of the National Reading Conference. Washington, DC: National Reading Conference.

Thiede, K. W., & Anderson, M. C. M. (2003). Summarizing can improve metacomprehension accuracy. *Educational Psychology,28*(2), 129-160.

Tierney, R. J. & Leys, M. (1984). What is the value of connecting reading and writing? In Bruce, T. P.(Ed.), *Convergences: Transactions in Reading and Writing*, 38-45. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers.

Tierney, R. J., & Pearson, P. D. (1984). Toward a composing model of reading. In J. M. Jemsen(Ed.), *Composing and comprehending*, 33-45. Urbana, IL:National Council of Teachers of English.

Taylor, D. (1981). The relationship between reading and writing.Unpublished EDSE, The University of Mississippi.

Trabasso, T., & Bouchard, E. (2002). Teaching readers how to comprehend texts strategically. In C. Block & M. Pressley (Eds.), *Comprehension instruction: Research-based best practices*, 176-200. New York: Guilford Press.

Trites, L., &*McGroarty*, M. (2005). Reading to learn and reading to integrate: New tasks for reading comprehension tests? *Language Testing*, 22, 174-210.

Williams, J.P. (1988). Identifying Main Ideas: A Basic Aspect of Reading Comprehension. *Topics in Language Disorders*, 8 (3): 1-13.

Wittrock, M. C. (1983). Writing and the teaching of reading. *Language Arts*, 60, 600-606.

Yoshimura, F. (2009). Effects of connecting reading and writing and a checklist to guide the reading process on EFL learners' learning about English writing. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 1, 1871-1883.

Zamel, V. (1992). Writing one's way into reading. *TESOL Quarterly*, 26, 463-485.

Appendices

Appendix A: Steps to writing a Summary

1. Read the whole text you are summarizing carefully and with full concentration at least twice to make sure you understand it.
2. Highlight the main idea.
3. Identify the portions of the text that support the main idea; underline these sections (main points / key supporting ideas).
4. Cross out useless information (minor details) such as illustrations, quotations, etc. from the original text.
5. Paraphrase the key points (rewrite them using your own words; don't quote anything word-for-word).
6. Combine your sentences using transitional words or phrases.
7. Your summary should be shorter than the original text. It reduces to about one third of its original size.
8. Do not add anything beyond the author's ideas (do not include your opinion).

Appendix B: The Summary Writing assignment

Read the text below and write a summary of its content:

Government officials, advocacy groups and economists in the United States are grappling with solutions to reduce high poverty rates. The U.S Census Bureau says that the last year, the number of poor Americans was the highest since such data started being collected five decades ago.

People living in poverty in the United States in 2009 was 14.3 percent, according to the Census Bureau, nearly a full percentage point higher than the previous year. In terms of overall numbers, the bureau says 43.6 million people last year were living in poverty, which is defined as a yearly income of less than $22,000 for a family of four.

Avis Jones-DeWeever of the National Council of Negro Women examined the data closely and says that more than one in four African Americans and Hispanics in the United States live in poverty as well as one in five children. "Frankly, these statistics need to serve as a wake-up call for America," said Avis Jones-DeWeever. "The time is now to once again mount a serious attack on poverty. In fact, this imperative might be more critical now than ever, given what I would characterize as the tattered state of our safety net."

But at a panel of poverty analysts meeting in Washington this week, the director of Deloitte Consulting, Wade Horn, warned that the U.S. political environment is not conducive to more government spending. "I am not sure that we are in a political context at the moment in which it is an easy sell to dramatically increase government spending", said Wade Horn. "In fact, given the focus on the debt and the deficit, I think we may at the beginning of a retrenchment in government spending, not an expansion of government spending." Horn called for aggressive government economic policies to create job growth in the private sector, while pursuing anti-**poverty strategies.**

The high poverty rate comes amid high unemployment, particularly in male-dominated sectors of the economy, such as construction and manufacturing. Avis Jones-DeWeever of the National Council of Negro Women says this makes equal rights issues regarding women even more pressing. "I do think it is important that people look at how well women do because for many two-parent families, they are now the only ones working," said Jones-DeWeever. "And so it is that much more important that women receive pay equity and get fair pay because it not only benefits them, it benefits their entire family."

LaDonnaPavetti from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities said several U.S. states have initiated programs to subsidize jobs in the private sector, with great success. "What we have seen with these programs is that they have been a huge benefit, particularly to small businesses," said LaDonnaPavetti. "And what has happened in those small businesses is that it has allowed them to be able to keep their businesses moving during times of low demand. And it has allowed some businesses to expand so that they are actually creating new jobs by that." Pavetti said that many of these programs are running out of money, and that hundreds of thousands of people who have been employed might lose their jobs.

But Nicholas Eberstadt with the American Entreprise Institute warned against making government subsidized employment a permanent part of the U.S economy. "Many of the Western European countries that have pursued some of these programs, over time you see labor force rigidities and barriers to entry actually developing there", said Nicholas Eberstadt. "So I think you have to be very cautious about this."

President Barack Obama says his economic policies, such as stimulus spending, are keeping millions more Americans out of poverty. The president has blamed the policies by his predecessor, George W. Bush, for creating the current economic hardships of many Americans. But opposition Republicans say huge government

spending has made the situation worse. The new poverty figures come only weeks before November's Congressional midterm elections.

Source: Voice of America, News / USA
Nico Colombant
September, 15, 2010

Appendix C: Holistic Scoring Rubric for Evaluating Written Summaries

Score Point	Score Point Description
4	- The summary clearly identifies the main idea of the original passage. - The summary uses all the significant details to support the main idea. - The summary does not include irrelevant information. - The summary is written in the student's own words. - The summary exhibits logical organization and fluent language use. - The summary is shorter than the original passage.
3	- The summary clearly identifies the main idea of the original passage. - The summary uses most significant details to support the main idea. - The summary introduces very little or no information, or opinion not found in the original passage. - The summary is written in the student's own words. - Most of ideas are in a logical order, and the summary shows general control of grammar and conventions except some minor errors in sentence structure, word choice, usage and mechanics (i.e., spelling, punctuation, and capitalization). - The summary may be too long or too short than required.
2	- The summary partially identifies the main idea of the original passage. - The summary does not use relevant details to support the main idea. - The summary includes irrelevant information. - The summary is written only partially in the student's own words as some sentences are copied directly from the source text. - Organizational, linguistic, and lexical errors compromise the summary's comprehensibility.
1	- The summary does not identify the main idea. - Supporting details are weak and not clear what idea they

	are supporting. - The summary includes irrelevant information. - The summary is almost entirely borrowed from the original passage. - The summary shows a limited control of grammar and conventions which impedes its comprehensibly.

Appendix D: The Reading Comprehension Post-Summarizing Test

1. What is the main idea discussed in the text?
2. According to the passage, what is considered as a poor family in the USA?
3. Which group communities are more concerned with this problem?
4. Did the problem exist only with the coming of president Obama to power? Justify your answer.
5. Who are the people concerned with finding solutions to this problem?
6. Find a suitable title to the passage.