

## Vocabulary Competency and Reading Comprehension of Grade 12 English as Second Language Users: A Systematic Review

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### Abstract

This paper has three main objectives: (1) establish the relationship between performance in vocabulary with performance in reading comprehension and writing; (2) determine whether good performance in reading comprehension automatically translates into corresponding good performance in vocabulary and writing or not; (3) establish the correlation between gender and performance in vocabulary, reading comprehension and writing attainment among Grade 12 students. Numerous first language studies show a high correlation between good readers and writers, assuming reading and writing mutually reinforce each other. Some explore the link between vocabulary size and depth and their correlation with reading and writing. Fewer studies examined the connection of (1) vocabulary and reading comprehension and (2) vocabulary knowledge and writing in a second language environment. These studies have reported that second language inputs (reading and writing) play a pivotal role in developing literacy skills amongst learners in second language contexts, i.e., reading input affects the development of writing and reading abilities and or vice versa (meaning, writing input could have the same effect). We recommend that education standards officers, school administrators, and teachers should design strategies to develop in students the habit of independent reading.

Keywords: Comprehension, English for second-language-users, Reading, Vocabulary, Writing.

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## INTRODUCTION

Investigating performance in vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing has taken the attention of most English as a Second Language (ESL) researchers at the international level. There are a limited number of studies that have investigated the existence of this relationship. A perusal of available literature reveals equally a limited number of studies that have investigated these variables here in Zambia.

The general assumption of this paper is that the development of vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing ability of students in school certificate (Grade 12) classes has a complimentary bearing on the performance in vocabulary, reading, and writing ability and vice versa. The following questions guided this paper: (RQ1) Is there a relationship between performance in vocabulary with performance in reading comprehension and writing?; (RQ2) Does good performance in reading comprehension automatically translate into corresponding good performance in

vocabulary and writing?; (RQ3) Is there a correlation between gender and performance in vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing attainment among Grade 12 students?

### Philosophical Underpinning

The conceptual framework offered in this paper (Figure 1) emerged from a survey of current literature, which relates to what some scholars consider as the linkage of knowledge of words and word meanings, on the one hand; and reading comprehension, on the other. In particular, the focus was on the influence of vocabulary knowledge on comprehension skills development, previous knowledge, and reading comprehension competency. Simple View of Reading Model (SVRM) is instrumental in accounting for vocabulary-reading comprehension relationships.

### The Simple View of Reading

SVRM studies have established that reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge are closely associated. What needs to be clarified is how this association is best interpreted. One interpretation sees individual reading preferences being responsible for individual differences in vocabulary knowledge. According to this view, children learn the meaning of new words via reading, amongst other strategies. Consequently, better readers will develop larger vocabularies over time, whereas poor readers, who read less, lack print exposure, and this serves to hamper vocabulary development.

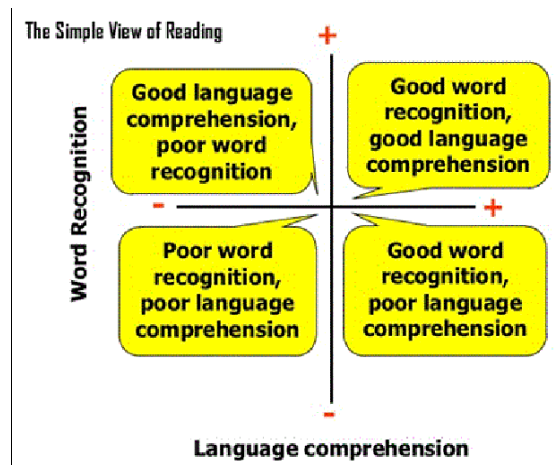


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework on the Simple of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986)

In supporting this relationship and clarifying the function of decoding in reading comprehension, Gough and Tunmer (1986) developed what is referred to as The Simple View of Reading (SVRM). This theory posits that the same language mechanisms that are utilized to understand language through writing are also used in listening comprehension but without the cognitive difficulties of having to decode text (Hogan, Adlof, & Alonzo 2014; Wigfield, Gladstone & Turci, 2016; Kaani & Machila, 2022; Mulambia et al., 2023; Banda et al., 2023). The tremendous element of the Simple View of Reading is that studying is conceptualized as a product of each components-competency will not be achieved. If one element is negative or non-existent, comprehension competency will no longer be achieved. It

is, therefore, clear that to understand what is being read, one must be able to decode the words on the page. Literature supports such a viewpoint when it points to the inability to read words by some students, which often results in a fixation on retrieving meaning from written text.

An alternative view sees individual differences in vocabulary knowledge responsible for uniqueness in reading comprehension. In this view, if children have limited vocabulary knowledge or a limitation to access word meanings rapidly and efficiently, this will be detrimental to their reading comprehension. Longitudinal studies provide evidence to support both of these explanations, with vocabulary knowledge predicting growth in reading comprehension and reading comprehension itself predicting growth in vocabulary knowledge (de Jong & van der Leij, 2002; Gao, 2012; Daugaard, Cain, & Elbro, 2017).

Another possibility is that vocabulary and reading are related because they share common processes. Vocabulary growth requires the development of mappings between the semantic meaning of a word and its phonological form, and in a similar vein, reading depends upon the development of mappings between semantic, phonological, and orthographic units of representation (de Jong & van der Leij, 2002; Kaani, 2018; Kaani, 2021; Kaani, Mufalo, & Mulubale, 2022). Within this view, specific underlying processes may be impaired in poor readers, and it is these weaknesses that lead to both poor reading and poor vocabulary. For example, Sternberg and Powell (1983) suggest that reading comprehension, vocabulary, and general intelligence may be mediated by the ability to get more detail from context. It is interesting to note that working memory may also mediate the linkage of vocabulary and reading comprehension.

### **Component of Reading Comprehensions**

Reading comprehension is a complex skill (Perfetti, Landi, & Oakhill, 2005; Muyangana, 2012; Sampa et al., 2022). Readers make sense of words and word phrases, tell their meanings, and interpret grammatical structure. Rarely is a text completely literal: readers need to draw on general knowledge and an appreciation of pragmatic factors to understand the intended message. Successful reading demands that readers construct a coherent and integrated impression of the text, rich in referential relations (e.g., Kintsch, 1998; van den Broek, 1994; Sanopao, 2016; Mulambia et al., 2023; Banda et al., 2023).

Given that vocabulary correlates with reading comprehension, an important question is whether particular aspects of the reading comprehension process are more associated with vocabulary. To illustrate, consider a child who has great difficulty reading words. They are slow, inaccurate, and effortful. Not surprising, they also have difficulty understanding the text. They also show low-for-age vocabulary knowledge. Here, we observe an association between poor reading comprehension and poor vocabulary. However, it is impossible to know whether this is a consequence of vocabulary being associated with the child's word reading problems, with their comprehension-level problems, or with both.

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study used Systematic literature reviews. According to scholars, the term Systematic literature reviews refers to a way of synthesizing scientific evidence to

answer a particular research question in a manner that is transparent and reproducible. They point to the inclusion of published evidence on a topic of interest and undertake an appraisal of the quality of that evidence. This is the systematic pattern of literature search that was embarked on in establishing “the role of vocabulary knowledge in reading and comprehension development.” SRs can be traced as far back as the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Chassin et al., 1987; Chalmers, Hedges, & Cooper, 2002) and have evolved from solely being used in the medical and health sciences to being employed in many other fields of study including social sciences and education (Borry, Schotsmans, & Dierickx, 2006; Egger, Smith, & Altman, 2008).

This article followed the standard process for developing, conducting, and reporting a SR advanced by Egger et al. (2008), depicted in Table 1.

Table 1. Process in Systematic Literature Reviews

1. Formulated Review Question:	Why is this review necessary? What question needs answering?
2. Define Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:	Set criteria for the topic, the methods, the study designs, and the methodological quality of studies to be reviewed.
3. Locating Studies:	Developed a search strategy focused on covering the broadest possible sources relevant to the research question. Sources included databases like Scopus or Web of Science, study registers, academic repositories for theses, reference lists and citation lists of included articles, books, communications with experts, and searched ‘grey literature.’
4. Selected Studies:	Assessed studies identified by the search strategy to decide if the inclusion criterion is met. This step was performed in two stages: (1) reviewers screened titles and abstracts, and (2) screened full texts that were not excluded in the first stage. Reasons were identified for all studies excluded.
5. Assess Study Quality:	Used a pre-defined method for appraising the quality of included studies. Several tools exist for this stage (Crowe & Sheppard, 2011).
6. Extract Data:	Used a distinct pre-defined form for extracting data of interest from each included study.
7. Analyze and Present Results:	Used a predefined method to analyze and synthesize data obtained from studies sampled.
8. Interpret Results:	Reflected on limitations of the review, strengths of the evidence it teased out, how research questions are answered, and areas for future research, which arise.

Relating to the shared steps in Table 1, Moher et al. (2015) contend that a reporting guideline was established to support more standardized SR protocol writing. This upholds methods for steps 1 to 7 shared in Table 1.0, included in the protocols of SRs. What is interesting is that Moher et al. (2009) also posits that

similar reporting guidelines specify elements which should appear in published reports of systematic reviews.

The desktop review adopted an exclusivity and inclusivity approach that was unique. Print and electronic media sources formed the anchor of literature reviewed for the study. Sources such as books, journals, and theses were consulted in the study.

Findings are presented descriptively and thematically. Literature abounds defining and describing thematic data analysis in varying but unanimous ways (Attride-Stirling, 2001; King, 2004; Banda et al., 2017), provide systematic guidance on how to conduct thematic analysis and further contextualize ways of conducting research with an applied focus (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2011); and describe many inductive as well as deductive ways of coding qualitative data thematically (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Role of Vocabulary Knowledge in Reading and Comprehension Development**

First language (L1) reading researchers have reported the importance of both breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension (Qian, 2002; Nouri & Zerhouni, 2018; Sanopao, 2016; Sampa et al., 2022). However, in L2 research, there has been little recognition of the extremity of vocabulary knowledge until recently, and few empirical studies have reported such a relationship. These studies have paid attention mostly to the role of vocabulary size in reading (Clam & Sundon, 2013; Qian, 2002). This finding is in line with what Laufer (1996) established, with results indicating relatively high intercorrelations, ranging from 0.50 to 0.75, between the two factors under study herein.

In comparison, there have been fewer studies exploring the comprehensiveness of vocabulary and reading comprehension outcomes (de Bot, Paribakht, & Wesche, 1997; Qian, 2002; Clam & Sundon, 2013). This is probably because the subject area is more difficult to measure than vocabulary size, and therefore, vocabulary size measures are relatively advanced compared to vocabulary depth measures (Schmitt, 1997). Suffice it to say that Qian (2002) argues otherwise and cites the importance of both.

Vocabulary is acquired incrementally, so words acquired at the beginning of the learning process are likely to have much more depth than words more recently learned. The more words a learner knows, the more he or she will have a greater depth of knowledge of these words. Qian (2002) contends that having a larger vocabulary size gives a learner a larger database to guess the meaning of unknown words or behavior; and improves guesswork. It is, therefore, justified to argue that these two dimensions operate interactively and interdependently. The authors of this paper underscore the importance of equitably investigating how vocabulary impacts reading comprehension. Therefore, approaches that would effectively assess the extensiveness of vocabulary knowledge must be employed.

Although a study by de Bot et al. (1997), which employed qualitative methods (such as interview and think-aloud protocol) to investigate English as a Second Language (ESL) learners' reading processes, did not specify the term "depth," some

factors explored in that particular study, for example, morphology, homonymy, and word associations, reflected the aspects. This explains why Qian's (1998) study reports that certain aspects of 'depth' play an integral role in reading comprehension. Read (1993) also reports a depth-of-vocabulary-knowledge test designed to measure some paradigmatic and syntagmatic aspects of vocabulary knowledge. The test results demonstrated vocabulary knowledge's capability of being a reliable measure. Qian (2002) reports high inter-correlations in the following two aspects of vocabulary: size and depth, on the one hand, and reading comprehension, on the other, in the range of 0.78–0.82. These research findings significantly contribute to the confirmation of the depth of vocabulary and reading comprehension, especially in the context of reading assessment.

### **Investigating the Relationship between Reading and Writing**

Carson et al. (1990) studied the extent to which reading and writing are related to first (L1) and second (L2) language contexts. Their results demonstrated that this interaction is a complex one, with certain aspects of each skill being somehow independent of the other. Carson et al. (1990) and Grabe (1991) equally analyzed arguments for assuming that reading influences writing, that writing influences reading, and that they interactively influence each other. Comparatively, she says the variables at play will likely influence each other reciprocally but not as inverses of the same process. Interestingly, using a bi-directional model, Shanahan and Lomax (1986) discovered that this relationship changes at different stages of language development, and aspects of this relationship are independent of each other.

Contributing to the debate concerning reading and writing in L1 and L2, Krashen (1984) contends that second language learners' writing competence is derived from large amounts of self-motivated reading for pleasure and/or interest. Kimberling et al. (in Krashen, 1984) investigated the same issue directly, which revealed a disparity between good and poor writers. They discovered that persons with a keen interest in writing derive pleasure in reading across genres and literature at varying age ranges, especially during high school years. On the contrary, their findings did not report any single poor writer saying that they enjoyed reading during high school. Comparatively, this corroborates with the findings by Hilton (2008) and later Mkandawire (2017).

Literature confirms that reading captivates and helps an individual in various ways, one of them being making one innovative. Eventually, this captivates readers to make sense of what they read and pushes them to use their knowledge of the world and previous experience as readers. It is worth noting that the background experience of the person reading enables him or her to identify and understand cohesion, coherence, rhetorical organization, and conventions of written language. As Lopes (1991) contends, the reader's external knowledge of the world enables him or her to understand concepts and points of view and integrate them into his or her experience (Lopes, 1991).

Similarly, when writing, one tends to make use of one's knowledge of the world and his or her experience as readers. This is why, as Lopes (1991) rightly notes, projects that are designed to improve learners' writing should focus primarily on developing reading skills. Lopes contributes to the debate by saying that if one is aiming at bettering his or her writing, the first step should be the improvement of

one's reading strategies, making them always aware of the importance of calling upon their knowledge of the world and their experiences as readers. The second step should be to help the student develop a different attitude towards writing by helping them concentrate on expressing their thoughts rather than avoiding mistakes. On the other hand, scholars such as Edelsky (1982), Hudelson (1984), Spack (1988), Zamel (1992), and Sampa et al. (2022) believe that writing is what makes it possible for us to read rather than the other way around.

Zamel (1992) reports that the contribution of writing to enhancing reading in elementary school classrooms presents itself as an opportunity to explore meaning. In such classrooms, children with limited literacy and English language proficiency, even before they can read and express themselves orally in English, write stories that become their first reading texts. This initiation into literacy provides these learners with the opportunities to develop and extend their understanding of the text. To such learners, writing provides an opportunity for them to test out their growing understanding of 'storiness' or 'wordiness' and of how one keeps ideas apart in writing and of how one uses writing to express his or her thoughts. Zamel (1992) further argues that because writing requires learners who are beginning to read and write to make decisions about purpose, sequences, and language and because it helps such learners to understand how and why texts are written, it gives these learners insights into the goals, constraints, and concern of authors, insights which they apply to their reading. Since writing helps learners to understand that everything they read is writing, as such writing needs to be recognized as the basis or the foundation of reading.

Just like children in these writing-to-reading classrooms, adult learners who are acquiring a second language can benefit from creating their texts. Because these written texts can provide a means through which learners record their experiences and consider their realities, they have greater resonance for them than those they are usually assigned to read and thus have the potential to become the basis for literacy development (Zamel, 1992). At the senior secondary school level, English-as-a-Second-Language composition affects the reading of literature when the assigned writing is fully integrated with and provides strategies for reflecting on literary texts (Chipili, 2012). At more advanced levels, such as college and university, literature abounds, indicating that writing influences reading (Butler, 2006; Spack, 1988; Zamel, 1992).

### **Reading and Writing Models: Theoretical Perspectives**

Shanahan and Lomax (1986) report that scholars have undertaken studies amongst second language learners that have compared and analyzed theoretical models concerning the relationship between learning to read and learning to write. The models have been evaluated based on their ability to account for the relationships found in an extensive literature collection. Each model focuses on varying aspects of language mechanics but differs in the ordering of their causal relationships. This explains why language and curriculum experts have advised that attention should be paid to investigating the relationship that exists between reading and writing (Bishop, 1985; Carl, 2012; Mulenga, 2018, 2020; Ngambi et al., 2020). According to Shanahan and Lomax (1986), curriculum developers need to thoroughly understand this relationship because of the important implications it could have for many instructional and psychological issues. The models to be discussed and

analyzed in this section include the Interactive model, Reading to Writing model, and the Writing to Reading model.

### **Reading Models**

**Interactive Model:** Studies have revealed that a significant relationship exists between reading and writing, which has been studied and acknowledged by researchers and instructors. These scholars have offered insights into the relationship between reading and writing. Some researchers have argued that reading and writing interact (Shanahan & Lomax, 1986; Shanahan, 1987; Qian, 1990; Elleman & Oslund, 2019). Other researchers have reported that writing, working together with reading, has a significant influence on learners' achievement in reading and enhances their ability to think critically (Tierney & Pearson, 1983; Zamel, 1992; Elleman & Oslund, 2019). Advocates of this Model consider both reading and writing as processes. These scholars have identified commonalities that exist in reading and writing. They have, therefore, postulated that reading and writing not only share a common knowledge base but similar mental operations as well (Elleman & Oslund, 2019; Al-Ghazo & Ta'amneh, 2022).

Qian (1990) considers reading and writing to be interactive processes in the sense that a person who is reading recollects the plot, persona, writer, and characters, relates meaning to their own socio-cultural, religious, and political milieu while a person who is writing composes meaning for the intended audience by associating his existing knowledge, penetrating the subject gain insights out of it. Referring to the Schema Theory, Teller (in Zamel, 1992) observes that reading for comprehension is solely an interactive process by which the reader's background knowledge is activated so that he can interpret the meaning in the text. During the reading process, the reader keeps reconstructing the author's message and adds to the schemata in memory. Therefore, the author-reader relationship is critical not only to both reading comprehension but to creating meaning by composing it (Elleman & Oslund, 2019; Al-Ghazo & Ta'amneh, 2022).

In Tierney and Pearson (1983) and Heller (1991) view, the person who is reading and the one who is writing both go through the same activities as planning, drafting, aligning, revising, monitoring, and checking outcomes. Other researchers consider metacognitive theory as the basis for much research into the conscious manipulation of thinking while reading. Tierney and Pearson (1983) and Heller (1991) define metacognition as the knowledge that readers have about thinking and the ability to capitalize on such knowledge in keeping track of their reading. These scholars suggest that when a person is writing, he or she is not only actively engaged intellectually but emotionally in the construction of meaning. During this process, the person writing constantly keeps in check the language mechanics and style of writing to maintain the coherence of the composition. As Tierney and Pearson (1983) and Heller (1991) contend that readers and writers are alike, presumably because they both engage in thinking after they have finished with their respective texts. The authors of this paper posit that the concept of reflective thought is essential to both reading and writing processes.

Investigating reflective thinking of both good and poor readers, Birnbaum (in Zamel, 1992) undertook a review of some studies on this subject. These studies revealed that reflective thinking is central to proficiency in written language, whether the individual is engaged in reading or writing. In addition to the common

mental operations shared when reading and writing, there are quite a few specific areas where this close connection has been identified (Elleman & Oslund, 2019; Al-Ghazo & Ta'amneh, 2022). They are in the areas of vocabulary, syntax, narrative and expository text organization; spelling and word recognition ability; phonemic awareness; writing mechanics; capitalization, punctuation; correct grammar usage; reading achievement; spelling accuracy and reading fluency; use of cohesion and reading achievement, voice in composition and reading achievement, motivation, development of main idea in the writing of narratives, development of background setting in narration and reading achievement, patterns of response to literature, creativity in reading and writing comprehension, reading comprehension and writing productivity or fluency and sense of genre (Zamel, 1992; Elleman & Oslund, 2019; Al-Ghazo & Ta'amneh, 2022).

Arguing from another angle, Goodman and Goodman (1983) observed that there are some activities in which both reading and writing take place almost simultaneously during the time that children grow into literacy. Both Goodman and Goodman (1983) observed that children do not only learn to read by reading and write by writing, but also, they learn to read by writing and write by reading. They proposed that children should be exposed to a large amount of varied literature in real use so that they can develop the ability to take control of the two different modes of literacy. In his experiment, Shanahan (1987) established that of the three models, the interactive model is more effective in teaching second and fifth-graders than either the reading-to-writing model or the writing-to-reading model. This is, although, that the reading-to-writing model is superior to the writing-to-reading approach.

Contrary to the previous assertions, Shanahan (1987) has a contrary view when he observed that some reading and writing variables are not identical. Despite being highly correlated, he argued that the correlation is not significant enough to suggest that the rise of achievement in one will automatically lead to the improvement of the other. Supporting Shanahan's (1987) assertion, Tierney and Pearson (1983) contend that available statistics in knowledge-process studies reveal that the correlations between reading and writing are small and usually of no more than moderate levels of about (0.60). It is worth noting that it is rare that researchers find specific reading and writing measures accounting for more than 30 to 40 % of the variance between them. This further suggests that the two cannot replace each other.

The studies reviewed thus far have pointed out that while reading and writing share some common elements in some variables, they are different. Bennett and Hodges' (1987) study seems to be the odd one out in the field because it points to the fact that writing exerts influence not only on reading and learning at lower cognitive levels such as knowledge, retention of the information from the learning material but also on cognitive thinking such as application, analysis and evaluation. To be more exact, according to Bennett and Hodges' (1987) writing affects both students' reading comprehension and critical thinking.

### **Issues and Challenges**

Cross-reading and writing knowledge transfer might not be automatic but could be facilitated by certain experiences or instruction. The relationship between reading and writing is more complex than we think. Research reveals that some children tend to use particular aspects of knowledge or processes well in reading but not to

be able to do so in writing, while others' evidence an opposite pattern. It is undeniably true that there are good writers, but poor readers or vice versa exist too. Statistics show that there is a remarkable number of children who appear to fall into these unexpected categories (Belanger, 1987; Al-Saadat, 2004).

An interesting criticism challenging to refute is that advanced by Shanahan (1987), Tierney and Pearson (1983), and Al-Saadat (2004), who say that "reading and writing relation could be a simple artifact due to an under-developed theoretical model" primarily because most studies have not employed any intelligence control for various reasons. Also, there have been some important challenges to the notion that reading and writing influence each other and critical thinking (Elleman & Oslund, 2019; Al-Ghazo & Ta'amneh, 2022; Mpolomoka & Sakai, 2021; Sampa et al., 2022; Banda et al., 2023; Mann et al., 2023).

### **Instructional Implications**

The interactive model suggests that writing should be introduced to the students as soon as reading begins. In classroom instruction, teachers should combine reading and writing, both of which will require instructional emphasis to enhance the student's competence in comprehension and composition.

Literature points to reading and writing being instrumental in promoting critical thinking (Al-Saadat, 2004). They believed that integrating both readers and writers would lead to a symbiotic relationship between the two ways of thinking. It is in this symbiosis that students are provided with the opportunities to think more critically.

### **Reading-Writing Model**

The second model, the reading-to-writing model, contains components sequenced in the same manner as in the interactive model. The only difference between the 'reading-to-writing' model and the interactive model is that all relations between the variables emanate from reading to writing. This model theorizes that reading knowledge can stimulate writing but not activate reading. It appears to be a reasonable characterization of many instructional programs, as evidenced by the paucity of writing instruction in many schools (Elleman & Oslund, 2019; Al-Ghazo & Ta'amneh, 2022). The progression from early childhood education to primary school, then secondary school classroom, is usually preceded by several years of reading and literature instruction. This manner of learning and instruction provision assumes that reading can exert a strong influence on writing, but it limits the likelihood of writing on reading.

### **Writing to Reading Model**

The third and final model is the 'writing-to-reading' model which includes the same reading and writing components as the Interactive Model and Reading-to-Writing Model earlier described in this paper. In the writing-to-reading model, writing is assumed to affect reading without reading exerting influence on writing. It attempts to thrive on those theories that claim that writing development does precede reading development (Al-Saadat, 2004). Again, none of these theories is explicit about either the component abilities or the ordering of the relations. However, they all postulate that writing can be learned prior to acquiring the technique of reading. It is partly important to stress the significance of the 'order of development' as shown

in theories herein shared and partly, though to a lesser extent, bring to the fore the specific sequences of relations among variables proposed in these theories. Unlike the interactive model, in the writing-to-read model, writing knowledge is assumed to influence aspects of reading knowledge at both equivalent and higher levels of discourse.

## CONCLUSION

These results provide insight into the pedagogical implications of the study. Having an insightful idea of students' vocabulary knowledge and their corresponding reading and writing abilities may help test and curriculum developers to fine-tune English tests, and relook at curriculum content, and make them appropriate to assess and impart students' reading comprehension and writing skills. These findings may be of great benefit to students as well, especially those who plan to improve their lexical knowledge and reading comprehension competencies. Learners should realize that increasing these skills depends highly on their efforts.

The overriding implication of these findings is that reading and writing need to be taught together at the senior secondary level. The researchers posit that integrating literacy skills develops strategic approaches to academic tasks. Reading and writing should not be approached linearly in such a way that reading always precedes writing. Just as the teaching of writing must involve the teaching of reading (as has been conceptualized above), the teaching of reading is, by necessity, the teaching of writing. Just as reading furnishes learners with comprehensible input for writing, writing can provide comprehensible input for reading. Just as learners need to become better readers to become better writers, they can become better readers by becoming better writers. This line of research on this complex relationship is new to the second language context. However, its importance for improving reading and writing abilities in second language learners must be emphasized. Thus, we make the following recommendations: (1) ESL teachers should endeavor to assist their learners in attaining different aspects of vocabulary threshold to upgrade their reading performance and to motivate them to do independent reading; (2) Education Standards Officers, School Administrators, and Teachers should design strategies to develop in students the habit of independent reading.

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