Research Article

Enhancing Learners' EFL Writing Performance through Extensive Reading Strategy Training into the Writing Process

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It is logical to anticipate that teaching one will lead to the student's proficiency in the other because the reading and writing processes are correlated and, in many cases, combined. The goal was to find out how extended reading strategy training (ERST) affected first-year undergraduate students' writing abilities. Thirty-one of the 61 undergraduate participants from Wollega University were placed in the control group and 30 were placed in the experimental group. Interviews and tests on the ability to write paragraphs were used to gather the data over the course of 10 weeks. The following criteria were evaluated: the capacity to handle the specified issue, well-developed thoughts, well-organised concepts, acceptable transitions, unity, coherence, syntactic diversity, and idiomaticity with few lexical or grammatical faults. The interview data were evaluated thematically, while the quantitative results were primarily studied using analysis of covariance. The results show that ERST significantly improves the writing abilities of the students. This outcome is consistent with past research that showed extensive reading to be helpful in enhancing students' writing abilities and offers valuable information on the significance of including the ERST programme into the writing process in writing courses.

1. Introduction

Students at the university level consistently make major errors in spelling, grammar, tense, punctuation, capitalisation, conjunction, and concept structure, despite Ethiopia's prominent role in education policy and execution [1, 2]. As in many other nations, the teaching of writing skills in Ethiopian schools has drawn criticism from a number of researchers and observers. First, it has been claimed that the writing component of English language instruction is occasionally skipped for a variety of reasons. Second, if they attempted to teach it, they would probably do it in a conventional way, namely by utilising writing exercises at the sentence level to reinforce specific vocabulary and grammatical rules [3]. Additionally, it is common for curriculum designers and textbook authors to undervalue writing in comparison to other language abilities. This may be seen by the fact that writing assignments in English textbooks almost always come at the end of the chapter [3]. This disregard for writing abilities in English language instruction could have serious repercussions. Students may find it difficult to communicate effectively in writing without the right training and practise, which could impede their

performance in school and in their careers. Additionally, if writing is not given enough attention, it may continue to be thought that speaking and listening come first, devaluing written communication in society at large. To solve this problem, teachers must place a high priority on writing education and give students the chance to improve their abilities through engaging and relevant exercises. This can entail integrating writing into all facets of language learning, for instance, through journaling or group writing assignments. Writing is an important part of language education and, by valuing it, we can provide students with the skills they need to succeed in school and in the workforce.

The research project has undergone a number of steps. The researcher first developed extended reading strategy training (ERST) content and extensive reading (ER) materials and gave them to a trainer for EFL instructors. The material was used and examined for its dependability and applicability in supplying students with the knowledge and abilities required to generate the highest standard of academic writing. There were also modules on grammar, paragraph development, and sentence structure. The training materials were designed to be active and exciting, including written tasks, group discussions, and

one-on-one feedback sessions. Monthly assessments were carried out throughout the programme's 6-month implementation to track advancement and identify areas that required improvement. In general, it was believed that the programme would succeed in raising the university students' writing standards. Therefore, this research was contextualised within the larger goal of improving overall academic performance focusing on writing skills as crucial, as it is a fundamental aspect of communication and critical thinking. By providing engaging and interactive training materials, the programme aimed to foster a love for writing and encourage students to express their ideas effectively. In addition, the rationale for this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the writing programme in improving the university students' writing skills, the ultimate goal being to determine if this programme truly succeeded in elevating the writing standards of university students and if it could serve as a model for future writing initiatives. Through this evaluation, valuable insights could be gained on effective teaching methods and strategies for enhancing students' writing proficiency that the programme would succeed in raising the university students' writing standards.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Transactional Theory and ERST. A well-liked method of teaching writing that emphasises the connection between the author, the reader, and the text is called "transactional theory." According to this notion, writing is a dynamic activity that encompasses numerous viewpoints and interactions. The abilities and methods students need to interact with texts in a meaningful way can be developed by students through extensive reading strategy training, which can be a useful way to complement this approach. Teachers may assist students in building a solid foundation of information and understanding that they can draw from when they write by encouraging them to read widely and deeply. Additionally, this method underlines the value of revision and feedback by encouraging students to analyse their own writing and seek out other people's opinions. Ultimately, teachers can assist their students in becoming more proficient writers who are able to communicate clearly in a range of circumstances by incorporating transactional theory with thorough reading strategy training. In general, transactional theory provides a useful foundation for creating language teaching methods that support student autonomy, engagement, and success. Scholars underline the critical role reading plays in developing citizens with bright brains who can write. The notion put forth by Krashen [4] contends that substantial reading for interest or enjoyment aids in the development of writing abilities. Reading gives the writer an awareness of how reader-based text looks and feels. This implies that writer learns that reading is necessary to add knowledge and experience, and the reader is moved to write to record, express, and clarify thoughts and feelings that arise from reading, as an illustration of how reading and writing are connected because they are two processes that support one another.

Reading also aids in the development of vocabulary and grammar, two aspects that are crucial for writing well.

Writing professionals can learn new writing strategies and styles by reading, which they can then apply to their own work. This is crucial in professions that place a high emphasis on originality and innovation, like journalism or creative writing. Regular readers are more likely to have a better understanding of the world and to grow in their capacity for empathy. Additionally, combining reading and writing into instructional methods fosters imagination and creativity, allowing pupils to explore novel concepts and viewpoints. Additionally, it fosters in them a passion of learning that lasts a lifetime, which is necessary for success in any endeavour. Teaching kids to read critically and write effectively is crucial now more than ever because of the easy access to information in the digital era. According to Marhaeni [5], reading helps pupils to develop their knowledge, critical thinking abilities, and capacity to produce knowledge. In other words, reading is a crucial skill for every writer who wants to hone their art and create compelling prose.

International research has been conducted on the topic of reading and writing integration, which has also attracted considerable interest in the field of language studies. It has been discovered that encouraging students to study texts and develop arguments based on evidence when reading and writing are integrated in the classroom improves students' critical thinking abilities. The idea that reading and writing are two sides of the same coin informed this method of teaching writing. It acknowledged that pupils learn to study and comprehend the craft of writing when they read like authors. Lipscombe et al. [6] underlined the significance of the teacher's position as a writer and recommended that teachers and students collaborate to produce their writing in a welcoming and nonthreatening environment. This approach of teaching writing has become increasingly popular in recent years as educators recognise the importance of helping students develop strong writing skills. In general, this integration of the two skills shows that the reading intervention develops depending on the common nature of reading and writing and can change the knowledge and practise of the writing performance.

2.2. The Process Approach of Teaching Writing. A social constructionist framework controls the writing process. According to this concept, writers gain knowledge and abilities by doing a lot of practise, thinking critically, and exchanging perspectives in both official and informal settings with friends, family, teachers, and other writers through their written products. Reading motivates students, as it teaches them significant ideas and sharpens their analytical and critical thinking faculties. Reading gives students something to talk about, encourages them to remember their prior information, and aids in the development of a new schema for them. Reading also helps to focus class discussions on the topic at hand. Reading gives students something to write about because, at this age, they lack the sophisticated ideas necessary to write on a specific subject. They can get these concepts through reading. Reading also helps students develop their voice, grammar, syntax, and language skills because it exposes them to examples of excellent writing [7]. The introduction of process writing pedagogy in the late 1960s and early 1970s was

the most significant development in writing theory in this century. Reading was the first skill related to content-area instruction, and researchers attempted to integrate the teaching of writing through the process approach with it [8]. Process pedagogy instructs students to perceive writing as a process through the use of connected activities and techniques [8]. These include brainstorming, free writing, and other forms of creativity; planning, such as outlining, drafting, and revising. Peer group activities, regular student–teacher conferences, and the employment of peer tutors throughout the entire writing process are just a few of the techniques that are encouraged. This event values student viewpoints and experiences and seeks out effective avenues for them to have an impact on academic writing.

2.3. The Teaching of Writing in Ethiopia.

Along with listening, speaking, and reading, writing skills are taught in Ethiopia as part of a communicative English language skills programme. In a classroom, only 45 min are typically allotted for teaching writing each week. Students in this course engage on comprehension exercises and occasionally write remarks on what they have read in the course's intense reading texts. Even though it is frequently emphasised in ESL and EFL classes in foreign environments, the course delivers tasks without providing explicit directions on how to integrate abilities. Similar to Ethiopia, English courses such as communicative language skills are created and taught in colleges using an isolated skill model, notwithstanding theoretical discussion [9]. Separating reading education from writing instruction is absurd, though, as a process that is active in one area might have an impact on another. Students will surely have a tone of writing ideas if they read more about the subjects they intend to write about while debating and assessing the ideas in the accessible materials. Reading and writing will also interact to develop the reader's schema (writer) in this way. Students will be assisted in gathering information to support, develop, and produce new ideas by providing the resources and offering instruction centred on them. They could also broaden their lexical and syntactic vocabulary by mimicking and copying. With this transcription, pupils will feel more secure when speaking a foreign language.

This study is predicated on the concept that students will acquire topical ideas for their writing if writing is taught through reading texts. Students will have a model for their writing as a result, improving the quality of their writing [7]. Reading will also improve the quality and interest of the learning environment in the writing classroom. Students' exposure to a variety of texts will aid in their development of critical thinking skills and perspective widening. They will expand their vocabulary and linguistic skills as they use new words and phrases in context. Reading exposes pupils to a range of settings and people, which can stimulate their imagination and creativity.

2.4. The Self-Regulated Strategy Development towards ERST.

The self-regulated strategy development (SRSD) model of strategy instruction developed by Harris and Graham [10] was modified in the current study to use ERST as a training method for combining training in integrating reading and writing to improve the writing performance. The ERST curriculum primarily focuses on ER strategies that are taught alongside learner autonomy (LA) and sustained silent reading (SSR) and are a part of the larger SRSD paradigm of strategy education. These strategies also include instruction in cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies. The Harris and Graham [10] SRSD model of strategy instruction, which served as the foundation for the current study, sees learning as a complex process that depends on changes that take place in learners' motivation, skills, and abilities as well as their self-regulation, strategic knowledge, and domain-specific knowledge and abilities. Although SRSD has been employed in other academic fields, such as math and reading (see [11]), Harris and Graham were the ones who first put it into practise in writing, focusing on the following three goals: (1) assist students in acquiring knowledge about writing as well as effective writing techniques and strategies, such as planning, writing, revising, and editing; (2) encourage students to continue honing the skills necessary to supervise and manage their writing; and (3) promote positive attitudes among students towards writing and towards themselves as writers. The educational aspects of SRSD aim to improve students' written work (behaviour), alter how they compose (cognition), broaden their writing knowledge (cognition), and increase their motivation (affect). Such training responds to the traits of students who struggle to learn because it tackles the many cognitive, behavioral, and emotional difficulties these students face [12].

According to the study of Harris and Graham [10], Harris et al. [13], and Mason [14], the integration of reading and writing skills has grown in significance in recent years. These academics understand the value of blending these two abilities in instructional and peer assistance initiatives. The goal of the current study was to create a new method of teaching writing called ERST by building on this basis. The ERST programme, which is based on the SRSD model of strategy, aims to develop the writing abilities of first-year undergraduate university EFL students by integrating reading and writing skills. ERST offers a distinctive method of writing teaching that could be very beneficial for pupils by fusing these two crucial skills. ERST is a cutting-edge new approach to this area of study with a focus on integration and collaboration.

2.5. The Integrative Nature of ER and LA.

To improve students' writing skills through ER, traditional teachers must make changes to their teaching methods in the classroom. Students must be accountable for their learning, for instance, because it is challenging for professors to control the reading practises due to student differences in a class. It might be difficult for teachers to suit everyone's needs because each student is different in terms of personality, life events, background in language learning, and learning style. ER, whose core idea is to provide the readers autonomy, can therefore be a helpful method to deal with the problem. Three essential approaches for fostering LA in EFL classrooms were suggested by Yan et al. [15]. To share responsibility for their learning process, students must first be involved. They should rely less on their teachers and more on themselves
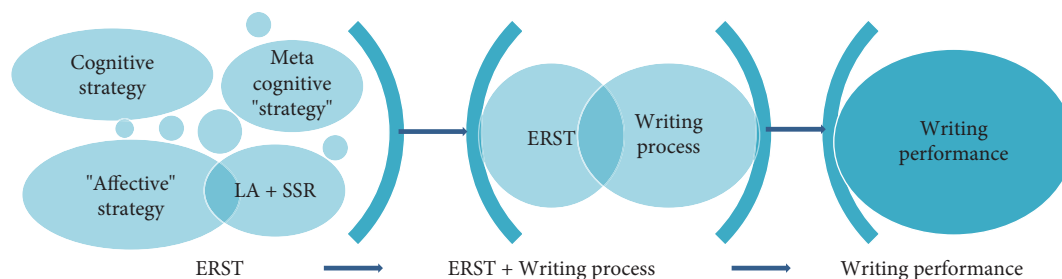
FIGURE 1: The integration of ERST into the writing process to improve students' writing performance.

when selecting the books to read and what to learn from them. The reading material that students choose to read should be based on their interests and level of language skill, according to their teachers. Students' motivation is increased when they can choose their own resources, and this is favourably connected with their high autonomy [16]. Additionally, teachers must promote student discussion, analysis, and evaluation of both personal and group learning development. Additionally, teachers must serve as their students' language coordinators, facilitators, and consultants in the classroom [15]. To inspire kids to read and develop their independent reading skills, teachers must explicitly implant in them the idea of autonomy. Finally, teachers ought to give students written assignments or presentations based on the reading to see if they read outside of the classroom. In general, teachers must alter their conventional classroom teaching strategies if they want to see improvements in their students' writing abilities through intensive reading.

2.6. The Integration of the ERST Programme into the Writing Process in a Nutshell. The current ERST researcher focused on the integration of reading and writing in a way that rigorous reading strategy training enhances writing performance. When teaching writing as a process, the knowledge and experiences gained through the ERST intervention are used as background knowledge that begins and concludes the writing process. LA and SSR are featured in ERST because they are ways to individualise the ER. Figure 1 illustrates how the ERST intervention was integrated into the writing process and transformed into one of the writing performance components.

3. This Study

ER is widely recommended in the educational literature to improve the writing performance, and its role in the foreign language classroom has been a source of concern for teachers. Despite the fact that the current researcher gained valuable experience from ER as a student at schools and universities before, she has observed as a teacher that the majority of Wollega University's first-year undergraduate students are unaware of the role of ER in developing their writing performance or lack knowledge of using the ER experience in their writing activities. Instead of helping the students, it is also observed when most of the teachers raise the issue of the uncontrollable nature of ER. According to them, ER does not provide teachers with the opportunity to ensure

that their students read what they are supposed to read. They also claim that, though a study is conducted on ER, the internal validity of the results may suffer from different extraneous variables. This presumption of EFL teachers may emanate from a lack of clear conceptualisation regarding the importance of ER in accelerating students.

In the current situation of research-based practices, educators may be hesitant to allow the use of a new educational method until the effects of that method have been evidently confirmed through research. Even though there are a few international and national studies conducted on the effects of ER on learners' writing performance, as far as the researcher's knowledge goes, no researcher to date has attempted to train students on ER strategies that encourage them to use their full autonomy to read extensively inside and outside the classroom to investigate its effect on their writing performance. As far as the current researcher reading goes, it is an issue that did not get adequate focus by Ethiopian researchers in an educational context. Thus, the current researcher decided to investigate the effects of extensive reading-based strategy training (ERBST) on the writing performance of Ethiopian EFL University students.

Although previous research has explored the effectiveness of various instructional approaches to improving writing skills, there is a lack of research on the specific strategies that can enhance the writing performance of first-year undergraduate students in Ethiopian universities. Hence, this study seeks to fill this gap in the literature by investigating the contribution of ERST to the writing performance of first-year undergraduate students at Wollega University. For a better understanding, the researcher adapted the ERST framework to help learners get training first, use it as an experience for their ER, and improve their writing performance. The researcher attempted to conduct the experiment to see its effect on writing performance, where the independent variable was ERBST and the dependent variable was writing performance. To the best of the current researcher's knowledge, this is the first attempt to determine whether or not Ethiopian EFL University students' writing performance improves significantly after ERST.

The results of the study would help teachers better understand the issue and integrate it into their classroom routines in general and in the writing classroom in particular. It will help EFL teachers use ERST to equip students with effective writing skills. As teaching writing in an ER context will provide additional guidance and experience for their

TABLE 1: Participants demographic information per condition.

Demographics	ERST programme condition	Control condition
Number of participants		
Male	17	20
Female	14	11
Year		
Age in years	19–22	19–23
Parents' educational level: 10th complete at most (%)	46%	40%
Teacher trainer		
Number of participants	1	1
Male	—	—
Female	1	1
Age in years	38	38
Teaching experience in years	12	12
University		
Number of universities	1	1
Type of the university		
Public	1	1
Nonpublic		
Location		
Urban	1	1
Suburban/rural		

learners, the teachers can do this by training the students to take charge of their learning and extensively read the materials of their interest inside and outside the classroom, like in the digital libraries, and by helping them integrate what they have experienced with their writing performance. Therefore, findings of this study will have important implications for teaching and learning practices in Ethiopian higher education institutions and contribute to the broader literature on writing pedagogy and second language acquisition.

In general, to achieve the attempts of the current study, the following research questions were created to act as a direction for the investigation:

(1) Is there a statistically significant difference between the writing abilities of the experimental group and the control group after ERST integration?

(2) What difficulties do the experimental group and the teacher trainer encounter while integrating ER and writing during ERST?

4. Method

4.1. Design. In this study, a quasi-experiment was designed and conducted to investigate the effects of extensive reading strategy training on the writing performance of Wollega University first-year social science students. The design of the study is quasi-experimental in the sense that it deals with an untreated control group with a pretest, posttest, and follow-up. Quasi-experimental design is usually a construction that already exists in the real world. The researcher preferred a quasi-experiment design rather than a true experiment

because it allows evaluating the impact of a quasi-independent variable under naturally occurring conditions, which cannot be done in a true experiment design. In those cases, in which the independent variable is manipulated or even simply taken advantage of by a naturally occurring event, clear causal relationships among variables are established. A quasi-experimental design has some sort of control and experimental groups, but these groups are not randomly selected. It is often used precisely because such random allocation is not possible or practical. Therefore, rather than randomly allocating, the researchers have to choose a control group that is as similar to the experimental group as possible. In addition, the current researcher employed analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to handle the preexisting difference of the groups and ensure that the study is valid and reliable.

By keeping all these facts about quasi-experimental research design in mind, the current researcher employed the nonrandomized control group pretest–posttest design in the current study.

The quasi-experimental design of the study included two conditions: ERST + communicative English language skills course condition and communicative English language skills course condition alone. In both cases, the teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) teacher was obliged to submit an application for the writing programme in her classroom. The measurement design featured two testing scenarios: a pretest and a posttest. An overview of the measurements and testing events may be found in the section measurements.

4.2. Participants. Table 1 indicates that the study included 61 students and one teacher from one university. The participating teacher instructed first-year college students majoring

in social sciences. Students in these grades range in age from 19 to 23. The participants were carefully chosen with the understanding that university-level students are capable of managing their learning through ER and that the researched issue pertains to undergraduate university students. Following the receipt of a passive consent letter outlining the goals of the study, all volunteers agreed to take part. The researcher obtained background information (parents' age, gender, and level of education). The average age of the students was 21, and the bulk of them (∼61%) were male. At most, 53% of the parents had completed the 10th grade; hence, they cannot be classified as adequate educational level. The teacher trainer was a 38-year-old female instructor with a Ph.D. in TEFL. There was no chance for an education gap that could have impacted the study's findings because the teacher trainer was the same in all scenarios. The Ethiopian Ministry of Education granted institutional accreditation to the university in 2007, and the Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency granted additional programming accreditations.

4.3. ERST Programme. The intervention consisted of the ERST programme, which was implemented as an integration of the writing process into an existing communicative English language skills course. At the start of the study, an introductory session of 2 days (for 8 hr) was organised for the teacher trainer in the intervention condition to acquaint her with the underlying principles, main components, and structure of ERST. The ERST programme aimed to improve the writing performance of first-year undergraduate university students in Ethiopia. The training material was developed by the current researcher in collaboration with members of the research team.

4.4. Main Components of the ERST Programme. The ERST curriculum integrated LA and SSR with a variety of reading strategies, such as cognitive, metacognitive, and affective techniques, to improve writing ability. According to the hypothesis underlying the ER skills intervention, the ER abilities they practise while reading widely serve as a foundation for their writing in three key ways. Through the emotive techniques they practise during training, individuals are initially encouraged to adopt a positive perspective towards their writing. Second, the metacognitive skills students develop from ER and ERST training enable them to become proficient in planning, monitoring, and evaluation. Third, they get a better awareness of how to use background knowledge to forecast, guess, transfer, organise, reflect, write grammatically correct sentences, and distinguish sentence structure as they work on their cognitive strategies throughout the intervention. Generally speaking, these ERST components assisted students in identifying many strategies they might use throughout ER to understand the reading materials and to identify the writing-improvement tactics.

Prolonged reading naturally results in LA. At the beginning of training, it is made available as a component of the ERST course. LA can be used effectively with metacognitive strategies, particularly those that include planning, observing, and evaluating one's work. The students will take part in these activities if they comprehend the natural LA principles that tell them of their obligation to direct their learning. The

addition of the LA idea in the current study strengthens the intervention because the students are assured to understand their duties and manage their work well. SSR is part of the ERST for a variety of very significant reasons. First and foremost, the SSR assignments can make it possible for the text and the individual students to communicate more directly and personally. Additionally, it is a student-centred exercise that highlights the unique needs and skills of every learner. Third, Day and Bamford's [17] advice that reading should be done in silence and privately supports SSR. The only effective method for customised reading instruction in huge mixed-ability classrooms is SSR, according to Channuan [18]. Additionally, during this period, the students use their reading journals to do summaries, reports, notes, reviews, and other writing projects. In general, ER gives students a better understanding of the world, which helps them develop ideas for their writing.

4.5. The Structure of the ERST Programme. Each section of the lecture made consistent use of the three learning strategies: explicit instruction, direction (practise), and observational learning. The initial section of the ERST material's goal was to prepare students psychologically and methodologically through ER and LA-based motivating activities, such as defining LA (planning, monitoring, and assessing) and showing them how to incorporate it into ER practises. This enables the students to use the knowledge during ER and grasp the integrative nature of ER and LA. This was accomplished through observational learning using a variety of instructional techniques, such as watching, listening, discussing, and mimicking examples provided during independent learning, as well as contrasting models (teaching assistants or peers). Then, using the reading sources at their choice, students were asked to put their understanding of organising, reviewing, and refining their ER both inside and outside the classroom to practise. Throughout their SSR, the teacher demonstrated excellent reading skills and offered assistance when necessary via scaffolding and processing feedback. Students learned detailed reading skills in the next section through practise reading passages provided in the training manual. By mimicking a few tactics from the model reading material, the teacher illustrated how to employ the strategy. To assist teachers' models, the information was included in the teaching manual. The students read aloud and engaged with the reading during the lesson, employing a variety of reading strategies such as determining the reading material's structure, making notes, drawing on prior knowledge, projecting, speculating, determining the meaning of words, locating main ideas, using references, resourcing, deduction, imagery, the keyword method, transfer, inference, translation, summarising, and so forth. Next, they compare their own responses to the reading comprehension questions and talk about the tactics they employed with their other classmates.

Writing assignments are completed under the self-regulation area. The instructor provides a brief explanation of how the students should organise, oversee, and evaluate their work as they compose coherent paragraphs of reflection on the reading materials they have spent a lot of time researching. Goal-setting, progress-tracking, and achievement-evaluation
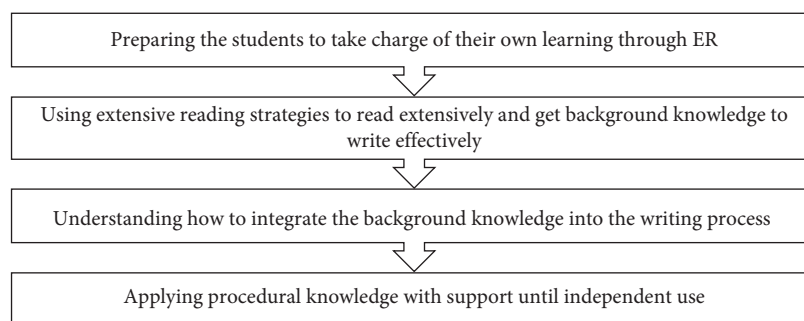
FIGURE 2: ERST sequential learning parts.

strategies employed by the instructor or a peer are examined, discussed, and contrasted by the students. The teacher trainer and students continued to meet in the SSR section after finishing the bulk of the theoretical portion from parts one to three of the material and engaged in additional relevant assignments based on what they read. Each student brought a book that they were eager to read and complete in class after beginning it elsewhere. The instructor took on the position of a reading role model by reading aloud to the kids. Each period began with SSR and ended with class discussion on summaries, reports, and notes that the students had made in their reading diaries as well as topics that they had read aloud in class and outside of class for the remaining 40 min. To have material for their reading diaries, presentations, debates, and sharing with their peers in the following weeks, students were urged to read as much as they could outside of class in addition to in class. Finally, they compose well-organised paragraphs using the information and experiences they have received through ER in the areas of organisation, punctuation, vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and text structure. Figure 2 depicts the progressive learning parts of the ERST.

4.6. Supporting Materials. The students were expected to submit various forms of proof of their reading during the semester. Students can express their views and feelings and measure their development through this type of documentation. Additionally, it gives the teacher adequate data to evaluate each student's progress throughout the course of the term individually. The number of pages they hav read, how much time they spent reading, the topic of the story, and any new insights they had are all things that students keep track of as they work towards their weekly reading goals. Wong and Storey [19] claim that reflective journaling is "useful for arousing and increasing students' awareness of effective writing skills and is significantly related to writing performance" (p. 297). As part of the plan–perform–reflect–plan cycle of learning, these are included in the performance evaluation to promote a positive attitude towards ER. The "Book Response Form" developed by Mikulecky and Jeffries [20] was updated and used by the current researcher for this project. In addition, the students had to submit summaries and reports on the novels they had read. Such reports offer the teacher one assessment tool while also providing the students with an

opportunity to review and apply key terms and concepts from the readings. It was also critical to be able to evaluate how well students were performing and identify those who would need more assistance. Teachers pushed students to record their reading in their reading journals to achieve this goal.

4.7. Measures. The researcher used students' sample writing ability tests and teacher trainer's interview to collect valid data for the current study.

4.8. Students' Writing Performance. The pre- and posttests were taken from Mermelstein [21] and asked students to write descriptive essays on the topics of "Your Past Summer Vacation" and "Your Future Summer Vacation," respectively. The pretest was used to determine the baseline difference between the control and experimental groups, whereas the posttest was utilised to determine whether the intervention resulted in a change in the scores of the two groups. It served as a gauge for determining whether or not the experimental group's writing performance significantly improved or not after the inclusion of ERST. To avoid skewing the results due to the pretest's experience, the researcher did not administer the same tests in the pre- and posttest. However, before administration, both tests were examined by the advisors and colleagues from the TEFL department to ensure the tests' equivalence and establish the internal validity of the research. The writing rubrics, which were adapted from the TOEFL iBT® Test Independent Writing Rubrics and measure the text quality in five categories, served as a guide for the scorers. One, effectively addressing the topic and task; two, well-developed, using appropriate explanations, exemplifications, and/or details; three, well-organised ideas and appropriate transitions; four, displaying unity, progression, and coherence; and five, displaying consistent facility in the use of language, demonstrating syntactic variety, appropriate word choice, and idiomaticity with minor lexical or grammatical errors. The rubric was used with the assumption that it helps the scorers use the same standards or criteria to assess the students' writing. To this effect, Cronbach's alpha for test one was 0.96 and 0.98 for the second equivalent test. These results of the reliability coefficient reveal the consistency of inter-rater reliability because they are greater than 0.7.

5. Challenges of Integrating Reading and Writing

At the completion of the training, a 15-min interview with the teacher trainer was conducted as an extra method of data collecting for the current study. The teacher trainer signed a consent form before responding to the interview questions with remarks. The response trainer planned the interview at convenient times once the participant received permission for it to be recorded and transcribed. It was carried out to check for any integration issues between writing and ER in the current study. With a semistructured interview method as a guide, the responding trainer was allowed complete freedom to speak on anything she had deduced from the observation based on the interview questions. These inquiries sought to learn fundamental data for the research objectives by eliciting their perspectives. To ensure the reliability of the interview data, the researcher directly communicated with the instructor or trainer. The researcher then verbatim recorded and wrote down the interviewee's remarks.

5.1. Implementation. The students kept reading extensively outside of the classroom after finishing the lessons outlined in the programme manual until the intervention's conclusion, meeting regularly once a week for 70 min each. The students in these classes studied the texts they had begun outside of class for an additional 30 min, discussed the topics they had read about, the methods they had employed, and the paragraphs they had written as a summary, reflection, or report in their reflective reading journal. To share their reading experiences and offer feedback on one other's work, they traded reading notebooks. The teacher trainer continued to serve as a role model while they read and a mentor when they required help. In addition, the three reading passages were reduced to one because it was determined that two were sufficient for comprehension and that it would be better to use the downtime for SSR and writing exercises. All of the other lessons envisioned for the implementation of the study were accomplished. The teacher trainer and the researcher met following each ERST lesson to go through the implementation circumstances and any knowledge gaps to maintain the calibre of delivery. The researcher was able to assess how successfully the teacher trainer upheld the programme's basic values by direct observation and a study of the students' reading diaries. Prior to the intervention, the teacher received training on how to use the programme, and the researcher gave the teacher trainer enough guidance. Because there was only one experimental group and they were all trained by the same teacher trainer, there was little doubt that the various ways the ERST programme was administered may have had an impact on the study's findings.

5.2. Data Analysis. Following the identification and categorisation of two separate types of raw scores from the students' sample writing assessments, one-way ANCOVA was utilised to evaluate the outcomes of the quantitative data. One-way ANCOVA is frequently used to determine whether intervention had any discernible effects on the differences in dependent variables between two or more independent (unrelated) groups. Because it looks for differences in adjusted means (i.e., corrected for the covariate), it has the added benefit of statistically controlling a confounding variable, which is thought to affect the results. The interview data underwent a qualitative analysis and interpretation. The teacher trainer's interview was transcribed, coded, and analysed thematically to answer the second research question.

6. Results

6.1. Effects of Integrating ERST into the Writing Process on Writing Performance. This section addressed the following research topic and its accompanying null hypothesis:

RQ: Is there a statistically significant difference between the writing abilities of the experimental group and the control group after ERST integration?

Null hypothesis (H01): Integrating ERST into the writing process does not result in a statistically significant difference in the writing performance of the experimental group as compared with the control group.

A study of the descriptive findings revealed that the total student scores on the pre- and postintervention writing ability tests were normally distributed. Because the values vary between −2 and +2, one-way ANCOVA might be performed on them [22]. The test results for the treatment and control groups were similarly distributed according to their histograms, normal Q–Q plots, box plots, a Shapiro–Wilk's normality test ($p > 0.05$) [23], and a visual examination of their histograms.

Regarding the homogeneity of regression, the interaction was not significant, as $F(2, 58) = 1.91$, $p = 0.16$, that is, $p(0.16) > (0.05)$. The underlying assumption of homogeneity of variance for the one-way ANCOVA has also been met as $F(1, 59) = 0.16$, $p = 0.69$, that is, $p(0.69) > (.05)$. Therefore, the researcher ran a one-way ANCOVA with (a) the postintervention test as the dependent variable; (b) the control and the treatment groups as levels of the independent variable group; and (c) the preintervention test as the covariate. The S.P.S.S. statistical analysis programme version 28 was used to examine the data collected for this investigation.

The study's main hypothesis was that individuals who took the ERST in addition to the standard communicative English Language Skills II course would do better on writing tests than those who simply took the standard course. This was done to see if there was a statistically significant change in the posttest scores between the groups following the implementation of an ERST course for 8 weeks.

Table 2 shows the mean difference between the groups before the intervention. As displayed in Table 2, there is a mean difference between the control ($M = 5.30$; SD = 2.54) and the treatment group ($M = 5.85$; SD = 1.78) in writing performance. So, it was needed to control this difference to see the exact effect of an independent variable on the dependent variable after the intervention. For this reason, the current researcher has decided to use one-way ANCOVA as an analysis tool for research question three.

As it is clearly displayed in Table 3, there were 31 students in group 1 (the control group) and 32 students in

TABLE 2: Descriptive statistics for preintervention students' sample writing test.

Programme	M	SD	N
CG	5.30	2.54	31
TG	5.85	1.78	30
Total	5.57	2.20	61

TABLE 3: Descriptive statistics for postintervention students' sample writing test.

Group	Mean	SD	Total	
			N	%
Control group	6.2	1.5	31	100
Experimental group	7.1	1.3	30	100
Total	6.6	1.5	61	100

TABLE 4: Tests of between-subjects effects on students' sample writing test.

Source	Type III sum of sq.	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta sq.
Pretest	0.44	1	0.44	0.22	0.64	0.004
Group	10.88	1	10.88	5.44	0.02	0.09
Error	116.02	58	2.00			

group 2 (the experimental group). Table 3 shows the mean difference between the groups after the intervention. As displayed in Table 3, there is a significant mean difference between the experimental group ($M = 7.1$; SD = 1.3) and the control group ($M = 6.2$; SD = 1.5) in writing performance.

According to Table 4, the ANCOVA result depicts that there is a significant difference between the control and experimental groups after adjusting for the preintervention test. As it is indicated in Table 4, the covariate, the preintervention test, is insignificantly related to the writing performance of Wollega University students ($F(1, 58) = 0.22$, $p = 0.64$), while ERST (the intervention) has a significant impact on the writing performance of these students after controlling the effect of the preintervention test ($F(1, 58) = 5.44$, $p = 0.02$). In other words, following the intervention, students in the experimental group performed better in writing than those in the control group. As a consequence, the analyses' findings show that the present research's hypothesis was accepted because the p-value (0.02) is <0.05. This demonstrates that the intervention significantly affected the experimental group students at Wollega University's writing abilities.

The outcome in Table 4 also shows that there is about 9% effect size of ERST on posttest mean scores based on ETA squared. According to Sawilowsky [24], the impact size of the ERST was moderate, and this percentage shows that the student's writing performance has improved. The descriptive and inferential statistical statistics taken together confirm that there is a statistically significant difference in writing performance between the experimental and control groups. This demonstrates unequivocally that the intervention used in the experimental group in the EFL classroom improved

students' writing abilities, and it would seem acceptable to suggest that the null hypothesis is rejected.

6.2. Challenges in ER–Writing Integration for Students and Teacher Trainer. Results from the qualitative phase of the study allowed the researcher to understand how much integrating reading and writing skills in a classroom was challenging for both teachers and students for different reasons. For example, the interviewee started giving her ideas about the challenges she faced because of the education policy of the country, which does not include ER in the course content.

> I had to instruct the students by modifying extra lessons since the teaching policy of colleges in Ethiopia has not yet paid enough attention to ER, or reading for pleasure in classrooms, to be taken as a course.

The teacher trainer (interviewee) went on to elaborate on her argument by pointing out the time constraints she encountered as a result of these additional classes and problems resulting from inexperience.

> This technique, which demands students to blend ER procedures with writing, is new to both me and the students because it was utilised specifically in this programme. This tweak unwittingly gave me the impression that I was running out of time because I needed more time for preparation than before and was also unfamiliar with the approach.

The interviewee also discussed the difficulties that students had using this ground-breaking strategy for fusing writing and ER in the context of Ethiopian writing teaching.

> The difference between how writing was formerly taught to them as a distinct skill and how it is now incorporated with ER caused issues with the students at the beginning of the training. Since integrating these skills necessitates that they handle their work entirely autonomously, it is difficult to supervise students' ER in a way that will improve their writing ability. Students had trouble organising, supervising, and grading their work because of their lack of expertise.

She said that the students' inability to understand the reading materials because they were written in a foreign language (English) posed the largest challenge to the programme's implementation. She remarked:

> Even occasionally, students were hesitant to choose reading resources because the language was challenging to read and comprehend on its own. They acknowledged that because English is not their native tongue, reading and understanding are challenging for them. I got the impression that they were accepting the English language as a barrier to learning. Instead of attempting to use the language for various goals, they were terrified of it. And to help them towards the training objective, I had to put in a lot of time and work. (Year: 2022) (Jan. 30, 2022).

7. Discussion

7.1. Effects of ERST on the Writing Performance of the Students. In this study, the researcher investigated how Ethiopian undergraduate first-year university students' writing abilities were affected through integrating the ERST programme into the writing process. The SRSD model of strategy instruction by Harris and Graham [10] was modified by the researcher to create ERST, which was then constructed and tested with the goal of improving writing instruction and students' writing performance. In addition to LA and SSR, the ERST programme placed a special emphasis on comprehensive reading techniques such as cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies. Accordingly, the results of this study show that ERST significantly enhanced the writing performance of the experimental group. While some researchers have noted that the implementation of ER appears to be constrained in many higher education classrooms where English is a foreign language due to teachers' time commitments [25] and the scepticism of many educators towards "silent classrooms" [26], the findings are consistent with the findings of studies conducted by various scholars such as Hany [27], Shen [28], Yoshimura [29], De Rycker and Ponnudurai [30], Zainal and Husin [31], Al-Monsour and Al-Shorman [32], Salehi et al. [33], and Hamad and Abbasian

[34] are only a few of the authors who have addressed this issue. These studies found that ER had a positive effect on teaching English language generally and writing instruction specifically. Most importantly, the current research shows that adding ERST into improving writing performance is the right technique because it has encouraged students to willingly engage in correcting their writing concerns through ERSs, which has led to improved writing performance. This finding goes in line with Mermelstein's [21] finding, which demonstrated that the treatment group made more improvements than the control group in their writing performance because of ER.

The outcomes of the current experiment have been enhanced by the treatment group's utilisation of ERST components. These students first used cognitive abilities such as triggering prior knowledge, boosting word power, gathering information, organising thoughts, and sentence construction they had developed via ER. The ER excerpts that the students read gave them a good opportunity to observe how the main idea is developed across a paragraph and gave them a diversity of words to employ later in their work. In their study, Holmstron and Glengeninig [35] stressed the importance of reading for students to develop better writing abilities because they may come across different grammar rules when reading, which would later help them develop a grasp of language and grammatical structures and increase their vocabulary. Second, the students have effectively organised their written information (paragraphs) using metacognitive techniques including planning, monitoring, and assessment. As part of their training, they have first thought through how they will come up with ideas and then utilised their monitoring experience to check their paragraph. The study by Ramadhanti and Yanda [36] is in line with the current finding because it demonstrates that lecturers can increase students' metacognitive awareness by teaching writing using a cognitive process approach to increase metacognitive knowledge. Overall, the findings suggest that incorporating a cognitive process approach in teaching writing can significantly contribute to enhancing students' metacognitive awareness and ultimately improve their writing proficiency.

The affective strategy training also focused on building students' confidence and motivation through goal setting and self-reflection. This allowed students to set realistic goals for themselves and track their progress, which further enhanced their writing skills. The knowledge students gained throughout affective strategy training, which helped them adopt a positive perspective on learning via effort, was also helpful in helping students' writing abilities. Mostafavi and Vahdany's [37] observation is also congruent with this study in that emotional strategies assist language learners in increasing their skills in EFL learning while also enabling them to become independent and conscious of the best ways to study. These findings demonstrate the close relationship between ER reading and writing in the teaching and learning of EFL. As a result, reading and writing are mutually reinforcing abilities in the EFL classroom, supporting the argument that they should be taught together [28]. Al-Monsour and Al-Shorman [32] also confirm that incorporating ER programmes into writing education is an excellent way to improve students' performance and provide them with a

fulfilling academic experience. Therefore, the current study seems to suggest that combining writing with ERSs in the EFL classroom plays a significant role in assisting students in becoming proficient lifelong readers and writers.

7.2. Challenges Teacher Trainer and Students Face during ER–Writing Integration. The findings indicated that integrating reading and writing skills in a classroom was challenging for both teachers and students for different reasons. One reason, as stated in the findings, for the challenges the trainer interviewee faced was that the education policy of the country does not include ER in the course content. In agreement with this, Akmal et al. [38] assert that the integrated language skills teaching technique may be impeded by a few issues, like educational policy, despite its huge potential and advantages. Plakans [39] also points out that a significant impediment to high-quality development may exist for the integrated skills approach's growing worldwide applicability. Therefore, teachers must have a sufficient understanding of the issue and devote enough time to lesson preparation because it is a crucial component of implementing the integrating skills method in the classroom. The other significant challenges were the paucity of facilities and the absence of emergency response (ER) from the Ethiopian higher institutions. The findings of Pardede [40], which mention that schools have the capacity to impede the integration of implementation techniques and approaches connected to climate, policy, and equipment, are consistent with this conclusion. Therefore, it is undeniable that institutions of higherlearning, like universities, are expected to offer a working learning environment as a sign of their strong institutional support.

The results also demonstrated that because the students were not familiar with the explicit integrated technique for teaching reading and writing abilities, they themselves experienced difficulty. Despite participants' statements that they were combining reading and writing teaching, [41] argued in their related study that their indicated practises revealed a poor knowledge of what it meant to integrate literacy education. There was therefore a discrepancy between how writing was formerly taught to pupils as a distinct skill and how it is now incorporated with ER. Even on rare occasions, some students were reluctant to select the reading materials because they found the titles in the English language difficult to read and understand. In a similar vein, Masduqi [42] finds that pupils did not want to study textbooks while knowing the need of doing so. The students' inadequate prior knowledge, their difficulties comprehending the reading materials, and the challenging organisation of the textbooks are all contributing factors to their lack of interest. Therefore, it is essential for educators to come up with new strategies for getting children interested in reading while also making the content more accessible.

8. Conclusions

This study looked at ER writing proficiency in English. The results showed that improving the writing performance of EFL undergraduate students at Ethiopian University may be accomplished by teaching writing skills in an ER environment. For the majority of the participants, the training was successful in cultivating positive attitudes towards their responsibilities in their learning and showing improvements in their writing abilities. Students have the opportunity to read and write freely, in their own time, at their own speed, and without the direct supervision of their teachers when writing is taught through ERST. As a consequence, the researcher believes that teaching writing through ERST can help students become independent readers and writers. This condition then aids students in determining what they want to learn, how they want to learn it, and where they want to study it. The findings also demonstrated a strong link between writing performance and ERST. The time employed for this study was too short to fully understand the effects of ER, as it would require more opportunities to read more worthwhile reading materials during longer periods of commitment, which is a key drawback of our findings. A longer time frame would have allowed for the accumulation of more information and experience, which would have improved the students' performance.

9. Future Research

According to the study, the ERST training became more successful with each new session. How these courses improved students' writing abilities more than in the control class is a critical question. It would be beneficial to conduct a more in-depth study on learning processes and how they affect process and performance results. In the current study, the outcomes after 8 weeks were examined. A follow-up study should examine the effects of the ERST training over a longer period of time, the researcher advises. The researcher believes that because ER is so vast, it will be more useful for instructors to explore more methods that are appropriate to use ERST.

Data Availability

The data used to support the findings of this study are available upon request to the corresponding author.

Additional Points

Limitations. The small sample size of the current study may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations. The study also did not assess the long-term effects of ERST on writing abilities or explore potential differences in effectiveness based on individual student characteristics or learning styles. Future research should address these limitations to further understand the impact of ERST on writing skills and provide more comprehensive recommendations for incorporating this programme into writing courses.

Disclosure

The institution only needs the article published to allow the author to make the final defense of the original research.

Conflicts of Interest

Acknowledgments

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