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## **An Experimental Study in Cultivating Academic Writing of EFL University Students by RAFTS Strategy**

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### **Abstract**

Academic writing material considered necessary in higher education due to its vast implications in social and professional field. Therefore, several strategies have been supposed to master writing. The main problem of the research is that most students face difficulty in writing a paragraph such as: using various synonyms, describing persons, places, giving opinion... etc. These challenges make students unable to express their ideas in writing which hinders their creativity. In this respect, this study aimed to measure the effect of RAFTS Strategy on cultivating EFL students' academic writing at Tikrit University where 90 students were chosen from first stage in Department of English, College of Education for Women by using a target sampling method. The study lasted for two months in 2023-2024 Academic Year. The target group received instructions based on RAFTS Strategy, while the second group, which is called the control group received instructions traditionally. Based on the gathered data via post-test in writing, it was found out that the results of experimental group who was taught by following RAFTS Strategy higher than the results of the control group who was taught traditionally. This indicates

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that the target group outperformed the control group in terms of writing scores and the results of writing test that was administered to them. The results of this study may be useful for the stakeholders who run Academic Writing courses at universities.

**Keywords:** Academic Writing, Cultivating, EFL, Experimental Study, RAFTS Strategy.

## دراسة تجريبية في تنمية الكتابة الأكاديمية لدى طلاب الجامعات الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية

### لغة أجنبية باستخدام استراتيجية RAFTS

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#### المستخلص

تعتبر مادة الكتابة الأكاديمية ضرورية في التعليم العالي بسبب آثارها الواسعة في المجال الاجتماعي والمهني. لذلك، تم افتراض عدة استراتيجيات لإتقان الكتابة. المشكلة الرئيسية للبحث هي أن معظم الطلاب يواجهون صعوبة في كتابة فقرة مثل: استخدام مرادفات مختلفة، ووصف الأشخاص والأماكن وإبداء الرأي ... إلخ. هذه التحديات تجعل الطلاب غير قادرين على التعبير عن أفكارهم في الكتابة مما يعيق إبداعهم. وفي هذا الصدد، هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى قياس تأثير استراتيجية RAFTS في تنمية الكتابة الأكاديمية لطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية في جامعة تكريت حيث تم اختيار 90 طالباً من المرحلة الأولى في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية للبنات باستخدام أسلوب العينة المستهدفة. استمرت الدراسة لمدة شهرين في العام الدراسي 2023-2024. تلقت المجموعة المستهدفة تعليمات بناءً على استراتيجية RAFTS، بينما تلقت المجموعة الثانية، والتي تسمى مجموعة التحكم، تعليمات تقليدية. بناءً على البيانات التي تم جمعها عن طريق الاختبار البعدي في الكتابة، وجد أن نتائج المجموعة التجريبية التي تم تدريسها باتباع استراتيجية RAFTS أعلى من نتائج مجموعة التحكم التي تم تدريسها تقليدياً. وهذا يشير إلى أن المجموعة المستهدفة تفوقت على المجموعة الضابطة من حيث درجات الكتابة ونتائج اختبار الكتابة الذي تم إجراؤه لهم. وقد تكون نتائج هذه الدراسة مفيدة لأصحاب المصلحة الذين يديرون دورات الكتابة الأكاديمية في الجامعات.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** استراتيجية RAFTS، الكتابة الأكاديمية، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، تنمية، دراسة تجريبية

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Writing is considered as a means for learning new language and is regarded a fundamental category of foreign language learning, i.e., it is a key productive capacity for EFL students, as it is crucial to achieving academic success within learning settings. Increased competency in the English language requires extensive instruction, profound understanding, and significant mastery of the desired vocabulary (Aajami, 2018a).

Belcher & Braine (1995) claim that the improvement of the writing skills of students in second language has been an important goal in higher education. Writing in a precise and efficient way is an essential barrier, in particular for English as Foreign Language learners. Hence, guiding students on choosing the suitable vocabulary and using Precise meanings of each word boost their writing skill (Aajami, 2018b). Five capabilities must be mastered in academic writing. At first, students have an important level organizational competence, making sure that the ideas in their writing are obviously comprehensible. Second, students display high accuracy in writing by concentrating technical terms in order to prevent misunderstanding of their thoughts. Third, students as writers have to control the grammatical use to make sure successful exchange of information. Additionally, the author should have an extensive vocabulary within the subject's field, and afterwards students as writers must combine these skills in order to cultivate a style that suitable for the reader and particular contexts (Murray and Christison 2011).

Salman & Badie (2024) assert that using advanced techniques in the classroom has an important effect on EFL students' English proficiency. Students at University of Tikrit learn English for a specific academic purpose to achieve the educational requirements. Consequently, students have to show competency in the writing process, particularly its components and features such as formality, objectivity, and complexity while using language adequately. Furthermore, students need to learn how to pick the suitable vocabulary and exploit the precise meaning of word to further develop their performance in writing.

Taylor (2009) argues that academic writing process consider the role of the writer, the content, the reader and the typical form of language that is commonly employed. Writing for academic purposes, the writer has to recognize that it adheres and follows to a well-organize, formal, and objective framework using terminology which is frequently abstract and intricate.

In an academic writing process, a writer is required to provide reasons and evidence that reinforce the ideas conveyed. As a result, the writer must deliver his ideas in clear and acceptable language for the audience. Recently, the researcher has noticed through teaching the academic writing course that most students face difficulty in writing a paragraph such as: using various synonyms, describing persons, places, giving opinion... etc. These challenges make students unable to express their ideas in writing which hinders their creativity. Writing a composition needs the proficiency to use appropriate vocabularies to form purposeful and meaningful sentences as well, the ability to use suitable conjunctions to link ideas, in addition to utilize correct punctuation marks.

This study aims at finding out the effect of RAFTS strategy on cultivating EFL students' academic writing.

The present study posits that there are no significant variations among the mean values of the group participating in the experimental group, instructed in academic writing employing RAFTS strategy and the mean of the control group which is taught using the conventional method in posttest. The research is restricted to First year students in the Department of English, Colleague of Education for Women, University of Tikrit in Iraq. The study has been carried out in the academic year 2023-2024. It was confined to instructing according to the textbook titled (Academic Writing), the students are taught the first five chapters from the book in the first semester of the study.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Academic Writing**

Literature Reviews reveal that there are many definitions of the term academic writing from different perspectives. (Bailey, 2011) defines it as a way of communication wherein writers try to convey their ideas clearly and concisely, supported by evidence to support for their views. It requires logical thinking, formal style, and adherence to particular citation and formatting rules. Stella Cottrell (2019) describes academic writing as "the process of presenting ideas in a coherent, well-organized, and formal manner to communicate effectively within an academic context". It highlights the analysis, synthesis, and judgement of information. Murray and Hughes (2008) characterize academic writing as planned, based on evidence writing that exhibits a critical comprehension of the subject matter". It needs suitable citation and proper language. According to Jordan (1999) academic writing includes the utilization of rational argumentation, well-organized paragraphs, and reliable sources for supporting ideas. The goal is to improve the academic discussion.

University of Leeds (2019) claims that academic writing is a comprehensible and formal written statement of an individual's own evidence-based opinions on an area of study, subject or problem. Consequently, it is a coherent and formal written expression of one's own evidence-based opinions regarding a given subject matter or problem mainly aimed at presenting an equitable comprehension of that problem or subject. In addition, academic writing is impersonal, focused, objective, precise, respective, lucid, comprehensive, engaging and adheres to rules within its specific domain (Hyland & Jiang, 2017, Lachowicz, 1981, Lowe & Willey, 2018 and Lin-Siegler, 2017). Since, the purpose is to convey one's point of view to the reader, the primary goal must be to provide clarity in how one wants to be viewed. Therefore, the work has to demonstrate clarity of language, breadth, coherence and depth within the appropriate discipline, topic or subject context (Gabi 2022).

Li (2007) assumes that writers' contexts should identify issues or concepts about the identifications and spread of English as 2L environments in relation to the application of

successful instructional strategies for teaching academic writing. Abdulkareem (2013) argues that academic writing plays essential role in acquiring a FL. The EFL learners have to know the writing steps, its constituent parts, and characteristics like complexity, formality, and objectivity while using the language carefully and distinctly.

The key characteristics and features of academic writing have been identified according to the literature of The University of Southern California (2019) and The University of Leeds (2019) as following: Use formal tone: adhere to standard conventions within the field, refrain using slang or colloquial expression, avoid abbreviations or contractions and arrange the work in appropriate formed paragraphs. Evidence-based: support all claims with evidence, integrate important research findings, provide practical examples, also, employ theoretical or conceptual propositions, and incorporate relevant materials, whether published and unpublished. Depth and breadth: To show your depth, carefully discuss your ideas or examine your arguments in detail, including questioning widely held assumptions and notions. For breadth, consider all key counterarguments to your own and support these with evidence as well, including various forms and sources, present fair perspectives, even those with which you may not personally occurs. Supportable conclusions: any analyzed argument must possess a conclusion, what is the conclusion for each argument? you have considered multiple perspectives on the argument, you have employed different sources to support different perspectives. Clarity of meaning: simple, easy-to-understand language need to be used for the field, provide operational definitions of key terms of the piece of writing, employ technical terms from time to time, always describe, explain, expand, conclude, and be concise. Focused: each element of the writing must meaningfully contribute towards addressing the question, refrain from incorporating material only due to it excites you, every component of the work must explain its diversity by clearly relating to the core purpose of the writing. Sustained: every argument is sufficiently developed and concluded or closed before moving on to the next, and follow balanced manner. Cohesion of written thought: be sure that there is harmony within and between your paragraphs and exchanging between points must be logical. Grounded in the discipline or topic: all content must be consistent with the discipline, inferences must be compatible with the discipline and ensure meanings in your writing are consistent with disciplinary meanings. Originality: the work must be original and your own, the work must be one's original effort, draw your own insights, present your own arguments, write your own examples, make your own inferences, and reach your own conclusions.

Hameed (2024) mentions that most of the students face difficulties in writing and these difficulties due to the low creativity. Therefore, it can be concluded that the writing as described by D. Zemach and C. Islam is a way of expressing thoughts and ideas in a systematic and organized manner, stressing clarity, coherence, and appropriate paragraph

development. From their perspective, effective writing necessitates planning, drafting, rewriting, and refining to express meaning to an intended audience effectively.

## **2.2 RAFTS Strategy**

RAFTS strategy is an abbreviation reflecting of R (Role of the writer), A (Audience to whom the work is designed), F (Format of the work being produced), and T (Topic of the work). RAFTS strategy facilitates students grasping how they work and their role as writers, identifying their audience they address, distinguishing various writing genres and comprehending the topic they are addressing. Moreover, it fosters creative writing among students urging them to think about an issues and topics through various points of view, customized to a particular audience and delivered in different formats. Furthermore, the RAFTS strategy offers students the opportunity to grow their innovative abilities and explore their imagination of what they want to do in accordance their creativity (Seliem et. al., 2020).

Groenke & Puckett (2016) state that the RAFTS strategy enables the incorporation of previous knowledge with new knowledge while prompting innovation during structured writing task. This strategy allows students to show their topic knowledge and proficiency in using content terms, while constructing an idea and substantiating it with facts. Lindawaty & Clarry (2014) reveal that RAFTS strategy increased students' writing performance and reinforced their value as writers through raising their recognition of how the topic affect the format of their readers.

The RAFTS strategy is adoptable strategy suitable to developing jigsaw, sense-making activities, summative assessments or homework tasks. It serves as a basis to generate differentiated performance tasks and was created in order conceived to assist educators in considering and organizing different types of writing, with specific goals for understanding, comprehension and developing of skill in writing assignment (Santa 1992). It requires composing beyond a perspective different from that of a student, targeting an audience other than the teachers, and employing a structure that differs from traditional tasks or oral responses to questions (Buehl 2014).

According to Parilasanti (2014) the RAFTS strategy is a guided writing method that could be used in writing teaching to further develop students' writing proficiency. This strategy assists students in grasping the role they play as writers, the audience they involve, the various writing genera, and what topic they are discussing. To engage in RAFTS writing, students have to evaluate adopting new perspective, align the audience and that role, design suitable framework, and tackle specified topics from the source material. It can easily apply in any field of study with similarly successful outcomes. It is suitable for assessment, presentation in class, or as an innovative replay to facts.

The procedures of teaching based on RAFTS include the following steps as mention by (Seliem et. al., 2020).

First step: Prewriting: present the topic to students and clarify the RAFTS strategy, assist students brainstorm and select their (Role, Audience, Format, and Topic) and make them arrange their ideas and thoughts before writing.

Second step: Writing: let students start writing relay on their selected RAFTS elements, encouraged them to enhance their ideas innovatively while keep clearness, in this phase teachers monitor students' progression and provide feedback.

Third step: Revising and Editing: in this stage students review their drafts to enhance their writing, vocabularies, and coherence of the text Where they check whether there are mistakes in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Fourth step: Sharing: in the last stage students present their writing, for example sharing with their class this will help them comprehend the effect of their writing on an audience and boosts their self-confidence.

At the same manner Buehl (2013) discuss using RAFTS strategy in six steps as follows:

- Offer each elements of the RAFT strategy to the students.
- Identify the significant notions, concept, ideas, or information from the reading task so that determine the topic of the task.
- Produce an idea about potential roles class members could suppose in their writing. This will set the role for the task.
- Then make the students identify the audience for the writing.
- Now decide the format writing will take.
- Provide authentic examples for a particular RAFTS project for students to consult while they plan their writing.

Sisalima & Sánchez (2023) outlined the advantages of the RAFTS strategy in educational setting; they said 1) it improve student motivation since it engages students, making them more motivated to complete writing tasks. It offers opportunities and allows them to explore different point of views. 2) Improved Writing Structure: where students get a clear steps and framework for writing, helping them comprehend their task effectively. 3) Enhancement of critical thinking skills: as RAFTS helps students to imagine different roles. 4) Increased engagement and interest: because of the flexibility of the RAFTS, allows students to select their topics, this will interest them and making learning fun. 5) Better Writing Performance: it improves students' ability to write

through enhancing their grammar patterns, vocabulary, and their style in writing. 6) Encourages Focus and Organization: through defining the major elements (Role, Audience, Format, and Topic), this make students maintain focused on the task and better organize their ideas. 7) Positive Classroom Environment: the RAFTS strategy allows students to express their ideas freely in a non-threatening environment as well as it serves as motivator to encourage collaborative learning and discussion in classes.

## **2.3 Related Previous Studies**

### **2.3.1 Nasser (2018)**

Iraqi EFL Students' Difficulties in Writing Composition: An Experimental Study (University of Baghdad). The study aimed to First: diagnose the difficulties faced by Iraqi EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students in writing compositions, particularly in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and handwriting. Second: identify strategies in order to assist learners boost their skills in writing, such as constructing meaningful sentences, using conjunctions, and organizing ideas. The study included 30 female first-year EFL students from the Department of English, College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad, during the 2017/2018 academic year. The tools for Data Collection was Pre-test and Post-test: The pre-test assessed students' basic writing abilities and identified their challenges, While the post-test measured improvement after targeted teaching interventions. The major results include: Students demonstrated significant progress in grammar, punctuation, and spelling, as shown by higher post-test scores. Handwriting errors and spelling mistakes decreased. Techniques like group work, visual aids, and regular feedback contributed to better sentence construction, idea organization, and use of appropriate grammar. Students gained confidence in writing and organizing ideas, resulting in clear and accurate written paragraphs.

### **2.3.2 Seliem, Mohamed, & Ali (2020)**

The Effect of RAFT Strategy on Developing EFL Creative Writing Skills for the Third Year Governmental Language Preparatory School Students. The study aimed to develop the creative writing skills of Egyptian third-year governmental language preparatory school students in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) through the use of the RAFT (Role, Audience, Format, Topic) strategy. The study involved 80 students randomly selected and divided into two groups: An experimental group trained using the RAFT strategy and control group taught through regular instruction. The tools for Data Collection involved Pre- and post-tests in order to measure EFL creative writing skills, which assessed various aspects such as fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. The other tool was scoring scale designed to evaluate students' creative writing performance. The main results of this study are: The experimental group demonstrated substantial improvement in creative writing skills compared to the control group, as



shown by statistically significant differences in post-test scores. The RAFT strategy had a large effect size on enhancing creative writing skills. As well as the strategy motivated students to write creatively, organize ideas effectively, and think critically about their audience and purpose.

### **2.3.3 Discussion of Previews Studies**

One of the previous studies dealt with RAFTS strategy while the other study deals with difficulties in writing composition. Both of these studies address ways to develop creative writing skills. As a results, it is predictable in these two studies there are a number of differences in aims, tools, sample and findings. The goal is to recognize the similarities as well as differences in the required procedures assumed, collecting data and the results found. The current study aims to uncover the impact of RAFTS strategy in cultivating academic writing on EFL university students in academic year 2023-2024. The present study differ from those two previous studies in terms of the sample includes 90 EFL first-grade students from the Department of English, College of Education for Women, Tikrit University, during the 2023-2024 academic year and the other difference lies in the procedures followed in submitting the RAFTS strategy in the lectures.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

This study is a quantitative one where a posttest design is applied as a measuring instrument to comprehend all aspects of the phenomena and in order to know the students' development before and after the treatment in relation to the impact of RAFTS strategy on cultivating an academic writing among first-grade students from the Department of English, College of Education for Women, Tikrit University, during the 2023-2024 academic year. The measuring instrument is a test and to discover the results, the post-test instruction is employed. The test has been constructed based on the writing Criteria (Relevance, Clarity and Organization, Accuracy and Depth of Content, Grammar, Spelling, and Style) to measure differences among the participants in the two groups. An achievement posttest has five questions that focuses on the components of the RAFTS strategy in relation to behavioral objectives and the criteria of writing as shown in table (1) below:

**Table (1):**

**Specification of the Description of RAFTS, Description, Behavioral Objectives, Criteria and the Criteria of the Post Test**

Components of RAFTS	Description	Examples	Behavioral objectives	Criteria	Percentage
<b>Role (R)</b>	Defines the perspective or role the student assumes	Student, Scientist, Journalist, Historian, Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstrate the ability to adopt different perspectives (e.g., writing from the viewpoint of a historical figure, scientist, or fictional character).</li> <li>- Analyze the needs and expectations of different audiences to tailor messages appropriately.</li> <li>- Apply reasoning to organize thoughts based on a given role and context.</li> </ul>	Relevance to Role and Audience	20%
<b>Audience (A)</b>	Identifies the intended audience for the response	Classmates, Parents, General Public, Experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Construct clear and coherent messages in various formats (e.g., letters, reports, speeches).</li> <li>- Use appropriate tone, style, and vocabulary based on the chosen role and audience.</li> <li>- Develop persuasive, informative, or descriptive content depending on the writing goal.</li> </ul>	Clarity and Organization of Format	20%
<b>Format (F)</b>	Specifies the format of the response.	Essay, Letter, Report, Speech, Infographic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage imaginative thinking by exploring different roles and contexts.</li> <li>- Demonstrate originality in presenting ideas through varied writing formats.</li> <li>- Engage the audience through compelling storytelling or argumentation.</li> </ul>	Accuracy and Depth of Content	30%
<b>Topic (T)</b>	Indicates the subject or theme to be addressed.	Climate Change, Historical Events, Scientific Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organize ideas logically and coherently using the RAFTS framework.</li> <li>- Follow conventions specific to different formats (e.g., essay structure, formal letter format).</li> <li>- Provide clear introductions, supporting details, and conclusions.</li> </ul>	Effective Use of Strong Verbs	15%
<b>Strong Verb (S)</b>	Describes the intended purpose or action.	Explain, Persuade, Compare, Justify, Describe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Apply knowledge from different subjects (history, science, literature) in writing tasks.</li> <li>- Show the ability to connect academic content with real-world applications.</li> <li>- Demonstrate self-reflection skills to enhance writing quality</li> </ul>	Grammar, Spelling, and Style	15%

The follow-up test has been delivered to a committee of experts in the field of ELT and ling., to confirm the validity of the study's tool, they accepted 98% of the items of the test. An analysis of the test item reliability was determined through the reliability coefficient test through utilizing the statistical package for the Social Science Program (SPSS). The acceptable value of Crombach Alpha is 0.787 which shows acceptable consistency of reliability. After teaching the students RAFTS strategy, the reliable of the study test is administered to the intended groups of students, after being valid. The

researcher follows the following steps in teaching RAFT strategy in the classroom to cultivate an academic writing of students as shown in table (2) below:

**Table (2):**

**Blueprint of the RAFTS strategy**

Steps	Major areas	Components	Minor areas
1.	Choose a Sample RAFT Prompt	Role	Environmental Scientist
		Audience	Local Community Members
		Format	Persuasive Speech
		Topic	Reducing Plastic Waste
		Strong verb	Such as: Convince, Explain, Inform, or Propose
2.	Discuss Key Elements with the Class	Role	- Who is writing? (An environmental scientist—someone knowledgeable and concerned about sustainability.) - What tone should they adopt? (Formal, persuasive, and informative.)
		Audience	- Who will be reading or listening? (Community members—people who may not be experts but are interested in their local environment.) - What information might appeal to them? (Practical tips, local impact, and benefits.)
		Format	- How should the information be presented? (Speech format—clear, engaging, and persuasive with strong calls to action.)
		Topic	- What is the focus? (Encouraging people to reduce plastic use through personal and community efforts.)
		Strong verb	- What is the type of topic? (Convince, Explain, Inform, or Propose)
3.	Model a Written Response	Role, Audience, Format, Topic, and Strong verb	<b>Title:</b> <i>A Greener Future: Reducing Plastic Waste in Our Community</i>  <i>Good evening, everyone. My name is Dr. Jane Carter, and I'm here today to talk about a growing issue that affects us all—plastic waste. Every year, our town generates over 500 tons of plastic waste, much of which ends up in our rivers and parks. But together, we can change this. By making small changes, such as using reusable bags and bottles, we can significantly cut down on our plastic consumption. Businesses in our community can also switch to biodegradable packaging, reducing pollution and creating a healthier environment for our children. I urge each of you to take action. Say no to single-use plastics and support local policies that promote sustainability. Our choices today will shape the future of our community. Let's work together for a cleaner, greener tomorrow!</i>
4.	Analyze the Response with the Class	Role, Audience, Format, Topic, and Strong verb	Discuss the following questions: 1. Did the response effectively take on the "Role" of an environmental scientist? 2. Was the "Audience" considered with accessible language and relevant concerns? 3. Did the "Format" align with persuasive speech techniques (e.g., call to action, emotional appeal)? 4. Was the "Topic" well addressed with supporting facts and encouragement?
5.	Encourage Students to Practice	Role, Audience, Format, Topic, and Strong verb	- Have students choose a new RAFT prompt and write their own responses. - Provide feedback focusing on how well they incorporate the four RAFT elements.

The blueprint above illustrates the procedures that the researcher offers in the class to facilitate RAFT prompts and make it familiar and clear for the students. Additionally, the researcher provides many opportunities for students to practice on RAFT prompts through suggesting several tasks such as:

Task1: As an environmental scientist, write a report to government officials proposing practical solutions to reduce plastic waste in your community.

Task2: As a news reporter, write an article informing the public about the impact of social media on teenagers' mental health.

Task3: As a student, deliver a speech to convince your classmates to adopt healthier eating habits.

Task4: As a historian, write an exhibit description explaining the major causes of World War II for museum visitors.

#### **4. DATA ANALYSIS**

After the data collected from the responses to the posttest items, the collected data is analyzed by the SPSS Program aiming to answer the hypothesis of the research quantitatively.

##### **4.1 Analysis of Results & Discussion**

This research seeks to determine the influence of RAFTS strategy on cultivating EFL students' academic writing. This aim is verified, as the statistical analysis using a t-test for two distinct groups indicates that the average scores of the control group is (76. 12) with an average deviation of (13. 35) with the average scores of the experimental group is (81. 29) with an average deviation of (12.54). The t-test formula for two independent groups has been used, to find out differences between the mean scores of the two groups. The calculated t-value is (4.05) above the tabulated t-test value which is (2.00) at the significance level of (0.05) and "a degree of freedom" of (88). This indicates that significant variations exist across the E and C group, favoring the experimental group. This result reveals that the students have achieved significant findings towards learning English as shown in table (3):

**Table (3):**

##### **The Experimental and Control Groups performance in the Post Test**

Croups	NO.	Mean	Stand	T-value		D.F	L.S
				Computed t-value	Tabulated t-value		
Experimental	45	81. 29	12.54	4.05	2.00	88	0.05
Control	45	76. 12	13. 35				

## Discussion

The statistical analysis of the collected data reveals that the achievement of the experimental group is notably better than control group. This indicates that RAFTS strategy has an effect on cultivating EFL students' academic writing. The results of the current study are consistent with the results of the study of Seliem, Mohamed, & Ali (2020) despite the difference in the sample. Honestly, this effect is due to many reasons one of them is that RAFTS strategy facilitates the process of learning academic writing in term of writing a comprehensible and formal written statement. This agrees with University of Leeds (2019) opinion referred to in the theoretical background.

Another reason that led to the experimental group's progress is that RAFTS strategy enables the incorporation of previous knowledge with new knowledge while prompting innovation during structured writing task. As well as this strategy allows students to show their topic knowledge and proficiency in using content terms, while constructing an idea and substantiating it with facts. This agrees with Groenke & Puckett (2016) as mentioned in the theoretical framework.

It is worth pointing that the current study has verified the stated hypotheses and achieved its aim through finding out positive effect of that strategy on cultivating EFL students' academic writing.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The objective of the present research is to cultivate the skills of an academic writing during application the RAFTS strategy on EFL university students in academic year 2023-2024. According to the students' performance, the comparison between posttest results of two groups showed that there is a significant difference after applying the RAFTS strategy on academic writing texts where they had a positive improvement in their knowledge of vocabulary, grammar patterns related to writing correct texts. The researcher found out that RAFTS strategy enhanced students to write better academic texts and various topics from several perspectives to specific audience. As it learned students to arrange their ideas and keeping the attention. Academic writing often emphasizes on illustrate arguments, evidence, clarity, accuracy and following a structured format. Therefore, the students became able to utilize the language to deliver their ideas and communicating via written text.



The RAFTS strategy as a versatile instrument in learning English lessons, but its application may show several obstacles and challenges for both teachers as well as students. Some of these difficulties faced the researcher during the application RAFTS strategy were: the researcher has to prepare and design prompts that align with diverse skill levels to ensure that all students are challenged in the same degree. Another obstacle is assessment complexity where evaluating a large number of student responses, from various perspectives, might complicate the assessment process. Therefore, clear, consistent criteria must be set to assess different responses.

On the other hand, there are challenges faced students which is divided into two poles; first students might suffer to comprehend the concept of writing from a different perspective when they play various roles different from their own, which is central to the RAFTS strategy. Also students may need guidance to select suitable formats that deliver their message and fit the audience and role. All these barriers can be challenging without adequate support from the side of their teachers. To address these challenges, it is important to offer examples, provide clear instructions, and guide students through the process. Continuous feedback as well as offering many practices can assist students to become more proficient with this technique.

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