

Quality of Writing in EFL University Students' Descriptive Essays

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Content Negotiations English Language Meaning Methods Descriptive Articles Writing Quality	Writing, as a productive skill, is multidimensional. When EFL students have qualified written language, they will be able to convey their ideas and express themselves effectively. The quality of writing: complexity, accuracy and fluency play a significant role in the language of EFL students. It promotes their different linguistic knowledge which enriches the foreign language learning process. The present study aims at identifying and comparing: 1. The quality of writing the descriptive composition for EFL university students at the colleges of education in the two universities: Tikrit and Samarra. 2. The quality of writing descriptive composition in the light of the three principal dimensions: A. Complexity, B. Accuracy, C. Fluency. The participants are 185 undergraduate EFL students, in the third year English Departments, Colleges of Education, Universities of Tikrit, and Samarra. The study is conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2021-2022. The data have been gathered by using a diagnostic test to assess students' quality of writing: complexity, accuracy and fluency in writing descriptive essays. The results of the study reveal that EFL university students have a low quality of writing.
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1. Statements of the Problem:

Writing in English is considered the most difficult skill because of its complexity in syntactic, semantic, morphological and phonological aspects. Rao (2017: 62) says, “Learning to write in a first language, second language or foreign language seems to be the most difficult skill for language learners to acquire in academic contexts”. “Writing is a complex process that involves the mastery of multiple skills that contribute to the overall difficulty of writing for any language user” (Ibid).

In the same vein, “learning to write in either first or second language is one of the most difficult tasks students encounter and one that few students can be said to fully master”. Writing is known to present a fairly challenging task for both teachers and learners (Richards, 2008: 87). One of the main problems among students is the fact that many of them cannot develop their writing skills, mostly the ones who are making compositions in a foreign language.

In other words, the majority of learners still struggle with one or more aspects of writing, achieving only a basic or below level of performance (Neumann 2014:85) They typically produce sentences that are less syntactically complex, contain more grammatical errors, are shorter, have higher percentages of capitalization and spelling errors, and mostly are lower in overall quality than those of skilled native writers (Graham and Harris 2005:68).

Hapsari (2011: 42) argues that writing is generally known as the most difficult of the four skills. The difficulty is seen in generating and organizing ideas and the mastery of the different aspects of writing such as grammar, spelling, word choice, punctuation, and so on.

The quality of writing is not simply restricted to the learning of linguistic items and gaining mastery over different dimensions of performance. In essence, the way people produce language in both oral and written forms may have been affected by different factors (Nosratinia, Abbasi, & Zaker, 2015:21)

Researchers in the area of second/foreign language learning (Ellis, 2003; Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Skehan) are now in agreement that FL proficiency, in general, and writing proficiency, in particular, are multicomponential in nature, and that their principal dimensions can be adequately, and comprehensively, captured by the notions of complexity, accuracy and fluency (henceforth: CAF) (Housen & Kuiken, 2009: 467).

The current study conducts an in-depth analysis on English language learners' performance through an objective assessment to state the quality of writing according to three main dimensions: CAF by using Larsen-Freeman model.

2. Aims of the Study:

The study aims at identifying and comparing:

1. The quality of writing the descriptive composition for EFL university students at the colleges of education in the two universities: Tikrit and Samarra.

2. The quality of writing descriptive composition in the light of the three principal dimensions: A. Complexity, B. Accuracy, C. Fluency.

3. Hypotheses of the Study:

It is hypothesized that:

1. There are statistically significant differences among the EFL university students' quality of writing the descriptive composition at the two universities; Tikrit and Samarra.
2. There are statistically significant differences among the EFL university students' quality of writing the descriptive compositions at the two universities; Tikrit and Samarra in the light of the three principals: A. Complexity, B. Accuracy, C. Fluency

4. Limits of the Study:

The current study is limited to third year EFL university students, Colleges of Education at Tikrit and Samarra Universities during the academic year 2021- 2022. It is limited to EFL university students' writing of descriptive and narrative compositions.

5. The Model of the Study:

To analyze the students' written performance, T-Units are first measured and the indices for CAF are computed as follows:

T-Unit: "A T-Unit is an independent clause and any associated dependent clauses, that is, clauses that are attached to or embedded within it."

Flu: "Average number of words per T-unit".

Comp: "Average number of clauses per T-unit".

Accu: "The proportion of error-free T-units to T-Units" (Larsen-Freeman, 2006:597).

6. The Nature of Writing:

Writing is one of the four basic skills in language learning. As Archibald (2001: 156) states that writing is a multidimensional skill that requires knowledge and skills to perform it effectively. This represents the result of the exchange of knowledge, experience and cognitive aspects of the author's work. Therefore, it is considered as a complex skill.

Writing is seen as an act of typing letters and characters on different materials such as paper, wood and under the purpose of recording the thoughts and ideas. (Hyland, 2004:4). It includes encoding of a message of some kind that people are able to translate their thoughts into written language. (Harmer, 2006:31)

The process of writing is taught in both public schools and colleges for the sake of developing individual learners which may help them in their roles in society and to improve their skills in the work place for the future, besides, it is a major cognitive challenge since it is considered as a test of memory, language, and thinking ability (Atwell,1987: 10)

From the four language skills, writing is categorized as one of the productive skills along with speaking since they involve producing language rather than receiving it. These two skills are basically different in various ways. The differences lie on a number of dimensions including textual, features, socio-cultural norm, pattern of use and cognitive process (Ibid).

Writing is slightly different from speaking in term of communication context. Speaking is always intended for face-to-face communication among the audience present, while writing is always used by the writers to express and communicate their ideas to the readers who are actually separated by both time and space distances (Raimes, 1994:35)

Therefore, it requires clearer and more comprehensive message. In other words, when people communicate orally, they can use various types of prosodic features such as pitch, rhythm, pauses that enable them to get feedbacks from the listeners. In contrast, those features of speaking do not exist in writing because the communication context is created by the words alone without having direct interaction between the writer and the reader. The differences between speaking and writing can also be seen from the language characteristics. Permanence, production time, distance, orthography, complexity, vocabulary, and formality are some characteristics that differentiate written language from spoken language (Brown: 1994:123).

Here are list of the characteristics that differentiae written language from spoken language as stated by Brown (2007:397-398):

A. Permanence: Oral language is transitory and must be processed in real time, while written language is permanent and can be read and reread as often as one likes.

B. Production time: Writers generally have more time to plan, review, and revise their words before they are finalized, while speakers must plan, formulate and deliver their utterances within a few moments if they are to maintain a conversation.

C. Style: Distance between the writer and the reader in both time and space, which eliminates much of the shared context that is present between speaker and listener in ordinary face-to-face contact thus necessities greater explicitness on the part of the writer.

D. Orthography: It carries limited amount of information compared to the richness of devices available to speakers to enhance a message (e.g., stress, intonation, pitch, volume, pausing, etc).

E. Complexity: Writing tends to have characteristics of longer clauses and more subordinators, while spoken language tends to have shorter clauses connected by coordinators, as well as more redundancy (e.g., repetition of nouns and verbs).

F. Formality: Because of the social and cultural uses to which writing is ordinarily put, writing tends to be more formal than speaking.

G. Vocabulary: Written texts tend to contain a wider variety of words, and more lower-frequency words, than oral texts (Ibid).

6.2. Process of Writing:

Richards and Rodgers (2001:97-98) state that the process of teaching writing consists of four basic stages. They are planning, drafting, revising, and editing. For each stage, various learning activities that can support the learning of specific writing skills are suggested. For instance, in the planning stage, teachers can help their students to improve their writing skills in generating ideas by giving activities, such as brain storming, clustering, and rapid free writing.

The planned writing experiences for the students can be described as follows:

A. Planning: Planning or pre-writing is an activity of writing that aimed to encourage and stimulate the students to write. Since its function is to stimulate students' ideas to write, the writing activities must be prepared to provide them learning experiences of writing, such as brain storming and etc.

B. Drafting: At this stage, the students will focus on the fluency of writing and write without having much attention to the accuracy of their works. During the process of writing, the students must also focus on the content and the meaning of the writing. Besides, the students may be encouraged to deliver their messages to different audience, such as peers, other classmates and etc.

C. Revising: The students review and reexamine the text to see how effectively they have communicated their ideas to the reader. Revising is not a simply activity of checking language errors but it is done to improve the content and organization of the ideas so the writer's intention is clearer for the reader.

D. Editing: At this stage, the students are focused on tidying up their works as they prepare the final draft to be evaluated by the teacher. The main activity done by the students at this stage is editing their mistakes on grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentences, diction etc.

To sum up, the arrangement of the steps cannot be separated because it works like a wheel. Each stage in the process of writing will work in line to help the students in composing the text (Ibid).

Eunson (2014:9) explains that there are four types of Writing, they are:

7. Descriptive Writing:

The goal of most descriptive writing is to create a clear vision, whether objective or subjective. On the one hand, by objectively describing the structure of a building, we may refer to things such as wood, steel, etc., also, to describe surface materials; we may refer to brick or stone, and so on. On the other hand, to mentally depict a building, one can present one's personal view of the building, such as how one feels when the building receives the sun's rays from a certain angle Donovan (2009: 36).

Descriptive writing is a multidimensional task by which the writer can imaginatively deal with different faces of something, without real action, such as appearance, feeling, taste, and so on. For example, students may be asked to write descriptively about the protesters' behavior. However, observing a real event leads to a more effective description, which is often based on solid and sensory details. Examining small pieces of writing helps to develop writing

skills and enables the writing of larger texts such as essay stories (Mahanand, 2013: 183).

Descriptive writing paints a picture with words. A writer might describe a person, place, object, or even memory of special significance. Furthermore, Wardani (2014:2) explains that descriptive is “a text that gives information about particular person, place, or thing”. It functions to communicate a deeper meaning through the description. In a descriptive writing, the writer should show, not tell, through the use of colorful words and sensory details.

The best descriptive writing appeals to the reader's emotions, with a result that is highly evocative.

Thevadas and Hashim (2020:698-722) defines descriptive writing as a detailed account of physical attributes as well as qualities of a person, a thing or a place. It attends to the senses-sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste to convey the whole picture. Journal entries would aid pupils in producing a descriptive write up. As pupils write, they recall the memories or experiences that they wish to share in the journal.

In line with the writer's opinion about description, it has been defined by philosophers as “a mode of perception,” or a means of knowing Dietsh, B. (2003:138). It gives the writer to record sensory details, to reflect on an experience and think about its advantage. Furthermore, in a book Students' Writer it states that “Description adds an important dimension to our lives because it moves our emotional and expands our experience by taking us to places, we might not otherwise know much about” Clouse, B. (2002-142). Sometimes, we did not notice that we always find descriptions in our everyday lives.

We can assume that each kind of descriptive writings has different purposes and a suitable descriptive detail can strengthen the main idea. Therefore, successful description has a purpose: giving details to the thesis or the point of the description so the reader will catch the message Dietsh,B.(2003:138).

There are two types of descriptive: Objective descriptive and Subjective descriptive. Both types of descriptive serve important purposes. Writers often combine them in their writing or they only tend to choose one. Subjective descriptive is when the writers use their personal feelings and reactions by using expressive language as they describe in order to create certain feelings of the reader (Ibid:146). On the other hand, objective descriptive is describing something objectively, accurately, and as thoroughly as possible as the writers report what they see, hear, and so on Buscemi,S.(2002:265). It means that the description uses impartial and impersonal tone and it is also literal, factual, and fair kinds of writing. In scientific and business writing, must description is based on unbiased, objective observation. Moreover, most journalist and historians try to remain objective by serving facts, not opinion.

8. Quality of writing (CAF):

Historically, most researchers who traced CAF's origins stated that it emerged shortly after the birth of SLA (Housen, Kuiken, & Vedder, 2012: 3). The theoretical framework of CAF has been used repeatedly in the field of SLA to measure L2 proficiency and L2 language development and it has

been employed as well on comprehensibility and perceived flu. studies. It was first introduced by Skehan twenty years ago (Housen, Kuiken & Vedder, 2012:2). The research on CAF started when a distinction is made between fluent and accurate language use.

Among the four language skills of English, writing is considered the most complex skill for the EFLs to acquire because of its complexity in grammatical structure, vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation Rao (2017: 75-86). Widdowson (2001: 62) rightly says, “Writing is the use of visual medium to manifest the graphological and grammatical system of the language”.

Crystal (2006: 257) says, “Writing is a way of communicating which uses a system of visual marks made on some kind of surface. It is one kind of graphic expression”. According to (Crystal, 1994: 178), “Writing is not language, but merely a way of recording language by means of visible marks”.

The individual elements of CAF went through a long process before they were combined into one triad and were considered to be potentially capable of illuminating language use and measuring language development and proficiency (Rausch, 2012: 25). Skehan (1988:92) proposed a model that included CAF as the three principal proficiency dimensions.

Moreover, Skehan (2009:510) states that CAF are important since it open up our insights into the cognitive processes that FL learners are engaged while learning foreign language in general, and FL writing, in particular.

(Norris & Ortega, 2009:555) CAF should be inconsistently defined and operationalized in a way to produce validated and consistent results which are replicable across different studies. One important distinction should be made, moreover, between the writing proficiency and the writing quality. While the former involves rating scale to language learners ability in writing components such as grammar, organization, and mechanics, the later involves in CAF. Consequently, CAF can deliver “a full of language development in FL writing” (Lu, 2011:38).

Lambert and Kormos (2014:9) believe that CAF is important theoretically and empirically since decision-making can be achieved by using it.

A. Complexity:

Comp. is usually viewed as being the most controversial of the three proficiency measures. Comp. has been generally defined as the use of more challenging and difficult language. Ellis & Barkhuizen (2005:139) define comp. “as the extent to which learners produce elaborated language”. Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998:69) define comp. as “a wide variety of both basic and sophisticated structures and words are available to the learner”. Skehan (2009: 21) defines compl. as 'challenging language'. Ellis (2008) defines comp. as 'the capacity to use more advanced language'.

Skehan and Foster (1997:230) define writing complexity as, “Learners’ capacity to use more elaborate and complex target like language”. According to Skehan (1996:46), comp. is “the stage and elaboration of the underlying inter language system”.

Housen and Kuiken (2009:463) state that “comp. is the most complex, ambiguous, and least understood dimension of the CAF triad”.

Bulté and Housen (2012:22) deduce that “there is no commonly accepted definition of comp.”, which contributed to the contradictory and mixed findings of the studies that investigated it. In other words, there are many reasons why there is no agreement on one definition of comp., such as interpretations-related issues, the references of the construct, its multidimensional and multicomponential characteristics, and its multiple meanings. The discussion here will address FL comp. in terms of two sub-categories of linguistic comp: syntactic comp. and lexical compl.

B. Accuracy:

Accu. is usually regarded as the simplest construct of CAF and refers to the degree of conformity to certain language usage norms, primarily in the areas of lexicon and grammar. Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998:4) define accu. as ‘the conformity of second language knowledge to target language norms’. Housen and Kuiken (2009:4) defined accu. as ‘the extent to which an FL performance deviates from a norm’.

Accu. refers to “the extent to which an FL learner’s performance (and the FL system that underlies this performance) deviates from a norm” (Housen et al., 2012:4).

Writing accu. refers to “the extent to which the language produced conforms to the target language norms” (Skehan & Foster, 1996:232). Skehan (1996:46) also defines accu. as a characteristic concerning “a learner’s capacity to handle whatever level of inter-language complexity s/he has currently attained”; that is, how similar produced language is to the target language.

Skehan (1996a:16) believes the construct “concerns how well language is produced in relation to the rule system of the target language”. Skehan and Foster (1999:96) define accu. as “the ability to avoid error in performance, possibly reflecting higher levels of control in the language, as well as a conservative orientation, that is, avoidance of challenging structures that might provoke error”.

For Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998:33), the term refers to “the ability to be free from errors while using language to communicate in either writing or speech”. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005:139) state that “learners who prioritize accu. are seeking control over the elements they have already fully internalized and thus adopt a conservative stance towards FL use”. Bruton & Kirby (1987:90) define accu. as “the extent to which the writer is willing to follow through a range of processes or procedures that lead to the completion of the piece of writing”.

C. Fluency:

Flu. refers to a person’s general language proficiency. According to Tavakoli and Skehan (2005:239), flu. can be further broken down into the following: speed flu., breakdown fluency and repair fluency. It has also been defined by Skehan (2009:511) as ‘the capacity to produce speech at normal rate and without interruption’.

Flu. is ‘the production of language in real time without undue pausing or hesitation’ Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005:139).

Flu. is defined as “the number of words produced in a specified time frame, together with lexical frequency, irrespective of spelling and content,

provided that the writer's meaning is readily understandable" (Fellner & Apple, 2006:19).

Lennon (2000:26) defines the construct as "the rapid, smooth, accurate, lucid, and efficient translation of thought or communicative intention into language". Housen et al. (2012:3) view it as "the ease with which learners produce the FL".

Dobao (2012:47) interprets flu. as the "length of the text". For Polio (2001:105), the definition of writing flu. should not be concerned with how fast a writer can write, but rather how close the writing is to that produced by a native speaker, or "how native-like the writing sounds".

Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998:14), flu. means, "More words and more structures are accessed in a limited time, whereas a lack of fluency means that only a few words or structures are accessed".

9. CAF Research Challenges:

CAF has attracted the interest of many linguists, researchers, and practitioners and has had widespread application in L2 research. Still, none of the three constructs are uncontroversial, and many questions and issues still remain unanswered and unresolved. As a result, in the search for their refinement, some researchers (e.g., Bulté & Housen, 2012; Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Housen & Kuiken, 2009) have highlighted several problems that should be addressed. Housen et al. (2012:3) believed that these problems stem from five areas:

(i) the definition of CAF as scientific constructs, (ii) the nature of their linguistic correlates and cognitive underpinnings, (iii) their connections and interdependency in both FL performance and FL development, (iv) their empirical operationalization and measurement, and (v) the factors that affect the manifestation and development of CAF in FL use and learning.

However, because of the correlation between all of CAF problem sources and the fact that one source of a problem can lead to another source of a problem (the challenges in defining and measuring CAF constructs).

10. Research Design:

According to Cohen (2014:156) quantitative research is defined as social research that employs empirical methods and empirical statements. He states that an empirical statement is defined as descriptive statement about what is the case in the real world rather than what ought to be the case. Typically, empirical statements are expressed in numerical terms. Another factor in quantitative research is that empirical evaluations are applied. Empirical evaluations are defined as a form that seeks to determine the degree to which a specific program or policy empirically fulfills or does not fulfill a particular or norm. The researcher used a descriptive quantitative method to conduct this research.

Moreover, Creswell (2012:166) has given a very concise definition of quantitative research as a type of research that is explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods.

Ary (2010:474) mentions that the descriptive way is a method that connects with data in the form of the word. Thus, the researcher used the descriptive method to describe the data.

11. Population and Sampling:

11.1. Population:

Creswell (2012: 142) describes population as “a group of individuals who have the same characteristic. For example, all teachers would make up the population of teachers, and all high school administrators in a school district would comprise the population of administrators. As these examples illustrate, populations can be small or large. Within this target population, researchers then select a sample for study”. The population in the present study is 335 Third-year college students (male and female).

The sample is a subset of the target population that the researchers are intending to evaluate in order to generalize the target population. Ideally, a survey is selected to represent the population as a whole (Creswell, 2012: 142).

According to Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh (2010: 148), a sample is a number of individuals, objects or events selected for a study from a population, usually in such a way that they represent the large group from which they are selected. The sample of the present study is 185 Third-year college students (male and female) who are morning studies in the Department of English at the College of Education for Humanities/Universities of Tikrit and Samarra for the academic year 2021-2022. As shown in the following table:

Table (1) Population and of the Study

College	Population	Sample
Tikrit University	159	85
University of Samarra	176	100
Total	335	185

12. Test Construction:

Collecting information from students is an important duty, therefore it should necessarily be conducted in systematic ways. Otherwise, it is difficult to know how rational educational decisions and judgments can be (Hughes, 1989:15). Thus, one research instrument is adopted in the current study which is a diagnostic test.

Diagnostic test is available technique that can be employed to help both teacher and the student. A diagnostic test can be given to students at any time to assess their current knowledge and mastery of English language. It is important as it assess the teacher to judge the level of the students and the weak points in their learning and to know what language areas they need to improve on (Aljuboory, 2014:47).

Aljuboory (2014:7) defines a test is a tool that is best used for gathering information about students' performance and achievement in a given course of study. It is method or procedure for measuring a person's ability, knowledge, or performance in a particular aspect of life. It is the most common one of

assessment tools. It means presenting the student with a set of questions or tasks in order to get a correct measure.

Baker (1989:3) defines test as a means of reaching to the correct and accurate decisions. The construction of the test involves planning for the test, preparing the items and instructions, putting them together and reproducing the test (Brown, 2004:47).

The Construction of the diagnostic test is viewed basically as the persons' competence in the area of content and this competence is the result of many intellectual variables. The achievement data comes from experiments and the acquisition of complex domains such as the peoples' ways to solve physics problems. In order to achieve the aims of this study, a diagnostic test is constructed. The test questions are constructed to find out EFL university students' quality of writing: CAF in writing English compositions.

The test includes two subjective questions. These two English themes assess EFL students' performance in writing. The themes are of two kinds of writing: descriptive and narrative. The first theme is 'Cigarette advertising and its effects on societies', which is a descriptive one. The second theme is narrative which is 'Describe an event that happened to you last year'. These topics have been chosen from a book named "Essay and Letter Writing" by L. G. Alexander.

12.1. Face Validity:

Lewis et al. (1995:141) define face validity as the degree to which a measure appears to be related to a specific construct, in the judgment of those who are concerned with education such as test takers, teachers and supervisors. That is, a measurement tool has face validity if its content simply looks relevant to the person taking the test or answering the questionnaire. It evaluates the appearance of the questionnaire and test in terms of feasibility, readability, consistency of style and formatting, and the clarity of the language used. To insure the test validity, it has been submitted to a jury of instructors and specialists in the English language teaching and Linguistics. The jurors have reviewed the instrument and state that it is appropriate and valid; their modification has been taken into consideration (See appendix B).

12.2. Construct Validity:

Wier (2005:17) illustrates that the construct validity as a matter of the a posteriori statistical validation of whether a test had measured a construct in individuals. Mc Namara (2000:138) defines validity as "the relationship between evidence from test performance and the inferences about candidate's capacity to perform in the criteria that are drawn from the evidence (See table 4).

12.3. Scoring Scheme of the Test:

Scoring means applying a numerical scale to measure responses. Scoring provides valuable feedback concerning students' achievement and teachers' attitudes. (Genesee and Upshur, 1996:208). The test consists of two questions.

In order to score the two abovementioned compositions objectively, the researcher used the Profile of Larsen Freeman (2006) which is a reliable

rating scale. The scoring committee conduct an in –depth analysis on the EFL university students' writing through an objective assessment. They used Polio (1997) guideline to determine T-units, in the first place, then, used the Profile of Larsen Freeman (2006) in order to determine the scores of CAF. Larsen-Freeman (2006) defines writing CAF as follows:

A. Accu.: The proportion of error-free T-units to total T-units (in terms of lexical, morphological, and syntactic errors).

B. Flu.: The average number of words per T-unit.

C. Comp.: The total number of clauses divided by the total number of T-units.

12.4. Reliability of the Test:

Reliability is an important character of a good test. A test is said to be reliable if its degree of accuracy stays stable and consistent each time is conducted with the same condition for the same sample of students (Veram and Beard, 1981:860). One of the necessary characteristics of a good test is reliability. Alderson (1995:294) states that "reliability is the extent to which test scores are consistent".

Reliability is explained by Ravitch (2007:70) "in testing, a measure of consistency. For example, if a person took different forms of the same test on two different days, scores on both tests should be similar. Alpha-Cronbach formula is used to measure the reliability of the test. The coefficient is found to be (0.81), which is considered acceptable.

12.5. Discrimination Power:

Discrimination power means "calculating the degree to which a particular item's results correspond with the results of the entire test" (Alderson, 1995: 80). This means that an object is deemed to have weak power of discrimination if it is correctly scored by high-skilled students as well as low-skilled students.

Item discrimination refers to the degree to which an object makes a difference between good and poor testers. An object has good power of discrimination if it collects the right answers from the good students and the wrong answers from the bad students. It is worth noting that the high power of discrimination will be close to 1.0, and no power of discrimination will be nil at all (Brown, 2010: 71).

The test item discrimination power was found to have a range of 0.34-0.55. The test items for DP and DL are shown in the following table:

Table (2) Difficulty level and Discrimination power

Question	Item	Higher	Lower	Difficulty	Discrimination
Q1/ Descriptive	1	203	83	0.54	0.34
Q2/ Narrative	1	297	104	0.41	0.55

13. Data Analysis:

13.1. Results Related to the First Hypothesis

13.1.1. Comparison Between the Theoretical Mean and Students' Performance at the Two Universities in the Writing the Descriptive Composition:

To verify the first hypothesis, which states, "*There are statistically significant differences among the EFL university students' quality of writing the descriptive composition at the two universities; Tikrit and Samarra.*" The mean scores of the students' writing descriptive composition in the test are 18.90 and the theoretical mean is 50 with a standard deviation of 9.29, respectively. The T-test formula for one sample is used. The calculated t-value is 45.493, which is found to be higher than the tabulated t-value, which is 1.972 at the 0.05 level of significance when the degree of freedom is 184, as shown in Table 3.

The results of the table 7 indicate there are statistically significant differences between the theoretical mean and students' writing descriptive composition at the two universities in favour of the theoretical mean. Thus, according to these results, the students of the two universities showed a significant weakness in writing descriptive composition. So, the second hypothesis is accepted.

Table (3) The Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and One Sample T-Value of the Students' Writing the Narrative composition at the Two Universities

Group	No. of students	Mean	SD.	Theoretical Mean Score	T-Value		DF	Level of Significance
D. E	185	18.90	9.29	50	Calculated	Tabulated	184	0.05
					45.493	1.972		

13.1.2. Comparison Between the Mean Scores of Tikrit and Samarra universities Quality of Writing the Descriptive Composition:

To find out whether "*There are statistically significant differences among the EFL university students' quality of writing the descriptive composition at the two universities; Tikrit and Samarra*", all mean scores are obtained and compared. Statistics show that the mean scores of the Tikrit university is 18.07 and that of the Samarra university is 19.61 with a standard deviation of 7.65, 10.47 respectively. By using the t-test formula for two independent, the calculated t-value is found to be 1.125, while the tabulated t-value is found to be 1.972 at the degree of freedom 183 and level of significance 0.05. This mean indicates that there is no significant difference between the two universities in the quality of writing the descriptive composition.

Table (4) The Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and Two Independent Sample T-Value of the Students' Writing the Descriptive Composition Tests Between the Two Universities

Groups	No. of students	Mean	SD.	T-Value		DF	Level of Significance
Tikrit	85	18.07	7.65	Calculated	Tabulated	183	0.05
Samarra	100	19.61	10.47	1.125	1.972		

13.2. Results of the second Hypotheses:

13.2.1. Comparison the EFL University Students' Quality of Writing Descriptive Composition at the Two Universities in the Three Principal dimensions:

A. Accuracy. B. Fluency C. Complexity.

In order to achieve the third aim of the current study which is the quality of writing descriptive composition in the light of the three principal dimensions at the two universities of the colleges of education Tikrit, and Samarra by investigating the third hypothesis that states — *"There are statistically significant differences among the EFL university students' quality of writing descriptive composition at the two universities in the three principal dimensions"*. The one-way analysis of variance is used, as shown in the following table:

Table (5) One-Way Analysis of Variance ANOVA Among the Three Principals

	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-value		Sig.
				Calculated	Tabulated	
Between Groups	31262.352	2	15631.176	596.755	3.01	0.05
Within Groups	14458.870	552	26.194			
Total	45721.222	554				

table 11 shows that the calculated F-value 596.755 is higher than the tabulated F-value 3.01 at the 0.05 level of significance and DF = 2, 552. This indicates that there are significant differences among university students in the term the quality of writing descriptive composition in the light of the three principal dimensions: CAF at the two universities.

Table (6) Comparisons of Means Between Three Principals (Scheffe ^a)

Groups	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Accuracy	185	0.1945		
Complexity	185		1.8400	
Fluency	185			16.8744
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000
Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.				
a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 185.000.				

According to table 12 above, the comparisons of means show that the mean scores in the term of descriptive composition of the in the two universities in the three principal dimensions, Accu. 0.1945, Comp. 1.8400, and Flu. 16.8744, with harmonic mean sample size = 185.000. This means indicates that there is a significant difference among EFL university students' at the three principals and in favour of Fluency. The hypothesis, which states *"There are statistically significant differences among the EFL university students' quality of writing descriptive composition at the two universities of the three principal dimensions:CAF"*, is accepted.

13.2.2. Comparison Among EFL Tikrit University Students' Quality of Writing Descriptive Composition at the Three Principal Dimensions:

A. Accuracy. B. Fluency. B. Complexity.

In order to achieve the fifth aim of this study which is the quality of writing descriptive composition in the light of the three principal dimensions

among EFL Tikrit university student's by investigating the fifth hypothesis that states — *"There are statistically significant differences among the EFL university students' quality of writing the descriptive composition at the two universities; Tikrit and Samarra of the three principal dimensions: CAF"*, the one-way analysis of variance was used, as shown in the following table:

Table (7) One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Among EFL Tikrit University of Descriptive Composition at the Three Principal Dimensions

Variables	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-value		Sig.
				Calculated	Tabulated	
Between Groups	12820.876	2	6410.438	378.724	3.03	0.05
Within Groups	4265.453	252	16.926			
Total	17086.329	254				

The table 5 shows that the calculated F-value 378.724 is higher than the tabulated F-value 3.03 at the 0.05 level of significance and DF = 2, 552. This indicates that there are significant differences between university students in the term the quality of writing descriptive composition in the light of the three principal dimensions at Tikrit university.

Table (8) Comparisons of Means Among Three Principals (Scheffe^a)

Groups	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Accuracy	85	0.2076		
Complexity	85		1.8607	
Fluency	85			16.0075
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000
Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.				
a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 85.000.				

According to the table 18 above, the comparisons of means show that the mean scores in the term of descriptive composition among EFL Tikrit university students at the three principal dimesionss, Accu. 0.2076, Comp. 1.8607, and Flu. 16.0075, with harmonic mean sample size = 185.000. This means indicates that there is a significant difference among EFL Tikrit university students' at the three principal dimensions: CAF and in favour for Flu. The hypothesis, which states *"There are statistically significant differences among the EFL university students' quality of writing the descriptive composition at the two universities; Tikrit and Samarra in the three principal dimensions: CAF "*, is accepted.

13.2.3. Comparison Among EFL Samarra University Students' Quality of Writing Descriptive Composition at the Three Principal Dimensions: A. Accuracy B. Fluency C. Complexity

In order to achieve the second aim of this study which is the quality of writing descriptive composition in the light of the three principal dimensions among EFL Samarra university student's by investigating the fifth hypothesis that states — *"There are statistically significant differences among the EFL*

university students' quality of writing the descriptive composition at the two universities; Tikrit and Samarra in the three principal dimensions", the one-way analysis of variance is used, as shown in the following table:

Table (8) One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Among EFL Samarra University of Descriptive Composition in the Three Principal Dimensions

Variables	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-value		Sig.
				Calculated	Tabulated	
Between Groups	18523.358	2	9261.679	273.020	3.03	0.05
Within Groups	10075.161	297	33.923			
Total	28598.519	299				

The table 19 shows that the calculated F-value 273.020 is higher than the tabulated F-value 3.03 at the 0.05 level of significance and DF = 2, 297. This indicates that there are significant differences between university students in the term the quality of writing descriptive composition in the light of the three principals at Samarra university.

Table (10) Comparisons of Means Among Three Principals (Scheffe ^a)

Groups	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Accuracy	100	0.1834	
Complexity	100	1.8224	
Fluency	100		17.6112
Sig.		0.140	1.000
Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.			
a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 85.000.			

According to the table 20 above, the comparisons of means showed that the mean scores in the term of descriptive composition among EFL Samarra university students at the three principals, Accu. 0.1834, Comp. 1.8224, and Flu. 17.6112, with harmonic mean sample size = 185.000. This means indicates that there is a significant difference between EFL Samarra university students' at the three principals and in favour for Flu. The hypothesis, which states "*There are statistically significant differences among the EFL university students' quality of writing the descriptive composition at the two universities; Tikrit and Samarra of the three principal dimensions: CAF*", is accepted.

13.2.4. Comparison Between Male and Female in the Quality of Writing Descriptive Essays Test at the Two Universities:

To find out whether "*There are statistically significant differences between male and female in the quality of writing narrative and descriptive essays at the colleges of education in at the two universities*", all mean scores are obtained and compared. Statistics show that the mean scores of the Females are 17.94 and that of the Males are 19.63, with a standard deviation of 9.03, 9.46 respectively. By using the t-test formula for two independent, the calculated t-value is found to be 1.224, while the tabulated t-value is found to be 1.972 at the degree of freedom 183 and level of significance 0.05. This means indicate that there is no significant difference between females and males of the two universities.

Thus, the six hypothesis, which states that *"There are statistically significant differences between male and female in the quality of writing narrative and descriptive essays at the colleges of education in at the two universities"* in the term of comparing is rejected.

Table (9) The Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and Two Independent Sample T-Value Between Females and Males

Groups	No. of students	Mean	SD.	T-Value		DF	Level of Significance
Female	79	17.94	9.03	Calculated	Tabulated	183	0.05
Male	106	19.63	9.46	1.224	1.972		

14. Discussion of the Results:

The results of the table 5 indicate there are statistically significant differences between the theoretical mean and students' writing the narrative composition tests at the two universities in favour of the theoretical mean. Thus, according to these results, the students of the two universities showed a significant weakness in the writing the narrative composition test. So, the first hypothesis is accepted.

Also, the results of the same hypothesis concerning comparison between the mean scores of the Tikrit and Samarra universities at quality of writing the narrative composition test show that there is no significant difference between the two universities in the writing narrative composition test, as explained in the table (6).

The second hypothesis relates to the writing narrative composition of EFL university students at Tikrit and Samarra universities. The table (7) reveals statistically significant differences in favor of the theoretical mean between the theoretical mean and the students' writing narrative composition tests at the two colleges. According to this data, the students of the two universities demonstrated a considerable lack of writing narrative composition on the examination. The second hypothesis is thus acceptable.

In addition, the findings of the same hypothesis concerning a comparison of the mean scores obtained by the universities of Tikrit and Samarra on a test of writing the descriptive composition show that there is not a significant difference between the two universities in the writing the descriptive composition test, as is shown in the table (8). The results of the fourth hypothesis show that the comparison the EFL University students' quality of writing descriptive composition at Tikrit, and Samarra universities in general of the three principals (i.e., CAF) most students have poor quality of writing narrative composition, but higher average scores in flu. principal, as explained in the following figure (3).

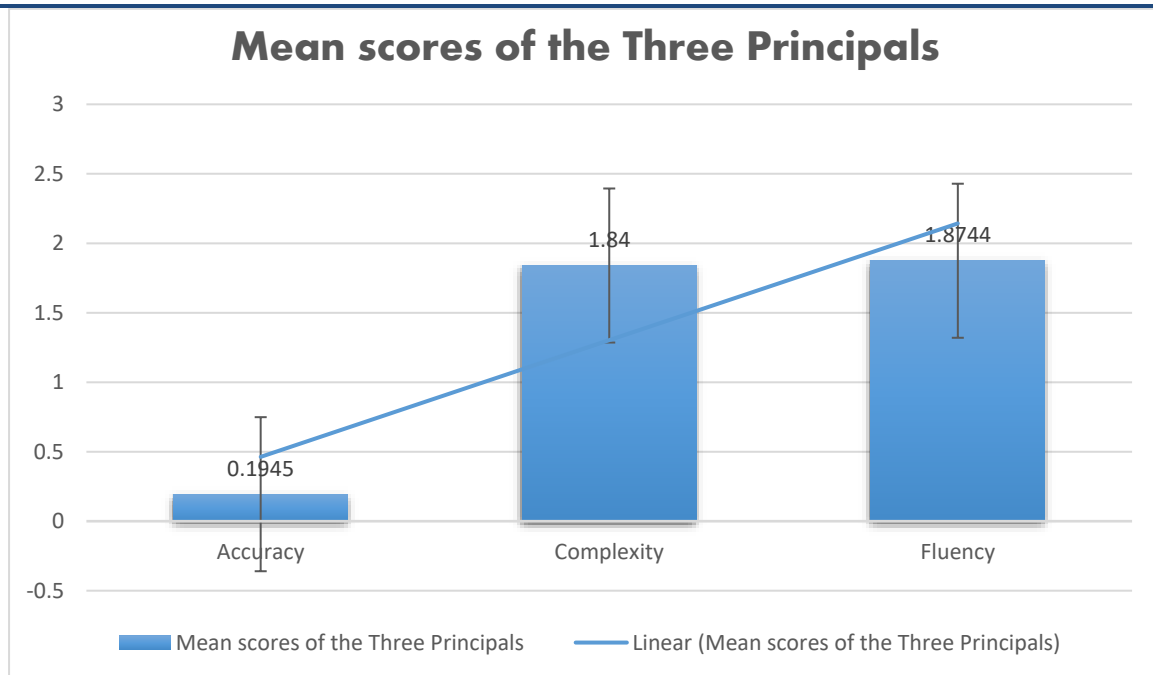


Figure (1) Comparison Between EFL University students' quality of writing descriptive composition at Tikrit, and Samarra universities

Results of the fifth hypotheses shows the comparison among EFL Tikrit and Samarra university students' quality of writing descriptive composition at the three principals: CAF. Most students have poor quality of writing narrative and descriptive composition, but higher average scores in flu. principal, as explained in the following figure (2)

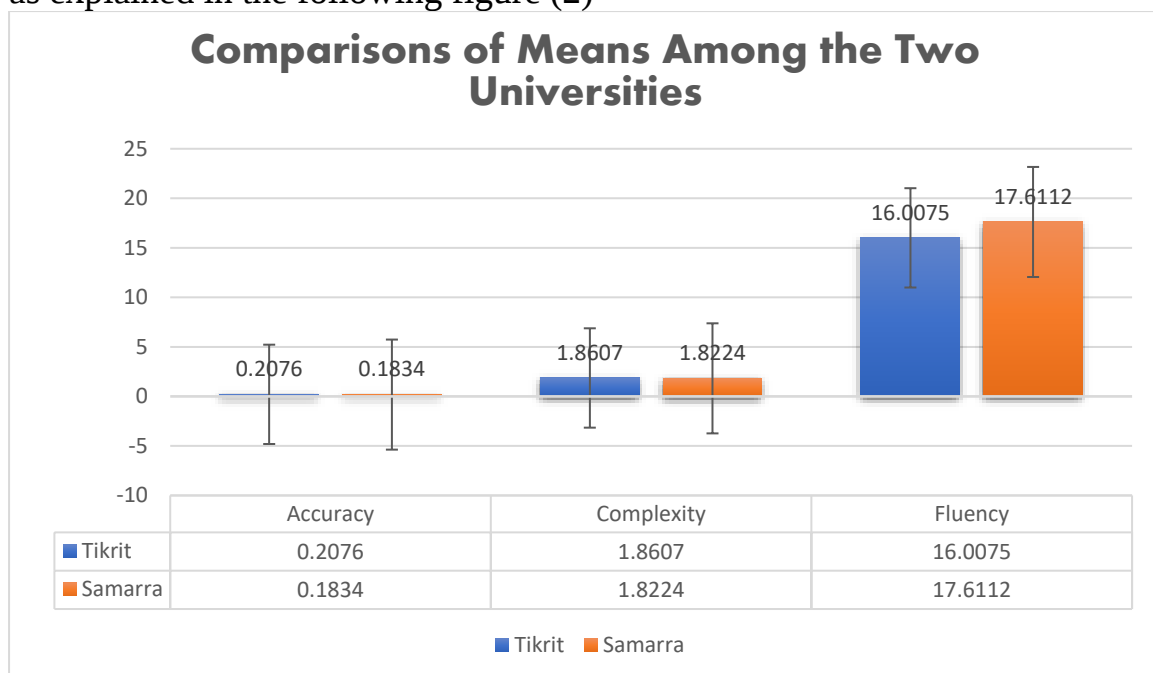


Figure (2) Comparison among EFL University students' quality of writing descriptive composition at Tikrit, and Samarra universities

Whereas the six-hypothesis concerned with the comparison between male and female in the quality of writing narrative and descriptive compositions test at the two universities. This means indicate that there is no significant difference between females and males of the two universities in the quality of writing narrative and descriptive compositions according to gender.

Thus, the six hypothesis, which states that *"There are statistically significant differences between male and female in the quality of writing narrative and descriptive compositions at the colleges of education in at the two universities"* in the term of comparing is rejected.

15. Conclusions:

1. CAF (Complexity, Accuracy and Fluency) can highlight the main factors in developing writing among EFL learners and teachers.
2. This study lead learners to a better understanding about the nature of writing difficulties, but, more importantly, they could lead to finding a reliable way to treat learners' weaknesses and problems in developing their writing skills.
3. CAF have been used both as performance descriptors for the oral and written assessment of language learners as well as indicators of learners' proficiency underlying their performance; they have also been used for measuring progress in language learning .
4. Material developers should pay attention to the difference in the emerging patterns of CAF features across different types of paragraphs writing.
5. They can devote supplementary parts and activities in the books for introducing the paragraph types in which learners show lower patterns of CAF features in students' performances.
6. In writing courses, teachers can plan to devote the sufficient amount of time required to present different types of paragraphs.

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