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Writing Apprehension among EFL Undergraduate Iraqi Students

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<p>Keywords:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Women-CEW-Significant-EFL-Recommendations <p>Article Info</p>	<p>Abstract: This study is an attempt to find out 1.the average of EFL university students' achievement in writing.2. Whether there are any significant differences between male students' mean scores and that female students' in achievement of writing. and 3. whether there are any significant differences in the mean scores of students of the University of Tikrit ,College of Education for Human Sciences(CEHS) and College of Education for Women (CEW) and the University of Samara', College of Education (CE) in achievement of writing .</p> <p>This study is an attempt to find out 1.the average of EFL university students' achievement in writing.2. Whether there are any significant differences between male students' mean scores and that female students' in achievement of writing. and 3. whether there are any significant differences in the mean scores of students of the University of Tikrit ,College of Education for Human Sciences(CEHS) and College of Education for Women (CEW) and the University of Samara', College of Education (CE) in achievement of writing .</p> <p>These aims are supposed to be achieved through testing the following hypotheses.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The average of Iraqi EFL University students' is within the theoretical mean scores, in achievement of writing.2. There are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of male students' and that of female students' in achievement of writing.3. There are no statistically significant differences in the mean scores of students' of the University of Tikrit, College of Education for Human Sciences (CEHS) and College of Education for Women (CEW) and that of the University of Samara', College of Education(CE)in achievement of writing. <p>In order to verify the hypotheses of the current study and achieve its aims, two instruments, i.e. a questionnaire and an achievement test have been constructed for data collection. The questionnaire includes thirty items and distributes to the EFL students at the University of Tikrit (CEHS) and (CEW) and those of the University of Samara' (CE) in order to assess students' apprehension of writing. While, the test is used to assess students' achievement of writing the two instruments have been applied to a sample of 109 EFL fourth year University students.</p> <p>The study ends up with a number of conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.</p>
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كتابة الإستيعاب عند الطلبة العراقيين كمتعلمين أجنب

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المستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى ايجاد 1. متوسط أداء الطلبة الجامعيين متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية هل هو ضمن الوسط الفرضي في أداء الكتابة؟ 2. هل هناك فروق فردية دالة بين الوسط الحسابي للطلبة الذكور والوسط الحسابي للطلبة الإناث في أداء الكتابة؟ 3. هل هناك فروق فردية دالة بين الوسط الحسابي في أداء الكتابة لطلبة جامعة تكريت (كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية) و(كلية التربية للبنات) و بين الوسط الحسابي لطلبة جامعة سامراء (كلية التربية) ؟.

تم تحقيق هذه الأهداف من خلال اختبار الفرضيات الآتية:

1. إن متوسط الطلبة العراقيين متعلمي اللغة الإنكليزية لغة أجنبية هو ضمن الوسط الفرضي في أداء الكتابة.
2. لا توجد فروق إحصائية دالة بين الوسط الحسابي للطلبة الذكور والوسط الحسابي للطلبة الإناث في أداء الكتابة.
3. لا توجد فروق إحصائية دالة بين الوسط الحسابي في أداء الكتابة لطلبة جامعة تكريت (كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية) و(كلية التربية للبنات) و بين الوسط الحسابي لطلبة جامعة سامراء (كلية التربية).

ولغرض اختبار فرضيات الدراسة حالياً وتحقيق أهدافها تم استعمال أداتين لجمع البيانات اللازمة. أولاً: صممت استبانة مكونة من ثلاثين فقرة ووزعت إلى طلبة اللغة الانكليزية في جامعة تكريت (كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية) و(كلية التربية للبنات)، وإلى طلبة اللغة الإنكليزية جامعة سامراء (كلية التربية) من أجل تقييم القلق في الكتابة. ثانياً: تم تصميم اختبار تحصيلي لطلبة اللغة الانكليزية ولكلا الجامعتين من أجل تقييم أداء الطلبة في الكتابة. تم تطبيق الأداتين الى العينة المنتقاة مكونة من 109 من الطلبة الجامعيين متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية للمرحلة الرابعة.

انتهت الدراسة إلى عدد من النتائج والتوصيات والمقترحات لأجراء المزيد من الدراسات. فيما يأتي بعض منها:

النتائج:

1. يواجه الطلبة الجامعيين متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية للمرحلة الرابعة صعوبات في الكتابة. كشفت النتائج أن الطلبة يواجهون صعوبات في كتابة الإنشاء، المقالات و الرسائل الالكترونية. معظم الطلبة قلة ذخيرتهم اللغوية في المعاني والنحو والتنقيط. بالتالي هم يفشلوا بالتعبير عن أفكارهم بشكل صحيح. الطلبة الآخرين قلة الثقة في مهاراتهم الميكانيكية
2. القلق من الكتابة لة علاقة في عدم رغبة الطلبة في الكتابة او الخوف من الوقوع في الخطأ مما يمنع الطلبة من إكمال كتابتهم.

التوصيات:

1. بإمكان مدرس المادة استخدام موضوعات مألوفة في كتابة الإنشاء، المقالات اثناء اختبارات الكتابة.
2. يجب على المدرس تدريب طلبة بأستعمال تكنولوجيا الحاسوب لتحسين قدراتهم في الكتابة وتقليل مخاوفهم منها.

المقترحات:

1. يمكن إجراء دراسة لمعرفة متوسط الطلبة الجامعيين متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية في الكتابة في مختلف مراحل الدراسة.
2. معرفة دور استراتيجيات التدريس الحديثة في تقليل القلق من الكتابة للطلبة الجامعيين متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية.

I. Introduction

Writing is an important language skill and an essential part of academic success. According to Arapoff (1979:200) writing is developing students' mental abilities. For example, when telling a story students highlight to know their world by classifying and using other processes of logic. They can explore their own thinking as they struggle to compose by discriminating among the various feelings and ideas swirling around in their mind. Teachers also can help to develop writing activity by acquiring unattainable insights into their students.

In fact, students' writings can tell the teachers much about what is happening in the mind of their students'. This means that, writing represents a thinking process , enhancing learning, motivates communication and, makes thoughts perceptible. When thought is written down ideas can be examined, reconsidered, rearranged and changed. Shortly, it means of extending one's own views about the world for the various uses that it can serve (Samuuel,1988:28).

However, writing is not an easy task as people consider; it is a complex and sophisticated skill when compared to other skills in English.This complex process may burdens students psychologically resists their skill development (Zhu,2004:30) .

Writing is a difficult activity because it involves certain level of English knowledge like: writing rules, vocabulary and, grammar. The process of writing involves a number of sub-skills most evident in planning, collecting data, drafting, revising, rewriting and editing. These sub-processes of writing are dynamic, non-sequential and interactive processes (Zamel, 1983:72).

1.1 The Problem of the Study

English language consists of four skills which are listening speaking, reading and writing. Writing is playing an important role in intellectual development and career preparation .In general, writing is one of the productive skills and it is the most difficult among the other language skills. Therefore, students who learn to write in a foreign language may face challenges because of the complexity of writing (Oz, 2006:251).

In other words, writing apprehension (WA, for short) is characterized by a fear of evaluation, avoidance of situations involving writing , fear of being instructed in writing, lack of confidence in expressing ideas clearly, and a sense that writing is neither an enjoyable nor a particularly important activity.

As a result, there are some problems in the quantity and quality of writing as well as writing attitudes of most students, specific those who lack knowledge in writing and fear of practising writing. Such problems may be faced, for example, when instructors teach writing composition in the light of the pre-determined set of rules to be followed when writing essays or paragraph (Miller and Daly, 1975:37).Hence, EFL instructors' evaluation of students' written composition is conducted in the light of models of correct paragraphs or essays provided to their students to copy .Besides, this evaluation focuses on whether students use correct forms and avoid errors of writing

mechanisms such as , spelling, punctuation and capitalization or grammar rather than on content, organization ,and cohesion.

Todd (2003:13) indicates that students who lack adequate writing skills experience less success with written work. This in turn, which might maintain students' WA and avoidance of writing practice and, feedback. Students who view WA as a trait they possess such as shyness, may tend to believe there is little they can do about it and may avoid use wishful thinking to maintain false hope that the situation will somehow resolve itself.

Another apparent problem or cause of WA is fear of exposure and of possible embarrassment of being made to look or feel less than competent. This is certainly understandable and it is less of a problem with other forms of communication. So, WA is a critical problem which is faced by the majority of ESL students. Furthermore, if WA problems are left unchecked may lead to poor proficiency in writing and speaking and, also other aspects of language use.

Moreover, Wang(2013:33)concludes that the complexity of writing in foreign language as a task tends to heighten apprehension or anxiety levels in students who are taking writing courses. This apprehension or anxiety can usually lead to discouragement and thus may result in negative attitudes towards writing. Consequently, WA can be considered as a complex term and serious problem that can hinder the performance of both native and non-native learners. This means that the problem of WA is an essential determinant of student's success in learning to write effectively in English. Among the most important causes of WA is students' anxiety concerning the evaluation of their work specially if this work would be evaluated in comparison to the peer students' work. In fact, WA has been proven to have a negative influence on the writing interest and competence of language learners. In the context of ESL/EFL, the lack of writing skills remains a prominent problem even at the university level. Most students are unable to write essays or compositions or writing an-email effectively and this has resulted in getting lower marks in English. Consequently, WA is a serious problem faced by most ESL/EFL learners because writing in mother tongue is different from writing in foreign language(Me Leod,1987:426-435).

Furthermore, to the best knowledge of the researcher in Iraq, most of EFL students face difficulties in language skills particularly in writing which make it undesirable skill and being avoided by students. Iraqi students lack the ability to write in English

at school and even at university levels because they rarely practise it, they lack knowledge in coherence (e.g., conjunction words) and ,also face problems in writing mechanism (e.g., grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization),in addition to limited vocabulary. Therefore, the current study is an attempt to find out what problems students face in their writing of a composition , an essay, term papers or writing an-email...etc.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The significance of the current study stems from the following points:

1.The significance of writing as a complex process involves a number of steps, on the part of the writer.

2.The significance of pin pointing WA as a personal trait among university students.

3.This study will contribute to the existing research on WA among Iraqi EFL undergraduate students.It is one of the few studies to be conducted in the field of students' WA by Iraqi students who are learning English as a foreign language .

1.3 Aims of the Study

The study aims at finding out :

1: The average of EFL university students is within the theoretical mean scores in achievement of writing .

2: Whether there are any significant differences between male students' mean scores and that of female students, in achievement of writing.

3: Whether there are any significant differences between the mean scores of students' achievement of the University of Tikrit(the College of Education For Human Sciences, and the College of Education for Women) and the University of Samaraa (College of Education) in achievement of writing.

1.4 Hypotheses of the Study

The following null hypotheses are put forward in order to be verified

1:The average of Iraqi EFL university students is within the theoretical mean scores in achievement of writing.

2: There are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of male students, and that of female students in achievement of writing.

3: There are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of students' achievement of the University of Tikrit (College of Education for Human

Sciences and College of Education for Women) and that of the University of Samara' (College of Education) in achievement of writing

1.5 Plan of the Study

A questionnaire is used to collect the required data on WA. This questionnaire contains thirty items dealing with apprehension about writing. This study also includes an achievement test which has been constructed in order to assess university students' efficiency in writing EFL.

The population of the current study includes all the undergraduate students who are studying at the University of Tikrit (College of Education for Human Sciences and College of Education for Women) as well as the University of Samaraa (College of Education).

The sample of this study is selected from the fourth year students in the departments of English at the included Colleges and subjected to the constructed instruments. The collected data is treated statistically and the obtained results are discussed later on, conclusions as well as recommendations are given in terms of the obtained results .

2. Academic Writing

This section will review the types of academic writing , stages of writing , writing versus speaking, characteristics of a good paragraph , writing sophisticate and the importance of punctuation in writing.

2.1 The Concept of Writing and Types of Writing

Daniels and William (1996:3-6) define writing as a method of representing language in visual form. In writing, sets of symbols are used to represent the sounds of speech along with the use of punctuation marks and numerals. Shortly, writing is the process of using symbols, i. e. alphabetical letters to communicate thoughts and ideas in a readable form.

Cheng (2008:647) adds that writing process is an emotional activity as well as cognitive activity, that is we think and, feel while we are writing. The method of writing is teaching students to produce the final phase of writing.

According to Chapman and King (2009:41) there are four main types of writing **Firstly, expository:** This type explains the subject to the reader and this type of writing is essential for students to get comfortable with many potential cares that is writing-oriented. Students must be able to organize their thoughts through following a predetermined plan. This type of writing can involve newspapers, articles, magazine

articles, encyclopedia articles and, other forms of writing. Thus, students or writers must be able to organize their thoughts and follow a plan .Consequently, the purpose of this type is to inform, explain and describe a concept to the readers.

Secondly, persuasive: In this type, students or writers present their opinions attempting to influence the reader. Persuasive writing is a more sophisticated type of writing . It can be regarded as an argument in writing. This type is based on showing an opinion or taking a stance about something and then to support that opinion in a way that convinces , the reader to understand it in the same way. This type contains an explanation of the other point of view and uses facts to disprove that view and support the writer's position. The examples of this kind are; debate position papers, essays, editorials, letters to the editor, or news articles.

Thirdly, narrative writing: In this kind the author tells a story, that could be fact or fiction stories, plays or even a plot summary of a story. Students spend a significant of time learning how to write narrative. Narrative writing is not always in the first person and is organized with a beginning, middle and end. For instance, one can write a story about an event, person, place or thing in a newspaper. **Finally, descriptive Writing:** In this type focuses on one subject and uses specific details to describe the idea. For instance , if a student is asked to write about his/her favourite ride at an amusement garden ,his/her writings will not only be on the name of the ride and what it looks like but, also describe the sensation of being on it and what kind of that experience reminds them(*ibid*).

2 . 2 Stages of Writing

2.2.1 Pre-Writing Stage

According to Richards and Renandya (2002:314-319) the pre- writing stage is the beginning in the method of the writing.In this stage,the mind of the student changes from a blank page toward generating the thoughts and gathering information in order to write.

In pre-writing phase students who have difficulties may benefit from:

A .The writer is written fast and, . B.role- playing or dramatization activities.

2.2.2 Drafting Stage

This stage involves the Students are focused on the fluency of the writing and they are not busy with the tidy of the draft or the grammar precise.One of the most important points in this phase,students should have in mind a central idea that he/she

wants to communicate with the others (e.g, audience) in order to give direction to his /her writing.

2.2.3 Revising Stage

In this stage, students examine the content of their writing. This phase focuses on improving students writing through rethinking, reworking , and refining his/her writing. Students at this phase can be improved global content and the organization of ideas. So that, the goal of the writer (student) is obvious to the reader in his/her writing. Students who have difficulties in revision may benefit from:

A. adding ideas or changing details to develop the topic. B. organization through changing the conclusion or moving sentences or paragraphs.

2.2.4 Editing Stage

In this stage, students attend to correctness in conventions when they enter this phase of the writing process. Editing should be undertaken when all revisions to the content are complete. Students may edit their writing independently. In other words, students are busy in neatness their texts as they prepare the final draft for evaluation by the teacher. They edit his/her own work for spelling, vocabulary, grammar...etc.in order to write the final draft

2.2.5 Publishing Stage

Publishing stage(post writing) this final phase of writing, students and teachers can do in order to complete the final writing. This involves publishing, reading-a loud, sharing and transforming texts for stage performances. It motivates student to write also to hedge against students find excuses to not write(ibid).

2.3 Writing Versus Speaking

There are many differences between the processes of speaking and writing. Writing is not simply a speech that is written down on paper; and that learning to write is not a natural extension of learning to speak. Vice versa speaking, writing requires systematic instruction and practice. Hence, there are many differences between them .In writing not everyone can learn to read and write whereas, in speaking universal everyday acquires it. Writing language is more general and restricted; it follows a standardized form of structure, vocabulary, grammar, and organization. Writers can write down words on papers to express their ideas, while speakers can speak using their voices but cannot write down with effective stress, pitch, rhythm to communicate their message when speaking. Speakers use intonation, pauses, pronounce and loudness but writers use unique features including punctuation and capitalization also

several written genres like, timetables, graphs, complex formula that cannot be read aloud efficiently but can be assimilated visually(Rodger,2001:12-15).

Daniels and William (1996:2-5) indicate that writing is written and read while speaking is spoken and heard. They conclude that writing differs from speaking with respect to:

1.**Age:** In this characteristic, speech is dated back to human beginnings may be a million years ago while writing is relatively recent as it was first invented by the Sumerians in Mesopotamia around 3200 B.C .

2. **Universality:** People at all the world can speak but before the invents of the Sumerians , people are non-literate. For example, new Guinea ...etc.

3. **Acquisition:** People start speaking during the first two years of life .Many of the abilities involved are probably acquired or inborn rather than learned .Learning to write builds on learning to speak

4. **Formality:** Communication may be formal or informal ,and hence writing can be characterized with formal style and speech with informal style. Informal situations for example, a person may quote sentences from a book to be used in his/her speech .

5. **Prestige:** Written language is associated with economic power and political educational institutions and admire literature all of which lend it high prestige

6. **Hesitations:** Speech is full of false starts and hesitations .Whereas, in writing there are no hesitations or false starts, and

7. **Grammar:** speech sometimes contains grammatical errors while writing should be grammatically accurate(ibid).

2.4 Characteristics of a Good Paragraph

Starkey (2004:67) and Schmitz(2012:314-330) define paragraph as a collection of sentences which all relate to one main idea or topic. Effective paragraphs have many characteristics, such as:

1. **Topic Sentence:** Beginning a paragraph with a topic sentence is one of the best steps to achieve unity and clarity in student's or writer's writing. The function of a topic sentence is to describe what the paragraph will be about since the reader should have clear expectations about what will follow . Topic sentence not only states the topic of the paragraph ,but also controls or limits the topic in the space of a single paragraph. Therefore, the idea can be divided into two types :

-topic idea which states the topic of the paragraph, and

-controlling idea which limits the topic. These two ideas are clear and easy to follow through using vocabulary to provide an accurate indication of what will follow in the rest of the paragraph.

2. **Unity:** It refers to the extent to which all ideas contained within a given paragraph "hang together" in a way that is easy for the reader to understand . In other words, unity makes effective paragraph when its body is closely related to the topic sentence. So, all the supporting sentences in the body shall focus on and be relevant to the main controlling idea of one's topic. Meanwhile the concluding sentence usually relates and reinforces the main idea in the topic sentence. Finally, unity develops or discusses the main idea stated in the topic sentence of the paragraph.

3. **Coherence:** This characteristic means that the ideas have a logical flow, the relationship between the sentences is clear and one idea connects to the unity. To achieve coherence in a paragraph is to organize one's ideas in the supporting sentences with an ordering principle like using chronological ordering for a narrative paragraph, spatial ordering for a descriptive paragraph ,and logical reasoning for an expository paragraph.

4. **Cohesion:** This characteristic is an inseparable part of coherence and do not single it out as another characteristic of good writing .A paragraph has cohesion when all the supporting sentences are well connected to each other. There are four cohesive devices connecting the sentences, they are:

A. Connectors which include coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions (e.g., after, before, while, when, until), transitions (e.g., for instance, therefore, consequentially..etc.). When students connect the sentences chronologically, they use these conjunctions are used to show differences : however , in contrast , on the other hand...etc.; and also to make conclusion, in short , briefly, in other words, in sum...etc.

B. The definite article(the) is used with definite nouns.

C. Personal pronouns substitute nouns.

D. Demonstrative adjectives such as this , that, these , those..etc..

5. **Binding:** as far as writing is concerned, this is the best one among all given characteristics .If the writing does not bind the readers then it will be useless readers should feel as they are reading something very interesting from the starting point to the end of the paragraph.

6. **Content length:** Many students desire to write more and more, which is good but they should not write long sentences or paragraphs. No one likes to read long paragraphs because it wastes time .A good paragraph must be in a proper length of content which should be to the point.

7. **Concluding Sentence:** It is a sentence in which the writer concludes the paragraph in order to give the reader important points to note. An effective concluding sentence draws together all the ideas that have been raised in the paragraph. It reminds readers of the main points (ibid).

2.6 Writing Sophistication

King (1998:13-16) explains that there are many methods by which students or writers make their writing more sophisticate .They need to build their vocabulary, they can always use a dictionary but, often the words suggested will not make sense in accordance with what they try to say. The best way for students to build vocabulary is to read, read write and read. They just have to read anything like, newspapers, fictions or anything. In addition, they must have a dictionary when reading, thus, they can search for any word if they do not know its meaning. In this way, students can remember the words and their meanings easily because they have read them in context.

King (ibid:16) believes that there are many characteristics in order to make writing more sophisticated including:

1. Avoid using too many exclamation points to express emotion. This note makes students or writers assuming that they are uncertain of the strength of their conversation.

2. Avoid flowery, poetic figures of speech. Oftentimes, this pulls the reader out of the story. Students must use clear description that apply to the scan. There is no need to attribute the poetic ability to writers unless they are writing poetry.

3. Avoid using italics to put emphasis on words. This is used when conversation is strong.

4. Avoid a lot of profanity. Unprofessional writers or students use profanity for shock value and sophistication but using it does not achieve any of them. If students character swears a lot just make sure it fits with the scene. Otherwise, one profane word in a book has more effect than a dozen on each page(ibid).

While, Bernoff (2016:66-67) says that there are many ways to make writing more sophisticated such as:

1. Choose simple words: It means that when students or writers write, they have to use simple words. For example, write **use** instead of **utilize**, **near** instead of **close** proximity, **help** instead of **facilitate**, **for** instead of **in the amount of**, **start** instead of **commence**. Using longer words seems as if writers' meaning is so specific that no other words will denote it.

2. Write short sentences: Students should write short sentences which are related to the composition or essay in order to keep patterns of the paragraph short as they will be easier to understand and read. So, each sentence should have one idea not more than one. If they write more than one idea his/her sentence will be complex and confused.

3. Keep paragraphs short: This characteristic means to make reading easier to better understand the information when a paragraph is broken into parts (ibid).

2.7 Importance of Punctuation in Writing

According to Coordination Group Publication (2017:35-40) punctuation marks play an important part in English grammar and writing. When we speak we can pause or emphasize certain words and phrases to help people understand what we are saying. But in writing, students or writers use punctuation marks in order to help the reader understand what they mean. So, using punctuation in writing can help the reader to obviously understand the message that is being conveyed. Punctuation, especially in academic writing, is crucial as it helps to strengthen arguments that are made in the text. It is important to know all the punctuation marks, their meanings and when to use them in order to produce a good piece of writing.

Consequently, punctuation plays a very important role in giving meaning to the language. The use of wrong punctuation marks or even wrong placement of punctuation marks can change the meaning of the sentence completely and often even convert the sentence to complete nonsense. Good punctuation expresses that writers or students have a good knowledge of grammatical structure. Consequently, students or writers should clearly grasp what is a simple sentence, what is a complex sentence and the meaning of each punctuation mark and where to use it. For instance,

She was bitten by a dog which hurts her.

She was bitten by a dog, which hurts her.

The meaning of the two sentences is different because of the use of comma mark. The first sentence means that the dog hurt her whereas, the second sentence means the bite hurts her. It is the comma after the noun phrase (**a dog**) that has completely changed the meaning of the second sentence (ibid).

Seely (2017:10-15) opines that punctuation marks are the system of signs given to reader to express how sentences are constructed and how they should be read and make the meaning obvious. So, the obvious sentences are the building blocks used to construct written accounts. The basic signs of punctuation marks include the following:

1. Full stop(.) A full stop is used at the end of a sentence. The full stop denotes that a point has been made and that we are about to move on to further explanations or a related point. A single full stop is also used in abbreviation of some words like telephone number (Tel. No.) and pages (PP.).

2. Comma (,) This mark is useful in a sentence when the student or writer wants to separate items on the lists, e.g., this mall contains fruits, vegetables, meats, rices...etc or use more than one adjective(a describing word, like the girl was happy, eager and full of anticipation at the start of her holiday.

3. Exclamation mark (!). It defines a strong feeling within a sentence like fear, anger or love. It is also used to emphasize feeling within a written word. The exclamation mark is used at the end of a sentence; therefore, there is no need to put a full stop after it. The use of exclamation marks is a poor way of emphasizing what we think is an important point in the written assignments. The importance of the point is emphasized without a sequence of exclamation marks. An exclamation mark should only be used when it is absolutely essential or taken from a direct quote and should be used in formal and semi-formal writing.

4. Question mark(?). This mark indicates that a sentence is asking a question, it always comes at the end of the question.

5. Semi-colon(;). it is the most difficult sign of punctuation to use accurately. If you doubt about its use, avoid using it and convert the added material into a new sentence.

6. Colon(:). The colon within a sentence makes a very pointed pause between two phrases. There are two main uses of the colon: it is used when listing and within a heading or descriptive title.

7. Apostrophe ('). Sometimes, it is called an inverted comma. It has two main uses: to indicate possession or ownership and to indicate where a letter is omitted.

8. Hyphen (-). This mark is used to link two words together like week-end and also used when a word is split between two lines(ibid).

Section Three (Writing Apprehension)

This section discusses of WA and its negative relationship with students' perception of writing, causes of WA , effects of WA , characteristics of WA .It also includes the role of reading and methods to reduce writing apprehension and strategies, activities ,suggestions and techniques to avoid writing apprehension.

3.1 Components of WA and its Negative Relationship with Students' Perception of Writing

Cheng (2004:647)states that there are four components arising while writing in a second/foreign language .**The first component** is confidence in writing in English which is consists of students' individuals' perception of difficulty of a writing task and self-assessment of their writing proficiency, besides students' perceptions of their competence, which is of a greater significance in experiencing second language WA and then their actual writing competence.

The second component is concerned with attitude and motivation to learning a second /foreign language .For example, students who believe that writing in English is important and who are interested in this area are not prone to WA and will have lower levels of stress. **The third component** is related to extra-curricular effort to learn English. Students who engage into listening to English broadcasts, keep contact with native speakers ,read English newspaper and watch English (TV. or movies) will have a lower degree of WA . **Finally, the achievement in English writing** is qualified as (L2) writing comprehension component. The grades students received for a writing course and for general examinations in English proficiency as well as self-assessment of their linguistic achievements made in their English diaries affect the level of WA.

Daly (1979:37) states that apprehension refers to a general avoidance of writing situations perceived by individuals to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing. This definition draws a correlation and interaction among three components:

- 1: Individual's attitudes (positive or negative judgment).
- 2: Emotions and feelings (fear or anxiety).
- 3: Behaviours of avoidance (blocking or resistance).

Faigley, Daly and Witte(1981:16) add that WA is a tendency to be anxious about writing. This means that writing is avoided and the apprehension can be seen in attitudes, behaviours and written products. Anxious writers share the following characteristics:

- 1: They fail to develop their ideas adequately,

- 2: They employ less variety in sentence patterns,
- 3: They have difficulty in thinking of what to write,
- 4: They produce shorter pieces of writing than their peers, and
- 5: They have difficulty with the use of writing mechanisms

3.2 Causes of Writing Apprehension

Writing specialists and psychologists have found that there are several things causing WA. According to Daly (1985:65) WA is described as a fright stage in writing process. This psychological barrier to writing is hypothesized to be caused by:

1. Inadequate time to complete writing assignments,
2. Writer's inability to see the purpose of his/her reports, leading to a belief that writing is a waste of time, and
3. Excessive criticism and repeated arbitrary revision of writer 's work by editors and supervisors.

Moreover, Daly (1978:10-14) states that fully negative comments and evaluations written by teachers on their students' work such as essay or compositions will result in reduced confidence ,reinforcement and satisfaction. Consequently, Daly (ibid) and Gregg(1995:7) suggest causes of WA as follows:

- 1 .lack of appropriate writing skills,
2. the type of writing tasks,
3. apprehensive writer's perception that teachers are a source of punishment of their students,
4. public comparisons of students' work with others that lead to disrespect and cause embarrassment to the writer, and
5. teachers given negative reactions to the content of student's essays or compositions,

Al-Drich (1979:84) believes that WA or anxiety a rise because of the lack of knowledge about the value of preparation and lack of methods to adequately cope with one's occupations writing demands . Raisman (1982:19-20)adds that the idea of WA is hypothesized on many points including:

1. students are unable to explain their ideas,
2. they have difficulty in developing arguments,
- 3 .they have limited range of vocabulary knowledge,
4. they are too worried over their ability to write,and
5. they are having limited time to plan, write and to revise the written draft(ibd).

3.3 Effects of Writing Apprehension

3.3.1 Attitude and Motivation Towards Writing

Anderman (2008:389) expresses that attitude and motivation towards writing as an effective disposition refers to how the act of writing writer feel , ranging from happy to unhappy .Attitude can best be thought of as an affective motivational state. Accordingly, students' attitude towards writing is less stale and more subject to change than a situation driven and short-lived emotion.

Rose (2009:7) concludes that attitude and motivation are "evaluation orientation" toward writing. In this case, the result of composing attitude and motivation toward writing are formed by one's history of evaluation by others and are reflected in the evaluation a student's levels at. For example, these evaluations can be broad such as this paper is not good or can be specific my conclusion seems tacked-on. In this case, evaluation is rooted in a comparison with internalized criteria of better writing or with beliefs about the criteria other audiences will use. Evaluation becomes improper when the criteria has internalized and attributed to others are full –blown or not enough understood(ibid).

3.3.2 Self -Efficacy

The construct of self-efficacy which was introduced by Bandura (1977:54) represents one core aspect of his social-cognitive theory. Bandura (1997:91) states that self-efficacy is how a person believes ,thinks, and feels in his or her ability to success in a particular situation. It can have an impact on everything from psychological states to behaviours and motivation. Self-efficacy plays a major role in how tasks, goals and challenges are approached. Students with a strong self- efficacy:

1. View challenging problems as tasks to be mastered,
2. Develop deeper interest in the activities in which they participate,
3. Recover quickly from setbacks and disappointments, and
4. Have a stronger sense of commitment to their interests and activities.

In contrast, students with weak self -efficacy:

1. Focus on personal feelings and negative outcomes,
2. Avoid challenging tasks,
3. Quickly lose confidence in personal abilities, and
4. Believe that difficult tasks and situations are beyond their capabilities(ibid).

Bandura (1986:75-76) believes that self -efficacy and WA are measured in the same sample. Many researchers find that apprehension does not contribute a significant amount to the variance of writing outcomes beyond that contributes by students' self-efficacy belief

Likewise, WA is correlated with writing performance. When self-efficacy is controlled, this relationship is diminished. Thus, self- efficacy is believed to mediate the relationship between apprehension and writing performance. Furthermore, when self-initial writing competence (also accounts for prior influences of motivation)gender and ,grade are controlled, self -efficacy still makes a significant independent contribution to difference in writing outcomes.

3.3.3 Self Esteem

According to Branden(1969:xiii) self-esteem(SE ,henceforth) is used to describe a person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value. It is seen as a personality trait which means that it tends to be fixed and enduring. Self-esteem involves a variety of beliefs about the self, such as the appraisal of one's own emotions, beliefs, appearance and behaviours. It plays an important role in psychology, SE depicts as one of the basic human motivations. People need both esteem from other people as well as inner self-respect. Both of these needs must be fulfilled in order for an individual to grow as a person and achieve self- actualization. The following are the three components of SE:

1. Self-esteem is an essential human need that is vital for survival and normal,
2. Self-esteem arises automatically based on a person's beliefs and consciousness, and
3. Self-esteem occurs in conjunction with a person's thoughts, behaviours, actions and feelings (ibid).

Maslow(1987:21-22)says that SE is a concept distinct from self-efficacy which involves the belief in future actions, performance and abilities.Once one has some measure of SE and confidence, one gains the psychological freedom to be creative and to grow as well as to be more generous to others.

There are factors that can influence SE such as, genetic factors that help in shaping overall personality , but it is often our experiences that form the basis for overall SE. Those who consistently receive overly critical or negative assessments from family members and friends, for example, will likely experience problems with low SE (ibid).

3.3.4 Self- Confidence

According to Snyder and Lopez(2009:217) self –confidence is a general term used to explain the inner strength of human beings .Shortly, self-confidence is defined as one's personal judgment, ability, power, etc. One increases self-confidence from experiences of having mastered particular activities. It is a positive belief that in the future one can accomplish what one wishes to do.

Also, Performance accomplishments are supposed to provide the most dependable confidence information because, they are based on one's own mastery experiences. Student's or writer's or any one's mastery experiences affect self-confidence beliefs through cognitive processing of such information. If one has repeatedly viewed these experiences as failure, self-confidence will decrease but, if these experiences are viewed as success, self-confidence will increase.

Ingleson (2010:5) notes that when self-confidence is reduced the whole world takes on a different view, the thoughts can become negative, the students or author may feel apprehension and full of fear and can feel powerless. Everyone has his own way of reacting to reduced levels of confidence although most of us do not have the skills to make good choices while we are in this place.

So that, self-confidence consists of eight modules, which should be worked through sequentially , they are: commitment and responsibility, habits and behaviour, beliefs and values, confidence, taking action, goals, communication and, motivation(ibid).

3.4 Characteristics of Students Who Suffer from Writing Apprehension

These points indicate the characteristics of students who suffer from WA as follows:

1. Avoid writing tasks and feel anxious about them make students suffering from WA. Daly and Miller(1975:6) address the issue of gender, but they find the date mixed and thus, conclude that it is likely that gender differences do not strongly influence writing apprehension.

2. The cognitive and affective models of blocking behaviour have tended to focus on the individual subject, without considering individuals' social position as a possible factor in blocking behaviour.(Olsen and Dobrin,1994:50).

3. Another characteristic that leads students to WA is that they lack the ability to express and organize their ideas. Anxiety may undermine their ability to think cohesively. They may also lack the needed vocabulary, structures and, expressions .They do not know how to organize or express good ideas; and they may not practice

writing extensively. They may not be interested in writing using English language because they believe that writing is difficult(Onwuegbuzie,1997:5).

4. Students who have apprehension about writing must make a regularly scheduled routine just as individuals who are apprehensive about oral communication, as they reveal and speak less about themselves. Individuals identified as writing apprehensive write less information.

5. The extent to the negative self-statements during writing are fixed characteristics of apprehensive writers. Those writers may not be sensitive to the objective difficulty of writing the assignment. Non-apprehensive writers, on the other hand, may worry more about their performance when the task is more challenging (ibid).

3.5 Methods and Measures to Reduce Second / Foreign Language Learning Apprehension

Clark(2005:6-9)concludes that apprehension from writing in learning (L2) can be reduced by many methods. **Firstly** ,the teacher can conduct the lessons with creativity and hence the classroom environment helps students to reduce their apprehension from writing. **Secondly**, teachers need to pay more attention to their students' learning rate and different cultural background. **Thirdly**, teachers must relate the teaching plan with updated issues occurred in the society in order to attract students' attention. This thing can help students remember what the teacher has taught them, easily.

There are many ways to reduce WA when students learn L2 including:

1. Students' feel fear of evaluations, specially negative evaluation. Teachers can help their students by giving them writing assignments that will not be graded. For example, exploratory writing on a topic or a draft of essay.

2. Teaching writing is not as a final product but as a process.

3. Referring to peers' feedback as an exchange for teaching. This feedback should be given in a non-threatening way , i.e. non-evaluative context.

4. Identifying error patterns made by students and helping them to correct these errors rather than correcting every single error by the teacher. It is accepted that this technique can help in overcoming high levels of WA among students.

5. Encouraging students to spend enough time on free writing activities.

These are the most frequently cited ways followed to reduce high WA levels.(Grabe&Kaplan, 1996:87).

3.6 Strategies and Activities to Avoid Writing Apprehension

Reeves (1997:35-40) and Tharp (1997:422) suggest that there are several strategies that teachers can use with their students whose WA interrupts their writing efforts, as follows:

1. Teachers speak about past experiences with writing in small groups early in the course as a way of helping students put past experiences in perspective . For example, students who are accustomed to receiving failing grades or primarily negative feedback may feel that they are unable to produce effective writing.

2. Teachers can be helped students examine these feelings, and understand their source. So, teachers can be encouraged their students to work through their apprehension.

3. Teachers can be included daily non-threatening writing activities in a practice-like atmosphere because, many students have either had little experience in writing or have only received criticism about past writings. The aim is to help students develop their self-confidence.

4. Teachers can be helped students get overcome their apprehension through reviewing samples of their errors. This assurance on systematic logic can help struggling students rise their confidence and be sure that they can learn from past errors.

5. Teacher can be helped students who are apprehensive by structuring writing activities in ways that promote balancing flexibility ,structure ,and success to help students unblock themselves(ibid).

Reeves (1997:39) and Gabaldon(2001:67) offer three techniques which have been successful and could develop confidence for students while writing, as follows:

1. Reflective dictation: In this technique, teachers can choose a passage from any primary passage source document. Students take dictation as precisely as they can and they can discuss errors as a class, and then examine the original piece more closely after that , they write a brief reflective response to the piece in terms of personal response to it, looking at the content and thinking about the structure of the piece.

2. A focused listening writing: In this technique, teachers can ask their students to write 500 words on a given topic. Students are sometimes intimidated by the task but by having them list everything they know about the topic and begin thinking about subtopics, students often find that the 500 words requirement is reasonable .This technique helps students develop confidence in their new language.

3. Metaphorical questions: In this technique, students are unready to revise their essays or compositions or writing an email. In other words, the second draft is not different from the first draft. For example, teachers may ask their students to answer questions such as "what does sleep look, feel, taste, smell? What words are synonyms for sleep? or What plant or creature would be a good symbol for sleep? The teacher asks students to revise the essay or composition or writing an email by using some of the new information they have generated(ibid).

Furthermore, students can be useful from many opportunities of using English through writing and speaking in a literacy environment. Reeves(1997:36-37) suggests that there are :

1.In-class writing activities: In this activity students may feel less apprehensive about writing if a teacher gives note cards which provide a small amount of writing space and ask them to respond using their own words. Another way that can be helpful, is to tell them that they have ten minutes to write the assigned paper. Setting a timer and making them write for ten minutes will help them find a " a way to writing or at least help them recognize the main points that they want to make in their writing".

2. Structured writing activities :most students need structure at the beginning for helping them feel less threatened by writing. Teachers can be allowed students to look for content without the pressure of having to make decisions about the form of the content. Such as, graphic organizers can provide students a visual pattern for writing. As students improve their writing, teachers can be helped them move beyond these structural activities and show them how to write "from scratch" using their own planning techniques (ibid).

4. Methodology and Procedures

4.1 Population and Sampling

Population refers to the subjects or examiners of a specific study or everyone who is the subject of a statistical observation (Reddy, 2004:28) .In short, population means a set of individuals or objects. A sample is taken from the population where each individual or object being independent and having an equal chance of selection, the average of the sample is an example of a random sample estimate of a population value (Schumacker and Tomek, 2013:43

The population of this study consists of 109 fourth -year university students of the Department of English at both University of Tikrit, College of Education for Human

Sciences(CEHS), College of Education for Women(CEW) and University of Samara', College of Education(CE). The number of the students at the University of Tikrit is ninety. Sixty- nine students are at the CEHS and only twenty-one students are at the CEW.. Twelve students have been randomly selected from the CEHS to represent the sample of the pilot administration of the constructed questionnaire and test. As a result, the remaining number is fifty-seven students and twenty-one from CEW who represent 87% of its original population. The number of the students at the University of Samara' for CE is thirty- one students which form 100% of its original population, as shown in Table(1).

Table(1)**The Population and Sample of the Current Study**

No.of University	Name of University	Name of College	Population	Pilot	Sample
1	Tikrit	College of Education for Human Sciences	69	12	57
		College of Education for Women	21	-	21
2	Samara'a	College of Education	31	-	31

Total	2	3	121	12	109
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4.2 Instruments of the Study

The current study includes two instruments, i.e. a questionnaire and an achievement test have been constructed, as follows:

4.2.1 Construction of the Questionnaire

Questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a number of questions or instruments to which they are to react either by writing out their responses or selecting from the existing responses (Dornyei and Taquchi, 2013:3-4). The items of the questionnaire can be put in a closed form or an opened form. In the current study a closed form questionnaire is used which has a set of options to each item from which the answers can be chosen. A Likert scale is used in the current study for studying and measuring answers' stances. They are usually used to determine answers' levels of satisfaction or agreement (Remeni and Onofrei,2015:15-16).

A questionnaire of thirty items has been constructed and distributed to the EFL students in order to discover the difficulties that students face in WA at University level. The included thirty items are presented in the form of statements to be endorsed on a five-point Likerts scale which ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

4.2.2 Construction of the Achievement Test

An achievement test is a tool to measure the level of knowledge or skill students learned in school or college to determine the academic progress they have made over a period of time. In other words, a test is a way to measure "general knowledge" that would be useful inside and outside of the class (Kautz and Heckman,2014:3).

Therefore, an achievement test has been constructed to measure students' level of performance in writing a composition, an essay, reading comprehension, and an email.

Table (2) describes the contents and behaviours of the achievement test.It indicates that the test involves four questions, questions one and two are scored out of thirty whereas, questions three and four are scored out of ten. Hence, the total score of the test is eight

Table(2)

The Specifications of Contents, behaviours and Scores of the Achievement Test

No.of Qs.	Contents	Subjects' Behaviours	Scores
Q1	Reading Comprehension	to understand the given passage and conclude the correct answer	10

Q2	Essay	to write a critical analysis of something using appropriate vocabulary ,grammar ,spelling,punctuation and other issues	30
Q3	Composition	to write a composition in terms of marking scheme involving grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and other issues	30
Q4	Writing an-email	to write an-email showing the personality,and some information about the appearance and character of the best friend.	10
Total			80

Section Five(Analysis of Data and Discussion of the Results)

The purpose of this Section is to analyze the collected data and discuss the obtained results related to the two involved instruments,i.e. the questionnaire and the achievement test of the current study.

5.1 Percentages of Students' Responses on the Questionnaire

In general the total percentages for the respondents of the whole statements are 24% for "strongly agree",and 27% for "agree", while 22% "for neutral" 16% for "disagree" and only11% for "strongly disagree" ,as shown in Table(3).These results conclude that EFL Undergraduate students have apprehension in their writing .In general,51% of the respondents are "strongly agree" and "agree", while 49% of the respondents record "neutral","disagree" and "stronglydisagree".

Table(3)

The Percentages of Students' Responses On the Questionnaire

No.of Items	Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	I have no fear of my English writing being evaluated.	15	14	21	19	20	18	23	21	30	28
2	I am afraid of writing essays in English when I know they will be evaluated.	19	17	19	17	29	27	24	22	18	17
3	I am nervous about writing in English	18	17	18	17	44	40	21	19	8	7

4	I would enjoy sending my English writing to magazines for evaluation and publication.	34	31	28	26	25	23	10	9	12	11
5	I have a terrible time organizing my thoughts in a composition course.	29	27	33	30	18	17	16	14	13	12
6	I should get a good grade regardless of the quality of my work.	26	24	30	28	24	22	17	16	12	10
7	I should prepare assignments in time	19	18	24	22	32	29	27	25	7	6
8	Expressing ideas through writing in English seems to be a waste of time	30	28	26	24	21	19	18	17	14	13
9	I often change some sentences and read them again.	24	22	44	40	24	22	11	10	6	6
10	I stop after writing each sentence to read it again.	15	14	37	34	32	30	13	12	12	10
11	I use comma,colon,semi colon and abbreviation, when it is necessary.	34	31	20	18	22	20	18	17	15	14
12	It is easy for me to write good compositions.	20	18	40	37	28	26	15	13	6	6
13	I feel relaxed when listening to my teacher .	22	20	23	21	29	27	24	22	11	10
14	I feel satisfied when my teacher is talking and teaching .	36	33	39	36	16	15	11	10	7	6
15	I feel more comfortable when I write than when I talk or read.	33	30	33	30	21	20	14	13	8	7
16	I like to see my thoughts on papers in English .	30	28	34	31	24	22	9	8	12	11
17	I am able to clearly write down my ideas in English.	35	32	30	28	17	16	18	17	9	7
18	I expect to do poorly in English composition lessons even before they begin.	31	29	34	31	20	18	14	13	10	9
19	I can complete writing my composition in the fixed time.	36	33	34	31	18	17	15	14	6	5
20	I always try to avoid writing anything on papers.	43	40	31	29	19	17	9	8	7	4
21	My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on my composition.	37	34	29	27	21	19	13	12	9	8

22	I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing.	20	19	31	28	31	28	15	14	12	11
23	I like to have my friends read what I have written.	22	20	20	19	23	21	20	18	24	22
24	Writing is a lot of fun.	29	27	34	31	24	22	16	14	6	6
25	My classmates will get the enjoyment of what I write.	19	17	26	24	22	20	24	22	18	17
26	I get a lot of benefit when the teacher explain the topic to us.	17	15	18	17	40	37	23	21	11	10
27	Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience.	27	25	27	25	26	24	21	19	8	7
28	I do not think I am able to write as most of other students do .	17	16	19	17	15	14	39	36	19	17
29	I feel disturbed when my teacher talks with me.	7	6	37	34	29	27	28	26	8	7
30	I do not have the ability to develop my writing.	44	40	42	39	14	13	5	5	4	3
Total		78	24	88	27	728	22	53	16	34	11
		8		1				1		2	

5.2 Analysis of the Collected Data in Terms of the Formulated Hypotheses

5.2.1 Average of Students' in Achievement of Writing

In order to verify the first hypothesis of the study which states “The average of EFL university students is within the theoretical mean scores in achievement of writing”, students mean scores as well as their standard deviation in the achievement test are obtained. They are 31.93 and 14.743, respectively. T-test formula for one sample has been applied in order to compare between the obtained level of performance and the theoretical level of performance. Results show that the computed t-value is 26.073, whereas the tabulated t-value is 1.965 at 0.05 level of significance and 108 degree of freedom, as shown in Table (4). Since the computed t-value is larger than the tabulated t-value, it means that there are significant differences between students' level of performance and the theoretical level of performance. This indicates that students face real difficulties in WA. Hence, the first hypothesis is rejected.

Table (4)

The Mean Scores, Standard Deviation and T-Value of students Performance in Achievement of Writing

No of students	Mean scores	Theoretical mean	SD	Variance	T – Value		DF	Level of significance
					Comp	Tabu.		
109	31.93	40	14.743	217.35	15.631	1.965	108	0.05

5.2.2 A Comparison between Males' and Females' Performance in the Achievement of Writing

In order to verify the second hypothesis which states "There are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of male students, and that of female students in achievement of writing". The mean scores of the two groups as well as their standard deviations are obtained.

The obtained results show that the mean scores for the males is 29.78 with a standard deviation of 14.350, whereas the mean scores of females is 38.04 with a standard deviation 11.494, as shown in Table(5). Then t-test formula for two independent samples is used in order to see whether the obtained differences are significant or not. The computed t – value is 9.110, whereas the tabulated t – value is 1.965 at 0.05 level of significance and with a degree of freedom 108. Since the computed t – value is larger than the tabulated t – value, this means that there are significant differences between male and female students in achievement of writing and in favour of females, hence, the second hypothesis “is rejected.

Table (5)

The Mean Scores, Standard Deviation and T-Value of Males and Females' Performance in Achievement of Writing

Group	No. of students	Mean scores	SD	T – Value		DF	Level of Significance
				Comp.	Tabu.		
Male	54	29.78	14.350	9.110	1.965	108	0.05
Female	55	38.04	11.494				

5.2.3 A Comparison between Students' Achievement at the University of Tikrit and the University of Samara'a

In order to verify the third hypothesis which states “There are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of students' achievement of the university of Tikrit(CEHS)and CEW)) and that of the university of Samaraa (CE) in achievement of Writing”, the mean scores for university of Tikrit is 37.85with a standard deviation 10.589,whereas the mean scores of the university of Samara`a is 29.61with a standard deviation of 12.295,as shown in Table(6)

In order to see whether the obtained differences are significant or not,t-test formula for two independent samples is used. The computed t – value is 7.306,whereas the tabulated t – value is 1.965 at 0.05 level of significance and at a degree of freedom (108).These results indicate that there are significant differences between the students of the two universities in their achievement of writing and in favour of the university of Tikrit, hence, the third hypothesis is rejected.

Table (6)

The Mean Scores,Standard Deviation and T-Value of the University of Tikrit and University of Samara'a Performance in the Achievement Test

Group	No. of students	Mean Scores	SD	T – Value		DF	Level of significance
				Comp.	Tabu.		
University of Tikrit	78	37.85	10.589	7.306	1.965	108	0.05
University of Samara`a	31	29.61	12.295				

5.3 Discussion of the Obtained Results

The obtained results have revealed that students at both the university of Tikrit and the university of Samara'a face difficulties and challenges in their writing.Results show that majority of the Iraqi EFL Undergraduate students' have high level of apprehension in their writing,whether in writing a composition or an essay, and writing an-email ,they lack knowledge of the vocabulary ,grammar and punctuation that barrier to complete their writing.

According to questions two,three and four of the test the majority of the students' have faced difficulties at three aspects,these aspects are:

1.Vocabulary aspect:One of the most important aspect that prevents students to write correctly or to complete their writing is vocabulary mistakes, there are four types of vocabulary mistakes such as: misuse of homonyms,confused words and wrong word forms

This aspect is very important and essential for effective communication at writing skill.The lack of vocabulary make students unable to explain their ideas.Some students struggle to communicate what they are thinking ,this can be a lack of words to describe what they want to write.Some students use the same words at questions two,three and four over and over again, a lack of descriptive words, adjectives and adverbs means students stick to the few words they know. Some students have difficulty in developing argument .The lack of adequate vocabulary knowledge is already an obvious and serious obstacle for many students to write or to complete their writing

2.Grammar aspect:Another aspect of students' mistakes in writing is grammar mistakes.Students sometimes do not choose the correct English verb tense for expressing an idea or do not use it in its correct form.They fail to use the articles correctly, or place words in the wrong order in a sentence.Also,grammatical errors involves errors of different word classes,subject-verb agreement,forms of singular and plural using present simple or present continuous in some cases.

3.Punctuation aspect.The other aspect of students' mistakes in the writing is punctuation that involves capitalization,use comma and apostrophe.Most of punctuation mistakes made by students are due to the lack of a clear understanding of what a sentence is and students result in complete sentences.

Another challenge is the correct usage of words,i.e. such as they fail the required or appropriate words instead one word in the place of another one which give the weak sentences.Some students' lack knowledge of vocabulary and rare use of punctuation marks.Other their writing are very limited .

6. Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Studies

There are three steps included in this section . Conclusions are stated first ,then some recommendations and suggestions for future studies in the field of WA, are given as follows:

6.1 Conclusions

The findings of the current study lead to the following conclusions:

1.In general,EFL Undergraduate students' at the fourth year face difficulties in the area of writing.Results revealed that students' face difficulties at writing a composition or

an essay ,and writing an-email.Most students lack knowledge in vocabulary,grammar and punctuation.So, they fail to express correctly about their ideas..Other students lack confidence in their basic mechanical skills and miss checking every word .

2.The findings reveal that the Iraqi Undergraduate EFL students are deficient linguistically(including command over grammar,vocabulary and punctuation,writing anxiety,lack of ideas,reliance on L1 and weak structure organization.These challenges are influenced by various factors involving untrained teachers,ineffective teaching methods and examination system,lack of reading and writing practice,low motivation and lack of ideas.

3. Students face difficulties in the organization of their ideas;also they have limited time to arrange their ideas or to reflect on their writing process and consequently, they commit careless mistakes or produce incomplete work,also lack of sufficient amount of grammar and vocabulary

4. Writing is very important to EFL undergraduate students' but some students at school or at the level of College do not like writing a composition, an essay an-email, also most of them lack the ability to arrange their thoughts even when they are interested in the topic.This lack may be attributed to their shortage of SE or confidence.

5 .Writing is not only a cognitive activity but also an emotional activity.So, students' motivation strongly influences all the steps of the writing.Students apprehension of writing stems from the lack of accuracy,self-confidence and their negative attitudes towards writing courses.Thus,College lecturers need to motivate their students in order to reduce the level of their writing and increase their competence through increasing their self- confidence.

6.2 Recommendations

On the basis of the obtained results and stated conclusions, the following points are recommended.

1.College lecturers should take their students' WA into consideration. Determining the level of students' WA is a positive step towards the treatment of this issue.

2.The way or method according to which writing is integrated in learning and teaching EFL needs to be addressed. For example, structured student-centered methods of teaching writing can decrease students apprehension of writing.

3.College lecturers must allow their students to write less than perfect sentences and paragraphs,and motivate them through relaxing games and music.

4.College lecturers must teach writing as for the sake of writing-not for the sake of exams and evaluation.Their comments should be positive thereby minimizing negative comments on their students' writings.

5.College lecturers need to help their students' overcome their poor English writing by adopting a comprehensive approach to teaching writing that can meet their strategic, linguistic and psychological needs.

6.3 Suggestions for Further Studies

To follow up this study,the following topics are suggested:

- 1.A study could be carried out to find the average of EFL Undergraduate students' WA in the various stages of study.
- 2.Investigating whether students' attitudes toward writing is improved by providing them with effective training.
- 3.Finding out the role of modern teaching strategies in reducing EFL Undergraduate students'.

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