



Does English Proficiency Level Predict Writing Speed, Length, and Quality?

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Abstract

The investigation of the role of L2 (second language) proficiency in L2 writing ability continues to be revealing for the better understanding of the nature of L2 writing. This kind of study is also much needed in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) settings like Iran for the better specification of the actual role of EFL writing instructors. The present article addresses the relationship between EFL proficiency and some qualitative and quantitative aspects of EFL writing performance. One hundred and forty college EFL learners, majoring in English as a foreign language in Iran, performed a letter-writing task. The quantitative and qualitative aspects of their writing performance were then quantified and studied in relation to their EFL proficiency. Correlation coefficients and analyses of variance showed the following: 1) Participants with higher EFL proficiency scores produced texts of significantly better quality ($R=0.42$, $P>.01$); 2) Text length, measured by the total number of words per text, was very weakly correlated with EFL proficiency scores ($R=0.2$, $P>.05$); 3) The correlation between the fluency or speed of writing measured by mean number of words written per minute on the one hand and EFL proficiency scores on the other hand was not found to be significant. The results suggest that although higher EFL proficiency may lead to the production of L2 texts with better

quality and quantity, it does not necessarily affect the fluency and the processing requirements of the complex task of EFL writing. Instead, L2 writing fluency in its limited definition in this work was shown to be a function of L2 writing ability level.

Keywords: EFL Proficiency, EFL Writing, Writing Quality, Writing Quantity