

This article reports on an enquiry into narratives written in English learnt as a fourth language by teenagers at two school levels. The investigation aimed at objectively gauging a number of specific features of the learner sentences, which were firstly classified into simple, multiple, incomplete and run-on sentences, with the length of the well-formed ones calculated next. Always taking the learners' full stop as the sentence boundary, the number of T-units per sentence and T-unit length were computed with the aim of better understanding grammatical complexity and fluency. T-unit length in the English narratives was finally compared with the average T-unit length in essays written in the other three school languages: Latin, Italian and German. At both school levels, the outcomes showed lower writing fluency in English, as was expected due to the much lower amount of hours in this than in the other languages. However, they also empirically verified improvement from the lower to the higher school level, so that it could be concluded that also the learning of a fourth language at school can be positively managed.