



*The Effect of Brainstorming Written Composition In EFL  
Learning Writing For Fifth-Year Preparatory School Students*

*Asst. Inst. Taghreed Abd –Al-Razak IsmayL  
Directorate General of Education / Diyala  
[wszsdx@gmail.com](mailto:wszsdx@gmail.com)*



اثر العصف الذهني في تعلم كتابة الانشاء لطلاب الصف الخامس الاعدادي

م.م تغريد عبد الرزاق اسماعيل  
المديرية العامة لتربية ديالى



## **Abstract:**

*The study investigates the impact of employing brainstorming strategy, as a pre-writing strategy, on preparatory EFL students' writing ability. Moreover, the study sought to investigate the efficacy of brainstorming for developing writing performance. Forty four participants were participating in writing composition in fifth grade at Iraqi preparatory schools . In this study the quasi-experimental design for one sample was used. Based on the results of the pretest and posttest, the learners who were treated with brainstorming strategy made significant progress in writing. Furthermore, their scores indicated that the majority of the learners found brainstorming a useful strategy in enhancing their writing skills. The results of the current study highlight the effectiveness of employing brainstorming as a pre-writing strategy in developing EFL students' writing skill.*

**Key words :** brainstorming, writing skill , written composition

## **المخلص:**

تبحث الدراسة في تأثير استخدام استراتيجية العصف الذهني ، كاستراتيجية ما قبل الكتابة ، على القدرة الكتابية لطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في مرحلة الإعدادية. علاوة على ذلك ، سعت الدراسة إلى التحقق من فعالية العصف الذهني في تطوير الأداء الكتابي. شاركت اربعة واربعون طالبة في الكتابة الانشائية في الصف الخامس من المرحلة الاعدادية في المدارس العراقية. وفي هذه الدراسة تم استخدام التصميم شبه التجريبي لعينة واحدة. وبناءً على نتائج الاختبار القبلي والبعدي ، حققت المتعلمات اللواتي استخدم معهن استراتيجية العصف الذهني تقدماً ملحوظاً في الكتابة. علاوة على ذلك ، أشارت نتائجهم إلى أن غالبية المتعلمات وجدون أن العصف الذهني استراتيجية مفيدة في تعزيز مهارتهن في الكتابة. وتسلط نتائج الدراسة الحالية الضوء على فعالية توظيف العصف الذهني كاستراتيجية ما قبل الكتابة في تطوير مهارات الكتابة لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العصف الذهني ، مهارة الكتابة ، كتابة الانشاء

## **INTRODUCTION**

Fitze and Glasgow (2009:14), assured that knowledge including grammar- vocabulary and rhetorical structure of the language are needed for writing as an ability interrelated with creativity , when writing motivates thinking that required for learners to focus and organize their opinions. Consequently, it reinforces learning and reflects in the language ( Maghsoudi and Haririan's 2013:23) .

As Yong (2010:13), noted writing can also foster collaborative skills of the learners but at the same time; it might be produced anxiety especially for those who are experiencing writing in the context of a second or foreign language ( Cohen and Brooks-Carson 2001:31). For McDonough (2004:12), collaborative arguments among groups can reduce the level of anxiety in learner's feeling and increase opportunities for communication through such activities. Hirst (2005:43), discussed that collaboration can contribute to an increase in producing opinions. Similarly, Richards ((1990:54) ,argued that communicative competence can be developed by cooperative learning.

In fact many students think that writing is not a cooperative work but, it is an individual attempt. They may never share their composition with their classmates and do not need their friend's written reflection and have no feedback for them. Thus, enhancing the quality of learners' composition is required for English writing teachers to give learners more collaborative environment and also

make them enthusiastic to share their production with their classmates. Some composition tasks are not paid enough attention as a significant element in the context of EFL by both learner and instructors in particular educational settings in Iraq. Therefore, the present investigation seeks to provide some preparation for writing classes to make learners become skilled in structural writing production. As well as ,written composition classes seem to be boring for the learners and they do not enjoy them perhaps, the students are not usually involved in such classes. On the other hand, stimulating the learners are not easy at all. Therefore, the present study looks for the effectiveness of the Iraqi learners' composition skill which is based on enhancing the brainstorming strategy to progress their writing skill. The most of investigators believe that the implementation of brainstorming tasks is one of the ways to obtain this target. Thus, the current research investigates the effectiveness of the Iraqi learners' writings which is based on developing the brainstorming strategy to improve their writing skills

### **Aim**

This study aims at working out the effect of brainstorming written composition in EFL learning writing.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The purpose of the present study was to answer the following research questions:

Q1: Does brainstorming strategy have any significant impact on writing composition of Iraqis' EFL learners at fifth preparatory school?

Q2: What is the effectiveness of the use brainstorming strategy in improving( Iraqi's EFL learners) writing skill?

## **Significance of the Study**

This study has practical and theoretical significance. Practically, the result of this study is predictable to give important support to the English writing teachers. Additionally, the outcome of the study is expected to provide experimental facts about the students' improvement in writing using brainstorming strategy.

## **Limitation**

The current study is limited to:

1-Iraqi EFL fifth preparatory students at Um AL-Mumyneen Preparatory School For Girls, Diyala Governorate.

2-The first course of the academic year 2019-2020.

## **EFL Writing Skill**

Writing is one of the components of second language learning refers to second language learners' ability to write. Using different kinds of combination and association , eliminate students' introversion and make them more confident to write with

everyone. (Chakraverty&Gautum,2000:12), defined writing as “a reflective activity that requires enough time to think about the specific topic and to analyze and classify any background knowledge". That is why writing constitutes a whole process of connecting specific elements to build a complete text, which needs to have some cohesion and coherence requirements in order to communicate related ideas that lead to a comprehensive sense.

### **Approaches of EFL Writing**

The traditional approach for writing has been called as product approach (Murray, 1980:7). It has been commonly used in the 1950s to 1970s. The importance is on the production and not in the development of writing .Teaching script was considered essentially as a machinery teaching and the instructor acting as an evaluator .It relies on the ending stages of writing, the constant text free from mistakes .(Nunan, 1991:5). One of the negative aspects in this approach , is that students missing inspiration and turn into inactive audience in the lesson (Ahmad, 2010:3) Learners tend to memorize samples of written texts and keep in mind them when they need. Therefore, It is a huge trouble if they are told to inscribe about a topic before preceding training (Salem, 2007:13). So, there is necessarily for a novel script approach to hold up students to reveal, plan, look for thoughts, construct up, arrange, assess their inscription and above all gather the supplies of assessments in schooling life. There is a demand

for method where the major principle of the instructor is to assist learners ,enlarge their thoughts, and the center of the lesson is a vast ultimate collection of production than the memorization of drafts of a text.

The process approach appeared as a reaction to the previous approach; it chiefly centers on the stags of script such as preparation, plan, revert to or rewrite and alter. Raimes (1983:11), stated that learners carry out 5 interrelated stags prior to the last products come out. These stags comprise pre-writing, draft, adjust and correct, and publish. Pre-writing and brainstorming; in this stage, teachers illustrate out thoughts from learners. Then, they assist students to organize their ideas by using mind maps or visuals. At the end of this stage students write their first draft. In fact , that the initial version may not be perfect, adjust and correct; learners in this stage hold to rewrite their writing, for instance, make sure their spelling, grammar, punctuation etc., correct or change thoughts. This can be accomplished throughout self-edit, peer edit and teacher edit. Publish; at the end of the process, students produce the ultimate outline. Many studies and researches on the EFL classes instructor's training inscription method is still in its immaturity and a few studies carry out in the investigational situation, under limited perform and variables ,using samples of students and teachers (Al-Ashri, 2013:7). With the development of text studies and discourse analysis, in 1980's

the genre approach was developed with the key concept that learners could benefit from learning different genres/text types in different social contexts and situations. The key concept is that each genre has its own conventions. According to Paltridge (2001:65), the genre approach helps incorporate discourse and contextual aspects of language use with regard to structures, functions or vocabulary. One problem of this approach is how to deal with grammar issues in oversized class. Therefore, recommended form-focused activities such as class discussion, question/answer session, addressing to students' problematic forms, evaluation of students' essays, in-class writing tasks, and role-play seem practically applicable in EFL writing communicative classes(Poole, 2005:87).

### **The Brainstorming Strategy in Writing Skill**

Brainstorming strategy is one of the most vital strategies in frustrating inspiration and solving problems in the educational settings, and this strategy was presented by Alex Osborn, in 1938 as a boss of an American advertisement company of his of traditional business meetings.

The brainstorming refers ; the use of brain to the active problem solving and the brainstorming term “means to develop creative solutions to problems” (al-Khatib, 2012:29). In written composition classes , students can use this strategy to create ideas



for writing a paper. In the process of brainstorming we should suspend any concerns about staying organized. The aim is to transfer our ideas and views onto paper without disturbing about while they make sense on how they fit together (Fleming, 2014).

## **Methodology**

### **Sample of the study**

In the present study, forty four (only female ) fifth Preparatory students aged 17-18 were tested. The participants are native speakers of Arabic, learning English as a foreign language. They all have been learning English for at least ten or eleven years . It was supposed that the students have similarly educational knowledge.

### **Instrumentation**

Pre-test and post-test were conducted in the current study. The study was lasted six weeks. In the first two weeks participants were asked to write a composition individually ; while in the third and fourth weeks, they were tested to write another composition in pair , they were followed brainstorming strategy, and in the fifth week the researcher asked the students to discuss and talk about the topic they write about as training phase. After that, they were tested . In the sixth week post-test has done, students wrote a composition individually also. Each pre-test , post-test and pair- work tests were

done in one lesson period i,e forty –five minutes. In scoring composition writing the researcher applied a rubric .

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### Statistical Method

The following statistical methods are used:

t-test= The t- test of one sample is used to find out the differences between individual student and the brainstorming pair-work students in writing composition.

M= The mean of sample

S.D=The standard derivation

M.D= The mean of differences

S.D.D= The standard derivation of differences

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Formula for one sample t-test:

$$t = \frac{\bar{X} - \mu}{S / \sqrt{N - 1}}$$

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## **Procedures**

Data collection was done at four different times; throughout the first course in the academic year 2019-2020 . Forty-four students were pre-tested twice. The researcher aims of collecting the data twice times in order to notice if students who write a composition in the first week (forty-five minutes ,one period` ) and their writing performance were affected by anxiety or illness .For these reasons , the researcher conducted the pre- test twice individually .Once the topic to write about : " Your favorite Hobby" , and twice to write about: "Your father's Job". To gather data, the students undertake this process, a composition put on papers by them in their class to evaluate their positions in writing skill in pairs .For third and fourth times , the researcher lets the students to chat and talk about the topic they write during fourth week following the brainstorming as a pre-writing strategy . In each week learners use up three lessons (45minutes) .To estimate and examine learners development in an inscription skill, it was determined in the fifth week to tell learners to carry out a free writing . To control the students writing, participants were all offered the quantity of time, forty - five minutes, one lesson with other topic is " Summer Holiday" .It was worth to be mentioned that the pair-work test was run twice .In which the students replace their acquaintances in the sixth week beneath the researcher's instructions to write about the topic " Your Weekend". This procedure was employed to observe

if their ability in writing was influenced or gain by the treated strategy. In the sixth session the post-test was administrated. It was a composition writing test , students were told to write a paragraph with the topic for this post-test was chosen as “What are your future dreams?” individually. Students were allotted 45 minutes to compose their writings. The pre-test ,post-test and pair-work tests papers among students were gathered and ready for the scoring stage. However, not all the learners utilized the limited time as mainly of them do have imperfect language talent when writing in English. To keep away from misunderstanding on what to do, directions were given to the students in their class . To make sure of the construct validity for the pre-tests and post-test , two experts of the field revise the tests' questions, topics and rubric for scoring . Since, writing an essay or writing composition are subjective tests, peer evaluation as the procedure for scoring phase was followed by a researcher who was their own English teacher and another English teacher in the school to obtain objectivity as much as possible. It is worth to be mentioned that the inter-rater reliability value-0.91 . It was a higher value which means that the test was really reliable (Selman& Murad,2012:23).

### **Data analysis & Discussion**

In order to analyze and discuss the findings, T-test for one sample formula is used. It has been found that there are no significance differences in the students' performance who write a composition between the average of first pre-test and the treated strategy test. In this respect since the computed t-value( 1.81) is less than the tabulated t-value (2.07) under (21)the degree of freedom at (0.05)level of significance. This indicates that first experience for students to work followed the brainstorming strategy in pair` are not affected their writing composition, and due to the fact that students do this test for the first time and without training, as students always work in pair orally and less work in written tasks without discussion previously see table (1).

**Table(1)**

**T-test value for one sample, between the first pre-test and the brainstorming pair-work tests .**

Level of significance	d.f	Tabulated t- value	Computed t- value	S.D.D	M.D	S,D	M.	N	Test
No significance	21	2.07	1.81	1.87	0.72	1.44	3.04	22	First Pre-test
-	-	-	-	-	-	1.74	3.77	-	Brainstroming Pair-work tests

From a comparison ,between the average of second pre-test and the brainstorming pair-work test . The results are shown that the computed t-value(2.31) is higher than t-tabulated value (2.07) under (21)the degree of freedom at (0.05)level of significance. This indicates that there is a significance difference between the students' performances who write a composition in a pair for the second time after training phase and the performance of students who write the composition individually and traditionally in the second pre-test. Since the researcher makes the students practice writing a composition in pair more than once in the fifth week . The students may have affected or benefit knowledge and information from their partners see table (2).

**Table(2)**

**T-test value for one sample, between the Second pre-test and the brainstorming pair-work tests**

Level of significance	d.f	Tabulated t- value	Computed t- value	S.D.D	M.D	S,D	M.	N	Test
Significance at level 0.05	21	2.07	2.31	2.11	0.59	1.21	2.40	22	second Pre-test
-	-	-	-	-	-	1.63	3	-	Brainstorming Pair-work tests

Regarding data analysis a comparison ,between the average of first ,second pre-tests and the brainstorming pair-work tests . The results reveal that there are also significance differences in the students' performances who write a composition between the average of first , second pre-tests and the brainstorming pair work-tests. This is due to the fact ,that computed t-value(2.37)is higher than tabulated t-value(2.07)under the degree of freedom (21) at(0.05) the level of significance ,which means that students have better performance ,when they were written and followed treated strategy rather, than written individually and traditionally . They share their ideas, experiences, through their discussions see table(3).

**Table(3)**

**T- test formula for one sample, between the average of the first and the second pre-tests and the brainstorming pair-work tests .**

Level of significance	d.f	Tabulated t- value	Computed t- value	S.D.D	M.D	S,D	M.	N	Test
Significance at level 0.05	21	2.07	2.37	1.54	0.65	1.08	2.72	44	First and second Pre-tests
-	-	-	-	-	-	1.12	3.83	-	Brainstorming Pair-work test

**Table(4)**

**T- test formula for one sample, between the average of the first and the second pre-tests and the post test .**

Level of significance	d.f	Tabulated t- value	Computed t- value	S.D.D	M.D	S,D	M.	N	Test
Significance at level 0.05	43	2	2.30	1.43	0.50	1.64	2.40	22	First and Second Pre-tests
-	-	-	-	-	-	1.58	2.90	-	Post test



The table reveals that there is a difference in students' performance of writing composition after they work in pair and they were using brainstorming strategy ,since the computed t-value (2,30) is higher than the tabulated t-value which has statically significant at 0.05 level of significance ,and this difference is in favor to students' performance of writing composition in the post-test. This result indicates that there is a significant effect in the development of students writing composition using brainstorming strategy see table (4).

From the analysis of the previous data, it has been found that in a period of one academic school year of one month and a half, EFL Iraqi fifth preparatory students facing minimal exposure to the English language writing composition utilized brainstorming in a pair (45 minutes per week) have obtained moderately better results than writing individually and traditionally.

This shows that students have learned more vocabulary and have been able to use it in their writing essays in English and that therefore, they feel more confident in writing more words in English because their knowledge in vocabulary and grammar has increased considerably when they use brainstorming strategy and work in pair , they find that there is no need to write alone and without using brainstorming strategy .

Therefore, this reveals that students who underwent this study have considerably improved their ability in English writing in six-weeks period of instruction in a minimal exposure situation of brainstorming strategy.

## **Conclusions**

From the previous data analysis and discussion ,It can be concluded that:

1- The brainstorming as a strategy was followed in written composition has positive effect in EFL Iraqi students' learning writing, since their writing ability is well developed.

2-The maximum exposure for the students to work with brainstorming strategy in writing composition reveal considerable development in their writing ability.

3-The teachers must make the students write paragraphs of a specific number of words to develop their thinking and discussing the main points in pairs, while they can be utilized brainstorming strategy. In this way they will help them to share their knowledge and experiences and discover their own errors through different written tasks instead of let them write individually and traditionally.

4- The teachers must give students a chance to write in a pair or in a group followed the treated strategy more than one time to share their progress and fears about writing. This will be very helpful for improving their writing skills, using extra material from magazines, web sites and different books in order to make the students learning writing composition easier.

5-English classes should be probably more motivated for the students to work in a group and in a pair since they feel more 'free' and confident in class. Students who attend such English classes receive more input and obtain better results.

### **Previous studies**

A number of studies have been utilized brainstorming strategy in many educational settings. One of them, a study came from Fawzi, Mohammad, and Hussein (2013). This study was shown that both types of brainstorming were encouraging students with more favorite assumed to guide. Proceedings of the 1st National Conference on English Language Teaching (NACELT), Sunday, 15 November 2015 State Islamic Institute of Palangka Raya ISSN: 2502-3225 66 .

Another study was conducted by al-khatib (2013). The outcome of the study revealed that there are statistical significant differences between the experimental group and the control group in the

creative thinking ,and these differences were in the favor of the experimental group showing the effectiveness of using brainstorming strategy in developing creative thinking skills.

Third study conducted by the researcher Sabarun(2015) an experiment study entitled “The Effectiveness of Brainstorming Technique in Writing Paragraph across the Different Level of Achievement at the Second Semester English Department Students of Palangka Raya State Islamic College 2014/2015 Academic Years”.

The study revealed that, there was a very statistically significant difference at the 5% and 1% of significant level in students’ writing achievement both for the bright and poor students between the students who wrote paragraph using brainstorming technique and those who wrote paragraph without using brainstorming technique.

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