

The Impact of Journalistic Questions Pre-Writing Technique on Iraqi EFL Secondary School Students' Performance in Writing Composition

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ABSTRACT

The process of writing is considered as one of the most important skills in teaching the foreign language. It enables learners to express their ideas, thoughts, feelings, knowledge.. etc in a writing form. Writing is the product of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures requiring special skills. However, this process is considered as one of the most challenging and complex tasks in teaching the foreign language. It needs various sets of competencies. In Iraqi EFL classrooms, teachers face a number of difficulties and problems in teaching the process of writing. Also, learners face problems in learning this process. Accordingly, teachers are advised to adopt various strategies and techniques in teaching composition writing. Journalistic Questions pre-writing technique is one of the most effective techniques implemented in writing teaching composition. It enables the learners to create and organize their ideas and

thoughts to produce effective composition. Moreover, this technique encourages cooperative learning and group work. Also, it is an interesting technique in teaching writing. This study aims at investigating the impact of Journalistic Questions pre-writing technique on Iraqi EFL secondary school students' performance in writing composition. This aim is achieved by the following null hypothesis which states that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the performance of the experimental group students who are taught writing composition by Journalistic Questions pre-writing technique and that

of the control group students who are taught writing composition by the traditional technique in the writing composition post-test. The study is limited to the students of the fifth preparatory class, in Karbala during the academic year 2017-2018. The results prove that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the performance of the experimental group students who are taught writing composition by Journalistic Questions pre-writing technique and that of the control group students who are taught by the traditional technique in the writing post-test in favor of the experimental group. Based on the above result, some conclusions and pedagogical recommendations have been put forward, as well as a number of further studies have been proposed.

Key words : Journalistic questions . Writing Composition. Technique

تعتبر الكتابة واحدة من أهم المهارات في تدريس اللغة الأجنبية، إذ تمكن المتعلمين من التعبير عن أفكارهم ومشاعرهم ومعارفهم .. إلخ بشكل كتابي. فهي نتاج عمليات التفكير والصياغة والمراجعة التي تتطلب مهارات متخصصة على أية حال، تعتبر هذه العملية واحدة من أكثر المهام صعوبة وتعقيداً في تدريس اللغة الأجنبية وتعلمها والتي تحتاج إلى مجموعة متنوعة من الكفايات. في المدارس العراقية، يواجه مدرسو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية عدداً من المشاكل والصعوبات في تدريس هذه المهارة. وبناءً على ذلك، يُنصح المدرسون باعتماد استراتيجيات وتقنيات مختلفة في تدريس الكتابة. تقنية (الأسئلة الصحفية) هي إحدى التقنيات الأكثر فاعلية المطبقة في تدريس مهارة الكتابة حيث تمكن المتعلمين من تنظيم أفكارهم. علاوة على هذا، تشجع الإستراتيجية التعلم التعاوني العمل الجماعي وأيضاً أنها تقنية ممتعة في تدريس الكتابة. تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى البحث في أثر تقنية الأسئلة الصحفية على طلاب المدارس الثانوية العراقية في كتابة الانتشاء. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف تمت صياغة الفرضية الصفرية التي تنص على أنه لا يوجد فرق إحصائي يعتد به بين متوسط درجة أداء طلاب المجموعة التجريبية الذين تم تدريسهم كتابة الإنشاء بواسطة تقنية الأسئلة الصحفية وطلاب المجموعة الضابطة الذين تم تدريسهم بالتقنيات التقليدية في الاختبار البعدي في كتابة الإنشاء. تقتصر الدراسة على طلبة الصف الخامس الإعدادي في كربلاء خلال العام الدراسي ٢٠١٧-٢٠١٨. تثبت النتائج أن هناك فرقاً إحصائياً في الدلالة بين متوسطات درجات أداء طلاب المجموعة التجريبية الذين يتم تدريسهم بواسطة تقنية (الأسئلة الصحفية) وأداء طلاب المجموعة الضابطة الذين يتم تدريسهم بواسطة التقنية التقليدية في الاختبار البعدي في الكتابة لصالح المجموعة التجريبية. بناءً على النتائج، تم تقديم بعض الاستنتاجات والتوصيات التربوية إضافة إلى تقديم عدد من الدراسات المقترحة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأسئلة الصحفية، كتابة الإنشاء، تقنية

SECTION ONE

Introduction

1.1 The Problem and its Significance

Writing is considered a skill that depends at a large extent on the writer's ability to understand the potential reader's point of view. The writer must have enough knowledge of the subject he aims to write about, the knowledge of suitable language and the knowledge of personal aspects which are involved in writing and how to control them (Perez et al., 2003 : 59).

In fact, writing is considered the most complex skill that human beings can implement. It is an effortful and cognitively demanding skill. It cannot be presented as a sequence of separated steps. It needs a number of applications of difficult mental resources and a collection of several strategies. Successful writing requires understanding of the components of quality text. In addition, writing process can be shaped and organized through the knowledge of writing strategies that successful writers need (Mertens, 2010: 2).

The skill of writing has become important to be developed effectively. Technology helps people from nations and different cultures interact with each other, that is why communication across languages is considered more essential. For this reason, the ability to write using a foreign language is considered as an essential skill in education, business, communication ..etc.(Nuraini, 2013 : 2)

Celce-Murcia (2001:207) states that writing enables a person to communicate with others using various messages. In the modern world, such communication is considered very necessary whether this communication takes the form of paper - and - pencil writing or using the most technological electronic mail. So, in the perspective of teaching language communicatively, writing, as a communication

skill, should be encouraged and nurtured in teaching English course and the language learners should be trained to be independent and successful writers by offering them a number of strategies about how to continue learning writing outside the classroom.

Brown (2000 : 335) comments that there is a simplistic view of writing that sees writing language is mere the graphic representation of spoken language. In fact, writing is more complex than this. Brown thinks that writing pedagogy is very essential. Hedge (2005 : 10) adds that writing is not only presenting accurate sentences or phrases, but it is also a skill leading learners to produce "whole pieces of communication to link and develop information, ideas, or arguments for a particular reader or a group of readers".

Because writing process is a part of language learning, students should have full master on this skill besides the other skills of listening, reading and speaking. Generally, writing needs high level of productive ability. So, writing is the hardest language skill as compared with the other skills. Generating and organizing ideas are difficult, but translating these ideas into readable text is more difficult. So, writing skill is highly complex (Perez et al., 2003 : 60).

There are two levels of skills that writers should focus on, higher level skills of planning and organizing, and lower level skills of spelling, punctuation, word choice etc.. The difficulty appears vividly if the foreign language learners' proficiency is poor (Nuraini, 2013 : 2).

Hundreds of learners, who are studying English as a second or foreign language around the world, have difficulties in improving writing skill. In fact, those learners are poor writers since they do not have interest in writing compositions. They commit a number of mistakes in the process of writing compositions and present incoherent paragraphs. So, they get unacceptable results (Jimenez, 2013 : 1).

Writing skills is considered complex and difficult to learn for a lot of students who believe that writing is complicated to develop. They believe so because they consider that writing is the most difficult language skill. Besides, students face problems in writing when they have troubles in making mistakes in both using the language and organizing ideas in a continuous composition. For this reason, the students' writings cannot be presented correctly (Langan, 2001 : 1).

Many learners have the ability to produce short sentences and paragraphs, but they fail when they want to write a composition. They make many mistakes and erroneous forms. They do not have sufficient knowledge about the techniques of writing, planning and revising. They tend to present long sentences because they want to say everything in one sentence. They do not realize the fact that the longer sentence is the more mistakes it contains and less meaning is clearly expressed (Gafled-Vile, 1998 : 3).

The problem, that appears in the process of teaching writing in Iraqi EFL classrooms, is that learners concentrate on the writing product itself rather than on how to write or what steps they should follow during the writing process to produce a good and efficient piece of written work. Iraqi foreign language teachers focus on

the written product while they pay less emphasis on the process of writing. Most of them ignore discussing the ideas given by the learners. "Composition writing may have an impact on the failure of improving students' written performance" (Al-Essawi, 2014 : 4). Several studies have remarked that Iraqi students, who have difficulties in writing composition, cannot present a continuous composition during classroom activity and consequently they do not have the ability to write properly (Al- Azzawi 1998, Al- Karkhi 1999, Al-Rifai 2001, Al- Hassan, 2005, Adnan 2006 and Al- Musawi 2011).

In order to face these difficulties in teaching writing, teachers are advised to follow effective strategies and techniques in teaching and developing the process of writing composition. One of these effective and beneficial techniques is Journalistic Questions (J.Qs.. for short) pre-writing technique.

This technique can enable students to develop their abilities in creating ideas and producing good writing pieces. Also, through this technique, the students' writing skill is expected to be improved (Kurniyasari, 2016: 14). Moreover, this technique breaks classroom monotony and boredom. It creates enjoyment and cooperative atmosphere in teaching writing composition.

1.2 Aim

The aim of the present study is to empirically investigate the effect of (J.Qs..) pre-writing technique on Iraqi EFL secondary school students' performance in writing composition.

1.3 Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that there is no statistically difference between the mean score of the experimental group students' performance who are taught writing composition by (J.Qs.) pre-writing technique and the control group students' performance who are taught writing composition by traditional technique in the writing composition post-test.

1.4 Limits

1-The study is limited to the students of the fifth class secondary school, the scientific biological branch in Karbala during the academic year 2017-2018.

2-The sample of the material is limited to teaching writing composition in the last four units of (English for Iraq-Fifth Preparatory by Olivia Johnston and Mark Farrell) published by Garnet Education, 2013.

1.5 Value

The present study can be useful for secondary school teachers and their students. Also, the findings of the present study can be beneficial for the organizers of in-service-training courses in English.

Concerning secondary school teachers, the present study meets their needs since (J.Qs.) technique is hoped to be valuable and effective for developing students' writing skill. Teachers can make use of the present study to reinforce teaching writing composition. Additionally, the present study helps them enhance group work which is one of the Communicative Approach activities. For Iraqi secondary

school students, the present study can be beneficial as (J.Qs.) technique develops their writing skill and enables them to be good writers following the effective steps in the writing process. Furthermore, it is hoped that adopting this technique encourages them to overcome their difficulties in this process. Finally, the present study can be benefit for the organizers of in-service-training courses in English to develop teaching writing composition in Iraqi secondary schools through using (J.Qs.) pre-writing technique.

1.6 Definition of Basic Terms

The following terms have been defined theoretically and operationally:

1.6.1 Journalistic Questions Technique

"It is one of pre-writing techniques consisting of 6 question words (who, what, where, when, why and how) used by reporters in making interviewees. Those question words can stimulate and encourage students in order to generate creative ideas in writing their texts". (Kurniyasar, 2016: 2).

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(J.Qs.) is defined as a writing technique that activates learners' creative thinking through the use of the questions of this technique to produce an effective text (Urquhart and McIver 2005: 83).

Operationally, this technique contains six questions adopted to improve learners' writing skill and stimulate their creative thinking. These six questions guide learners to write well, create ideas and organize these ideas to produce a coherent, cohesive and unified composition.

1.6.2 Writing Composition

According to Heaton (1988: 127) composition writing is an activity involving the learner to write words for producing grammatical and meaningful sentences and link them to form a continuous piece of written text.

Weiss (2006:9) defines composition writing as a written work produced by the learners in an educational environment to express what they know and feel.

Composition writing is defined operationally as a written activity implemented by the learners to express their thoughts, feelings and opinions through the use of grammatical and meaningful sentences which are linked to produce a continuous text.

1.6.3 Technique

"Technique is implementational – that which actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective" (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 19).

Cobuid (1987: 1501) states that technique is "a particular procedure of doing an activity, usually a procedure that involves practical skills".

The operational definition of technique is the practical steps adopted by a teacher inside the classroom to present an activity for his/ her learners' to facilitate their learning.

Journalistic Questions Technique and Writing Composition

This section presents the notion of writing composition, teaching this component, the definition of Journalistic Questions pre-writing technique (J.Qs. for short) and implementation of this technique in teaching writing composition. This section, also, sheds the light on the previous studies that tackles such topic.

2.1 The Concept of Writing Composition

Writing is a mental and physical work. It is considered physical when a writer uses the fingers in producing words, sentences and paragraphs with the help of a pen, paper or any means. On the other hand, writing is regarded as a mental process since it depends on thinking process in producing ideas that are reflected into words, sentences or paragraphs to send the intended message (Nunan 2003, 88).

Beside speech, writing is a means of communication. In the present age of technology which depends on tools to send messages, writing provides interaction when there is no chance to send information orally. Making use of alphabet letters

and in relation to grammar and vocabulary, writing expresses the human's interactions with the same system of speech. However, written language, as compared with the spoken language, is preferable since it can be saved easily in a notebook or computer file and it reinforces one's learning (Brown, 2000: 335).

Writing is regarded as one of the most important language skills the students need in the process of learning a foreign language as it helps them to communicate their ideas, thoughts, knowledge and feelings. This skill is not only a means of transferring messages, but also, it is a beneficial means to develop those messages. A person can realize a message written by someone and he is able to transfer it to others. Writing has been developed to enhance the process of learning and the process of writing itself. Writing is taught for learning when students produce a written material based on knowledge and information got from their teachers or textbooks. On the other hand, writing is needed for reinforcing the process of writing itself when learners improve their skills to be better writers (Harmer, 2004:112).

Boardman (2008: 20) sees that good writing can be characterized according to: coherence, cohesion and unity. Coherence means that the main and supporting sentences are arranged according to the ordering principles of the paragraph type in one paragraph. Cohesion means that supporting sentences should be related to others in one paragraph. Unity means that every paragraph belongs to supporting and main sentences. These characteristics, which are as a key to realize the quality of writing, enable readers to distinguish between different writers' styles.

Concerning the classroom situation, teachers should allow the students develop their writing styles putting these three characteristics into their considerations through the implementation of different pre-writing techniques. (J.Qs.) technique is one of these effective pre-writing techniques that enable students to reinforce their writing skill and realize writing characteristics.

Flower and Hayes (1981: 373) explain the elements of the writing process which are: planning, translating and reviewing. Planning means that the writer

plans his/ her ideas that will be presented to support the topic. Translating refers to writer's ability to translate his/ her ideas into a written text. Reviewing shows the writer's ability to revise his/ her sentences about grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. In this respect, teachers are advised to select a number of effective pre-writing techniques that reinforce students' writing skill through adopting these three elements. (J.Qs.) is one of these techniques that enhance writing skill. Through this technique, students realize how to plan, translate and review what they have written.

2.1.1 Types of Writing

Since there are different types writing, students should distinguish each of them and be aware of the characteristics, features and functions of each type. However, there are some similar qualities between these kinds. Teachers are advised to realize the purpose of each type to enable the students to distinguish them and adopt the appropriate type according to topic (Yanti, 2018: 16).

2.1.1.1 Expository Writing

This type is considerable as one of the most common types of writing. In this type, the writer attempts to explain the readers a concept or information using his/ her own style. The writer does not express his/ her opinions. He/she focuses on acceptable facts about the topic he/ she is dealing with including statistic or other evidences. Recipes, news stories, business writings, technical and scientific writings are examples of this type (ibid).

2.1.1.2 Descriptive Writing

In this type of writing, authors depend on a descriptive style. They try to paint a picture through words for their audience. This type is found in fiction writings. However, it can be seen in nonfiction writings; for example: memories, travel guides, etc. Descriptive writings need the readers to employ their senses as much as possible to create a complete and clear images about the topic. Poetry, diary writings, description of nature, fictional novels and plays are good examples of this type of writing (Jeffrey, 2015: 3).

2.1.1.3 Persuasive Writing

This type is preferable in academic paper. Writers select this type of writing trying to convince the audience about certain ideas or beliefs. They imply their opinions, thoughts, justifications, reasons and biases in writings. Persuasive writings show arguments. They appeal to emotions or reasons or both supported with anecdotes. Letters of complaints, recommendations, advertisements, newspapers are good examples of this type of writing (ibid).

2.1.1.4 Narrative Writing

Here, the author uses a narrative style to construct fiction and nonfiction writings. The main purpose of this type is to gain reader's interest. Also, this kind of writing is adopted for entertainment. On the other hand, narrative writings can be used to construct, change, conflict attitudes and social opinions. Novels, poetry and short stories are good examples of this type of writing (Kheryadi, 2017: 379)

In teaching situation, teachers should provide their students rich opportunities to practice writing in these four types. To facilitate this task, (J.Qs.) technique is advised to be adopted since the elements (i.e. questions) that this technique is built on have students generate ideas, opinions, feelings, develop them and express them freely and effectively.

2.1.2 Teaching Writing Approaches

There are various approaches in teaching writing. Raimes (1983: 6-10) presents six of them that are presented briefly below

2.1.2.1 The Controlled to Free Approach

During 1950s and early 1960s, second language learning was dominated by the Audio-lingual Method which focused on writing and speech through mastering on syntactic and grammatical forms. According to this method, learners, who have

sentence exercises, are required to copy or manipulate grammatically these controlled compositions. The teacher's role is to correct learners' errors. This procedure can lead the learners to write free compositions. However, this procedure make an emphasis on accuracy rather than fluency.

2.1.2.2 The Free Writing Approach

This approach focuses on writing quantity rather than quality. On other words, this approach stresses on fluency rather than accuracy. The principle, that this approach is based on, is that if the ideas are expressed well and completed the organization follows.

2.1.2.3 The Paragraph Pattern Approach

This is the third approach that emphasizes on organization through copying paragraphs or model passages. This approach shows that language users in various cultures or situations can make and organize communication with others in different ways.

2.1.2.4 The Grammar-Syntax Organization Approach

The fourth approach focuses on simultaneous work more than on composition features. In other words, this approach cannot see writing as composed of separated skills that are learned sequentially. Accordingly, teachers should train their students to focus on the organization of writing composition. Also, the students work on the necessary grammar and syntax.

2.1.2.5 The Communicative Approach

The aim of writing and the audience for it are given great emphasis according to this approach. Some tasks are given to the students who have to behave as writers. This procedure can develop the students' writing skill. Implementing this approach in teaching writing composition allows the student to find the answers of the following questions:

- Why am I writing this?
- Who will read it?

Since this approach provides students with the actual experience in the writing process, it is seen as quite functional in nature.

2.1.2.6 The Process Approach

This sixth approach makes a shift from the product of writing to the process of writing which shows:

- How does the learner write?
- How does the learner get started?

Students, here, are trained to produce thoughts for writing and select the best writing styles. Moreover, those students have to think of the writing purpose, audience, and the appropriate means of communication.

It is thought that this approach is a developmental process for producing effective texts through creating, expressing, drafting, redrafting and organizing ideas. Thus, writing process can be developed through three steps: pre-writing, writing and post-writing (revising or redrafting).

In fact, (J.Qs.) technique is regarded as one of the Process Approach techniques since the questions in this technique (who, what, where, when, why and how) have students create ideas, organize them logically, express them effectively and freely, draft them, redraft them and edit them in one continuous writing process.

2.1.3 The Importance of Teaching Writing

In fact, writing is seen as one of the most important courses in foreign language teaching as it reinforces learning and enables teachers to monitor their learners' progress in learning foreign language through the assessments and evaluation situations. Furthermore, teaching writing varies according to the students' age and educational levels. and, also, the subject matter. So, the process of teaching writing starts in the early stages of teaching language that represent the early stages of how to write letters and words. Teaching writing starts from the stage of writing mechanics such as tracing, spelling, copying and dictation. The process of teaching writing progresses to writing exercises as it is involved in the controlled writing stages. Then, this process moves to practise writing parallel paragraphs as in guided writing stage. Finally, teaching writing develops to produce free and creative writing. So, this process should start in the primary schools including all these academic stages. Writing skill, like other skills, is very essential in comprehending messages, conveying ideas and facilitating communication in the foreign language (Darman, 2014: 3)

On the other hand, since writing skill involves different types of mental processes including the sub-skills like, drafting, editing, revising, organizing, etc., teaching and learning this skill always have become difficult. So, the teacher's role is to enable the students to acquire these sub-skills for developing the main skill (Al-Essawi, 2014 :25).

Three main aspects of writing should be put in the students' consideration called PAF: purpose (objective) , audience (readers) and function (kinds of the text).

1-Purpose (objective): It refers to the main aim behind writing a text. Students should clarify the purpose or objective of writing their text.

2-Audience (readers): Any communication aims to express and interact ideas, opinions, feelings, etc. between two persons or more. In the process of writing, audience is not present, but the student can write a text putting the target group in his/ her mind.

3-Function: The notion of writing is decided by the function of this process whether the text is a reporter, a letter or just a write-up. Determining writing functions leads students to produce good and coherent pieces of writing.

(Bachani, 2013: 2)

Students should realize that writing process could be divided generally into five stages:

1-Pre-writing: It refers to the planning for writing. Planning is an important stage in writing process since it helps the writer to organize his/ her ideas before this process starts. A teacher can enable his/ her students who face difficulties in determining a topic or ordering ideas using a number of strategies such as: graphical editing, free writing and writing associations.

2-Drafting: In this stage, students are required to write their ideas that are arranged in the previous stage. The students primarily attempt to create the content of the text.

3-Revising: Here, students review their drafts sharing these draft texts with their classmates within group work. They try to rearrange the context according to their feedback. The group members can add new ideas to expand the text or delete unnecessary parts.

4-Editing: This stage focuses on the content. Spelling and punctuation, which are called the mechanical aspects of writing, are checked as well as the grammatical areas. Students are asked to review their drafts for the last time and make corrections where they are necessary before sharing these texts with other classmates groups.

5-Publishing: This is the last stage in the process of writing. The students are allowed to share their texts with their classmates who are represented the readers. The teacher's role is to make students' writings meaningful through sharing what have been written and presenting the necessary guidance and facilities.

(Maolida and Mustika,

2018:206)

In adopting any writing technique, students should follow these five stages in the process of writing. These stages are beneficial for enabling students to develop their writing skill, recognize their weak and good areas in their writings, realize writing as an effective communication means to express themselves freely and motivate them to write well in the future.

2.1.4 Some of Pre-writing Techniques

A number of effective pre-writing techniques, such as: free writing technique, looping technique, listing technique, clustering technique, nut-shelling technique, cubing technique, and researching technique are advised to be adopted in teaching writing composition in EFL classrooms. J.Qs.) technique is one of these effective techniques. The next item will shed the light on this technique.

2.2 Journalistic Questions as a Pre-writing Technique

This technique is implemented in developing students' writing skill. The term of (Questions) in the this technique refers to the six WH questions (who, what,

where, when, why and how). These questions stimulate learners to create and develop their ideas about the topic they are writing about (Kurniyasari, 2016: 14)

Adopting this technique in teaching writing enables learners to organize their ideas in their writings (Urquhart and McIver, 2005: 82). Like journalists, learners depend on their knowledge background to trigger more ideas and details events for developing the

topic. Making use of these six questions represents as hints to develop learners' thoughts. Furthermore, using these questions semantically helps learners plan their writings and achieve their purposes behind writing any paragraph or composition (Weber, 1992: 38). Although this technique implies six questions, some of them may not be needed in writing a composition. The idea is completed with three or

four questions. So, the other questions will be irrelevant in certain writings. For example, in the topic of the weather, the (who) element is not probably important.

Relating these six questions with the topic of the composition helps learners generate details of the compositions and gives them a context for writing about the topic. These questions allow the learners to include the important events in their writings and exclude the unimportant ones. In short, this technique determines the specific ideas during the process of writing (Preszler, 2006: 17).

Accordingly, this technique can foster learners' abilities to develop their ideas in producing good writing pieces. Also, through this technique, the learners' writing skill is expected to be reinforced. On the other hand, this technique can be implemented well with the teacher's facilitation to explain his/ her learners how they make use of the questions in this technique in the writing process. Asking learners to make six questions about their topic, teachers have them focus their attention on specific ideas and events of that topic. In order to make sure that learners have covered the whole content of the composition, they are required to present six full answers for these six questions (Kurniyasari, 2016: 14).

In fact, this technique stimulates learners' creative thinking. The questions in this technique enhance learners' ' creative thinking to generate ideas and develop them (Urquhart and McIver 2005: 83).

2.2.1 The Importance of (J.Qs.) Pre-writing Technique

Depending on the concept of (J.Qs.) pre-writing technique and its implementation, a number of benefits of this technique can be drawn below.

1-(J.Qs.) pre-writing technique is regarded as one of Communicative Approach techniques since it reinforces student-centered class rather than teacher-centered class.

2-This technique encourages creative thinking. The six questions of this technique trigger students' thinking to generate creative ideas.

3-Also, these questions guide students how to start writing their composition.

4-Accordingly, this technique is based on the Process Approach which is a shift from the product of writing to the process of writing. This approach shows the students how to write and how to get started. Also, it clarifies the students the steps of the writing process to guide them for producing effective writings.

5-Depending on the questions in this technique, students will be able to produce a coherent, cohesive and unified composition. With the help of these questions, the main and supporting sentences are arranged well, supporting sentences are related to each other and every paragraph belongs to supporting and main sentences.

6- These questions, also, enable students to realize how to plan their writings, translate their ideas into written forms, revise their writings and avoid any weak areas.

7-This technique encourages students to be literary critics. Based on these questions, students can determine the weak and good areas in their classmates' writings.

8-This technique creates an intimate atmosphere inside the class through students' group work and cooperative work instead of the competitive atmosphere.

9-This technique offers the teacher new roles. Instead of being the source of knowledge only, the teacher will be the facilitator, the adviser, the councilor and the organizer of work of students' groups.

10- This technique creates an intimate atmosphere between the teacher and his/her learners. He/ she will not be the scorer of the learners' writings only. He/ she will have a seat with the learners inside the class to participate them in reading and criticizing their products to develop their abilities in writing.

(ibid: 85-

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2.2.2 (J.Qs.) Pre-writing Technique in Teaching Writing

This technique will not achieve the aims of teaching writing composition unless its procedures are explained clearly for the students. So, they will be able to carry out this technique successfully in the process of writing composition. According to Prezler (2016: 17), there are a number of procedures followed by the teacher and others followed by the students in adopting this technique. Below, there is a detailed explanation to these procedures.

2.2.3 Teacher's and Student's Roles

The following is an explanation of the teacher's and student's roles in implementation of (J.Qs.) pr-writing technique in EFL classrooms (ibid).

2.2.3.1 Teacher's Role

1-The teacher explains the students the procedures of this technique. He/ she tells them that this technique consists of six questions which help them in generating ideas for writing their the compositions.

2-The teacher informs the students that it is not important to make use of all these questions. Some of them may be irrelevant according to the content of the composition.

3-The teacher writes the six questions on the board and explains how the students make use of these questions in the writing process.

a. Who: refers to important and secondary characters in the compositions. The students ask "Who are the main characters?" and "Who are the secondary characters?". Moreover, the students can make further questions "Who participates?" and "Who is affected?".

b. What: refers to the problem or the topic of the composition. It ,also, refers to all the events in the compositions. So, the students ask "What (will) happen (ed)?", "What (will

be /are /were) the significances?" and "What (will be/ are /were) the sources?".

c. Where: refers to the places and locations where the events in the composition (will) take (took) place. The students will ask "Where (will/ do/ did) the events occur?", "Where (will/ do/ did) the issues happen?" and "Where (will/ do/ did) some characters make certain actions?"

d. When: refers to the time of the events in the compositions. The students will ask "When (will/ do/ did) certain events happen?", "When (will/ do/ did) the problems begin?" and "When (will/ do/ did) certain character arrive, depart, etc.?"

e. Why: refers to the purpose. It explores the relation between the cause and effect of the events in the composition. The students will ask "Why (will/ do/ did) certain events appear?" and "Why (will/ do/ did) these characters behave/ avoid/ do certain actions?"

f. How: refers to how some events in the compositions happen. The students will ask "How (will/ do/ did) certain facts happen?" and "How (will/ do/ did) certain events/ problems begin?"

4-The teacher writes the title of the composition on the board and asks the students to implement this technique in writing their compositions.

5-The teacher wants the students to follow the five writing stages, which are pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing, in writing their compositions.

6-The teacher divides the students into groups. Each group will present a number of suggested questions based on (6WH questions) about the teacher's topic.

7-When all the groups finish writing their compositions, the teacher wants one student from each group to read his/ her group's composition in front of the class.

8-The teacher revises these compositions and checks the grammatical, spelling and punctuation mistakes. Also, he/ she revises the students' styles in writing.

9- He/ she allows all the student to express their opinions about their classmates' compositions. He/ she ask the students to participate in discussing the weak and good areas in these writings.

10-He/ she wants the groups of the students to modify their compositions according to these discussions.

2.2.3.2 Student's Role

1-The students of each group discuss the questions of this technique to present some suggested answers for these questions.

2-According to these suggested answers, the students in each group participate to start writing their own composition.

3-Following the five writing stages, the students in each group pre-write, draft, revise and edit their own composition.

4-Depending on active learning principles, the good students at writing composition

help those who are weak at this skill through encouraging them to generate and developing ideas.

5-The students in each group revise their composition to correct any grammatical, spelling and punctuation mistakes. This step will be a feedback for the student to revise their grammatical, spelling and punctuation knowledge.

6-After finishing writing the composition, the students in each group choose one member to read their composition in front of the class.

7-After making discussions between the teacher and the students about what they have written and after determining the weak and good areas in these compositions, the students in each group correct their mistakes in their composition, modify sentences, and revising composition ideas.

8-The last step, the students in each group publish the final copy for their own composition.

2.3 Previous Related Studies

In order to provide a background for the present study, the researcher has presented two studies dealing with effect of (J.Qs.) pr-writing technique on improving students' writing skill.

2.3.1 Kurniyasari (2016)

This study aims at investigating the impact of (J.Qs.) pr-writing technique to develop students' writing skill in narrative text. The population of this study was eight classes of eighth grade students of SMP N 19 Semarang. It consists of 258 students. The sample of the study was VIII-C as the experimental group and VIII-D as the control group. The researcher selected pre-post test non-equivalent design in his study. The pre-test of experimental group was implemented on May 18th, 2015 in class VIID and the pre-test of the control group was done on May 19th, 2015 in class VIIC whereas the post-test of experimental group was carried out on May 27th, 2015 in class VIID and the post-test of the control group was conducted on May 28th, 2015 in class VIIC.

2.3.2 Khotimah (2017)

This study aims at finding out the effect of (J.Qs.) pr-writing technique on the second year students of Mal Uinsu Medan. The population of the study was four classes of the second students in academic year 2016/ 2017. The sample of the study consisted of two classes selected randomly to be the experimental group and control group. The experimental group was taught writing by (J.Qs.) pr-writing technique whereas the control group was taught writing by Listing technique. The pre-tests and post-test were conducted to achieve the aim of the study.

Both previous studies proved the influence of (J.Qs.) pr-writing technique in teaching writing. It enables learners to improve their ability in writing composition and encourage them to be effective writers Also, this technique is fun and interesting and makes students eager to develop their writing skill.

Section THREE

Methodology and Procedures

This section presents the detailed explanation of the steps carried out by the researcher to implement the plan of this study and achieving its aim. In other words, this section sheds the light on the following:

- 1-the design of the experimental work,
- 2-equalization between the experimental and control groups,
- 3-the research instrument, i.e. the post-test, and
- 4-the statistical tool adopted for data analysis.

3.1 Experimental Design

Good (1973: 74) presents a definition for experimental design "the plan according to which experimental groups are selected and experimental treatments are administrated and their effect is answered". For achieving the aim of the present study, the researcher has chosen the non-randomized, pre-post-test, equivalent-group design. (Isaac and Michael, 1977: 43). This design requires two groups of equivalent that stand in terms of criterion measure, i.e., the independent variable (Padua and Santos, 1988: 31).

The first group is the experimental group (EG for short) whereas the control group is the second one (CG for short). Both groups are tested by the same writing composition pre-test (See Appendix B). The EG group is exposed to the independent variable which is (J.Qs.) pre-writing technique in teaching writing composition whereas the CG group is taught according to the traditional technique presented in the teacher's guide in (English for Iraq-Fifth Preparatory by Olivia Johnston and Mark Farrell, 2013). At the end of the experimental work, both groups are tested by the same writing composition post-test (See Appendix C). In fact, this experimental design is selected by the researcher since it is suitable for testing the deduced consequences of the hypothesis (Van Dalen, 1962: 236). (Appendix A. Table 1) refers to the experimental design.

3.2 Sample Selection

The researcher has chosen the students at Al-Iqtidar preparatory school for boys in the city of Karbala to be the representative sample of this study since the researcher is one of the staff of this school where great facilities have been presented in carrying out this study. The total number of the students at the fifth preparatory stage (scientific- biological branch) in this school is 107. They were grouped into three sections, namely A, B and C. Two non-randomized sections have been selected out of the three sections; namely A and B. Section A represents EG. Section B represents CG. The total number of the students in these two sections is 70; 35 students in each section. No students have been left out from both groups (See Appendix A. Table 2).

3.3 Equalization of Groups

To achieve the equalization between the two groups, the following variables

have been controlled. Information concerning the variables in the first three items was taken from the students themselves. It has been seen that there is no statistically significant difference in the controlled variables which are:

- 1-academic level of the father (See Appendix A. Tables 3) ,

- 2-academic level of the mother (See Appendix A. Tables 4),
 3-age of the students (See Appendix A. Tables 5).
 4- students' performance at English in the first course (See Appendix A. Tables 5),
 and

5-the pre-test (See Appendix A. Table 6).

3.4 Description of the Pre-test

In order to achieve the equalization between the two groups involved in this study, a pre-test is implemented. The pre-test contains one question about writing composition. This subjective test is scored out of 25. The students are asked to write a composition about 100 words on (Technology in our modern life) within 45 minutes (See Appendix B).

The scoring scheme for the pre-test is described below:

- 1-Ten-one marks are given for the effectiveness of the idea.
- 2-Five-zero marks are given for the number of the grammatical mistakes.
- 3-Five-zero marks are allocated for the number of the spelling mistakes.
- 4- Five-zero marks are allocated for the number of the punctuation mistakes.
- 5-Zero is given if the idea is not related to the composition subject.

Face validity of the pre-test is got through showing the test to a number of jurors (See Appendix D). The agreement percentage of the suitability of the test is 100 %. Concerning reliability of this test, score-rescore method is used and Person formula is applied for the subjective test where it has been found out to be 0.88 which is considered acceptable (Nunnally and Ator, 19972: 226).

By using the two independent samples t-test formula, it has been shown that there is no statistically difference between the mean scorer of the two groups since the computed t-value value, which is 0.206, is less than the tabulated t-value, which is 2, at 68 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance (See Appendix A, table 6).

3.5 Controlling Extraneous Factors Jeopardizing External and Internal Validity of the Experiment

A number of the extraneous factors that affect the experimental design have been controlled. The factors are:

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| a-history | b-maturation | c-classroom environment |
| d-the teacher | e-instrumentation | f-experimental morality |
| g-selection bias | | |

3.6 Description of the post-test

Like the pre-test, the post-test contains one question about writing composition. This test, which is subjective, is scored out of 25. The students are required to write a composition about 100 words on (An embarrassed situation happened in your life) within 45 minutes (See Appendix C). Since both the pre-test and post-test contain one subjective question in writing a composition, the same scoring scheme, that is adopted in the pre-test, is followed in the post-test.

3.6.1 Face Validity of the Post-test

Validity means the degree to which the test usually measures what is intended to measure (Brown, 1987: 221). To find out whether the performance of the post-test is valid, face validity is a suitable type. So, the post-test has been exposed to jury members who agreed that the post-test is valid in its face and it is suitable for the purpose for which the test is used. The test has gained 100% agreement of the total jury members. Appendix D shows the names of the jury members.

3.6.2 Pilot Study of the Post-test

The post-test has been given to 38 students at Uthman Bin Saeed preparatory school for boys non-randomly chosen from the population of the study. in the city of Karbala since the staff members of this school were ready to present facilities and assistance to the researcher.

The time required to do the post-test ranged between 40-50 minutes. So, the average length time for the post-test is 45 minutes. It means that the time of one lesson is sufficient for implementing the post-test. Moreover, the findings of the pilot administration of the post-test has shown that the instruction of the post-test is clear and unambiguous.

3.6.4 Reliability of the Post-test

Harmer (2001, 322) believes that reliability is "enhanced by making the test instructions absolutely clear, restricting the scope for variety in the answers, and making sure the test conditions remain constant". The reliability coefficient of the post-test has been computed by using Person coefficient for score-rescore method. Person coefficient has been found out to be 0.87 which is acceptable (Nunnally and Ator, 1972: 226).

3.7 Application of the Experiment

The experiment started on the 1st of March, 2018 and ended on the 10th of May, 2018. This means that it lasted for about nine weeks, five days per week. The researcher selected the students at Al-Iqtidar preparatory school for boys in the city of Karbala to be the sample of the study. He chose non-randomly two groups from the scientific-biological branch, namely Group A which was EG and Group B which was CG. The researcher gave the pre-test for both groups. Then he started teaching them the last four units from of (English for Iraq-Fifth Preparatory by Olivia Johnston and Mark Farrell, 2013). Concerning teaching writing, the researcher taught the EG according in order to (J.Qs.) pre-writing technique whereas he taught CG according to the traditional technique in the same textbook. Being sure that the post test is valid and reliable, the researcher gave it for both groups at the end of the experimental period at the same time. The allocated time for doing this test was 45 minutes.

3.8 Statistical and Mathematical Methods

The following statistical tools are used in this study:

The following statistical tools are used in this study:

1-**The Percentage** is used to find out the agreement of the jury members on the face validity of the tests.

2-**The t - Test** for two independent samples is used to find out the significance differences between the two groups in the dependent variables and the equalization of age and pre test variables. The following formula is used:

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{(n_1 - 1)S_1^2 + (n_2 - 1)S_2^2}{(n_1 + n_2) - 2}} \times \left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2} \right)}$$

= the mean of the experimental group \bar{x}_1

\bar{x}_2 = the mean of the control group

= the number of subjects in the experimental group n_1

n_2 = the number of subjects in the control group

S_1^2 = the variance of the experimental group

S_2^2 = the variance of the control group (Glass and Stanley 1970: 295)

4- Person formula

3- **Chi – square** is used to find out the significance of differences in the variable of parents' education. The following formula is used:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

O = the observed frequencies E = the expected or theoretical frequencies
(Healey, 2012: 275)

SECTION FOUR

Data Analysis, Results, Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions

This section shows data analysis got from the EG and CG students' responses in the writing post-test. A distinction is followed with the aim of presenting solid justification that can verify the hypotheses stated at the beginning of this study. On the light of the following results, a number of conclusions recommendations are and suggestions for further studies are put forward.

4.1 Data Analysis

In order to achieve the aim of the this study which is investigating the effect of (J.Qs.) pre-writing technique on Iraqi EFL secondary school students' performance in writing composition, it is hypothesized that there is no statistically difference between the mean score of the performance of the experimental group students who are taught writing composition by (J.Qs.) pre-writing technique and that of the

control group students who are taught writing composition by traditional technique in the writing composition post-test. In order to show this, the mean scores and standard deviations are calculated for both groups as it is shown in Appendix A. Table 7.

Using the t-test formula for two independent groups, it has been found out that the computed t-value, which is 4.20, is greater than the tabulated t-value, which is 2, at 68 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. This shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores in favor of the experimental group which has been taught writing composition by (J.Qs.) pre-writing technique. Therefore, the stated hypothesis is rejected and the alternative one is stated which reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the performance of the experimental group

students who are taught writing composition by (J.Qs.) pre-writing technique and that of the control group students who are taught writing composition by the traditional technique in the writing composition post-test. On the other hand, the Eta squared formula has shown that the value of effect size is 0.45. This shows clearly the effect of (J.Qs.) pre-writing technique on developing students' writing skill and on teaching writing composition as compared with the traditional technique.

4.2 Discussion of the Results

It is very clear that the findings got in the previous studies that are presented in section two refer that using (J.Qs.) pre-writing technique reveals certain effectiveness in teaching writing composition and on developing students' writing performance. Likewise, the present study aims at reflecting the effectiveness of applying this technique on students' performance in writing composition.

According to the result of the present study which is presented in 4.1, the effectiveness of this technique adopted in this study has been clear since the performance of the experimental group subjects in the post-test administered at the end of the experiment has surpassed that of the control group subjects.

This success is attributed to certain aspects concerning (J.Qs.) pre-writing technique. Below, some of these aspects are presented as they are shown by the researcher himself during the experimental work:

- 1-Adopting (J.Qs.) pre-writing technique can achieve its aim in scaffolding students' writing skill.
- 2-This technique is one of Communicative Approach techniques since it concentrates on student-centered classroom rather than teacher-centered classroom.
- 3-Using this technique has an influence at a great extent in showing learners how to interact and cooperate with each other.
- 4- This technique enables teachers to develop their students' writing skill.
- 5-Adopting this technique is enjoyable and interesting as it brakes monotony and boredom inside the classroom during teaching writing composition.
- 6-This technique reduces learners' shyness, anxiety and embarrassment since it encourages them to participate during the writing composition activity.
- 7-Also, this technique has an influence to reinforce learners to be independent and effective writers through creating impulses for writing and scaffolding self-confidence.

8-Moreover, implementing this technique motivates learners to be active participants through taking part in the writing activities.

On the other hand, the results of this study have been asserted by the previous studies presented in section two that show the following:

- 1- (J.Qs.) pr-writing technique is one of the techniques that improve creative thinking in the process of writing.
- 2- Since this technique emphasizes group work and cooperative learning, it is suitable for large classes.
- 3- This technique has a great role in enhancing weak learners' levels through adopting cooperative learning and making learners discussions.
- 4- As this technique makes learning enjoyable and breaks monotony. It activates all the learners to interact with the lesson

4.3 Conclusions

This success is attributed to certain aspects of (J.Qs.) pr-writing technique and its effectiveness in teaching writing. Below, the research presents some of these aspects:

- 1-This technique is very appropriate and effective in teaching writing composition.
- 2-This technique develops students' writing skill making them indulge in the process of writing.
- 3-It enables the students to order their ideas.
- 4-Also, it is essential in stimulating the students to elaborate their ideas in writing composition.
- 5-This technique encourages students to generate more ideas for their compositions.
- 6-Using this technique makes the lesson more comprehensive since it makes the lesson enjoyable and breaks monotony and boredom.
- 7-This technique focuses on cooperative learning which is one of Communicative Approach techniques in teaching in EFL classrooms.
- 8-It creates a cooperative and intimate atmosphere inside the classroom.
- 9-It emphasizes the group work inside the classroom. So, the weak students can learn and develop their levels in writing composition through the interaction with their classmates who are good at writing.

4.4 Recommendations

Based on the results of the present study, a number of recommendations can be drawn below:

- 1-English curriculum committee at Iraqi Ministry of Education are invited to develop the process of teaching writing through implying different techniques such as (J.Qs.), Cubing, Free writing, etc.
- 2-On the other hand, teachers should be aware of the effectiveness of (J.Qs.) pre-writing technique to enhance teaching writing and develop students' writing skill.
- 3-Pre-writing techniques, like (J.Qs.), can be beneficial inside EFL classrooms to stimulate students to be create effective writers.
- 4-It is hoped that writing techniques are implied in the curriculum of English department at the College of Education to make the students at this department be aware of the influence of teaching writing in EFL classrooms.

4.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

Several suggested studies are presented below:

- 1-A study is suggested to investigate the effect of (J.Qs.) pre-writing technique on intermediate schools students' performance in writing skill.
- 2-A study is suggested to investigate the impact of (J.Qs.) pre-writing technique on the writing performance of the college students in the departments of English.
- 3-Additional study can be proposed to imply the influence of (J.Qs.) pre-writing technique on secondary school students' performance in reading comprehension.
- 4-Finally, a study is recommended to examine the effect (J.Qs.) pre-writing technique on intermediate school students' performance in speaking skill.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Tables

Table 1 The Experimental Design

The Groups	The Test	Independent Variables	The Test
E G	Pre-test	(J.Qs..) Pre- writing Technique	Post-test
C G	Pre-test	Traditional Technique	Post-test

Table 2 Sample of the Study

Groups	No. of Students
E G	35
C G	35
Total	70

Table 3 Equalization in Academic level of Father

Sample	Number and Ratio	Primary	Intermediate and Secondary	Diploma and Bachelor	Total	Computed X ² - value	Tabulated X ² - value	d. f.	Level of .Significance
EG	Number	7	10	18	35	0.17	5.99	2	0.05
	Ratio Horizontally	20.0%	28.6%	51.4%	100.0%				
	Ratio Vertically	58.3%	47.6%	48.6%	50.0%				
CG	Number	5	11	19	35				
	Ratio Horizontally	14.3%	31.4%	54.3%	100.0%				
	Ratio Vertically	41.7%	52.4%	51.4%	50.0%				

Table 4 Equalization in Academic level of Mother

Sample	Number and Ratio	Primary	Intermediate and Secondary	Diploma and Bachelor	Total	Computed X ² - value	Tabulated X ² - value	d. f.	Level of .Significance
EG	Number	7	16	12	35	0.51	5.99	2	0.05
	Ratio Horizontally	20.0%	45.7%	34.3%	100.0%				
	Ratio Vertically	53.8%	47.1%	52.2%	50.0%				
CG	Number	6	18	11	35				
	Ratio Horizontally	17.2%	51.4%	31.4%	100.0%				
	Ratio Vertically	46.2%	52.9%	47.8%	50.0%				

Table 5 Equalizations in Student's Performance at English in First Course and Age

Test	Sample	— X	SD	Computed t- value	Tabulated t- value	d.f.	Level of Significance
Student's Performance at English in First Term	EG	53.89	17.88	0.157	2	68	0.05
	CG	54.54	17.13				
Age	EG	197.60	1.09	0.758			
	CG	197.40	1.12				

Table 6 Equalizations in Pre-test

Sample	\bar{X}	S D	Computed t- value	Tabulated t-value	d.f.	Level of Significance
EG	11.06	3.96	0.206	2	68	0.05
CG	10.86	4.17				

Table 7 The Mean Scores, Standard Deviation , T-test Value and Eta squared and Effect size for Both Groups in the Post-test

Sample	\bar{X}	S D	Computed t- value	Tabulated t- value	d.f.	Level of Significance	Eta squared and Effect size
E G	15.80	3.67	4.20	2	68	0.05	0.45
C G	11.86	4.17					

Appendix B

Pre-Test

In no more than 100 words, write a composition on " Technology in our modern life".

Appendix C

Post Test

In no more than 100 words, write a composition on "An embarrassed happened situation in your life "

Appendix D

Names of the Jury Members

No.	Academic Rank	Name	Field	College
1	Professor	Al-Refaee, Fatin Khairi Ph. D.	ELT	University of Baghdad College of Education / Ibn Rushd for Human Sciences
2	Professor	Khadim, Hussein Musah Ph. D.	Linguistics	University of Kerbala College of Education for Human Sciences
3	Professor	Mubarak, Ahmed Sahib Ph.D.	Linguistics	University of Babylon College of Education for Human Sciences
4	Assistant Professor	Al- Bermeni, Heider Kadhim Ph. D.	ELT	University of Kerbala College of Education for Human Sciences
5	Assistant Professor	Ahmed, Tawfeeg Ph. D.	Linguistics	University of Kerbala College of Education for Human Sciences
6	Assistant Professor	Shareeb, Mohsin Ali Ph. D.	ELT	Ministry of Education The Open Education College
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