وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

MINISTERE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPERIEUR ET DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE

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UNIVERSITE MOULOUD MAMMERI DE TIZI-OUZOU
FACULTE DES LETTRES ET DES LANGUES
DEPARTEMENT D'ANGLAIS

جامعة مولود معمري-تيزي وزو
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Title

The Implementation of Brainstorming to promote EFL Learners' Writing Skill:

The Case of Fourth Year Middle School Pupils at Zerrouda

Presented by: **Supervised by:**

Ms. **OSMANI Tinhinane**   Dr.YASSINE.Souryana

Board of Examiners:

Chair: Prof. FODIL Mohamed Sadak, Profrssor, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou

Supervisor: Dr. YASSINE Souryana, MCA, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou

Examiner: Ms ADEM Karima, MAA, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou

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Dedication

To my dear and precious parents

To my three brothers: Sofiane, Ahmed and Couceila

To all my family…

To my friends: Amel and Zina

This work is dedicated to all people who were a source of support, help and motivation;…

Acknowledgement

Abstract

The current study investigates the implementation of brainstorming to promote learners' writing skill. This research is centered around three objectives. First, it aims to identify the role of brainstorming sessions and activities in developing learners' ability to write. Second, it strives to explore the extent to which brainstorming can promote learners' writing skill. Third, this research attempts to find out learners' attitudes towards the use of brainstorming as a teaching and learning approach in order to promote their writing performance. To reach these aims, a quasi-experimental research design was adopted during six months. It involves a comparison of written productions of a control group (CTR) and an experimental group (EXP) resulting from a pre-test and post-test analysis in the light of Raimes' (1983) model of components of writing and Osborn's approach of brainstorming (1953) [which has been reinforced by many authors like Cullen (1998)]. 26 questionnaires were used as a complementary data collection tool to check the learners' attitudes towards the use of brainstorming to develop their writing performance. As far as data analysis procedures are concerned, mixed methods approach combining both qualitative and quantitative method was adopted. The quantitative data are analysed using the frequencies for the experimental research and the SPSS for the questionnaire, the qualitative results are analysed using the qualitative content analysis. The obtained results have shown considerable differences between the experimental group and the control group. The former made a significant progress concerning the different components of the writing skill; namely: the content, the writer's process, word choice, organization, mechanics and grammar. However, the latter did not demonstrate such improvement in all aspects. Therefore, the findings confirmed the importance of the brainstorming approach in developing EFL learners' writing skill. Moreover, the results of the questionnaire revealed that the participants in this study hold positive attitudes towards the use of brainstorming as a teaching and learning technique.

Key Words: Brainstorming, Control group , Experimental group, Post-test, Pre-test, Quasi-experimental research, Writing skill.

List of Abbreviations:

CTR: Control Group

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

EXP: Experimental Group

HP: hypothesis

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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Statement of the Problem

The teaching of English includes the mastery of the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. In the educational context, EFL learners need to develop their writing skill in order to transmit their ideas successfully to their teachers as it is the main medium through which they are tested and evaluated. Indeed, for teachers of English, teaching writing is an important and simultaneously challenging part in the process of learning.

At schools, writing is a form of communication that allows learners to organize their knowledge on paper and convey meaning to the reader. Indeed, It is one of the most authentic ways of sharing thoughts and ideas with others. Writing is considered the most important skill that learners need to master in order to enhance their personal development and academic achievements. In fact, the ability to achieve communicative competence in writing is a major element of language development and academic success for EFL learners at all levels.

However, learning to write appropriately and effectively seems to be a problem for EFL learners, mainly in middle schools, as they do not write very often and most of what they write is classroom bound .In this view, Nunan (1989) notes that learning to write is more than using 'a pen and paper'; it is rather a complex cognitive task that learners have to develop to form paragraphs and texts. In addition, Richards (2008) states that writing in either first or second language is one of the most difficult tasks students encounter as it requires not only grammatical and rhetorical device but also conceptual and judgmental elements.

In fact, improving EFL learners' writing skill has become one of the main focuses of teachers of English as it is observed that their writing is often obstructed by different factors, such as lack of vocabulary, lack of ideas, grammar, and so forth. However, it is not easy to surmount such difficulties, and this can often lead to mental blockage, lack of interest and demotivation.

Researchers have conducted many studies on different methods and techniques in order to enhance learners' writing skill, and one of the most well-known technique is 'Brainstorming'. This latter, is a creative problem solving method developed by Alex.F.Osborn (1953); it is used to generate ideas and find solutions when it is applied in different settings such as in the field of business, government, and education. In fact, brainstorming is used in classroom to stimulate ideas on different topics and involve students in the process of learning. In this view, Scan,Guy and Wenstrom (1991) point out that brainstorming activities motivate students who do not usually want to write by creating a non-threatening atmosphere.

The review of previous studies has revealed that the use of brainstorming in the teaching and learning processes has been the main concern of many researchers and it has been tackled from different perspectives. For instance, Ibnian (2011) has aimed at investigating the effects of brainstorming strategy on EFL learners' writing performance. The sample consisted of 84 Iranian EFL intermediate students have been divided into experimental and control group; the results have revealed that brainstorming strategy has a positive effect on the learners' writing achievements. In addition, Amoush (2015) investigated a research to identify the effect of employing brainstorming strategy on improving writing performance of English major students at Balqa Applied University in Jordan; The study has revealed that the scores of the students of the experimental group have been higher than the scores of the students of the control group. In the Algerian context, the study of brainstorming has received little interest. In this respect, work has been conducted by Ben Belkacem. C and Metrouh. F (2018) at MMUTO on enhancing students' motivation in the speaking ability through the use of brainstorming activities. Their findings have shown that this method is effective to help learners practice their speaking voluntarily and enhance their motivation in the classroom. However, none of these studies has discussed the key role of implementing

brainstorming to promote learners' writing skill; Consequently, it remains a fertile area that is worthy of investigation.

Aim and Significance of the Study

The present work has aimed at shedding light on the importance of implementing the brainstorming method to enhance learners' writing skill. In order to explore such an issue, our study has been conducted at Adem Mezian middle school of Zerrouda. The objectives of this study are threefold. First, it has aimed to identify the role of brainstorming sessions and activities in developing learners' ability to write. Second, it has strived to explore the extent to which brainstorming can promote learners' writing skill. Third, this research has attempted to find out learners' attitudes towards the use of brainstorming in order to promote their writing performance.

The significance of this research lies in the fact that it stresses the importance of fostering brainstorming as a crucial method in the writing process in EFL classes in order to increase learners' performance either in group or individually through practicing activities, taking risk and generating new and creative ideas. According to Buzan (1993), one of the biggest advantages of brainstorming is that it requires virtually no preparation and it can be used with classes at any level and under any situation. Such reflection inspired the motive of this study. Therefore, putting the first step in this fertile field, it is hoped that this research will provide a significant contribution and enrich the campus library.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

For the purpose of reaching the above mentioned objectives, the research aims at answering the following questions:

1. Can brainstorming activities enhance EFL learners' writing skill?

   a) If yes, how?

2. To what extent can brainstorming enhance learners' writing skill?

3. What are the fourth year middle school pupils' attitudes towards the use of brainstorming to promote their writing skill?

In an attempt to answer these questions, three working hypotheses are advanced:

Hp1: Brainstorming activities can enhance EFL learners' writing skill in different ways, such as: in generating new ideas, classifying and organizing them.

Hp2: Brainstorming can enhance learners' writing skill in terms of grammar and enriching their vocabulary.

Hp3: The participants have positive attitudes towards the use of brainstorming to promote their writing skill.

Research techniques and methodology

The need to reach and fulfill the previously set objectives has driven us to investigate a quasi-experimental research design that has taken place at Adem Mezian middle school at Zerrouda. Indeed, it is an empirical study about the fourth year pupils from which a population of 46 participants is selected after obtaining their consent.

The participants are divided into two groups, a control group (CTR) which consists of 23 participants and an experimental group (EXP) which is similar to the first group. After a general pre-test at the beginning of the experimentation in which the two groups were asked to write about a specific topic in order to evaluate their level, the participants of the EXP group were given various activities to do after attending some brainstorming sessions. In parallel, the CTR group followed their traditional way of learning without brainstorming sessions. After six months, the two groups have undertaken a post-test with the purpose to compare the results with the pre-test in order to notice any enhancement in their writing

performance and analyze whether the use of brainstorming is an effective method in the process of teaching and learning.

In addition, a questionnaire has been adopted as a complementary tool in the attempt to investigate the participants' perceptions and get more understanding about the topic. Moreover, the mixed method approach which combines the quantitative and the qualitative research techniques is adopted in the process of data analysis. The former has been used to analyze the results of the pre-test and post-test. The latter has been adopted in the analysis of the qualitative results obtained from the questionnaire.

Structure of the dissertation

Our study falls into two main parts; the first part is theoretical in issue, while the second is rather of a practical orientation. The overall outline of the dissertation follows the traditional simple model that consists of four connected chapters as well as a general introduction and a general conclusion. The first chapter aims at reviewing the main concepts in the literature and presents the main theoretical perspectives upon which the study is based. The research design chapter introduces detailed information about the population and the participants involved in the study as well as the data collection and data analysis tools. The third chapter in which the results have been sorted out from the experiment are figured out, using different diagrams, tables and pie charts. The last chapter compares the results of the pre-test and post-test and discusses them in the light of the theoretical framework and the literature review in order to check learners' writing improvement, and it provides answers to the research questions. The overall research follows the Harvard System of referencing for both in-text references and the bibliography.

Introduction:

This chapter reviews the different related works and the main theoretical framework this study has been relied on to investigate the role of brainstorming in developing learners' writing ability. It is divided into two parts; the first one is concerned with the writing skill. It starts by defining the writing, and its approaches which are: product, process and genre approach. After that, it presents its different stages and components. Followed by the importance of teaching writing and the difficulties that learners face when trying to learning it. The second part of this chapter is concerned with the definition of brainstorming approach and its relation to writing. Then, it presents the rules, types and steps of brainstorming, followed by the usage and advantages of this approach.

I. Theoretical Background on The Writing Skill

1. Definition of the Writing Skill:

Writing has largely attracted the attention of many scholars since it is a corner stone in all languages. As a first step towards a mere definition of writing, it can be said that it is an important mean of communication used to express thoughts, fillings, and needs. Crystal (2006: 257) says that "*writing is a way of communicating which uses a system of visual marks made on some kind of surface*". This view is shared with Widdowson (1978) who argues that writing is the act of making correct sentences and transmitting them through the visual medium as marks on paper. However, writing is not as simple as it seems, and does not stop at this level. It is a deep and difficult task which involves many aspects as it is viewed by Bell and Burnaby (1984, cited in Nunan, 1989: 36) who point out that: " *writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneou*sly". In addition, Flower and Hayes (1980) state that writing is a complex and creative process that is an essential skill for an effective communication. In the

same direction, White and Arndt (1991:03) state that: "*Writing is far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols: it is a thinking process in its own right. It demands conscious intellectual effort which usually has to be sustained over considerable effort of time*".

All in all, writing is considered as being a fundamental skill in language teaching and learning. At the same time, it is a challenging task that requires certain background knowledge and conscious cognitive efforts.

2. Approaches to the writing skill:

Raimes (1983) claims that teaching writing in ESL classes cannot happen in one way since there are different teachers and teaching styles, and different learners and learning styles. Indeed, in order to teach the writing skill effectively, ELT practitioners among them Harmer (2007) suggests three approaches to writing: the product approach, the process approach and the genre approach; yet, each one of them has its own emphasis.

2.1 The Product Approach:

The product approach is also called the text-based approach or the guided composition; it is a traditional approach of writing which puts emphasis on correct usage of grammar, punctuation and spelling. According to Gabrielatos (2005:05): a product approach is "*a traditional approach in which students are encouraged to mimic a model text, usually is presented and analyzed at an early stage*". In this approach, the main focus is around the linguistic knowledge and grammatical accuracy. Therefore, the learners are provided with models of texts to follow in order to prevent them from making mistakes. In addition, students afford no consideration to the process of writing, because what counts for them is only the end result. In this respect, Harmer (2007:325) states that: "*when concentrating on the product, we*

*are only interested in the aim of a task and in the end produc*t". In the same direction, the following quotation illustrates more this approach:

> The product approach to writing focuses on the end result of the act of composing, i.e. the letter, essay, story and so on. The writing teacher who subscribes to the product approach will be concerned to see that the end product is readable, grammatically correct and obeys discourse conventions relating to main points, supporting details and so on. The focus in class will be on copying and imitating, carrying out sentence expansions from cue words and developing sentences and paragraphs from models of various sorts.

> (Nunan1989:36)

In the product approach, the majority of the writers are more prone to memorization and imitation. Even though it facilitates the task of writing for the learners and reduces their mistakes; their creativity is not valued at all. Also, the students are made narrow-minded writers since they are not involved cognitively in the process of writing.

2.2The Process Approach:

The process approach comes as a reaction to the product approach which puts emphasis on the final products and on the students' knowledge of lexical and grammatical rules. It provides the learners with a set of steps to follow while producing a piece of writing (Harmer, 2007). With the traditional approach, learners fail to integrate critical thinking into their writings. But now, they are much more concerned with getting their thoughts out and getting them down than with making mistakes. In this respect, Raimes (1986: 11) states that with the process approach, writing *becomes a process of discovery for the students: discovery of new ideas and new language forms to express those ideas"*. That is to say, the focus is no longer on the finished product, but on the steps of the production. Harmer (2007:26) defines it as follows:

> Many educators, however, advocate a process approach to writing. This pays attention to the various stages that any piece of writing goes through. By

> spending time with learners on pre-writing, editing, re-drafting and finally producing a finished version of their work, a process approach aims to get to the heart of the various skills that most writers employ

In this sense as well, Shin (1986) puts forward the following characteristics of the process approach:

a. focus on the process of writing that leads to the final written product ;
b. help student writers to understand their own composing process;
c. help them to build repertoires of strategies for prewriting, drafting, and rewriting;
d. give students time to write and rewrite;
e. place central importance on the process of revision;
f. let students discover what they want to say as they write;
g. give students feedback throughout the composing process (not just on the final product) as they attempt to bring their expression closer and closer to intention;
h. encourage feedback from both instructor and peers;
i. Include individual conferences between teacher and student during the process of composition.

(Shin, 1986 cited in Brown 2001: 335-336)

2.3 The Genre Approach:

Despite the effectiveness and importance of the process approach, this latter does not provide the learners with solutions to all issues involves in writing. Therefore, a major shift has taken place in terms of pedagogical matters mainly on the ways in which the writing production is approached. The genre approach which comes as a reaction to the process approach is considered as the latest approach in the teaching of writing. It sheds light on the types of written texts and considers writing as a communicative task that aims at achieving different functions. This means that writing is taught for a given type of writing in a given context. According to Harmer (2001: 258):

> In a genre approach to writing students study texts in the genre they are going to be writing before they embark on their own writing. Thus, if we want them to write business letters of various kinds we let them look at typical models of

such letters before starting to compose their own… to discover facts about construction and specific language use which is common in that genre.

3. Stages of Writing

Dealing with writing means being able to control the different interrelated steps that are required. For this, there are different views from various scholars concerning the stages that writers have to go through in order to produce a meaningful content. But, till now there is no agreed number of steps that characterize the composing process. Williams (2003: 107) proposes eight steps in this following table:

Writing process	Definition	Description
Prewriting	Generating ideas, strategies, and information for a given writing task.	Prewriting activities take place before starting on the first draft of a paper. They include discussion, outlining, free-writing, journals, talk-write, and metaphor.
Planning	Reflecting on the material produced during prewriting to develop a plan to achieve the aim of the paper.	Planning involves considering your rhetorical stance, rhetorical purpose, the principal aim of the text, how these factors are interrelated, and how they are connected to the information generated during prewriting. Planning also involves selecting support for your claim and blocking out at least a rough organizational structure.
Drafting	Producing words on a computer or on paper that match (more or less) the initial plan for the work.	Drafting occurs over time. Successful writers seldom try to produce an entire text in one sitting or even in one day.
Pausing	Moments when you aren't writing but instead are reflecting on what you have produced and how well it matches your plan. Usually includes reading.	Pausing occurs among successful and unsuccessful writers, but they use it in different ways. Successful writers consider "global" factors: how well the text matches the plan, how well it is meeting audience needs, and overall organization.

Reading	Moments during pausing when you read what you've written and compare it to your plan.	Reading and written are interrelated activities. Good readers are good writers and vice versa. The reading that takes place during writing is crucial to the reflection process during pausing.
Revising	Literally "re-seeing" the text with the goal of making large-scale changes so that text and plan match.	Revising occurs after you've finished your first draft. It involves making changes that enhance the match between plan and text. Factors to consider usually are the same as those you considered during planning: rhetorical stance, rhetorical purpose, and so on. Serious revising almost always includes getting suggestions from friends or colleagues on how to improve the writing.
Editing	Focusing on sentence-level concerns, such as punctuation, sentence length, spelling, agreement of subjects and predicates, and style.	Editing occurs after revising. The goal is to give your paper a professional appearance.
Publishing	Sharing your finished text with its intended audience	Publishing isn't limited to getting a text printed in a journal. It includes turning a paper in to a teacher, a boss, or an agency.

Table 1: Stages of Writing Proposed by William James (2003: 107)

Harmer (2004) summarizes the process of writing in four steps: for him, the first step is planning: it is an initial stage where writers decide about: the purpose, the audience and the content structure. The second step is drafting: it corresponds to the first version of a piece of writing where writers let their ideas flow without evaluating them. The third stage is editing: it represents the phase of reading, organizing and shaping the meaning of the text. The last step which is the final version, it is at this phase that the writer sends the written text to the intended audience. Indeed, Harmer states that the process of writing is recursive; because, writers can go backwards and forwards until the final version is produced.
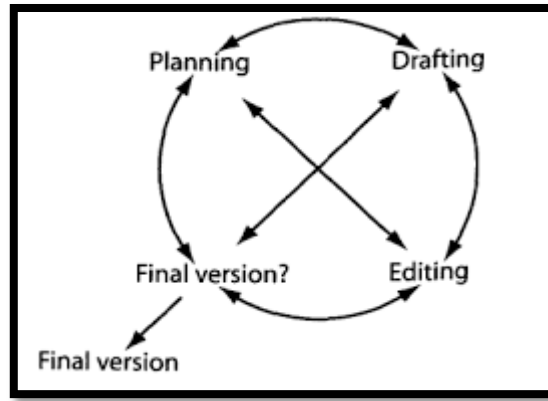
Figure1: Process Wheel (Harmer, 2004: 5)

4. Components of writing

Writing is considered as being a cognitively complex productive skill since it requires considerable efforts, guidance and practice from both teachers and students. Indeed, producing a piece of writing involves certain competence in a number of connected spheres. For this, Heaton (1989) suggests the following elements:

1. **Language use:** the ability to write correct and appropriate sentences.

2. **Mechanical skills:** the ability to use correctly these conventions peculiar to the written language- e.g punctuation, spelling;

3. **Treatment of content:** the ability to think creatively and develop thoughts, excluding all irrelevant information;

4. **Stylistic skills:** the ability to manipulate sentences and paragraphs, and use language effectively;

5. **Judgmental skills:** the ability to write in an appropriate manner for a particular purpose with a particular audience in mind, together with an ability to select, organize and order relevant information.

(Heaton, 1989: 135).

In this sense as well, Brown (2001) proposes the following table of the microskills of writing which must be followed in order to compose in a clear and effective way:

1. Produce graphemes and orthographic patterns of English.
2. Produce writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose.
3. Produce an acceptable core of words and use appropriate word order patterns.
4. Use acceptable grammatical systems (eg., tense, agreement, pluralization), patterns, and rules.
5. Express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms.
6. Use cohesive devices in written discourse.
7. Use the rhetorical forms and conventions of written discourse.
8. Appropriately accomplish the communicative functions of written texts according to forms and purpose.
9. Convey links and connections between events and communicate, such relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification.
10. Distinguish between literal and implied meanings when writing.
11. Correctly convey culturally specific references in the context of the written text.
12. Develop and use a battery of writing strategies, such as accurately assessing the audience's interpretation, using prewriting devices, writing with fluency in the first draft, suing paraphrases and synonyms, soliciting peer and instructor feedback, and using feedback for revising and editing.

Table 2: Microskills for Writing (Brown, 2001, p.343)

Raimes (1983) categorizes the basic elements in producing a good piece of writing as content, the writer's process, audience, purpose, word choice, organization, mechanics, grammar and syntax. The following diagram summarizes the different features that writers have to deal with while writing in order to communicate their ideas clearly and effectively.
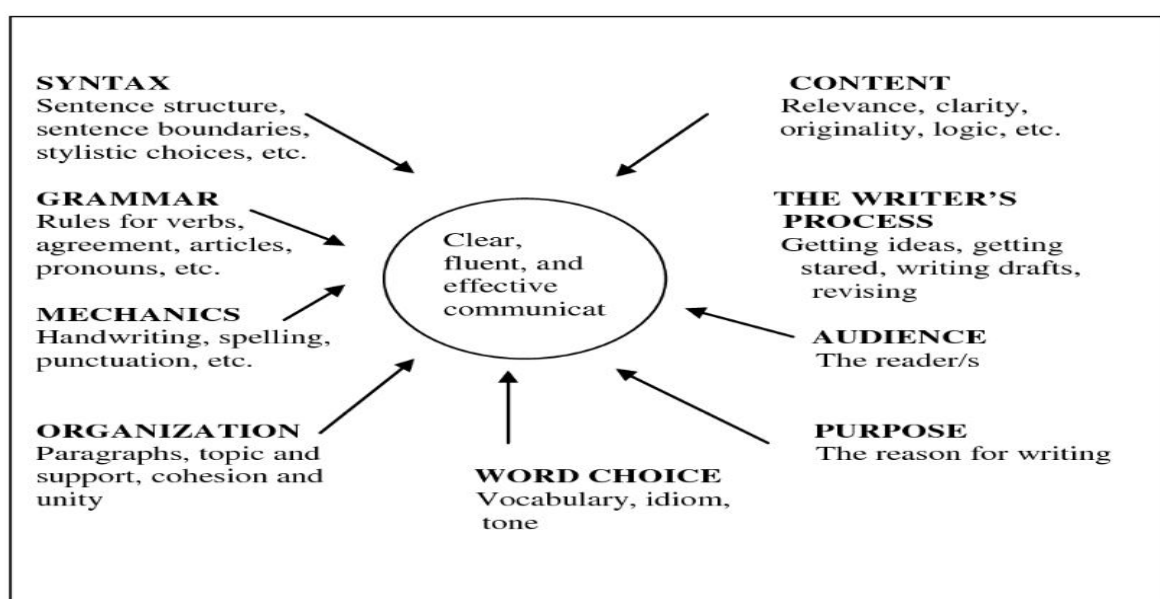
Diagram 1: Producing a Piece of Writing (Raimes: 1983, p06).

5. Importance and Reasons for teaching Writing in EFL Classes

Writing plays a major role in expressing one's thoughts, attitudes and opinions, but for Raimes (1983: 3) communication is not the only reason for writing. We use it because:

- First, writing reinforces the grammatical structure, idioms, and vocabulary.

- Second, when our students write, they also have a chance to be adventurous with the language, to go beyond what they have just learned to say, to take risks.

- Third, when they write, they necessary become very involved with the new language; the effort to express ideas and constant use of eye, hand, and brain in a unique way to reinforce learning.

- Moreover, students write to communicate with a reader; to express ideas without the pressure of face-to-face communication, to express a subject, to record experience, to become familiar with the conventions of written English discourse (a text).

It the same vein, Harmer (1998:79) suggests four main reasons for teaching writing:

1. **Reinforcement:** Some learners acquire languages in a purely oral/ aural way, but most of us benefit greatly from seeing the language written down.

2. **Language development:** the mental activity we have to go through in order to construct proper written texts is all part of the ongoing learning experience.

3. **Learning style:** For many learners, producing language in a slower way is something they appreciate. Writing provides time and ease for learners more than face-to-face communication does.

4. **Writing as a skill:** learners need to know how to write essays, how to put written reports together and how the writing system operates (punctuation, paragraph construction etc.) just as they need to know how to pronounce spoken English appropriately.

6. Learners' writing difficulties

In EFL classes, teaching and learning how to write in a foreign language is not an easy task for both teachers and learners. Though, many research works have been done to develop the writing skill, many EFL learners still face serious problems that prevent them from writing satisfactory productions. According to Raimes(1983: 12-13): *"When students complain, as they often do, about how difficult it is to write in a second language, they are talking not only about the difficulty of "finding" the right words and using the correct grammar but about the difficulty of finding and expressing ideas in a new language"*. Moreover, Bell and Burnaby (1984 cited in Nunan 1989:36) point out that:

> Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously. At the sentence level these include control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation. Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts.

This means that, learners should demonstrate an ability to structure good sentences using adequate vocabulary and good punctuation and spelling. Besides, Harmer (2006) states that there are various factors that can inhibit the learners from writing:

1. First, fear of failure.

2. Second, the fear from committing mistakes.

3. Thirdly, there are some learners who are uncertain to show their productions.

II. Theoretical Background on Brainstorming:

1. Brainstorming Approach

Brainstorming is one of the most known creative problem solving techniques which was developed by Alex Osborn a partner in an advertising agency in 1939 as a result of his inconvenience of traditional business meetings. Brainstorming is a strategy used in a situation where a group of people meet to activate their brains and generate creative ideas in a specific

area of interest. It is viewed as one of the most important techniques in provoking creativity in various fields such as: business, education and politics. Indeed, this technique has been the subject of interest of many scholars who tried to define it from different perspectives.

Jain (2010: 103) states that: "*Brainstorming is a technique used to gather a large number of ideas. The ideas generated are geared towards solving a specific problem*". In this sense as well, Wilson (2013:2) adds that: "*brainstorming is an individual or group method for generating ideas, increasing creative efficacy, or finding solutions to problems*".

2. Brainstorming and Writing

Generating ideas about a given topic is an important and crucial part in the writing process. But, when writing, students are often confronted with the problem of getting started. Generally, when teachers turn around the classroom during the writing module, they often hear comments like 'I have no idea about this topic! What am I going to write about this subject?

In fact, what inhibits students in writing is actually getting started. Raimes (1985) says that getting started is one of the most difficult and inhibiting steps in writing. As a result, teachers and course designers have tried to approach the writing skill from different angles and tried to develop several prewriting techniques among them 'brainstorming' in order to make it easier. Brainstorming is often used as a first step in the pre-writing stage which is supposed to enhance and develop learners' power of thinking and help them to think outside the box.

According to Brown (2001:348):

> brainstorming is a useful technique in writing because it permits you to approach a topic with an open mind. Because you do not judge your ideas as they emerge, you free yourself to come up with ideas that you might not even know you had. Brainstorming is one of several different ways to begin writing.

In addition, Richards and Schmidt (2002:58) state that '*brainstorming serves to gather ideas, viewpoints or ideas related to writing topic and is said to help the writer producing ideas'*. This means that learning to write well requires frequent practice. Therefore, teachers have to create opportunities for their students to write about topics that they care about.

3. The Four Basic Rules of Brainstorming

Conducting brainstorming sessions is not easy at all as it is a challenging task which demands a lot of concentration, motivation and time. Alex Faickney Osborn (1953) suggests that the key of the effectiveness of brainstorming method lies under four main basic rules that are: '*focus on quantity'*, '*postpone judgment'*, '*free wheel and encouraging strange ideas'*, '*building on each others' ideas'*. Therefore, in order to get satisfactory results, these rules must be respected.

1. **Focus on quantity:** quantity is more desired than quality. In fact, when brainstorming, group members are encouraged to contribute and generate as many ideas as possible. Brainstorming is the first step in the exploration phase of ideas before writing. Therefore, it is important to be open to all ideas and possibilities. Learners have to think up as many ideas as possible regardless of how ridiculous they may seem at first, but with little modification they can become fertile. Wilson (2013: 04) states that: "*Quantity, not quality, is the goal of brainstorming. The primary criterion for the success of brainstorming is the sheer number of ideas that are generated. Anything that limits the number of ideas is contrary to the intent"*. In addition, Jain (2010) adds that the greater the number of the generated ideas, the greater the possibility to find a radical solution.

2. **Postpone judgment:** during the brainstorming session, there is no right or wrong idea, all ideas are accepted. In addition, no participant is allowed to judge or criticize the others' ideas. Indeed, Light et al (2009:95) state that *"Brainstorming can be a particularly effective way of engaging students as the production of their ideas and*

solutions is separated from the often limiting impact of immediate intellectual criticism". The purpose of brainstorming is to generate as many ideas as possible. Evaluation, selection and judgment are the main cause of brainstorming failure. Indeed, the fear of rejection and judgment is the major cause that prevents learners from participating and prevents fresh ideas to come to light. The general principle of this technique is to separate idea generation from discussion.

3. **Free Wheel and encouraging strange ideas:** group members are encouraged to voice any solution they can think of, no matter how outrageous or impractical it seems to be; every idea is to be expressed. In this sense, Wilson (2013) states that strange ideas may not be useful, but through analysis they may become fertile and provide better solutions.

4. **Building on each other's ideas:** combining, adding and building on ideas is part of creative process. Members can suggest improvements, variations, or combinations of previous ideas. Indeed,Wilson (2013) argues that new ideas can emerge from synthesizing, i.e. when the participants work in groups, they can inspire each other through listening, understanding and creating.

4. Types of Brainstorming

4.1.Group Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a technique that can be applied on groups in order to share and exchange ideas. According to (Raimes and Jerskey, 2010:15):*'brainstorming is enhanced if you do it collaboratively in a group, discussing and then listing your ideas. You can then, by yourself or with the group, scrutinize the ideas, arrange them, reorganize them, and add to or eliminate them'*. In addition, Brown (2001) states that working in small groups is an ideal method to generate ideas and share them with the class members. Besides, Osborn (1957: 228-229) cited in (Nilson, Batalden and Godfrey, 2007: 112) states that:

> In the same length of time, and under proper conditions, the average person can think up about twice as many ideas when working with a group than when working alone. Nevertheless, nearly all have agreed that an alternation between group ideation and individual ideation is desirable, since a combination of these two methods has produced maximum results in almost every case.

From this quote, we can understand that Osborn contended that idea generation in groups is far superior than individual idea generation.

4.2. Individual Brainstorming

Individual brainstorming or silent brainstorming is a problem solving technique used only by one participant. Indeed, many individuals find that they can be more creative when working alone rather than on group. Quarte (2008) find that individual Brainstorming is more productive than brainstorming in groups. In the same vein, Wilson (2013:5) *states that "... this process may inhibit the generation of ideas in various ways. Individuals may forget ideas while waiting for others to state theirs or decide not to state ideas similar to those of the others".* In fact, this type of brainstorming is preferable when the problem is too small and does not need many heads to generate various ideas. But in many situations, it is the problem that defines which type of brainstorming to apply.

5. Steps of Brainstorming

Brainstorming is not an easy task; it requires a lot of time and preparation in order to obtain good results. Jain (2010: 103) put forward some steps to follow while conducting brainstorming sessions:

1. Create a background memo.
2. Gather the participants from as wide range of disciplines with as broad a range of experience as possible bringing more creative ideas to the session.
3. Write down a brief description of the problem. The leader should take control of the session initially defining the problem to be solved with any criteria that must be met.
4. Use the description to get everyone's mind clear of what the problem is. This helps in keeping the group focused.
5. Encouraging an enthusiastic, uncritical attitude among brainstormers and encourage participation by all members of the team.
6. Ensure that no one criticizes or evaluates ideas during the session.

7. Jot down all the solutions that come to mind.
8. Do not evaluate ideas until the session moves to the evaluation phase.
9. Once the brainstorming session has been completed, the results of the session can be analyzed and the best solutions can be explored either using further brainstorming or more conventional solutions.
10. Do not censor any solution, no matter how stilly is sounds.
11. The leader should try to steer the discussion towards the development of some practical solutions.
12. In a long session, take plenty breaks so that people can continue to concentrate.
13. Once all the solutions have been written down, evaluate the list to determine the best action to correct the problem.
14. After distillation, the top ranked ideas may be sent back to the group or to subgroups for further brainstorming.

6. Types of Brainstorming Activities

There are many brainstorming activities that can be used by EFL teachers while teaching writing about a specific topic. The aim is to facilitate the task for the learners and teach them techniques about organization and train them how to generate many ideas in a short period of time. For this, Cullen (1998 cited in Metrouh and Ben Belkacem, 2018) has listed five types of brainstorming activities that are effective to generate as many ideas as possible:

1. Simple Word List

1. List words to describe people's appearance.

2. List all the items you need for a party.

3. Make a list of house furniture.

2. Brainstorming on a Picture

Pictures are a rich source of inspiration for brainstorming. Strange events evoke the biggest variety of responses. Most learners will let their imagination roam if the pictures are strange enough. Use pictures from the textbook, magazines or other sources.

1. What are these people doing?

2. List objects in the picture.

3. What is this man thinking about?

4. Write four words to describe this person.

Raimes (1989) states that pictures are valuable resources that teachers can use, because pictures can bring the outside world into the classroom in a vividly concrete way. In addition, students can share their experiences and make use of vocabulary, idioms, and sentence structure.

3. Brainstorming using a Song

Songs are wonderful for reducing nervousness. They seem to be particularly effective in whole- class brainstorming when the teacher is writing the ideas on the board. Play a song for the class and ask questions like the following:

1. How does the singer feel?

2. What do you think the singer looks like?

3. Suggest titles for this song.

4. When do you think that this song was written?

4. Word-mapping or phrase-mapping around a central theme

Mapping is also known as clustering and webbing. It is a graphic form of listing that simply involves getting out ideas on a large writing surface and then making connection by associating similarly themed ideas with color-coded circles or underlines of distinct patterns and then indicating other relations by linking with lines. It is a way to visually organize data and information. A mind map works like the branch of a tree. Ideas and then sub ideas that are associated with the main idea or around a central idea branch in the center of the page. Mind mapping is a highly effective way of getting information out of the brain especially when the learners are able to understand data visually instead of lists.

5. Group story telling

Students work in groups and take turns adding to a story, either spoken or written. It I usually better to give the first line of the story

Example:

John was late for school because:

1. **Students A:** he missed the train;

2. **Students B:** and there wasn't another for 20 minutes;

3. **Students C:** so he went to a game center;

4. **Students D:** but he lost his wallet.

7. The use of brainstorming

Brainstorming is an effective technique that can be used in several domains for several purposes. In the educational setting, it can be used to decide about a given topic, to deepen learners understanding and make them effective critical thinkers. According to Wilson (2013:5) we use brainstorming to:

- Generate ideas or requirements ;

- Find solutions to specific problems;

- Support conceptual design by generating metaphors, ideas, for use;

- Explore new design spaces ;

- Generate social cohesion within product teams.

8. Advantages of Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a potentially powerful technique in the teaching and learning settings mainly in writing. It has several advantages either in the classroom or in real life situations. According to Nelson, Batalden and Godfrey (2007) brainstorming can be used to:

- Involve all members of the lead improvement team in idea generating no idea is too small, too big, or out of the question;

▪ Increase the sense of camaraderie among those working on the improvement process

▪ Increase team members' ability to listen carefully to others' ideas and to build on those ideas, which increases the team's creativity;

▪ Produce ideas that are new and different from those usually offered.

In addition, Wilson (2013: 6) adds the following elements:

▪ Provides ideas that may not surface other way;

▪ Provides many ideas quickly ;

▪ Requires few materials resources. Paper, pens, sticky notes, and tape;

▪ Is a useful way to get over design blocks that are holding up a project;

▪ Provides social interaction_ people like to work together in groups to solve problems.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed some theoretical concepts concerning the writing skill and the brainstorming approach. In its two sections, it has provided the reader with definitions about the writing skill with its three approaches. Then it has focused on the different stages and components of writing. After that, it has shed light on the importance of writing and its difficulties faced by the learners. The second part has focused on defining brainstorming and its relation to writing. Followed by defining the four basic rules, types and steps of this approach. Besides, it has presented the usage and advantages of brainstorming.

Introduction

This chapter is methodological; it deals with the empirical phase of this work and describes the research techniques used to 'investigate the implementation of brainstorming to promote learners' writing performance at Adem Mezian middle school of Zerrouda in Tizi Ouzou. It aims at providing the reader with the main research instruments and procedures that have been used to collect the necessary data. The first part focuses on the description of the procedures of data collection; the second part presents the procedures of the experiment, followed by the description of the questionnaire. The third part is about the data analysis tools used to analyse the findings of this research. Finally, this chapter provides an example of the technique used to calculate the rate improvement achieved by the CTR group and the Exp group in the post-test compared to the pre-test.

1. Procedures of Data Collection

The main technique adopted to answer the research questions in this present study is a quasi-experimental design. Indeed, this design seems to be the most appropriate technique that meets the objectives of the present study. In this respect, Gay, I,R (1992) states that:

> The experiment method is the only method of research that can truly test hypotheses concerning cause-effect relationships. It represents the most valid approach to the solution of educational problems both practical and methodological, and the advancement of education as a science.
>
> (Gay, I, R; 1992: 298).

In addition, another research tool which consists of a questionnaire is employed to collect data about the learners' attitudes towards the brainstorming approach and the problems that they encounter when writing. The questionnaire is considered as the most common tool used to collect data about a given topic. Brown, (2001:6) defines a questionnaire as:

> ... Any written instrument that presents participants with a series of questions or statements to which they should react either by selecting from existing possibilities or writing out their answers. Questionnaires are particularly efficient for gathering information on a large scale.

This study involves a mixed method research design. It involves both collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data. A quantitative method is used for the collection and analysis of the data which consist of around 92 collected papers submitted by the CTR and EXP group. The participants have been asked to write about given topics. Indeed, some of them have been selected from their programme due to time constraints and the others have been proposed by us. The results obtained from both groups in the post-test are compared to the results of the pre-test in order to check whether some improvements in terms of their writing performance can be caused by the implementation of brainstorming method for the EXP group participants. Indeed, their papers are compared through the identification of their errors in both pre-test and post-test by focusing on different aspects

2. The Procedures of the Experiment

The need to reach the previously mentioned objectives have driven us to conduct a quasi- experimental design at Adem Mezian middle school of Zerrouda in Tizi Ouzou in the first trimester of the academic year 2018-2019. Fourth year pupils are the participants of this study and constitute the whole population which has been divided into two similar classes. An experimental (EXP) group which consists of 23 pupils and a control group (CTR) which contains the same number. After a general pre-test before the beginning of the treatment, the members of the CTR group have attended only the traditional way of teaching with their teacher, whereas the members of the EXP group have attended different sessions of brainstorming, received assistance and worked on various activities in relation to the writing skill. After six 6 months, the two groups undertook a post-test in order to compare the results

with the post-test in order notice any improvement in their writing performance and deduce whether the use of brainstorming is an effective method in the process of teaching and learning.

2.1. The pre-test

A pre-test has been administered to the pupils of both EXP and CTR group (see Appendix 1) under the same conditions during the first trimester on November 23rd, 2018 before introducing to them the brainstorming approach. The design of the test is in the form of paragraph, the pupils been required to write a paragraph about 'their future projects'. Indeed, this question has been proposed by their teacher since it is included in their programme. The pre-test has been conducted to measure the previous knowledge of the learners in each group, i.e. to evaluate their writing proficiency and to find out whether the two groups are relatively homogenous.

2.2. The Treatment

After the pre-test, the participants have been given the treatment. The EXP group and CTR have been taught in different ways. The EXP group was exposed to different brainstorming activities that are developed by Cullen (1998) on their writing productions (see Appendix3). However, the CTR group followed the traditional method of learning.

2.3. The post-test

For the experimental design, pre-test and post test designs are the most appropriate method for comparing participant groups and measuring the degree of change occurring as a result of the treatments. In this study, after that the participants of the EXP group have been provided with brainstorming sessions, both CTR and EXP groups have undertaken a post test (see Appendix 2) at the end of May, 2019 which is the same test format as the pre- test. The participants have been asked to write an essay about 'the importance of the internet in their

life'. The aim of this test was to evaluate the effect of this method on the learners' writing performance. The results of the test in the two groups were compared using a statistical procedure.

3. The Questionnaire

In order to get answers about one of the major aims of this research which is the fourth year middle school pupils' attitudes towards the use of brainstorming to promote their writing skill, twenty three 23 questionnaires that contain 16 statements (see Appendix4) are employed with the EXP group.

The questionnaire is divided into three major parts. The first part is about learners' profiles and background knowledge. In the second part, questions have been asked to elicit the participants' attitudes views about the writing skill. The last part contains questions about the brainstorming approach. Indeed, the questions vary between yes or no questions, likert-type questions and multiple choice questions. This questionnaire has been administered at the end of the third trimester in order to get their feedback on the effectiveness of using brainstorming to promote their writing performance.

3.1.Piloting of the Questionnaire

At the beginning of data collection phase, we have designed and piloted the learners' questionnaire. Indeed, six (6) questionnaires have been distributed randomly to both males and females of the fourth year pupils with the aim of checking the clarity and the understanding of the different question items. Accordingly, this piloting allowed us to modify and clarify some words in the questionnaire so as to make it more comprehensible and easy to answer by the respondents.

4. Procedures of Data Analysis

As it is mentioned above, this study relies on a mixed method design in analyzing the collected data. To analyze the collected papers from the participants and the questionnaires,

both quantitative and qualitative content analysis are used to see whether the writing performance of the respondents has been improved through the implementation of brainstorming.

4.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

A quantitative method is used to analyze the numerical data that are obtained from the experimental research during the pre-test and post-test. In addition, it is also used to analyse the quantitative data that have been obtained from the questionnaires.

4.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

A qualitative method has been adopted for the analysis of the non numerical results gathered from the questionnaires that have been administered to the EXP group. The obtained results are transformed into some form of explanations and interpretations.

5. Description of the Statistical Method

This part describes the statistical method used to turn the obtained results from data collection tools into percentages in order to present them in the next chapter. To do so, the same procedure is followed for each CTR and EXP groups' results in both the pre-test and the post-test:

Example: in the control group, 8 out of 23 participants have given a relevant content to the topic.

23 represents 100%

Pre-test $\qquad 8 * \frac{100}{23} = 34,78\%$

Post-test $\qquad 5 * \frac{100}{23} = 21,73\%$

So (34, 78%) of the participants from the control group have given a relevant content to the topic in the pre-test and (21,73%) in the post test.

As it is mentioned above, the frequencies are used in order to calculate the data obtained from the EXP research. Concerning the analysis of the results obtained from the questionnaires, the SPSS is relied on.

Conclusion

To put it all together, this part of the dissertation has presented the research design and methodology followed in this research. It has first started by highlighting the data collection procedures and tools. Indeed, this part has explained and justified the data collection tools and data analysis procedures followed in this study. After that, it has described in detail the procedure of the experiment. It has then described the data analysis methods used to analyse the collected data.

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the presentation of the findings obtained through our investigation. It starts by presenting the results obtained from the quasi-experimental research in the form of histograms in the light of Raimes' (1983) model of components of writing and Osborn's approach of brainstorming which has been reinforced by many authors like Cullen (1998). Indeed, some elements have not been taken into consideration regarding the learners' age and cognitive abilities. The second part of this chapter displays the results gathered from the questionnaire in the form of pie-charts, histograms and tables.

1. Results of the Experiment

The first part of this chapter presents the results obtained in the pre-test and the post-test from the CTR and EXP groups that were involved in the research. In addition, the results are presented and analyzed relying on Raimes' (1983) components of writing namely: content, word choice, organization and mechanics.

1.1. Content: This component includes relevance, clarity, originality, logic, etc.

Results of the pre-test and post-test for the EXP and CTR groups in terms of Content

	CTR	EXP
pre-test	43%	35%
post-test	39%	65%
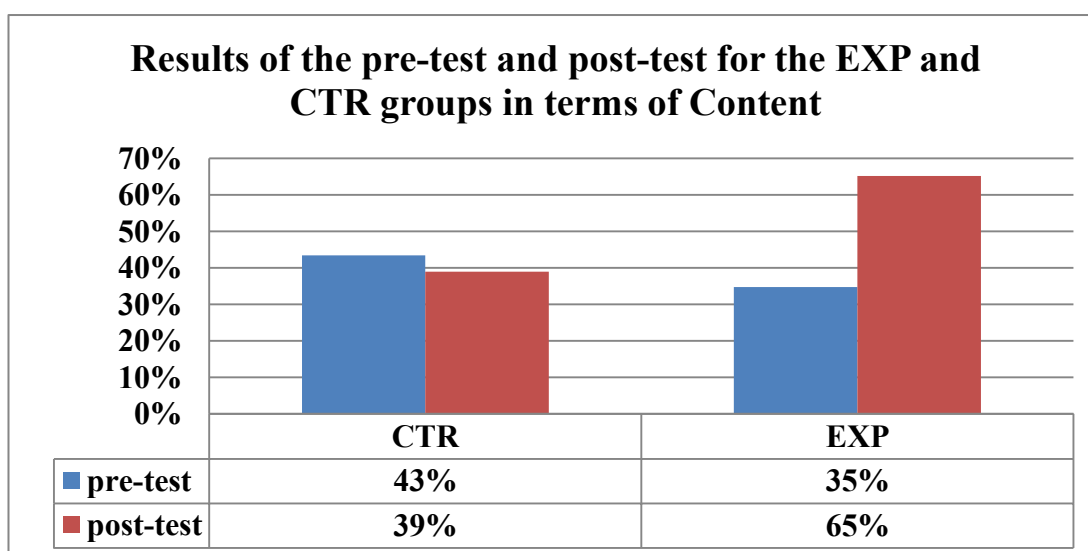
Diagram 2: Participants' writing of a Relevant Content

The diagram 2 presents the differences between the pre-test and post-test of the two groups at the level of content such as relevance, clarity and originality. It is observed that the score of the post- test EXP group's content is higher than the one of the CTR group. Indeed, 8 (35%) participants from the EXP group have used a relevant content in the pre-test and 15 (65%) in the post-test. Whereas, 10 (43%) participants from the CTR group have used a relevant content in the pre-test and 9 (39%) subjects in the post-test. This means that the treatment group have made a considerable improvement.

1.2. The writers' process: it starts by getting ideas, getting started, writing drafts, revising.

	CTR	EXP
■ pre-test	39%	48%
■ post-test	30%	74%
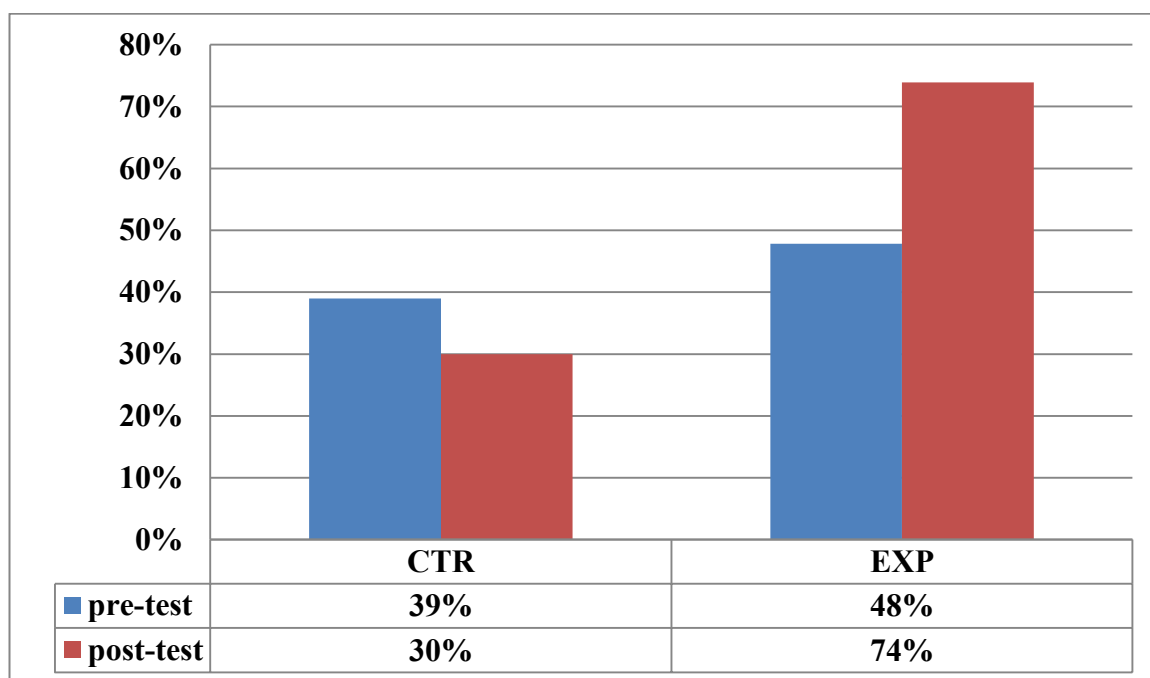
Diagram 3: Participants' writing Process

As shown in the above diagram, it presents the results obtained by the CTR and EXP groups in terms of the participants' writing process; i.e. the number of the learners who have used a draft paper and have written their ideas down before editing their papers. In the pre-test, 9 (39%) participants from the CTR group have used a draft paper and organized their works before handing it. However, this number decreased in the post-test to 7 (30%)

participants. Whereas, the other group of participants have shown a considerably high use of the process of writing starting from brainstorming to revising. The number as shown above has increased in the EXP group from 11 participants in the pre-test to 17 (74) in the post-test.

1.3. Word choice: it is about vocabulary, idiom, and tone.

	CTR	EXP
■ pre-test	35%	35%
■ post-test	26%	69%
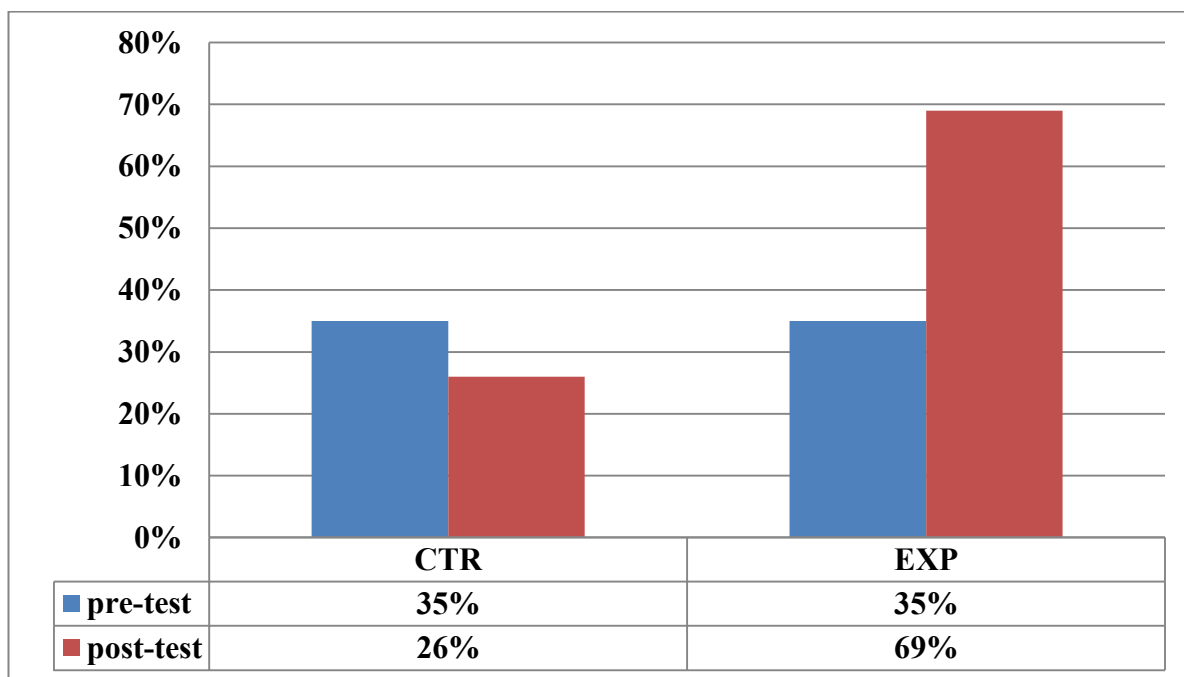
Diagram 4: Participants' Appropriate use of Word Choice

This diagram presents the number of participants who have used an appropriate vocabulary. The percentage of the EXP group use of appropriate vocabulary has increased from the pre-test (35%) to the post-test (69%). Whereas the results of the CTR group decreased from (35%) to (26%) in the post-test.

1.4. Organization: it is in relation to paragraphs, topic and supports, cohesion and unity.

	CTR	EXP
■ pre-test	22%	30%
■ post-test	39%	65%
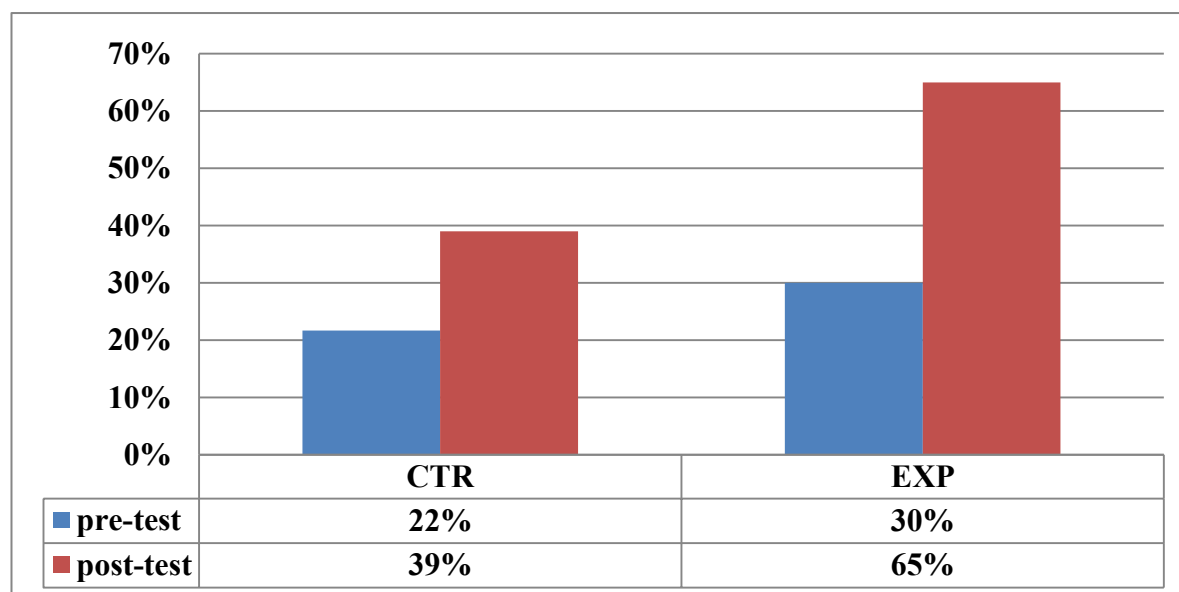
Diagram 5: Participants' Organization of their Writings

The diagram above presents the number of pupils who have organized their works into paragraphs and have written a coherent essay. It is observed that, in both groups, there is an improvement from the pre-test to the post-test. However, the EXP group shows a higher amelioration from 7 participants to 15

1.5. Mechanics: this component is about handwriting, spelling, punctuation, etc.

	CTR	EXP
■ pre-test	48%	39%
■ post-test	43%	78%
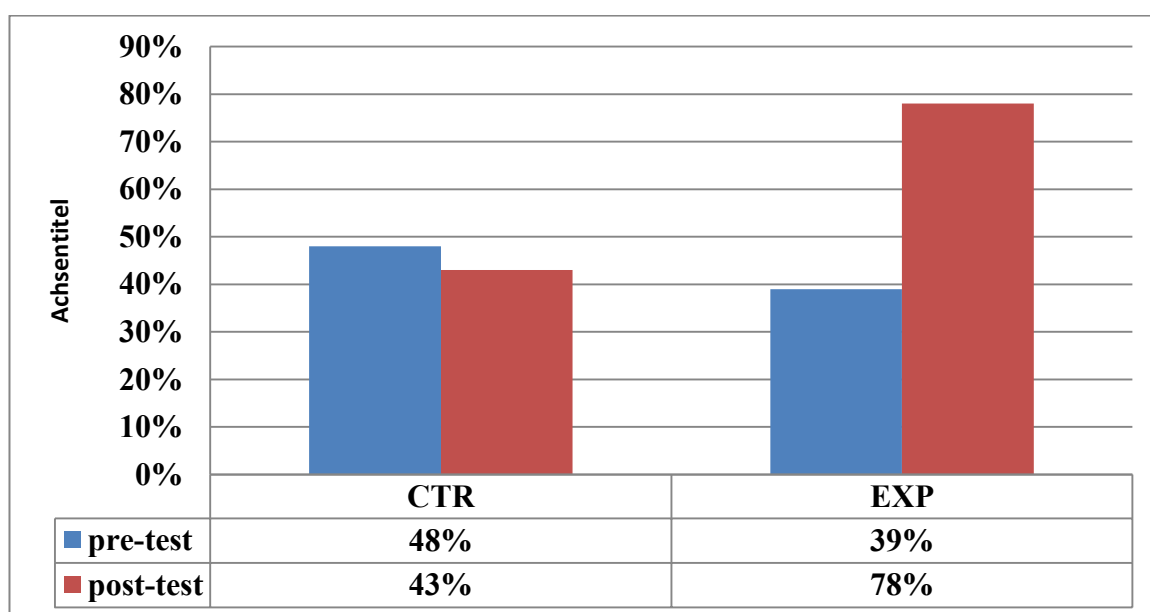
Diagram 6: Participants' Appropriate use of Mechanics

This histogram presents pupils' correct use of writing mechanics; i.e. in terms of spelling and punctuation. The results reveal that in the pre-test, the CTR group 11 (48%) have shown a considerably high use of writing mechanics in their essays, but this number decreased slightly in the post test to (43%). On the other hand, the treatment group participants who have used appropriate mechanics increased from pre-test 9 (39%) to the post-test 18 (78%).

1.6. Grammar: it consists of rules for verbs, articles, pronouns, etc.

	CTR	EXP
■ pre-test	52%	43%
■ post-test	52%	69%
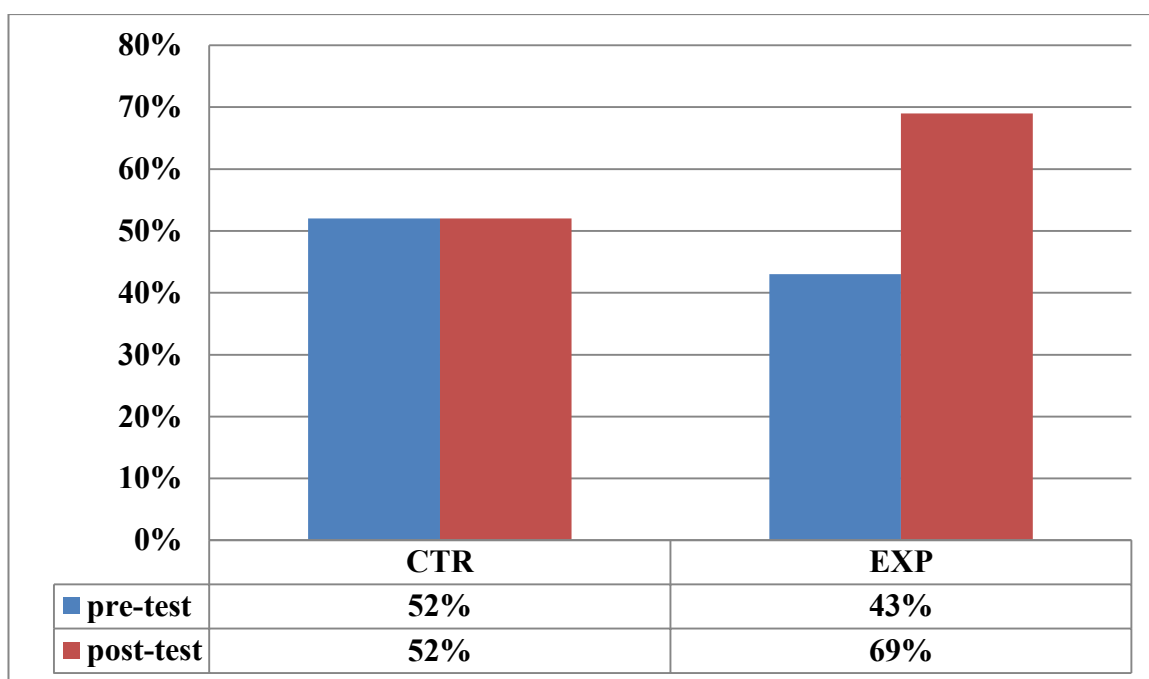
Diagram 7: Participants' Appropriate use of Grammar

The above diagram shows that the EXP has known a considerable improvement from the pre- test (43%) to the post-test (69%) the number of the learners who have used a correct grammar increased from 10 to 16 participants. However, the results of the CTR group have remained stable at 52% in both tests; i.e. 12 participants who have used an appropriate grammar in both tests. This means that the treatment group made a noticeable improvement comparing it to the CTR group.

Learners' questionnaire

Section one: learners' Background information

S (1)-Gender:

Option	Number	Percentage
Male	11	47.8
Female	12	52.2
Total	23	100

Table 3: Participants' Distribution According to Gender

The results obtained reveal that the distribution of gender in the classroom is almost the same. We have recorded12 females making up (52, 17%), whereas the rest is of the male gender that represent (47, 83%).

Q (2) - Do you like studying English?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	19	82.6
No	4	17.4
Total	23	100

Table 4: Participants' Attitudes towards studying English

A quick glimpse at this table reflects that almost all the participants (82, 61%) declare that they like studying English. Indeed, this is a positive point since they are aware of the importance of this language through which they can communicate everywhere. Yet, 4 pupils representing (17, 39%) give a negative answer.

Q (3) – How do you perceive your level in English?

a. Good

b. Average

c. poor
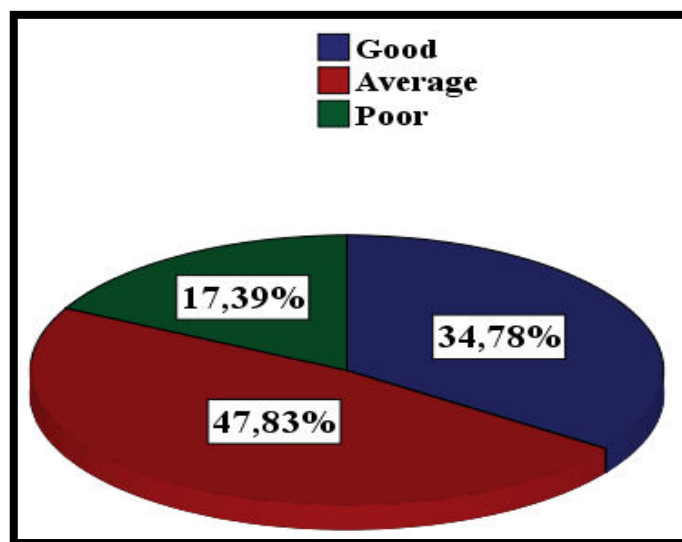
Pie chart 1: Participants' Perception of their Level in English

We observe from this pie chart that the highest percentage (47, 8%) of the learners assume that they have an average level in English. The others (34, 8%) state that they have a good level, whereas (17, 4%) say that they have a poor level in English.

In this question, the learners are asked to justify their self evaluation of their level. Indeed, the obtained answers reveal that some learners find their level average because they face difficulties to learn it .8 (34.8%) learners see that their level is good in English because they like it and get good marks, whereas the rest claim that they have a poor level because they are not interested in learning it.

Section two: The Writing Skill

Q (4) - Do you like writing in English?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	18	78,3
No	5	21,7
Total	23	100,0

Table 5: Participants' Attitudes towards Writing in English

This question seeks to identify the learners' attitudes towards writing in English. Through this table, it is observed that the majority of the learners (18) making up (78, 26%) claim that they like writing in English. This means that they are aware of the importance of this skill through which they can communicate and share their ideas. However, 5 subjects (21, 74%) indicate that they have a negative attitude towards this skill.

Q (5) - Do you find writing in English a difficult task?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	17	73,9
No	6	26,1
Total	23	100,0

Table 6 :Participants ' Perception about Writing as a difficult Task

The responses to this question that are reflected in this pie chart reveal that the majority of the pupils (73,91%) find that writing in English is a difficult task, but this does not mean that they are not able to produce a piece of writing. Yet, only (26, 09%) of the participants find it easy.

Q (6) - If yes, what are the aspects in which you find difficulties? (You can choose more than one answer)

a. Grammar
b. Lack of Vocabulary
c. Spelling
d. Lack of ideas
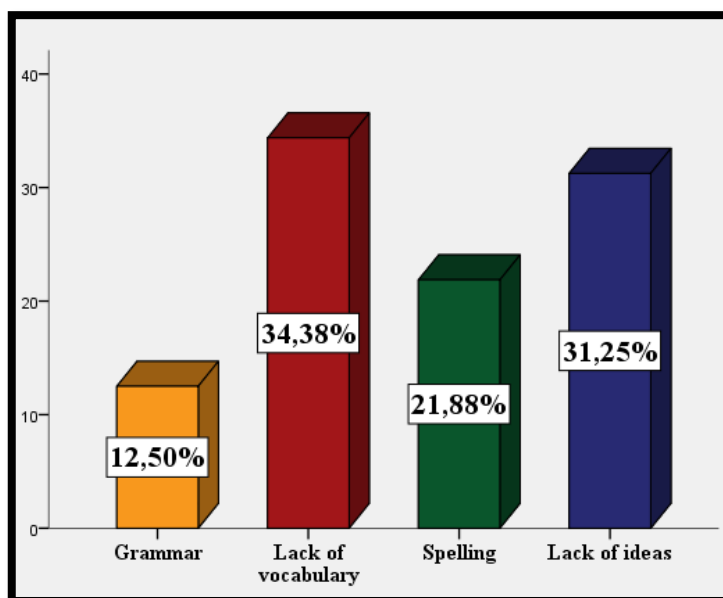
Diagram 8: The Participants Difficulties when Writing

In this question, the learners are permitted to choose more than one option. From these findings, it is noticeable that the learners face more difficulties with the lack of vocabulary (34, 38%) and lack of ideas (31, 25%) when writing. Seven 7 participants (21, 88%) state that they face difficulties in spelling. Whereas, only 4 (12, 50%) subjects declare that grammar represents an obstacle for them while writing.

Q (7) – How do you feel during a writing activity in the classroom?

a. Exited;   **b.** Demotivated;   **c.** Anxious;   **d.** Bored.
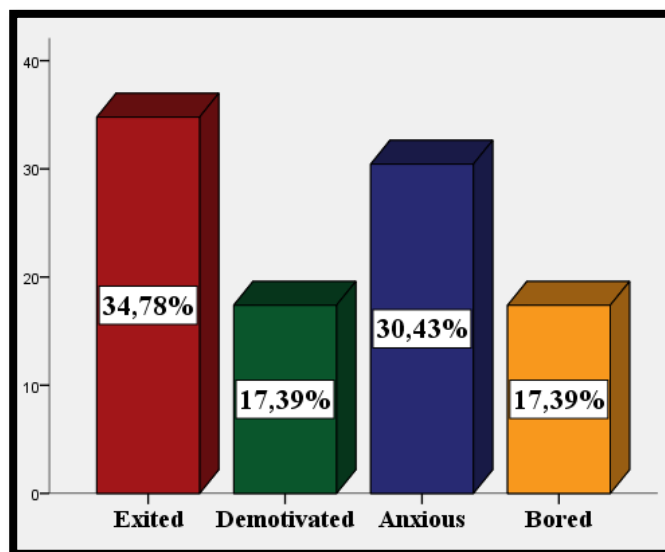
Diagram 9: Participants' Feelings during a Writing Activity in the Class

From the obtained data, we can notice that eight (34.8%) participants state that they feel exited during a writing activity in the class because it is a means through which they can express their thoughts and ideas. On the other hand, seven (30%) subjects say that they feel anxious when writing maybe because they perceive it as a difficult task. Yet, the rest of the pupils feel bored four (17%) and demotivated four (17%).

Q (8) - Do you write in English outside the classroom?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	10	43,5
No	13	56,5
Total	23	100,0

Table7: Participants' practice of Writing outside the Classroom

Regarding this question, more than half of the participants (56, 52%) confess that they do not write in English outside the classroom, whereas only 10 (43, 48%) pupils out of 23 claim that they practice their English in writing after the courses in order to perform better.

Section three: Learners' Attitudes towards Brainstorming

Q (9) - Do you find that brainstorming as a beneficial technique or not?

Option	Number	Percentage
Beneficial	23	100,0
Not benefical	0	0.00

Table 8 –Participants' Attitudes towards Brainstorming as a Beneficial Technique

From a quick glimpse at the above table, it is observed that all the participants have a positive attitude towards brainstorming, and find that it is beneficial and helpful for writing. In fact, this is a good sign because they know that they need it when writing.

As far as the analysis of the justified answers for this question is concerned, the learners state that this technique is beneficial because they have learned new things. Some other participants have answered that brainstorming is beneficial because they use it in the other modules.

S (10) – Brainstorming helps you improve your written production

a. Strongly agree; **b.** Agree; **c.** Disagree
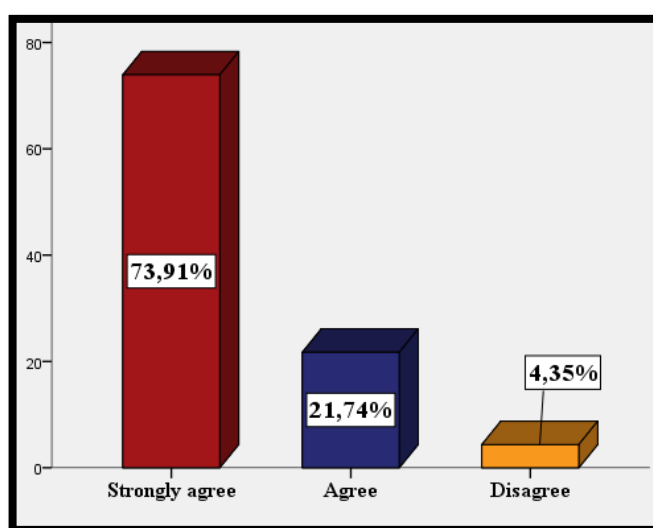
Diagram 10: Participants' Attitudes towards Brainstorming in improving their Written Production

This item sheds light on whether brainstorming helps the learners in improving their written production. For this, the majority of them (73, 9%) strongly agree with this statement. Only one participants (4, 3%) disagree, while the rest of the pupils (21, 74%) state that they agree with the fact that this technique is helpful for their written production.

S (11) – Brainstorming facilitates the writing activities.

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	21	91,3
No	2	8,7
Total	23	100,0

Table 9: Participants' Attitudes towards Brainstorming in facilitating the Writing Activities

As indicated in table 9, the majority of the learners 21 (91, 3%) state that brainstorming facilitates the writing activities whereas the two left participants (8, 7) claim that this method does not help them.

In this question, the learners have asked to justify their answers, those who have answered with yes, have said that this method helps them to generate more ideas faster and easily about the writing topic and organize them in a good way. While, some other participants have stated that it helps them to practice their writing and gather more vocabulary.

Q- (12) – Which types of brainstorming activities do you prefer?

a. Word list
b. Mind mapping
c. Group story telling
d. Brainstorming on a picture
e. Brainstorming on a song

41
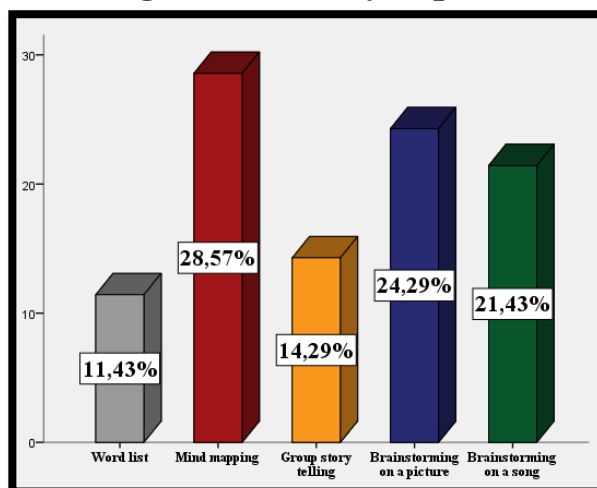
Diagram 11: Participants' Preferences about Brainstorming Activities

In this question, the learners have asked to choose more than one item if they want. The results on diagram 11 show that the most preferred types of brainstorming activities for learners are mind mapping with (28, 6%) and brainstorming on a picture with (24, 3); this is maybe due to the fact that these activities are multimodal and attractive for learning. In addition, (15) participants have opted for brainstorming on a song (21, 4%), followed by group story telling (14, 3%) and simple word list (11, 4%) in the fifth place.

Q- (13) – Does this method create a positive environment in the classroom?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	21	91,3
No	2	8,7
Total	23	100,0

Table 10: Participants' Preferences about Brainstorming in creating a positive Environment in the Classroom.

The results mentioned above reflect that the majority of the learners 21 (91.3%) claim that brainstorming creates a positive environment in the classroom whereas only 2 (8%) claim that it does not create a positive environment.

Q- (14) –Does brainstorming motivate you to write?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	20	87,0
No	3	13,0
Total	23	100,0

Table 11: Pupils' Attitudes towards Brianstorming in motivating them to write

This question seeks the identification of the learners' views about the importance of brainstorming in motivating them to write. The results on the above table reveal that almost

all the learners 20 (87%) find that brainstorming motivates them to write, this reflects that they find brainstorming interesting. Only three (13%) participants give a negative response.

Q- (15) – Do you prefer group or individual brainstorming?

a. Group brainstorming   **b.** Individual brainstorming
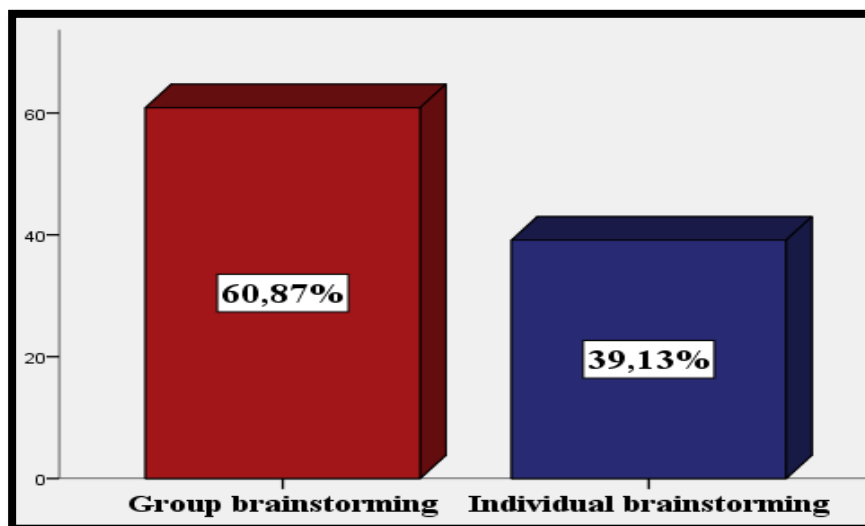
Diagram 12: Participants' Preferences about Group and Individual Brainstorming

Diagram 12 shows the learners' attitudes towards group and individual brainstorming. It is observed that the majority of the learners 14 (60.8%) state that they prefer to brainstorm in groups. Whereas the rest of them 9 (39%) subjects prefer to brainstorm by themselves.

The learners who have opted for group brainstorming argue that they generate more ideas and are more motivated to write when they work in groups. Concerning those who have selected individual brainstorming, they state that they have clearer ideas and focus more when they work alone.

Q- (16) – d Do you feel improvement in your writing now?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	23	100,0
No	0	0.00

Table 12: Participants' Improvement in Writing

Table number (16) shows whether the learners feel improvement in thier writing after attending brainstorming sessions. The results have shown that all the participants state that their writing performance is improved.

Through the collected answers, the learners say that their writing skill is improved because, they can generate and express their ideas better than before brainstorming. In addition, some pupils state that they can write without hesitation, because their vocabulary is enriched.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the research findings obtained in this study. It is divided into two parts. The first one has presented the main results of the pre-test and the post-test reached by both CTR and EXP groups. The second part has presented the questionnaire findings. Indeed, the obtained results have indicated that the control group has known a noticeable improvement in terms of their writing performance comparing to the control group. In addition, the results of the questionnaire have revealed that the participants of the EXP group have positive perceptions and attitudes towards the use of brainstorming as a teaching and learning technique.

Introduction:

The following chapter discusses and interprets the main results obtained from this research. It is divided into two main parts. The first part provides a critical discussion of the results of the quasi-experimental research. It evaluates the writing performance of the pupils as defined by Raimes (1983). This part interprets the results in terms of six components of writing, namely content, the writer's process, word choice, organization, mechanics and grammar. Indeed, Raimes (1983) proposed nine components that the writer has to follow in order to produce a good piece of writing. But, only six components have been selected in this present investigation, because of the learners' age and cognitive abilities. The results of the pre-test are compared to those of the post-test in order to reveal the effect of implementing brainstorming in enhancing pupils writing skill. The second part of this chapter discusses the main findings of the questionnaire administered to the treatment group at the end of the experiment in order to collect their attitudes towards the brainstorming approach, indeed the interpretation of the discussion of this questionnaire is based more on Osborn's and Cullen (1998) approach of brainstorming (1953).

1. **Discussion of the Results of the Experiment:**

As the results of the experiment have revealed, the writing ability of the pupils involved in this research has been improved. This ability consists of producing a piece of writing taking into consideration the needed components. In other words, it is to know and master the writing rules and their appropriate usage.

1.1.The Effect of Brainstorming on Pupils' writing of a Relevant Content:

The lack of ideas is the major problem and obstacle that learners face each time when trying to produce a piece of writing. In fact, this may be due to their limited knowledge about the different topics that are dealt with. In this respect, Al Murshidi (2014) claims that

generating ideas about a topic can be a barrier that hinders learners to move on in their writing. Therefore, building a good content is of a paramount importance for enhancing pupils' writing performance. Hedge (2005: 95) states that: ' *successful writing goes beyond producing clear and accurate sentences since learners must be aided to write and express their ideas in the most appropriate and creative way'*.

The results of the EXP and CTR group in the pre-test reveal that the participants express almost the same ideas. They have started all by presenting themselves, giving their age and level (see Appendix N°2). Indeed, creativity and originality have been absents in their copies during the pre-test in both groups. Contrary to the pre-test, the post- test's results show a considerable improvement on the EXP group's copies (see diagram 1). To make it more clear, some examples are selected from their written productions:

- *'..The internet is an adventure; you can see the most beautiful places and travel through it without moving...'*

- *'...The importance of internet in our life is similar to oxygen...'*

- *'...with the internet, everybody can share memories, thoughts, and knowledge...'*

From the examples above, we can say that, after the treatment phase, the participants of the EXP group made a considerable improvement and produced better written productions. The participants illustrated with examples and arguments about the importance of internet in their life. In addition, the content produced in the post-test is more elaborated with ideas relevant to the topic. However, the results of the CTR group in the post-test remained almost the same; i.e. their score in the post- test concerning the number of the participants who have used a relevant content to the topic was10 (43%) participants and 9 (39%) learners in the post-test. This may be due to the lack of practice outside the classroom.

1.2.The Effect of Brainstorming on Pupils' writing Process:

Many researchers and writers as Zamel (1983), Raimes (1983) and many others, made studies about the writing skill. In these studies, they have argued that one of the factors that seem to be obstructing learners from achieving good performance in writing is that they neglect the steps which they have to go through before dealing with their final product.

In this investigation, it has been observed whether the participants brainstorm and generate ideas before they start writing, and whether they use plans or outlines to rely on them while writing. Williams (2003: 114) claims that '*Planning is one of the most effective features of the writing process, although it can also be one of the most challenging'*. Yet, it is an effective step to develop a plan and achieve the final product. The results of the experiment have revealed that, only 9 participants from the CTR group and 11 participants from the EXP have used a draft paper and brainstormed before starting to write. Consequently, their papers have been full of mistakes and their ideas have not been organized (see Appendix 1).

After introducing the brainstorming approach and activities (see Appendix 3) to the participants of the treatment group, almost all the participants have used a draft paper in order to generate and organize their ideas during the post-test. Consequently, their score increased from 11 (48%) participants in the pre-test to 17 (74%) in the post test. This means that brainstorming is beneficial for generating ideas, especially when it is used during the prewriting phase. In this respect, Starkey (2004: 2) states that: '*pre-writing is the first step in creating a successful essay'*. Contrary to the EXP group, the CTR group's participants who have followed the traditional way of teaching did not show any improvement during the post test, their score decreased from 9 (39%) participants in the pre-test to 7 (30%) in the post-test.

1.3.The Effect of Brainstorming on Pupils' Word Choice:

One of the best ways to influence the reader is to know how to choose the right words. By choosing the necessary and appropriate expressions while writing, the learners can transmit their thoughts concisely. In fact, lacking vocabulary means failing to write, and having poor vocabulary would result in inappropriate writing. Many learners find difficulties when trying to write and sometimes, they misuse some words as is the case with synonyms that do not have the same meaning in all contexts.

Through the analysis of the participants' papers, the results have revealed that the percentage of the participants who have used an appropriate vocabulary in the pre- test in both groups is (35%). This means that the two groups find difficulties in expressing themselves and using appropriate vocabulary. Here are some examples to illustrate the case:

'...I went to get out a pilot..' '...bringing excellent marks...' ' ...a doctor of heart...' ' ...doctor of children...' '...I will do a teacher...'

As it is illustrated above, the learners lack basic expressions to use when writing and have a very limited range of vocabulary. In fact this may be due to the lack of interest, lack of practice or may be due to other factors as it is stated by Davies and Pearse (2000: 59) :

' *Vocabulary is neglected in some English courses. This is a pity because working with words can be enjoyable and satisfying for learners'* .

By choosing the necessary and appropriate words while writing, the learner may achieve the vocabulary accuracy and transmit the intended meaning concisely as vocabulary learning is an ongoing process that requires repetition and constant use in order to memorize it.

The results of the post-test reveal that the EXP group participants have made a great improvement concerning the use of appropriate adjectives and rich vocabulary which are

related to the topic such as: *' network system, find entertaining and educational videos, educational websites, electronic libraries…'*. Conversely, the results of the CTR group have revealed that they did not improve their vocabulary and have made almost the same mistakes as the pre-test.

1.4. The Effect of Brainstorming on Pupils' Organization of their written productions:

In the process of writing, ideas should be presented to the reader in an organized way. Starkey (2004:2) states that: *'by following [an organized method of writing], you will guide your reader from your first to last sentence'*. Indeed, organization has relation with paragraphs, topic sentence, supporting details, cohesion and coherence. Indeed, cohesion is attributed to the use of cohesive ties, which are mainly grammatical or lexical devices that make connection between what has already been said with what will be expressed after and guide the reader through the text. The term 'cohesion' refers to *'the use of explicit linguistic devices to signal relations between sentences and parts of texts'* (Connor, 1996: 83).

Cohesion is achieved when sentences are ordered in the logical manner and when clear transitions and linking words are used. However, the ability to organize ideas into a coherent and cohesive paragraph is one of the most common problems or challenges that learners face when writing. Here are some examples quoted from the EXP and CTR group's participants copies of the pre-test:

- *'…I have amazing dreams for my future. So because I like animals and I want to became a doctor and my first important project is to get my B.E.M exam…'*
- *'… I will be tested in four different subjects: the english and German languages and biology and chemistry…'*

- *'... I will be admitted to secondary school, I will study in the lycee, I will pass my BAC, then I will go to the university...'*

In the post test, the CTR group made almost the same errors (see appendix2) when asked to write a paragraph about 'the importance of internet in their life'. Contrary to the EXP group (see appendix 2), they refrained from doing such mistakes for example:

- *'...I use the internet to do my home works, watch videos and listen to music...'*

- *: 'Moreover, it helps us to discover new cultures...' ' in addition, I use it always to see videos, cartons, and films', '... besides, internet has electronic libraries...'*

- *'.. First, it helps us in our... Second, we can download...'*

So, even if they have good ideas about any given topic, they fail to organize them into a coherent paragraph or essay. Indeed, when a paragraph is well organized and the ideas are coherent, the writer can transmit his/ her ideas or message avoiding misunderstanding.

1.5. The Effect of Brainstorming on Pupils' Correct and Appropriate use of Mechanics:

Other difficulties that the participants face when writing concerns the use of mechanical components including: **spelling, punctuation, capitalization**, etc. These components are very important when dealing with writing.

It should be mentioned that punctuation can influence the meaning of the sentence; i.e. an incorrectly- punctuated writing can impede the meaning and makes the sentence or the text very difficult to comprehend. In addition, spelling also plays a significant role in enabling the reader to understand what is written; because, misspelled words can affect completely the meaning leading to problems in comprehension. In this respect, Harmer (2004:44) states that:

Writing, like any other skill, has its 'mechanical' components. These include handwriting, spelling, punctuation, and the construction of well-formed sentences, paragraphs, and texts. Such things are the nuts and bolts of the sentences, paragraphs, and they need to be focused on at certain stages of learning to write in English

When analyzing the participants' copies, the results of the EXP and CTR groups reveal that in the pre-test, they have made almost the same mistakes. Here are some examples to illustrate the case:

- **Spelling**: *'...I will be very hapy...' ' wen I get...' ' the bast mark...' ' I have in maging dreams...' ' I wille' 'joob' ' diferent' 'it is a long carrer...'*

- **Capitalization**: *'it is the Key of the future...' '... 'hi, My name is...' 'I will go to University...' ' ... go to England, france, Spain ...' '... I Start work...' ' ...english and German...'*

- **Punctuation**: *' after that I will continue my studies...'*

Harmer(2004: 46) argues that: 'English spelling is complex but it is not completely random and is, in fact fairly regular; there are usually clear rules about when certain spellings are and are not acceptable'.

In addition:

> Using punctuation correctly is an important skill. Many people judge the quality of what is written not just on the content, the language, and the writer's handwriting but also on their use of punctuation. If capital letters, commas, full stops, sentence and paragraph boundaries, etc. are not used correctly, this can not only make a negative impression but can, of course, also make a text difficult to understand.

Spelling and punctuation are two commonly shared writing difficulties among learners. Indeed, spelling is said to be closely interrelated with reading. In this respect, Firth (1980: 496) states that: *'learning to read should imply learning to spell and learning to spell should imply learning to read'*. Therefore, many scholars have proposed reading as a solution in

order to overcome spelling mistakes. While Harmer (2001: 256) says that *'... the correspondence between the sound of a word and the way it is spelt is not always obvious'*.

After the treatment, the two groups have undertaken a post-test in order to see whether there is an improvement or not. Indeed, the results reveal that, the treatment group participants who have used appropriate mechanics increased from 9 participants to 18; this means that the EXP have noticed a considerable improvement. However, almost the same mistakes were made by the CTR group. The following examples are quoted from their papers (seeAppendix2):

- **Spelling:** cominication' ' the internet maks the words close' 'helpe''it haves advansion and a disadvansion' ' it contens advantages' " it make's the word closer'

- **Capitalization:** ' with Familly' 'can't stay Without it' ' advantages of Internet' ''…words. the internet…'

- **Punctuation:** ' the internet makes the words close. is helpe to live a good life'

1.6.The Effect of Brainstorming on Pupils' Correct and Appropriate use of Grammar:

Grammar is referred to the system and structure of a language in general. It is the process which deals with the construction of words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs. In fact, when speaking about grammatical accuracy, we refer to the ability to use the grammatical structure in appropriate ways and situations; i.e. the knowledge of rules of verbs, articles as well as word formation. Indeed, Using correct grammar rules in communication is a challenging task for the learners mainly in the middle school.

In the present study, almost all the participants have difficulties at the level of grammar throughout their writing production in the pre-test. This may be due to a lack of practice and a

lack of memorizing grammar rules. The analysis of the corpus shows that in the pre-test, the participants of the CTR group and EXP group faced the same kinds of difficulties and made the same types of mistakes. Indeed, the common grammar difficulties faced by the pupils are at the level of morphology and the choice of appropriate tenses.

As far as the choice of appropriate tenses is concerned, the pre-test indicates that the participants' written productions have been constructed with a considerable number of errors. The following examples are quoted from their papers to better illustrate the case:

- *'…I have 14 years old…' ' …I will passed…' '… I will plant to married…'*

- *'If I have got my Brevet exam. I will be the happiest boy in Algeria'*

- *When I finished studies in the university I will get my diploma'*

- *'…To make many efforts to became a doctor…' '… became a police…'*

- *'… when I pass and success in my middle school..'*

- *'… in the future if I have got my Brevet exam…'*

At the level of morphological errors, the participants made many errors concerning the /s/ sound, they did not pay attention when to use it or omit it. Some errors are cited bellow in order to make it more clearer:

- *' … the finale years…' ' … to visit all the contry of the world…' ' a good marks'*

- *' … to learn different language and cultures…' '… I wish good lucks…'*

In the post-test (Appendix 2), the EXP group refrained from using such grammar errors, in addition. It has known a considerable improvement from the pre-test (see diagram N°7). The number of the learners who have used correct grammar has increased from 10 to 16.

However, the CTR group has seemed to keep making the same errors, for example*: '… it make you very lazy…' '… friend's and family it make's the world closer…'*

From the results obtained above and the analysis of the pre-test and post-test, we can say that the treatment group has made a noticeable (see appendix 2) improvement comparing it to the CTR group. Indeed, this is a positive point, because, the use of correct grammar is an important element when writing. Moreover, the absence of good grammar may lead to misunderstanding and meaning distortions.

2. Discussion of the Questionnaire's Results:

2.1. Learners' Background Information:

This section deals with the discussion and interpretation of the learners' questionnaire. It is divided into three subsections and each one of them collects information on a particular aspect.

Despite the fact that this sub-section contains only three questions, it provides us with some interesting background information about the participants. The results reveal that 19 (82.6%) of the informants have positive attitudes towards studying English. Indeed, this is a positive point, because these pupils are aware of the importance of this language through which they can communicate everywhere. According to Chamber (1991): 'language learning occurs more easily, when the learner has a positive attitude towards the language learning' (cited in Sevim Inal et al, 2005: 40). The analysis of the third question shows that most of the informants 11 (48%) have an intermediate level (see pie-chart1). Eight (8) respondents state that their level in English is good because they like it and always get good marks. However, the rest of them claim that their level is poor due to the lack of interest in learning it.

2.2. Learners' Attitudes towards the Writing Skill

From analyzing the participants' answers about their attitudes towards writing in English, it is obvious from the first sight (Table 4) that the majority of the learners (78%) like writing in English. Indeed, this means that they are aware about the importance of this skill through which they can express themselves and share their ideas. However, (73%) of the respondents (Table 5) state that they find writing as being a difficult task. Bell and Burnaby (1984, cited in Nunan 1989:36) say that: *'writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously'.*

As a support to the previous question, the participants were asked to select from the question number (6) the aspects on which they find difficulties while writing (see Diagram 8). Indeed, the results show that the pupils face more difficulties with the lack of vocabulary. Bowman (2006) states that, vocabulary is integrated into every content area and is addressed as part of the curriculum which means that the use of vocabulary is part of reading, writing as well as establishing the foundation of effective communication.

In addition, (31%) of the learners claim that lack of ideas hinders them from producing a piece of writing. Indeed, this can be explained through what Brown (2001) refers to as 'writer's cramp' (mental blocks) which is a situation where the learners find themselves unable to come up with ideas about the writing topic. In addition, Raimes (1983: 12-13) says:'*When students complain, as they often do, about how difficult it is to write in a second language, they are talking not only about the difficulty of "finding" the right words and using the correct grammar but about the difficulty of finding and expressing ideas in a new language'.*

Yet, the rest of the participants declare that they face difficulties at the level of spelling (22%) and grammar (12.5%). Indeed, this may be due to the lack of practice as the results of

the seventh (8) question reveal. Indeed, more than half of the participants (56. 52%) confess that they do not practice their writing skill outside the classroom in order to improve it. In addition, other factors such as Demotivation and anxiety may prevent the learners from producing a piece of writing as it is displayed in diagram (9). In this respect, Harmer (2006) states that there are many factors that can inhibit the learners from writing, among them, fear of failure and fear of committing mistakes

2.3.Students' Attitudes towards the use of Brainstorming to promote their Writing Skill

From the analyses of pupils questionnaire concerning their attitudes towards the use of brainstorming as a teaching and learning method in order to promote their writing ability. It is apparent from the first sight that the learners seem to be aware of the importance and the necessity of this approach in improving their writing skill. From the analysis of the first and second relating questions (item N°9 ,N° 10 and N°11) to the view of the learners about brainstorming, it has been revealed that the participants agree that this method is beneficial and helpful for their writings (see table 8 and diagram10). In questions (N°9 and N° 11) the learners were asked to justify their answers in order to get more understanding about their choice. Indeed, the learners state that this technique is beneficial because it helps them to generate more ideas faster and organize them in a good way. Some other participants have answered that brainstorming facilitates the writing activities by helping them to gather more vocabulary about the writing topic. In this respect, Brown (2001, 348) states that ' *brainstorming is a useful technique in writing because it permits you to approach a topic with an open minded'*.

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The findings of question 12 concerning learners attitudes towards brainstorming activities, the results have illustrated in the diagram 9 reveals that the top three popular activities are: mind mapping which was selected by almost all the classroom (20 participants); in this respect, Scott (2011) states that when using idea mapping, you might discover interesting connections between topics that you had not thought of before. In the second place, brainstorming on a picture activity where 17 pupils have opted for it. For this, Raimes (1989) states that pictures are valuable resource that can bring the outside world into the classroom in a vividly concerte way .Brainstorming on a song ranked on the third place with 15 participants who selected it. Indeed, these activities are more beneficial especially for the pupils who like language learning through using enjoyable techniques are more disposed to learn with brainstorming activities.

As we progress in the analysis of the findings, more than (20) learners say that brainstorming creates a positive environment in the classroom (table 9)and motivates them to write. In fact, learners' motivation is a serious and a dynamic factor in educational success, it is considered as being one of the main determining factors of success in developing a second or foreign language learning.

As far as the item 15 is concerned, many participants (61%) state that they prefer group brainstorming. Indeed, brainstorming on a group is perceived as an effective method to remove anxiety, develop learners' self-confidence and motivation. Group work creates an active classroom atmosphere and promotes learners' participation to achieve a positive learning environment. In this sense, Brown (2001: 47) states that: '*As students work together in pairs and groups, they share information and come to each other's aid. They are a "team" whose players must work together in order to achieve goals successfully*'. However, the rest

of the participants (39.13%) find individual brainstorming more appropriate for them as they get clear ideas and focus more when they work alone.

The results of the last statement (see table 12) show that all the participants recognize that their writing performance is improved with brainstorming approach. Through the analysis of their justified answers, the majority of the learners state that they can express their ideas better than before introducing this technique to them. In addition, some pupils argue that they can write without hesitation because their vocabulary is enriched.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this chapter has discussed and interpreted the main results of the pre-test and the post -test have been undertaken by the participants of both CTR and EXP groups. The collected papers have been analysed in the light of the review of the literature and Raimes (1983) and Cullen (1998) theoretical frameworks.

The results of the quasi-experiment research show a considerable difference in terms of progress between the two groups (EXP and CTR) who received two different models of teaching and learning in favour of the EXP group. This suggests or means that the Brainstorming approach is effective in improving pupils' writing performance. This could be due to the fact that the learners' motivation and interest increased when they were given a new method of teaching and learning. In addition, this chapter has discussed the main results of the questionnaire submitted to the participants of the EXP group, which reveals that pupils have positive attitudes towards the implementation of brainstorming to promote their writing performance. Moreover, almost all the participants find this technique beneficial and helpful for their writing performance. This chapter has provided evidence to be used in the general conclusion in order to test the hypotheses set in the general introduction.

The present study has investigated the implementation of brainstorming to promote learners' writing skill at Adem Mezian middle school at Zerrouda in Tizi Ouzou. This research which is a quasi-experiment in nature, has attempted to put forward brainstorming activities in order to develop the fourth year pupils' writing ability. Also, it has strived to explore the extent to which brainstorming can promote learners' writing skill. Moreover, it has aimed at investigating the learners' attitudes towards the use of this technique to enhance their writing performance.

This study has been conducted in the light of Raimes (1983) components of writing and Osborn (1953)'s approach of brainstorming which has been reinforced by many other scholars like Cullen (1998). The researcher selected only six components of writing from Raimes model, that are: content, the writer's process, word choice, organization, mechanics and grammar; this is due to the learners' age and cognitive abilities. In addition, five main brainstorming activities have been selected from Cullen (1998) theoretical framework to apply them on the writing process, namely: mind mapping, brainstorming on a picture, word list, brainstorming on a song and group story telling. Indeed, these theoretical concepts have been used to analyse the results obtained by the experimental group (EXP) group and the control group (CTR) in the pre-post tests. The corpus consists of 92 collected written productions of a 46 participants sample; i.e. 23 participants from CTR group and 23 others from the EXP group from fourth year middle school pupils. The improvement of the groups has been compared from the pre-test to post-test focusing on their development on the writing skill.

The mixed method research, which combines both quantitative and qualitative techniques, has been used in the process of data analysis in order to answer the research questions and test the reliability of the advanced hypotheses. Indeed, the quantitative technique was used to

examine the results of the experiment and the close-ended questions of the questionnaire, the qualitative method was adopted to analyse the results of the open-ended questionnaire submitted to the participants of the EXP group in order to analyse their attitudes.

The results revealed that the EXP group improved their writing productions in all the aspects that have been selected by the researcher, namely: content, the writer's process, word choice, organization, mechanics and grammar. Unlike the CTR group which did not show a significant improvement in the post-test i.e. they have made the same mistakes as in the pre-test. As far as the participants' perceptions about the use of brainstorming as a teaching and learning technique are concerned, the results of the questionnaire revealed that almost all the participants expressed a positive attitude and agreed that this technique is beneficial and helpful not only in writing but also in the other modules.

Relying on the results gathered from this investigation, it can be said that the brainstorming activities are beneficial and helpful for the learners to promote their writing performance providing them with different techniques to generate ideas, organize them and make use of their previous knowledge. In addition, the participants expressed positive attitudes towards brainstorming as an effective teaching and learning technique. Indeed, they have said that brainstorming activities have helped them to practice their writing better and inhanced their motivation and engagement in the classroom. Moreover, all the participants find the brainstorming approach effective and crucial for their learning either individually or in groups.

Throughout this study, many obstacles have been encountered. This study demanded a lot of efforts and methods to analyse the gathered data, but, the major limitation of this research was time constraints. In addition, if not restricted in time, the researcher would have anlysed the collected data in a more detailed way. It is hoped that the present work will contribute to

the field of applied linguistics and English Language Teaching Methodologies. Adding to this, the current work was conducted with the fourth year middle school in Zerrouda. Thus the results obtained cannot be generalized to EFL learners as a whole. However, further researches on the same issue in different settings with different levels (in the secondary school, at university…) can be conducted. Other investigations can be conducted on the role of brainstorming in engaging and involving the learners in the process of learning mainly participation. Or, the effect of brainstorming on the learners' memorization. Moreover, other investigations may be conducted on the implementation of brainstorming in teaching and learning other disciplines like civilization and literature.

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Appendix 4

Dear learners

This present questionnaire is designed as part of an academic study investigating the implementation of brainstorming as a teaching and learning technique to promote learners' writing skill at AdemMezian middle school of Tizi-Ouzou. Your contribution will be beneficial for the accomplishment of the present work. Hence, you are kindly requested to answer the following questions. Note that the results will be used only for academic purpose and your responses will remain entirely confidential. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please put a cross (×) in the right box and provide statements wherever required.

Section one:learners' Background Information:

1. **Gender:**

   a- Male ☐   **b-** Female ☐

2. **Do you like studying English?** Yes ☐   No ☐

3. **How do you perceive your level in English:**

   a. Good ☐   **b.** Average ☐   **c.** Poor ☐

   Why? ....
   ....

Section two: The WritingSkill:

4. **Do you like writing in English?**   Yes ☐   No ☐

5. **Do you find writing in English a difficult task?** yes ☐   No ☐

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6. **If yes, what are the aspects on which you find difficulties? (you can choose more than one answer)**

    a. Grammar

    b. Lack of vocabulary

    c. Spelling

    d. Lack of ideas

    e. Other: …………………………………………………………………..

7. **How do you feel during a writing activity in the classroom?**

    a. Exited   8

    b. Demotivated   4

    c. Anxious   7

    d. Bored   4

8. **Do you write outside the classroom?**

    Yes   No

Section three:learners' attitudes towards brainstorming:

9. **Do you find brainstorming as a technique before writing:**

    a. Beneficial

    b. Not beneficial

Justify:……………………………………………………………………………………

10. Brainstorming helps you improve your writing production:

      a. Strongly agree   ☐

      b. Agree   ☐

      c. Disagree   ☐

      d. Strongly disagree   ☐

11.Brainstorming facilitates writing activities:

    a. Yes   ☐   b. No   ☐

    If yes how?..

    ....

12. Which type of brainstorming activities do you prefer? (you can choose more than one option)

      a. Word list   ☐

      b. Mind mapping   ☐

      c. Group story telling   ☐

      d. Brainstorming on a picture   ☐

      e. Brainstorming on a song   ☐

13. Does this method create a positive environment in the classroom?

    a. Yes   ☐   b. No   ☐

14. Does brainstorming motivate you to write?

    a. Yes   ☐   b. No   ☐

15. Do you prefer: a. group brainstorming ☐   b. individual brainstorming ☐

  Justify:……………………………………………………………

16.Do you feel improvement in your writing now?

    a. Yes   ☐   b. No   ☐

  Justify:…………………………………………………………..

Appendix one : The Pre-test

Topic: What are your future projects:

CTR Group Answers:

Souad.

> Hello. My name is ___ souad, I am in 14 years old, I will Stady terminaly eddel School in Adem Mezian / zerouda) and I will
>
> I have a maging dreams and projects for the future, I will be the best teacher if you get nice marke,
>
> I start work, I will go to England, France
>
> I can travel in ~~Expensively~~ diferent conturi I'll build glass houses after I get my deploma. and I start my Joob in France that fit me

Hello, My name is Damia. I am in 14 years old. I will study in the Middel school Adem Mezian.

. I have in maging dreams and projects of the future I will go to England, france, Spain and Italy If I take a Eurorail ticket. ~~Afters~~ After I come back to Alegeria I will be Start looking for a job I will accept a job that fits my life style ~~exe~~ excepetations

Rachid

2.

Hello, my name is [ ] Rachid, I have 14 years old. I am a pupil in Adem raziane middle school and in this year I will pass a B E M exam.

In the future If I have got my Brevet exam I will be a very hapy . When I admitted to secendary school I will do my best to get my Bac and I will go to university . When I finished studies I will do a teacher and I will by a car and beautiful house and I will maryed .

My name is   Nourdine. I have
14 years old. I am pupil in the finial
middle school year.

If I have got my Brevet exam.
I will be the happiest boy in Algeria.
I will be admitted to secondary school,
I will study in the lycee, I'll opt
to literary field and than I will pass
my BAC, then I will go to the
university. When I finished studies
in the university I will get my
diploma. Than I will get a job, I will
a big nice ~~home~~ house, and I will buy
a beautiful car, than I will think
~~to~~ about travel

I hope

Melissa GAME

Hi, My name is Melissa, I often wonder about My future, past My Bam exam. when I get My Bem exam, I will passed in lycée and I choose the scientific field. I will do my best in order the best month in Baccalauréï exam. Then I will be tested in 5 own different subjects: the english and German languages and biology. and chemistry. After my graduation, I will study in the Medical University to become a doctor. Then I will ed live with my family in happy life.

13 years old.

SN:
CM:

Thank you for asking about my future life. well I will get my BE M escam, I will chose the literary field to become a Airport checkers, but I should make efforts to realize my dream I want to also visit all the contres of wold as: Frence, Englend, Turkesh, ... when I finish my travells I'll make a quiet family which contanes: me, my husband, and my two children. I beleve that I can realize all my dreams.

EXP Group Answers to the Pre-test

Hello, my name is [   ] Liza. I have amazing dreams for my future, so because I like animals and I want to became a doctor and my first impartant projet is to get my B.E.M. exam. whith a good marks to I will become scientific to became docter. After I get my B.E.M exam. I want to get Bacalorcat and studying in Midical Universit for realise my amazing dream with is tobecame pediatre ~~docter~~ and my best amazing dreams of my live is to visit all the contry of the world as: Malisia, Japan, Paris, Londor Turkish. If I have the time, I will plant to married in my city and live with my familly and friends. I want to become a famous person with my education, and my dreams.

- Hi, my Name is   ZAKARIA.
I am 14 years old, I am student in the finale
Years in ADEM MEZIANE middle school.
  For my future I choise scientific fild because
  I love and I am good in Mathemathic, Phisics
and science. I wont to get my finale exam
with 16 marks, and go to "Achbal El Ouma".
I wish to became a footbaleur because I love
this sport, or I became a police man because
he protect the citizence. And I wish to go
with my parents to "El hij". After I go to El hij
I will marriyed with a Muslim and Kabyle girls
and travel with my family in all the word to
learn different language and caltures .

My future dreams

1 One guest came to our school and asked as about our dreams. Me as student in this middle school, I will tell her about my dreams.

" Adem Meziane "

I am Ferrah Chilelli, I am 14 years old. I am in the fourth year of middle school. When I will passe my BEM exam, and I will get it with an excellente mark, I will choose the scientific field because I love very much the scientific modiouse and I have a very good knowledge in this modiouse as physics, sciense and mathématics. Then I will go to secondary school and also I pass my Bacaluria exam, next I will go to the university to make many efforts to became a doctor. After all that, I will travell to many cantries as Turkia, Frence, America, India ... When I finish my travells, I thing to make a

Benza, I have a Poet of dreams in my mind
t to doe all of then when I pass and success
iddle school. Bruer exam in order, to live
n life in the future.

soon as I finish my middle school I want
literary in ligh school because I loue foreign
espacially english and when I pass my
reat exam I will keep my studies in the
i to learn english then I will work as an
teacher and I will teach my pupils with all
ty and love. Evermore I want to travel around
d and will visit diffrent countries like turkey
and paris. Also I want to bring my parents to
. therfore I want to have a family and I
to be a mom. I hope that all my dreams
e true because I will be so happy and
oud for my self.

Hello! my name is ———— Sarah
I have one dream foer the future
is to beccome a doctor of children.
Because I like them very much.
Foer this, deams I study evrey day.
I have many projects as visit
Paris and marry and would
live in a big familly in a
beautiful house.
My important dreams is to get
my B.E.M escam because it is
the key of the future.

My future:

My school guidance counsellor, asked we all MS4 to fill in the stream options concerning our future projects.
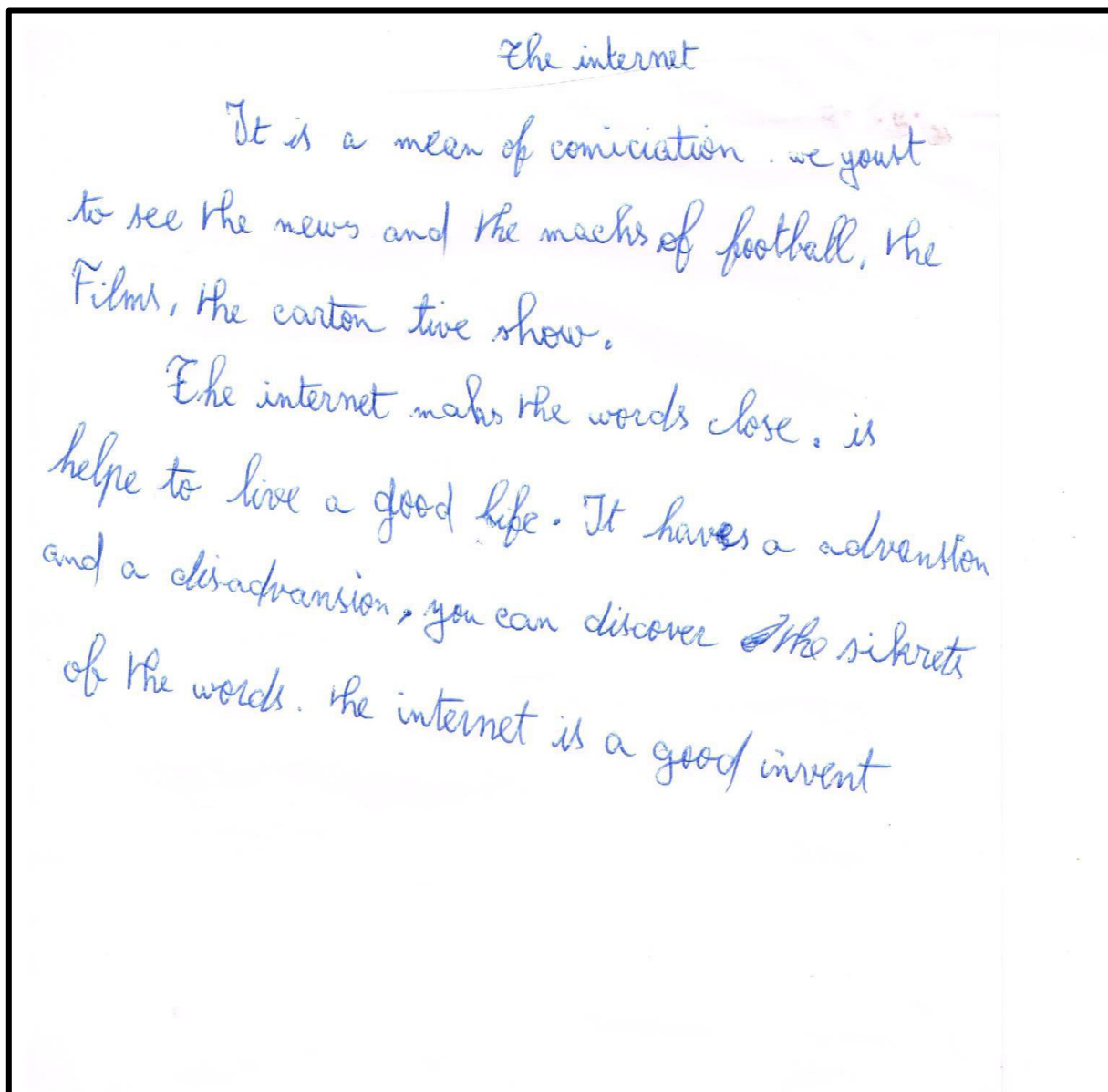
I am pupil at Atem Heziane middle school, in the 4th year. My name is Anaïs _____, I will pass my BEM exam. In the future, I want to get out a pilot it is my best dream. I adore it since childhood. But that dreams can only be achieved by working and doing research and bringing excellent marks, especially physics and other materials, when I will finish my secondary school I will go to University, and studies it is a long carrer. When I will all kil, I will travell with my parents, and I will marry and get two children "girl, boy", I want to be round of my parents.

I wish good luck to the other students and to me in realizing our dreams.

Appendix Two : The Post-test :

Topic; What is the importance of Internet in your life?

CTR Group Answers:

The internet

It is a mean of comiciation . we youst to see the news and the machs of football, the Films, the carton tive show.

The internet maks the words close . is helpe to live a good life. It haves a advantion and a disadvansion, you can discover the sikrets of the words. the internet is a good invent

The Internet

Internet it is a mean of Coumincation with people and your friends, familly.

They are peopol can't stay Without wring in our life, it have advantéges make your life igist easiest, desdvantéges of Internet make you craze and makes you awen of your familly, only.

You ~~must~~ must stop the Couminication at the all your time, you must doing so samthing alles you love you. You must il will be good thing.

the internet

The internet haves menis thinks : Flacbook,

Tuiter and google ...

The internet use's it for comminction betuin the friend 's and with family it make's the word laser. the internet have the invranteges and it inhas the advertages and desedventages and it influes form the main, and has the desedventages ex you have a exercice you can't do it befor the internet and you make the a printy

and you mest for the porpale mest reduce to used to care about their studies.

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The internet.

the internet is one of means of com
It's contens advuentages and desadvantge

the internet, contens advuentages ama
- contact with frends in Facebook,
Familly, Know the news of world a
people stady with teacher .... In
same time its contens desadreatages
stay for along hours, reduce the
aleilites, it isolate you.

The internet it's a great, inee
ment of, comunication.

The internet is one of the means of cominication. It is the most used one.

The internet has many adventages: wacth videos and films, it make the world close, we can have a conversation with others. And it has desadventages: it make you very lazy, and you stop use it, and it isolate you, you will be alone with your self.

The internet is a great invention but we have to be careful when we use it.

EXP Group Answers:

For me, the internet is the most important technology in our life. It has many advantages in many domains. We use the internet to communicate with our family and friends in Algeria or outside. In addition, I use it always to see videos, cartons and films. Besides, I use it always to speak with my brother Karim who lives in America. This is the importance of internet in my life.

. Internet is very important in my life because it contains many advantages. First, it helps us in our studies and homeworks. Second we can download many books and subjects of exams. Third, with the internet we can communi with our friends and family every where. In short, internet is very important in my life because it helps me always.

The internet is a magical invantion because of many reasons. When people use it in a positive way for example: to communicate, see the news, do shopping and play games. Another reason is that it made the word a small village because we can see the news of other countries and people around the world. But, there are people who use the internet in a negative way for instance, people spend their time chating and forget every thing. In addition, the internet can cause problems of health.

The internet is an important thing on my life, because of its adventages and utilisations.

I use the internet to do my studies researchs, and meet new friends, contacting my family members. Including to that I install many wonderful applications which used to be my way to enjoy myself in one hand. In the other hand these applications contains useful ideas and informations. Beside, internet has electronic libraries which give usefulest books and the most famous novels. Also, the most coolest thing is that you can do your home works from educational sites. Furthermore, the internet is an adventure; you can see the most beautiful places, and travel though it without moving. I really admire that the internet gives us the best services.

With the internet, everybody can share memories, thoughts, information and knowledge.

I think that the internet is the best thing ever happend to me. I like it so much.

The importance of internet

The internet is a globaly connected network system that uses to transmit data via various types of media. The internet has a very big importance on our life, if in stadies or intertaining.

The importance of this globaly for students ik that it makes it easier to research things like the information that are taught in other schools and univesities. It is very important because it is the space where people have acess to get much amounts of information, it is where a large of knowledge comes froms. Internet has also made access to communication and find directions. It helps us to make new friends. In addition, when we go on trip where we need a map but with it we use only the map of internet on our phones and get information about the place like restaurants, hotels and many other things. Moever, it helps us to discover new cultures, find entertaining and educational videos that we can download then and get in contact with different people from different countries.

The importance of internet in our life is similar to oxcygen for this wold. It is very famous nowadays for some people, it make our lives easy and simple.

Appendix Three: Brainstorming Activities

1-Brainstorming on a Picture

1. What do you see in this picture?

2. Give a title to the picture

3. List the objects on the picture?

4. Try to write a paragraph about the elements involved in the picture
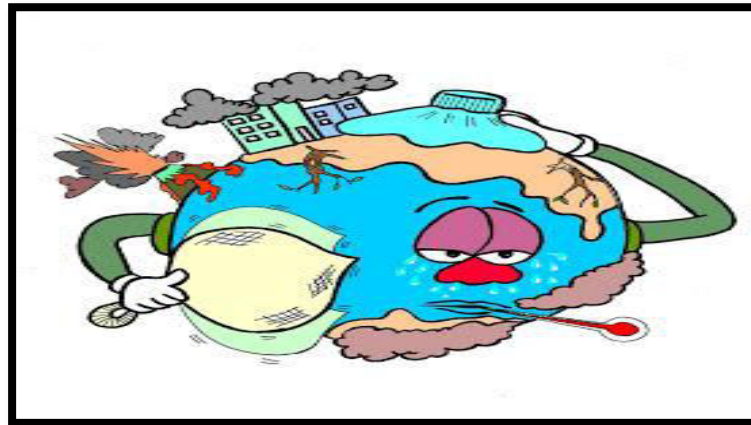
2- Brainstormingon a song

- What do you think the singer looks like?

- suggest titles for this song?

- What is the song about?

Title: John Lenon: imagine

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=john+lennon+imagine+

3- Mind mapping: what is travelling for you?

4- Group story telling: 'Slilwan in Ighzar Qirwan'

5- Simple word list: write a dialogue where you try to convince your parents to let you

travel.

- List words to describe the situation

- List all the items you need for travelling

- Describe the place where you spent your last holidays.

: Hello, mam.
mother: Good morning, my darling daughter
: mam, I want to say a thing about
travel to London.
mother: What ?!! I don't understand
what you say ? she replied?
: Please, mam
mother: No, you can't move to London
: one, because it is not safe
: mam, I will go with my friend by
: I borrowed friends there, I will go
: my first two weeks, in addition,
: are many beautiful landscapes and
: escapes I will go to visit Oxford
: Big Ben, and Piccadilly, that, Also.
: 3 peoples are kind, cheerful, open minded
: and outgoing, they are not
: mater: Okay, I accept your trip.
: Thank you mom

My mother: What is the thing you
will take with you ?
Me: I will take my special collar, my
camera to take photos as souvenir,
I will take money because it is important
and my map to will many places —
My mother: And about food ?
Me: There are many ships to take example;
meat and fish, also in London there regular
eat with fork, knives however the fingers
eat with three fingers
My mother: Okay, if take that your special
are relative
Me: Don't late mam

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Paragraphe:

Travel:

Travel is deplace from place to an other, it is like a trip. To travel we use many means of transports as: car, bus, bout, plane and train ... The most travels are making with friends, or with family or alone.. We do this travels to visit many places like: famous lanmarks as: Biza Tower, Tadj Mahal, and relascation and change the air, discovery many things and research and also build new relations. And collecte informations about culture and food, and new ways of thinking. When we come back from this travel we get souvenirs like photos, clouths and refreche our style. All the pupil have dreams to visit and travel, me also I have far hope to visit: Turkish, India, Egypt, U.S.A and The Saoudi Arabia.

The Travel:

The travel is change place by means of transportation to discover many places. We have different landmarks in the world to visit. I like travel with my family and with my friends, The travel can be done by different means of transport, example: I want to visit Piza Tower in Italy, I will travel by the plan. I want to discover the Great Wall in China which is very attractive, I trip by the plan, and I will .... to Tunisie, I will trip by the car or the plan. I want discover the cuntry of Frensh. I will trip by the bout ___ ekt. The travel is important in human life, it is mean to get informations and relaxation and research, and bulding new relation.

Class : 4 MS₁

"Sliluxen in ighzar girwen"

Once upon a time, there was a beautiful girl her name is : Sliluxe

She was like a princess, with along hair, she had a skin as white

as snow. She lived with her parents and her brothers in a small

house. But her parents did not allow her to go out. One morning

her friends came to convince her parents to let her collect wood

in the forest, her parents sad : "Yes, we let you go but you must

take care of her".

Shilwan and flut.

- Shilwan with this friends in the forest. They were very happy and play, singing. Suddenly. Shilwan observed on a shining object in the forest. Shilwan was very attracted by the object, and their friends warned her : " Shilwan, no don't touch it. it can be dangerous besid it can be dangerous for your beaty". But she didn't accept the eadves because she was stubborn, in short she was very happy after she open the coffer and find a beautiful flut.

- In shot Shilwan was very beautiful, all the people spich for her beautiful besid the trees, seened to tell to each other about her beauty

Slilwan :

At the end of day, when getting back home, she stopped to rest because she was very tired, someday, rumbred she has a flute to sing, it is a beautiful object. Suddnly a huge evil monster appeared, she was shahed, afraid, he was sad, "I will take you with me but not today hhhh, I will come back". After many days she was for got it, but the evil monster he was returned and he was took the girl, and she couldn't tell her parents about this think, when his brother new about this problem, he safed her.

Soon after that, her family decided to look for her. An old man told them that it was taken by a monster who lives in ~~the~~ "Ighzar Qirwan". Her family was astoniched. The monster ~~sayed~~ sad : "I didn't give you your sister". ~~The~~ Her brother decided to kill the monster. They gow out to look for their sister and saved their. The monster died. The brother took his sister and returned to their village, evryone lived happily in their life.

The planet is ill

We live in planet which is very sick therefore the pollution. Pollution is one of the major problems of our planet specially in developed countries, next to the man is the first problem, he is the big problem.

Pollution also has kind such as:
Air pollution: caused by dangerous gases (cars, bus, camions...) and this pollution of our air cause big problem in our health and cause illnesses for instance: respiratory problems, lung cancer and asthma, and it can be natural like volcanic gases, and not get gases but also dirty smell. We have also:
Water pollution: aquatic species for example fish, pinnipeds...: industrial waste is one of the main causes of water pollution it is a serious threat to humans, mother nature and even animals chemical products. and:
finally: land pollution: it is present widely in the environment, it is al what makes the earth dirty and unhealthy, mustn't forget the animals because also these animals has there role. The desposition of animals can cause no balance in nature

to get to get good environment and live in earth beautiful. We protect our planet to get a good health.

the planet is ill = sick
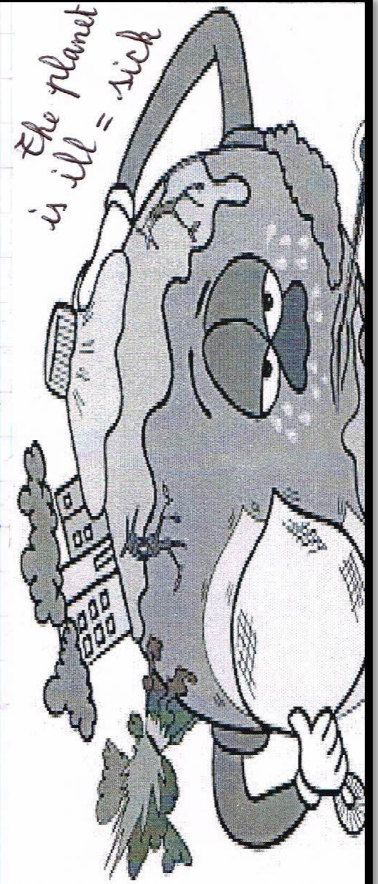
My winter holidays:

In Algeria there are many beautiful places among them : Oran, Tikejda, Annaba and Algiri

In ~~sater~~ the last winter holidays. I have visited Tikejda with my classmates, my teachers and also t workers of my school. That's why today I will discribe this wonderfull place. Tikejda is an amazing place because there are many animal like : monkys, horses... We have seen also th stadum and the park where we are playing for a long time. Tikejda is a green place, we find many kinds of plants and trees. In addition, there are many magazins of tradtional things and also there a small magazins of food like pancake

The planet is ill...

Pollution is one of the major problems of our planet especially in developed countries.

The pollution is a man made phenomenon, it is caused by human activities. In pollution there are three types. First, air pollution caused by dangerous gases (cars, Bus...) commercials and industrial waste which can cause an increased risk of health problems such been example breathing problems and lung cancer... It can be natural phenomenon like volcanic gases. Second is water pollution aquatic species been instance to fish, fruits... Industrial waste is one of the main causes of water pollution, it is a serious threat to humans. Third land pollution is present widely in the environment. It is all what makes the earth dirty and unhealthy. This pollution caused the global warming is also known as a climate change it is an increase in the earth's average atmospheric temperature that causes surrounding changes in climate. Finally is caused the desertification in which an area of land becomes a desert, it is caused by climate change and human activities, deforestation. For this pollution the planet is ill.

We have to put hand into hand to rehabilitate the earth and protect it