

اثر طريقة المربعات الأربعة في تنمية الأداء الكتابي للطلبة

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الكلمات المفتاحية: طريقة المربعات الأربعة ، الأداء الكتابي للطلبة.

كيفية اقتباس البحث

يوانان ، رنا فوزي، اثر طريقة المربعات الأربعة في تنمية الأداء الكتابي للطلبة، مجلة مركز بابل للدراسات الانسانية، أيلول 2026، المجلد:16 ، العدد:9.

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The Effect of the Four Square Writing Method on the Development of Students' Writing Performance

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Keywords : Four square writing method, Students' writing performance.

How To Cite This Article

Younan, Rana Fawzi , The Effect of the Four Square Writing Method on the Development of Students' Writing Performance, Journal Of Babylon Center For Humanities Studies, September 2026, Volume:16, Issue 9.



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ملخص البحث: -

تعد الكتابة مهارة أساسية في تعلم اية لغة وآداة تواصل مع الآخرين. فالكتابة هي أداة لكل من تطور المعرفة وتصور المعرفة. فهي تحتاج الي اتقان العديد من الكفاءات اللغوية. لذلك، تحاول هذه الدراسة الى اختبار إثر استخدام طريقة المربعات الأربعة في تنمية الأداء الكتابي للطلبة. يفترض الباحث عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين فرق متوسط الاختبارين (القبلي-البعدي) في الأداء الكتابي لمجموعات البحث.

ولتحقيق اهداف الدراسة صممت التجربة، اختيرت عينة البحث بصورة عشوائية من المدارس الثانوية للطالبات المتميزات في مدينة الموصل. تضمنت العينة (٦١) طالبة. تم تقسيمهن الى مجموعتين احدي المجموعتين خصص ليكون المجموعة التجريبية التي تم تدريسها باستخدام طريقة المربعات الأربعة ، بينما المجموعة الأخرى خصصت لتكون المجموعة الضابطة التي تم تدريسها باستخدام الطريقة الاعتيادية. قام مدرس اللغة الإنكليزية في المدرسه بتدريس كلا المجموعتين .

. تم عرض أداة البحث على مجموعة من الخبراء في مجال طرائق التدريس لإيجاد صدقها الظاهري. بينما الثبات تم حسابه باستخدام معامل الفا- كرونباخ وقد بلغ (٠,٧٦)
استخدم الباحث الاختبار التائي لعينتين مستقلتين كاداة احصائية. اشارت النتائج الى ان هنالك وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين فرق متوسط درجات الاختبارين القبلي - البعدي في الأداء الكتابي وذلك لصالح المجموعة التجريبية. وبناءً على النتائج، قدم الباحث بعض من التوصيات والمقترحات..

Abstract: -

Writing is an essential skill of learning any language and an instrument for communication with others. So ,writing is a tool for both knowledge development and to visualize one's knowledge . It needs mastery many language competence . Therefore, this study tries to examine the effect of four square writing method on development of students' writing performance. The researcher hypothesizes that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the (pre-test and post-test) of the research groups in writing performance.

To achieve the aims of the study, an experiment is designed. The sample has been randomly chosen from intermediate schools for outstanding females students in the city of Mosul. It consists of (61) subjects. They divided into two groups. One of them is assigned to be experimental group which has been taught by using four square writing method while the other is assigned to be the control group which has been taught by using traditional method. The teacher of English has taught both groups. The research tool has been exposed to a jury of experts in the field of teaching methods to determine it's face validity . While the reliability has been calculated by using Alpha Cronbach coefficient and is (0,76).

The researcher uses T-test for two independent samples as a statistical tool . The result indicates that there has been statistically significant difference between mean scores(pre- post tests) for both groups in writing performance in favor of the experimental group. On the basis of the result, the researcher has presented some recommendations and suggestions.

1-Introduction :-

Writing is one of four basic language skills .It has several goals including expressing ideas , communicative with others .It is a medium of social interaction (Novitasari et al , 2022 : 205).Therefore , it is a vital tool for communication with others . Clerck (2014) cited in (Yunus et al , 2021:21) asserted this point when saying that writing is a skill that makes



learners think ,explicit minds , facilitate recognizing and sharing their views among them. Moreover , by writing other three language skills are developed which are (listening , speaking , and reading).

Thus , writing is an act of gathering ideas and constructing them in to clear and coherent text for readers , (Feenestra ,2014 : 9) seeks that “ producing a good written text, first of all needs mental processes of generating , organizing and structuring ideas and translating thoughts into visual symbols (words). So , writing is not an easy activity especially for learners who learn English as a foreign language ,It is corresponds with what Nasser noticed (2019 : 178) “ writing a go.od text form is a big challenge for non – native learners”. The learners must mastered this activity .

Generally , Iraqi students face difficulties in writing paragraphs or essays .Even outstanding students ,who have good academic achievement and good linguistic abilities, show unsatisfactory performance as a result , the average of success is low compared with other skills . Most of them are unable to organize their thoughts logically while others struggle to use punctuation marks , grammar, linking words and vocabulary.

Hence writing any paragraph needs unity .i.e.it has one idea and coherence that means it is easy to read and understand the written text.

Consequently , a teacher of English should use suitable method or strategy to raise the students' ability in writing .Wherease, the method of teaching is one of the factors that influences students' performance besides other elements such as language activities , age,

Four square writing method is a simple open-ended graphic organizer that is designed for helping the learners in writing process (Rohayu,2018:25) The difference between four square writing method and other visual organizers it is consistent with the steps of writing process . In fact , it is called method because it includes several steps should be followed (Dewi,2013:1) .

Its form includes four squares ; one additional box located in the center ; the center box is numbered (1) ,While the others are numbered (2-5). Box one includes the topic to be written about. While other squares from 2 to 4 include main and supporting ideas or necessary details . While the fifth square contains summary sentence .Using this method helps the learners to reduce time of writing process .It also allows the learners to take responsibility on writing (Aslan,2025:397) . All these points encourage the researcher to conduct this study

2- Significance of the study: -

The significance of the study lies in two dimensions theoretical and practical sides. :

Theoretically side , the results of the study can be used as a reference for other researchers who want to do research on development students' writing skill. The researcher also anticipates that this study will improve the quality of students' writing performance. While practically side , this study gives insight and information about how to apply this method by using four square writing method. In addition to that, the results can be used as a guide and available resource to enlarge the teachers' methods, especially in teaching writing (paragraphs and compositions) for increasing learners' learning .

3-Statement of the Problem:-

Writing is a crucial language skill that enables the learners to express their ideas and feelings. Through supervisory field visits to students-teacher and interview with the English teachers, the researcher has observed that most secondary Iraqi students faced difficulties in writing paragraphs or compositions especially in academic writing, this belongs to many reasons .The researcher has directed towards the outstanding schools to notice the same problem , the outstanding students have good linguistics abilities and high achievement , but the researcher has found that they have been unable to compose their thoughts and organize them . Some of them can't use grammatical structure correctly to form meaningful sentences and have weakness in using punctuation marks. Moreover, they don't have ability to use linking verbs correctly . So, they need to double efforts and use appropriate method for improving their writing performance .

Based on what has been mentioned above, teachers of English need to employ methods which produce positive outcomes in students' writing skill. These methods should lead the learners to more practice, deep understanding and massive comprehension for writing process.

4- Aims of the study: -

This study aims at empirically: -

Investigating the effect of four-square writing method on the development of students' writing performance and development students' performance in writing English paragraphs or compositions.

5- The hypothesis: -

The following hypothesis has been introduced: -

1- There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of (pre- post tests) of the research groups in the development of students' writing performance .



6- limitations of the study: -

The findings of the study are limited to the following:-

1-In term of sample size , this study is limited to first intermediate grade for outstanding schools for females on the left side of Ninevah city especially, Umm Al Rabieen intermediate for outstanding females students .

2-In terms of time, this study was conducted during the second term of academic year 2024 -2025

2-In the term of subjects , this study is limited to the last four units of English textbook (English for Iraq) for first intermediate students' book and a activity book.

3- In term of instrument of the study, the researcher constructed a writing performance test , then she found it's validity and reliability.

7- Definition of Basic Terms: -

7.1 Four square writing method:-

To better understanding of four square writing method, the researcher displays some definitions about it: -

According to Agustina (2017:90) states four square writing method

“Is one method offered in teaching writing that leads students organize, compose information and concepts, as well as promote thinking about relationship among concepts before they start to write”

Another definition of this method is provided by Bartholoma et al cited in Muthim & norhasanah (2022:365) define it “is a method that uses a graphic organizer in helping students to organize facts, thoughts, and ideas.

The operational definition of four-square writing method: -

It is a simple shape that can be used to assist students in developing students' writing performance. This shape includes four squares that are connected to each other with another box in the middle. By using this shape , the students can plan and organize their ideas of writing.

7.2 writing performance: -

Puspitawening (2016) cited in (Dewanti,2019:13) define writing performance “is one of a skill and learning language acquired by individual to write meaningful words or sentences grammatically correct and well organized without giving the teaching”

While Siti et al (2024:2) view writing performance “as a process of communication in which numerous ideas on someone feelings come together in written form”

The operational definition of writing performance:-

It is a student's ability to write and express her thoughts, ideas, feelings, in a well written paragraph text.

8-Theoretical background: -

Four square writing method and its advantages: -

In (1999) four square writing method developed by Joudith.S. Gould and Evan Jay Gould (septian,2018:24) in America. They believed that four square is a simple graphic organizer that allows the learners to write down their main and sub ideas for writing a paragraph or composition .It is used especially in the primary and secondary levels . This method emphasizes visual learning theory that deals with notion a real learning depends on visual base more than audio base .In other words , human brain remembers the visual experiences better than invisible texts (Raivn,2016 : 115) . Moreover , graphic organizer presents the ideas in an organized manner that makes them easier for learners to understand . A graphic organizer facilitates both generating and structuring the ideas . It also relies on the constructivism theory because it helps the learners build their knowledge step by step .Hence , four square writing method has several advantages ,they are as follows:-

- 1-It can be modified , It serves as one of the graphic organizers to assist learners to learn English language skills , especially writing skill.
- 2-It helps the users to organize their ideas or thoughts effectively. This is due to its shape which includes four squares connected to a central one. In the middle.
- 3-It encourages the learners to write systematically.
- 4-It can be used with different grades and various kinds of texts such as descriptive, narrative, expository and persuasive text.
- 5-It brings fun to the lesson.
- 6-It helps the users to excludes irrelevant ideas.
- 7-It increases the generation of ideas because its first step emphasizes on brain storming.
- 8-It is suitable to the learners' needs. (Rahman,2016:10) & (Mustain,2022:185)

9-Steps of Four Square Writing Method: -

To adopt this method , there are several steps should be followed each one built upon the previous one, they are: -

- 1.Idea categorizing : - In this step, the teacher activates or brain storms his students' background knowledge by introducing the subject. (title),
- 2.Labeling the ideas : - The teacher helps them to label the ideas after placing the title sentence in the middle of shape,



3. Adding more details. : - Here, the learners elaborate their ideas and begin to write them down from the second square unit the fourth one,
4. The teacher asks the learners to write summary about the topic in the fifth square based on the first three ones,
5. After that, he asked them to add the suitable linking words to connect the ideas or necessary punctuation marks, and
6. Finally, the learners edit their paragraph or text. (Fatmah, 2009: 26-36).

9-Disadvantages of Four Square Writing Method: -

Despite the advantages mentioned above, many drawbacks are presented, they are as follows : -

1. It needs a lot of time because of its instructions.
2. The learners feel bored if the material becomes familiar to them.
3. Some students often struggle to distinguish between facts and opinions. (Zahara, 2017:22-23)

In addition to that (Rahayu, 2018:33) asserted that "four square writing method doesn't call for abandonment of hands-on learning".

10-Prior Studies : -

The researcher reviews other studies to compare them with the present study. The first one was done by Rofa'h & ulfatul (2017) who examined the effect of four square writing method through pictures series in writing narrative text for elementary grade at SMANU santara Bilongpanggang. The sample included (31) subjects he used a cluster sample because the school administration determined the pupils classification. The experimental group involved (16) pupils of XT – TPA while the control group involved (15) pupils of XI – IPS. After gathering and analyzing the data by using SPSS, the result revealed that the experimental group, which received the instruction by four square methods through pictures achieved higher performance than the control group, which was taught by think – pair and share method.

The second study used a descriptive qualitative method, which was conducted by Hardi (2019). It sought to analyze student use the four-square writing method and developing narrative writing and also identify the writing aspects that can be improved by using this method. The sample of the study involved (5) subjects from (39) grade at MADAN MULIA elementary school. These subjects were chosen because they had acquired a lot of vocabulary that enable them to write paragraphs. the research tools were students writing observation and questionnaire. the intervention was limited to three sessions of four-square writing. The results showed that using four square writing method helps the students to

improve their abilities as well as it used extensively in a pre-writing and drafting paragraphs.

Another work was designed by Utami et al in (2024) his study tried to examine the effectiveness of four-square writing method and increasing students writing skills in recount text among the third semester STKIP PGRT NGAANTUK. the researcher used one group with pre-post tests as the experiment design. The results had been statically computed by using T – test. The statical analysis showed that the main score of post – test is higher than pre—test. This indicates the positive rule of force square writing method for increasing students ability in writing.

Based on the studies mentioned above, all of them focused on the same independent variable which was four square writing method. Most studies have examined its effect on writing narrative text such as Rofa'h and Ulfatul s' study (2017) whereas in Utami study (2024) focused on recount text . In this study, the researcher did not have specific kind of text she examined its effect on academic paragraphs presented in English textbook.

This study conducted in Iraq, on the first intermediate class for outstanding students who learn English as a foreign language this level is very important to establish good writing habits for Iraqi students .While other studies carried out in other countries and English language considers as a second language . The difference was also in the number of participants , such as rafa'h and Ulfatuls' study included (31) subjects hardis' sample involved (5) subjects while in the present study the number of participants was (60) students.

11-The Procedures: -

12.1- the experimental design: -

In order to achieve the aim of this study, two equivalent groups with a pre-test and post-test was chosen as the experimental design. This is shown in table (1) .

Table (1) Experimental Design

Groups	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental	Test	Four-square writing method	Test
Control	Test	Traditional method	Test

12.2- The sample: -

The total number of the sample was (60) participants. They were randomly chosen and distributed into two groups. One group was selected as the experimental group (namely class A) and other group was



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controlled group (namely class B). The subjects have been selected from first grade at UMM-AlRabeeen intermediate school for outstanding females students.

12.3- Equivalence of the sample: -

The researcher tried to control some of variables that may affect the experiment. These variables are: -

Students' age in months , score of mid-year exam in English, parents' education, and pre—test for students' writing performance.

The difference was tested at (0.05) level of significance using T – test formula for two independent samples and Chi – square formula. It was found out that the participants of the experimental and control groups were matched on the above mentioned variables. Since ,there were no statistically significant difference between two groups. table (2) and (3) summarize the results.

Table(2) Results of T-Test for Students' Age , score of Mid -year Exam and Pre -test Scores

Variables	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	T-value calculated	T-value Tabulated
Age in Months	Experimental	31	150.645	3.877	58	0.387	2
	Control	29	150.241	4.205			
Score of Mid-year Exam	Experimental	31	83.871	8.413	58	0.614	2
	Control	29	85.413	10.952			
Pre-test for students' writing performance	Experimental	31	10.193	4.044	58	0.845	2
	Control	29	9.344	3.715			

Table (3) The results of Chi- square for parents' attainment.

Variables	Group	N	Secondary	B. A	A.m PhD	Chi-square value calculated	Chi-square value tabulated	
Fathers' education	Experimental control	31 29	8 6	16 19	7 4	1.111	5.99	Level of significance(0.05)and df (58)
Mothers' education	Experimental control	31 29	8 5	18 19	5 5	0.419	5.99	

12.4- The Instrument of the Study: -

The researcher constructed test for evaluating students' writing performance. The test designed with three various types of questions. The total score of the test was (20) marks whereas in our school, (10) marks are allotted for writing composition . This was done to strength the study statistic. The researcher assigned a score to each item, taking into consideration the following points : organization of ideas , grammatical structure , linking words, and punctuation marks.

12.5-Test Validity: -

Validity is the extent to which an instrument measure what it is intended to measure (Kabai, 2019 :5). In order to ensure the face validity of the test, it was exposed to panel of specialists in the field methods of teaching. In the light of their comments and suggestions, some items were modified.

12.6- Pilot study: -

The main purpose behind this step was to estimate the time needed for answering , test its clarity in addition to that calculate the reliability coefficient of the test. The test was applied to a sample of (30) students from group (G) of first intermediate level from the same school. Through applying a pilot study the researcher recorded the time is needed for answering the test , the time average was (40) minutes.

12.7- Test Reliability: -

According to Gay etal (2012:165) the concept of reliability refers to “the degree of a test’s consistency measures whatever it is aimed to measure” . So, One of the methods that can be used to find out test reliability is Alpha Cronbach formula .As the result of applying this formula a reliability coefficient of (0.76) is obtained .This indicates the test has good reliability.

12.8- Applying of the experiment: -

The instruction started on the 19th-February-2025 and ended on the 6th – may - 2025. The teacher of English taught both groups so as to avoid the effect of this variable on the result of the experiment. Both groups studied five topics has been selected from the last four units of (English for Iraq) textbook for the first intermediate level (O’Neil et al ,2023) .

13-The Statistical Means:-

The following statical means are used: -

- 1-Alpha Cronbach formula to calculate the reliability of the test.
- 2-T-test for two independent samples (Allam , 2010 : 202)
- 3-Chi-square formula to test the differences of parents’ attainment for two groups of quivalenc (Halima,2018 :360)



14-The result and Its Interpretation: -

In order to find out whether there is any significant difference between the scores of the experimental group and control group. The researcher calculated the mean difference between (pre-post tests) for both groups by using T- Test for two independent samples. The means scores difference (pre-post test) for control group was (3.344) While the experimental group was (5.871) , calculated T-value was (3.030) which is higher than the tabulated T - value (2.00) at a significance level of (0.05) and freedom degree (58). This is clear in table (4)

Table (4) Result of T-test for the two groups

Groups	Num ber	Mean			SD	calculated T-value	Tabulate d T-value
Experim ental	31	Pre-test	Post-test	Mean Difference (Per-post tests)	3.442	3.030	2.00
		10.193	16.064	5.871			
control	29	9.344	12.689	3.344	2.979		

When comparing the mean scores differences (pre-post tests) . It became clear that four square writing method has a remarkable effect on the development of the students' writing performance .This is due to its nature which helps the learners to recognize the goal of each step of writing steps . Hence , writing process becomes systematically. Four square writing method also enhance learners' cognitive structure by employing their knowledge in other fields (writing paragraph or composition). In addition to that , it encourages the learners to share their personal experiences with others about the topic to be written about . Generally , Visualization process of written text , by using graphic organizer and limitation the words that she want to use , optimizes the writing process .

15-Conclusions: -

In the light of the obtained result, the following conclusions have been drawn: -



1-Four square writing method plays an effective role in enhancing and developing students' writing performance.

2-The outstanding learners become independent learners to express on their ideas and feelings .

3-It increases the students comprehension for the writing process i.e. understanding the steps of writing (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing).

16-Suggestions: -

The researcher suggests the following: -

1-A similar study is needed to investigate the effective four square writing method on other skills like reading comprehension.

2-A comparative study can be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of this method with other methods like collaborative method.

17-Recommendations: -

The researcher has been recommended the following: -

1-The English teachers are advised to use this method in order to foster their learners' writing skills to write various kinds of texts.

2-This method is presented as a topic in the field of teaching methods to help the teacher - students to apply it and how to use it in their teaching .

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Journal of Babylon Center for Humanities Studies: 2026, Volume: 16, Issue: 9



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