



Sudan University of Science and Technology
College of Graduate Studies



EFFECTS OF TECHENICAL ERRORS ON EFL STUDENTS WRITING

الأخطاء الفنية وتأثيرها على الكتابة لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة
اجنبية

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of M.A. in English Language
(Applied Linguistics)

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Dedication

To my family

Acknowledgement

I owe a great many thanks to a great many people who helped and supported me during the writing of this research . Not forgotten my parents and my husband for providing everything , and their advice support which are the most needed for this study. They encouraged me to complete this task so that I will not procrastinate in doing it.

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At last I express my thanks to the principal of Sudan University of Science and Technology for extending his support.

Abstract

The aim of this study to investigate "the mechanical errors" which the EFL students at “Alnokhpa secondary school” make in their writing. To this end ,the researcher administered attest were (30) secondary school students chosen from “Alnokhpa school for girls”. The analysis was done qualitatively to asses students problems in punctuation, capitalization and spelling. The results revealed that the most mechanical errors among the students of secondary level have considerable problems in the use of mechanics as: they overuse the comma at the expense of the period , the incorrect use of the capital letter, they commit spelling errors and the misuse of semicolon respectively. In the light of the findings, the researcher recommended that all the teachers should overstress the importance of punctuation marks, capitalization, and spelling in the written and the oral communication courses.

المستخلص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة الأخطاء الفنية لدى طالبات "مدرسة النخبة الثانوية". ولتحقيق هذا الهدف قام الباحث بتطبيق اختبار وتكونت عينة الدراسة من (30) طالبة من طالبات المرحلة الثانوية بمدرسة "النخبة الثانوية بنات". تم إجراء تحليل نوعي لمعرفة مشاكل الطلاب في استخدام أدوات الترقيم واستخدام الحروف الكبيرة والتهجئة. وأظهرت نتائج الدراسة مايلي: كانت أغلب الأخطاء الفنية لدى طالبات المرحلة الثانوية أنهم يعانون من مشاكل الكتابة الأساسية في استخدام الفنيات وهي: الاستخدام الخاطئ للفاصلة المنقوطة، والإفراط في استخدام الفاصلة على حساب النقطة، الاستخدام الخاطئ لعلامات التنصيص، وأخطاء في استخدام الحروف الكبيرة وكما تواجههن مشاكل التهجئة. بناء على نتائج الدراسة يوصى الباحث بأن يقوم جميع المعلمين التركيز على علامات الترقيم، واستخدام الحروف الكبيرة، والتهجئة أثناء إعطاء الطلاب أى عمل كتابي أو شفوي.

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Chapter One

Background Overview of study

1.0 Introduction

Writing is a productive skill which always classified by learners and teachers, it is usually is neglected by curriculum designers. This causes difficulties for learners when enrolling in academic studies. This skill, which is considered the most difficult among all skills, needs a lot of training and practice in order to develop.

Many mechanical errors that in both students and professionals are obviously caused not by the authors lack of knowledge about correct usage but his lack of concern for correctness sometimes this is philosophical stance, based on belief that correct usage is not all that important and that as long as a reader can make sense of writers work, then mechanical errors are irrelevant Non-native speakers are bound to make mechanical errors when writing English.

1.1 Statement of the problem

The problem which the present study intends to identify focus on, the mechanical errors when dealing with English writing. A lot of researches have been done on comprehension errors but mechanical errors have been neglected. The researcher has noticed that learners make errors when writing in English. Among them are spelling, capitalization and punctuation errors.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to identify the common and frequent mechanical errors of learners under the study. Errors help in knowing the areas of difficulty and thus see what steps should be taken to help learners overcome them.

1.3 Questions of the study

1. Are there any significant differences in frequency of each one of the three aspects(punctuation, capitalization, and spelling) of English mechanicals on writing investigated in the study?
2. What aspect of mechanical on writing causes much difficulty to learners ?
3. What are the difficulties that face learners when they deal with English mechanicals on writing ?

1.4 Hypotheses of the study

The researcher suggests hypotheses that may test the previously mentioned questions:

1. There are significant differences in frequency of the three aspect of English mechanicals investigated in the study.
2. Punctuation use causes much difficulty to learners.
3. Ignorance of rule restrictions and overgeneralization lead to wrong use of mechanicals.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study tries to fill the gap done on the previous studies, identify, classify and analyze the mechanical errors by third year female students of Alnokhpa secondary school.

The study is expected to be beneficial for students in helping them to know the areas of difficulty in using punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

Also teachers would know the problematic areas that requires more attention.

1.6 Limitation of the study

- a. the population of this study is limited to the third year female students of Alnokhpa secondary school.
- b. the study focuses on mechanical errors . It identifies, classifies and analyses these errors.

1.7 Methodology of the Study

The researcher uses the descriptive and analytic method. The sample chosen for the study is third year (female) students of the Alnokhpa secondary school.

The data collected is analyzed and evaluated using the statistical package (SPSS).

Chapter one

Introduction

1.0 Background of the study

1.1 Statement of the Problem

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1.3 Questions of the study

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1.5 Significance of the Study

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Chapter Two

2.0 The Writing Skill

Writing is a difficult process even in the first language. It is even more complicated to write in a foreign language. Many studies indicate for the beginning English Foreign Language (EFL) students, there tends to be interference from their first language in the process of writing in English (Benson, 2002; Cedar, 2004; Chen & Huang, 2003; Collins, 2002; Jarvis, 2000; Jiang, 1995; Lade, 1957; Liu, 1998; Mori, 1998; Yu, 1996). Writing in a foreign language often presents the greatest challenge to the students at all stages, particularly essay writing because in this activity, writing is usually extended and therefore it becomes more demanding than in the case of writing a short paragraph.

In many cases, the majority of these students are still translating words, phrases, and sentences from Arabic to English with often very strange results. The challenge for the composition teacher is to find methods to activate in a meaningful way the passive knowledge the students possess in terms of the writing skill, as well as to help the students become more proficient while working to eliminate some of their common errors. A better understanding of the L1 influence in the process of EFL writing will help teachers know students' difficulties in learning English. It will also aid in the adoption of appropriate teaching strategies to help beginning EFL students learn English writing skills better "there is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for L2 learners to master. The difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these notions into legible text". Yet, it is very necessary to look into the dynamics of writing and its teaching, as writing is a skill that not only is tested in every valid language examination, but also a skill that learners should possess and demonstrate in academic contexts. Writing includes numerous considerations and choices to be made regarding "higher level skills", such as content, structure and organization, and "lower level skills", such as punctuation and choice of appropriate vocabulary items and grammatical structures, which are the terms used by Richards & Gennady (2002). Moreover, writing skills must be practiced and learned through experience. By putting together concepts and solving problems, the writer engages in "a two-way interaction between continuously developing knowledge and continuously developing text" (Bereuter & Scardamalia, 1987, p. 12). Indeed, academic writing demands conscious effort and practice in composing, developing, and analyzing ideas. Compared to students writing in their native language (L1), however, students writing in their L2 have to also acquire proficiency in the use of the language as well as writing strategies, techniques and skills, they want to write

close to error-free texts and they enter language courses with the expectations of becoming more proficient writers in the L2.

However, most secondary school Arab students find it difficult to write essays free of errors of various types. Therefore, teachers of essay writing need to anticipate certain common types of errors. They may also find other types of errors, which can be revealed by analyzing the written products or essays of students. These are the conventions, which are usually followed by the teachers of writing when analyzing students' errors.

As mentioned above writing is a complex task; it is the “most difficult of the language abilities and skills to acquire (Allen & Cored, 1974, p. 177). Its level of difficulty varies between native speakers (NS) who think in the language used, in this case it will be English, and non-native speakers (NNS) who think in their own native language, in this case, it will be Arabic. While writing, non-native speakers have to think of all those rules they need to apply or use, rules that native speakers are expected to have automatically.

2.1 Why study error?

In 2012 the CEO of two successful technology companies, Kyle Wines, wrote an essay for the Harvard Business Review titled “I Won’t Hire People With Poor Grammar. Here’s why.” Wines begin his essay in stark fashion:

If you think an apostrophe was one of the 12 disciples of Jesus, you will never Work for me. If you think a semicolon is a regular colon with an identity crisis, I will not hire you. If you scatter commas into a sentence with all the Discrimination of a shotgun, you might make it to the foyer before us politely Escort you from the building.

Wines go on to connect knowledge of grammar explicitly to job performance—and implicitly to character: Grammar signifies more than just a person’s ability to remember high school English. I’ve found that people who make fewer mistakes on a grammar test also make fewer mistakes when they are doing something completely unrelated to writing—like stocking shelves or labeling parts.

That there is no empirical support for the claim that “grammar mistakes” in writing correlate to problems in job performance, such as stocking shelves, is less important than the fact that the views Wines expresses about the importance of correctness in writing are widely shared—among educators, policymakers, and the public in general.

These attitudes about the importance of “good grammar” and the perceived connection between grammar instruction and “good” writing continue to impudently the public debates about reform in literacy education, despite the preponderance of research over the past half century showing that, as Hillocks (1986) notes in his extensive meta-analysis, “grammar study has little or no effect on the improvement of writing” (p. 225). Hillocks’ findings were corroborated,

with a notable nuance, in a more limited meta-analysis released in 2007 by Graham and Perini. They found that direct or traditional grammar instruction had a negative effect on students' writing quality; however, alternative methods of grammar instruction, such as sentence-combining, showed positive effects on writing quality, and one study (Fear & Farman, 2005) found that teaching grammar in the context of students' own writing had positive effects on writing quality (Graham & Perini, 2007, p. 21).

Nevertheless, the notion that "good grammar" equates to good writing remains strong. Findings from some studies point to the importance placed on formal error in the assessment of writing quality (Graham, Harris, & Hebert, 2011; Kiuahara, Graham, & Hawke, 2009), and the results of the most recent national survey of teachers' writing practice, revealed that English teachers believe that correcting errors in usage in mechanics is important or very important (Applebee & Langer, 2013). Perhaps as a result, correctness—or conversely, the avoidance of error—is disproportionately valued in much writing instruction, particularly in English language arts (ELA) classrooms. A better understanding of the nature and frequency of error in student writing would help educators place formal error in perspective and could inform the development of more effective methods of addressing error in student writing. . A better understanding of error might also lead to a careful review of the usefulness of traditional methods, such as "correcting" student papers or assigning "grammar" worksheets that continue to be a common component of mainstream writing instruction.

In addition, despite a seemingly consistent concern with error and "good Grammar" over time, surprisingly little is known about the nature, frequency, and potential causes of error in the writing of adolescent students. The research that has focused on error in adolescent student writing has largely examined the writing of special needs students or students whose rest language is other than English. Although such research can provide some insight into the nature of error in adolescent student writing, the septic kinds of difficulties faced by special needs students and second-language writers can differ significantly from those of mainstream students and students whose are native English speakers. Consequently, the usefulness of this body of research for understanding error in adolescent student writing in general is limited.

Finally, the more we can learn about error in student writing, the more likely it is that we can understand the complexities of the development of writing competence in adolescents and the better we can meet the challenges of developing effective methods of teaching writing. Gaining insight into the nature and frequency of error in adolescent student writing has the potential to challenge longstanding and resilient attitudes about the role of error in student writing development and the importance of error (or lack thereof) in writing quality.

2.2 Errors and Mistakes

It is essential here to make a distinction between mistakes and errors. According to Brown *mistakes* refer to "a failure to utilize a known system correctly" whereas *errors* concern "a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner" (1994a: 205). Two things need to be stated here: Firstly, mistakes do not require special treatment assuming they are recognized. Secondly, *error* here refers to structures only. Both Cored (1967, 1971) and James (1998) reveal a criterion that helps us to do so: A mistake can be self-corrected, but an error cannot. Errors are "systematic," i.e. likely to happen regularly and not recognized by the learner. Hence, only the teacher or researcher would locate them, the learner would not (Gas & Spelunker, 1994).

Norrish (1983) made a clear distinction between errors and mistakes. He stated errors are "systematic deviation when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong." He added that when a learner of English as a second or a foreign language makes an error systematically, it is because he has not learnt the correct form. Norrish defined mistakes as "inconsistent deviation." When a learner has been taught a certain correct form, and he uses one form sometimes and another at other times quite inconsistently, the inconsistent deviation is called a mistake. And it is in this light that the researcher has chosen to focus on students' errors not mistakes. An error, however, is considered more serious. In Contrastive Analysis, the theoretical base of which was behaviorism, errors were seen as "bad habits" that had been formed. The response was based on the stimulus. It was assumed that interference of the mother tongue (L1) was responsible for the errors made during the transition period of learning the target language. As an English teacher, I am well aware of the fact that my Arabic speaking students in grade 12, science section, commit many errors in essay writing (See appendix 6). These students have been studying English almost their whole lives and still, their errors are numerous.

In the cognitive approach, errors are seen as a clue to what is happening in the mind. They are seen as a natural phenomenon that must occur as learning a first or second language takes place before correct grammar rules are completely internalized. I think teachers are relieved to find a more realistic attitude towards errors. Errors are no longer a reflection on their teaching methods, but are, rather, indicators that learning is taking place. So errors are no longer "bad" but "good" or natural just as natural as errors that occur in learning a first language. The insight that errors are a natural and important part of the learning process itself, and do not all come from mother tongue interference, is very important. There is variation in

learners' performance depending on the task. Learners may have more control over linguistic forms for certain tasks, while for others they may be more prone to error.

2.3 Mechanical Errors

Mechanics are rules that standardize certain things in writing. By comparison with larger matters of purpose and substance and structure, such things as punctuation, spelling, and capitalization may seem trivial. But all these mechanics of writing are tools the writer uses to signal the reader. An occasional errors may be excused, but writers cannot afford to ignore the effect of mistakes on the reader. At the least, mistakes are distracting and *a word* interrupt though; *faulty punctuation, a mistaken spelling, even not capitalized* may create meaning unintended by writer. Careful writers take pains to ensure the effect of their words is not distorted by faulty mechanics.

Mechanical errors is the second main point of errors in writing which needs more attention of teachers and students who engage the writing process. The mechanical errors are merely as harmful as the grammatical errors. Mechanical errors in general involve the errors of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

No matter how niggling they may seem, details about punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are important to master. Even with the spell checker and grammar checker eternally activated, we can make plenty of tiny mistakes that deeply affect sentence meaning. I know of an engineer who has repeatedly reported inaccurate dollar amounts to clients because of his sloppy proofreading. I have read government reports by well-published scientists where the colon was misused more than a dozen times in a single report. Even capitalization rules can be highly important to meaning: a student in geology, for example, must be aware of whether or not to capitalize “ice age” (yes when you mean the specific glacial epoch; no when you mean any of a series of cold periods alternating with periods of relative warmth). Finally, small mechanical errors (such as abbreviating a term or acronym improperly) reflect a general sloppiness and disregard for convention.

So work on the little things. Seek to understand punctuation marks as units affecting grammar and meaning, and accept proper spelling, capitalization, and mechanics as professional necessities. This chapter will help you to do so without immersing you into a grammatical swamp.

2.4 Kinds of Mechanicals

2.4.1 Punctuation

Punctuation is very important in indicating the writer's purpose. It is a series of rules that are applied in sentences. They add the correct punctuation is effective punctuation. The more writer writes, the more he/she will discover that punctuation marks can work for him/her in directing the readers in the same way. Punctuation lends carefulness to our writing, gives it clarity, and conveys to the readers exactly the meaning we intend. Punctuation is of considerable importance to our writing, its clarity, and its effectiveness. One of the best tools writer has is punctuation. They add that with a very small signal, the writer can tell the reader how to interpret the ideas on the page and how to understand the relationships among them. There are dozens of significant marks in the punctuation system, they are:

Comma, semicolon, colon, parentheses, dash, bracket, italics (underlining), apostrophe, quotation marks, abbreviations, etc.

What is punctuation?

Punctuation is used with written English. It has two main purposes. The first is to help readers to understand how the words would sound if they were spoken, and the other purpose is to help readers understand the grammar of a sentence. Clear and correct punctuation makes written English easier to understand, and sometimes the use of punctuation can completely change the meaning of a sentence.

Consider this famous example:

'Woman without her man is nothing.'

This has the meaning that if a woman does not have her man, then she is nothing. But now let's add some punctuation.

'Woman; without her, man is nothing.'

The meaning is now the opposite. The sentence says that men are nothing without women. Punctuation is important for meaning.

Punctuation is different for every language - for example Spanish uses an upside-down question mark at the start of a question, but English does not. So even if you know punctuation in your own language, it is still necessary to learn how this is done in English.

why would we use punctuation in writing?

The simple answer is that it helps your reader – who is possibly also your marker - to understand your message easily. When you speak, you frequently pause, your voice rises or drops and often your face and hands add non-verbal information through “body language”; all this assists in communicating your message clearly. In writing you have to remember that the readers have only what is on the paper or screen in order to understand your message. Punctuation basically helps to indicate the pauses, rises and falls etc. which are important for understanding.

Different punctuation marks are used in different situations but all help with conveying your message with clarity. It is therefore essential, in academic writing in particular, to use punctuation accurately. Your tutors will expect this and you will lose marks for not doing so. On the other hand, correctly used punctuation can help to strengthen your arguments and improve marks.

What is the best way to learn punctuation?

Punctuation is best learned by looking at written English and trying to understand how the use of punctuation changes the way a sentence is read. Try reading sentences aloud, and notice the effect that punctuation has on the rhythm of your speech. Note that some types of written English, such as cartoons use non-standard punctuation, so try to read English in a novel or a newspaper. When you have written something, read it through aloud. If you have difficulty or find yourself running out of breath, then you have punctuated badly. Remember that spoken English allows the speaker to use stress, timing and intonation. When reading written English, look to see how punctuation tries to reproduce this.

Kinds of Punctuation

Hyphens

A wise writer once said, “If you take hyphens seriously you will surely go mad.” Hyphens belong to that category of punctuation marks that will hurt your brain if you think about them too hard, and, like commas, people disagree about their use in certain situations. Nevertheless, if you learn to use hyphens properly, they help you to write efficiently and concretely, and you will have to use them regularly because of the nature of technical writing. Because concepts in science and engineering frequently rely on word blends and complex word relationships, the best writers in these fields master the use of the hyphen.

The Hyphen's Function

Fundamentally, the hyphen is a joiner. It joins:

- two nouns to make one complete word (kilogram-meter);
- an adjective and a noun to make a compound word (accident-prone);
- two words that, when linked, describe a noun (agreed-upon sum, two-dimensional object);
- a prefix with a noun (un-American);
- double numbers (twenty-four);
- numbers and units describing a noun (1000-foot face; a 10-meter difference)
- “self” and “well” words (self-employed, well-known);
- ethnic labels (Irish-American);
- new word blends (cancer-causing, cost-effective);
- Prefixes and suffixes to words, in particular when the writer wants to avoid doubling a vowel or tripling a consonant (anti-inflammatory; shell-like).

The rule of thumb I apply when using the hyphen is that the resulting word must act as one unit; therefore, the hyphen creates a new word—either a noun or a modifier—that has a single meaning. Usually, you can tell whether a hyphen is necessary by applying common sense and mentally excluding one of the words in question, testing how the words would work together without the hyphen. For example, the phrases “high-pressure system,” “water-repellent surface,” and “fuel-efficient car” would not make sense without hyphens, because you would not refer to a “high system,” a “water surface,” or a “fuel car.” As your ears and eyes become attuned to proper hyphenation practices, you will recognize that both meaning and convention dictate where hyphens fit best.

Apostrophes

As you already know, apostrophes are used to form both contractions—two words collapsed into one—and possessives. Handily, we can virtually ignore the issue of contractions here, since they are so easily understood and are rarely used in technical writing. With possessives, the apostrophe is used, typically in combination with an “s,” to represent that a word literally or conceptually “possesses” what follows it.

Apostrophes with Words ending in “s”

Although practices vary, for words that already end in “s,” whether they are singular or plural, we typically indicate possession simply by adding the apostrophe without an additional “s.”

Apostrophes with Acronyms and Numbers

In technical writing, acronyms and numbers are frequently pluralized with the addition of an “s,” but there is typically no need to put an apostrophe in front of the “s.” Therefore, “SSTs” (sea surface temperatures) is more acceptable than “SST’s” when your intention is simply to pluralize. Ideally, use the apostrophe before the “s” with an acronym or a number only to show possession (i.e., “an 1860’s law”; “DEP’s testing”) or when confusion would otherwise result (“mind your up’s and q’s”).

Possessives without the Apostrophe

Convention, frequency of usage, and—to be honest—the economy of advertising, sometimes dictate that the apostrophe is dropped. In proper names that end in “s,” especially of geographic locations and organizations, the apostrophe is often omitted. And in everyday combinations where possession is automatically understood, the apostrophe is often dropped.

Quotation Marks

Despite what you may see practiced—especially in advertising, on television, and even in business letters—the fact is that the period and comma go inside the quotation marks all of the time. Confusion arises because the British system is different, and the American system may automatically look wrong to you, but it is simply one of the frequently broken rules of written English in America: The period and comma go inside the quotation marks.

However, the semicolon, colon, dash, question mark, and exclamation point fall outside of the quotation marks (unless, of course, the quoted material has internal punctuation of its own).

This measurement is commonly known as “dip angle”; dip angle is the angle formed between a normal plane and a vertical.

Built only 50 years ago, Shakhtinsk—“mine town”—is already seedy.

When she was asked the question “Are rainbows possible in winter?” she answered by examining whether raindrops freeze at temperatures below 0 °C. (Quoted material has its own punctuation.)

Semicolons, Colons, and Dashes

Punctuation marks: terribly powerful in the right hands. Punctuation marks are silent allies, and you can train yourself to exploit them as such. Punctuation marks do not just indicate sound patterns—they are symbols that clarify grammatical structure and sentence meaning. And, as I demonstrate in the writing of this paragraph, punctuation marks showcase your facility with the language. What follows are some basics about three of the most powerful and most commonly misused punctuation marks.

The Semicolon

The semicolon is often misused in technical writing; in fact, it is often confused with the colon. Grammatically, the semicolon almost always functions as an equal sign; it says that the two parts being joined are relatively equal in their length and have the same grammatical structure. Also, the semicolon helps you to link two things whose interdependency you wish to establish. The sentence parts on either side of the semicolon tend to “depend on each other” for complete meaning. Use the semicolon when you wish to create or emphasize a generally equal or even interdependent relationship between two things.

The Colon

The colon: well-loved but, oh, so misunderstood. The colon is not just used to introduce a list; it is far more flexible. The colon can be used after the first word of a sentence or just before the final word of a sentence. The colon can also be used to introduce a grammatically independent sentence. Thus, I call it the most powerful of punctuation marks.

The colon is like a sign on the highway, announcing that something important is coming. It acts as an arrow pointing forward, telling you to read on for important information. A common analogy used to explain the colon is that it acts like a flare in the road, signaling that something meaningful lies ahead.

The Dash

The dash—which is typically typed as two hyphens or as one long bar (available on your word processor’s “symbol” map)—functions almost as a colon does in that it adds to the preceding material, but with extra emphasis. Like a caesura (a timely pause) in music, a dash indicates a strong pause, and then gives emphasis to material following the pause. In effect, a dash allows you to *redefine* what was just written, making it more explicit. You can also use a dash as it is used in the first sentence of this paragraph: to frame an interruptive or parenthetical-type comment that you do not want to de-emphasize.

Commas

These little demons compound and trivialize the nightmares of many a professor after an evening of reading student papers. A sure way to irritate educated readers of your work is to give them an overabundance of opportunities to address your comma problems. It is easy but dangerous to take the attitude that Sally once did in a *Peanuts* comic strip, asking Charlie Brown to correct her essay by showing her “where to sprinkle in the little curvy marks.”

You have probably heard the common tips on using commas: “Use one wherever you would naturally use a pause,” or “Read your work aloud, and whenever you feel yourself pausing, put in a comma.” These techniques help to a degree, but our ears tend to trick us and we need other avenues of attack. However, it seems impossible to remember or apply the 17 or so grammatical explanations of comma usage that you were probably introduced to way back in 8th grade. (For example: “Use commas to set off independent clauses joined by the common coordinating conjunctions. . . . Put a comma before the coordinating conjunction in a series.”) Perhaps the best and most instructive way, then, for us to approach the comma is to remember its fundamental function: it is a separator. Knowing this, it is useful to determine what sorts of things generally require separation. In sum, commas are used to separate complete ideas, descriptive phrases, and adjacent items, and before and after most transition words.

Comma Rules

Complete ideas need to be separated by a comma because, by definition, they could be grammatically autonomous, but the writer is choosing to link them.

Complete ideas are potentially whole sentences that the writer chooses to link with a conjunction such as “and” or “but.”

Digital recordings made it possible to measure the nuclear magnetic signal at any depth, and this allowed for a precise reading to be taken at every six inches.

Note how the second half of this sentence contains both a subject (“this”) and a verb (“allowed”), indicating that a second complete idea is presented, and thus a comma is required.

Descriptive phrases often need to be separated from the things that they describe in order to clarify that the descriptive phrases are subordinate (i.e., they relate to the sentence context, but are less responsible for creating meaning than the sentence’s subject and verb). Descriptive phrases tend to come at the very beginning of a sentence, right after the subject of a sentence, or at the very end of a sentence.

Near the end of the eighteenth century, James Hutton introduced a point of view that radically changed scientists’ thinking about geologic processes.

James Lovelock, who first measured CFCs globally, said in 1973 that CFCs constituted no conceivable hazard.

All of the major industrialized nations approved, making the possibility a reality.

In each of these cases, note how the material separated by the comma (e.g., “making the possibility a reality”) is subordinate—i.e., it carries context in the sentence, but the primary sentence meaning is still derived from the subject and verb. In each example, the phrase separated by the comma could be deleted from the sentence without destroying the sentence’s basic meaning.

Adjacent items are words or phrases that have some sort of parallel relationship, yet are different from each other in meaning. Adjacent items are separated so that the reader can consider each item individually.

Weathering may extend only a few centimeters beyond the zone in fresh granite, metamorphic rocks, sandstone, shale, and other rocks.

The river caught fire on July 4, 1968, in Cleveland, Ohio.

This approach increases homogeneity, reduces the heating time, and creates a more uniform microstructure.

In the first sentence, the commas are important because each item presented is distinctly different from its adjacent item. In the second example, the dates (July 4, 1968) and places (Cleveland, Ohio) are juxtaposed, and commas are needed because the juxtaposed items are clearly different from each other. In the third example, the three phrases, all beginning with different verbs, are parallel, and the commas work with the verbs to demonstrate that “This approach” has three distinctly different impacts.

Finally, transition words add new viewpoints to your material; commas before and after transition words help to separate them from the sentence ideas they are describing. Transition words tend to appear at the beginning of or in the middle of a sentence, and, by definition, the transition word creates context that links to the preceding sentence. Typical transition words that require commas before and after them include however, thus, therefore, also, and nevertheless.

Therefore, the natural gas industry can only be understood fully through an analysis of these recent political changes.

The lead precursor was prepared, however, by reacting pure lead acetate with sodium isopropoxide.

Using a Comma Before “And”

It is true that commas are sometimes optional, depending on sentence meaning and the writer’s taste, and many writers choose not to put a comma before the “and” in a series (also known as the “serial comma”) involving a parallel list of words. For example, some would write the sentence “I am industrious, resourceful and loyal,” using no comma before the “and.” This practice is fine as long as you are consistent in applying it. However, I, and the grammar handbooks I consult, recommend a comma even in these circumstances, because—even in the example provided—there is a slight pitch and meaning change between the terms “resourceful” and “loyal.”

Most importantly, if the “and” is part of a series of three or more phrases (groups of words) as opposed to single words, you should use a comma before the “and” to keep the reader from confusing the phrases with each other.

Medical histories taken about each subject included smoking history, frequency of exercise, current height and weight, and recent weight gain.

By always using a comma before the “and” in any series of three or more, you honor the distinctions between each of the separated items, and you avoid any potential reader confusion. The bottom line is this: When you use a comma before the “and” in a series of three or more items or phrases, you are always correct.

That noted, be aware that some professors and many journals will not favor the use of the comma before an “and” in a series (for the journals, it is literally cheaper to print fewer commas).

Comma Overuse

Perhaps the best way to troubleshoot your particular comma problems, especially if they are serious, is to identify and understand the patterns of your errors. We tend to make the same mistakes over and over again; in fact, many writers develop the unfortunate habit of automatically putting commas into slots such as these:

- between the subject and verb of a sentence
- after any number
- before any preposition
- before or after any conjunction

The Period

Though a seemingly trivial punctuation mark, the period does present some knotty challenges, especially in technical writing. We all know to place a period to signal the termination of a simple sentence that makes a statement. However, here are a few more specialized rules:

- Do not use a period in combination with other punctuation marks unnecessarily, especially when a quotation is involved. In such an instance, end the sentence naturally on whatever punctuation mark is logical (e.g., a question mark).
- Avoid using periods at the ends of abbreviated units of measure, except when the period might be confused with another word. (Therefore, so that it’s not confused with the word “in,” use “in.” to abbreviate “inches.”)
- When using a period in conjunction with parentheses, the period comes after the parentheses are closed if the parenthetical comment itself is part of the larger sentence (as in the first bulleted sentence above, and this one). The period comes inside the parentheses only when the parentheses themselves contain a complete independent sentence. (See the example in the second bulleted sentence above, as well as this sentence.)

- By convention, if an abbreviated word (such as “etc.”) ends a sentence, let a single period signal the sentence’s end—two periods in a row would be incorrect.
- In acronyms commonly understood or commonly used in your field (ASTM, EPA, US, GIS), do not use periods after the capital letters.
- Do use periods after abbreviations and acronyms that are forms of address, initials within proper names, earned degrees, and when expressing measures of time (Dr. Bauer; M.S. degree; Steven S. Wilson, Jr.; 5:00 p.m.; 10 B.C.).

Parentheses

We are used to using parentheses to identify material that acts as an aside (such as this brief comment) or to add incidental information, but in technical writing the rules for using parentheses can be more nuanced. Some more specialized functions of parentheses include:

- To introduce tables or figures within a sentence:

In pulse-jet collectors (Figure 3), bags are supported from a metal cage fastened onto a cell plate at the top of the collector.

- To represent converted units:

The funnel used for this experiment was 7 in. (17.8 cm) in length.

- When enumerating:

The system has three principal components: (1) a cleaning booth, (2) an air reservoir, and (3) an air spray manifold.

- To indicate product manufacturer names:

The filtering process involves a 10-mm Dorr-Oliver cyclone (Zeon International).

- To introduce an acronym after it has been written out:

-

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviations (the shortened form of a word or phrase) and acronyms (words formed from the initial letters of a phrase) are commonly used in technical writing. In some fields, including chemistry, medicine, computer science, and geographic information systems, acronyms are used so frequently that the reader can feel lost in an alphabet soup. However, the proper use of these devices enhances the reading process, fostering fluid readability and efficient comprehension.

Some style manuals devote entire chapters to the subject of abbreviations and acronyms, and your college library no doubt contains volumes that you can consult when needed. Here, I provide just a few principles you can apply in using abbreviations and acronyms, and in the next section I offer a table of some of the forms most commonly used by student writers.

Abbreviations

- Typically, abbreviate social titles (Ms., Mr.) and professional titles (Dr., Rev.).
- In resumes and cover letters, avoid abbreviations representing titles of degrees (e.g., write out rather than abbreviate “Bachelor of Science”).
- Follow most abbreviations with a period, except those representing units of measure (“Mar.” for March; “mm” for millimeter). See the table that follows for further guidance.
- Typically, do not abbreviate geographic names and countries in text (i.e., write “Saint Cloud” rather than “St. Cloud”; write “United States” rather than “U.S.”). However, these names are usually abbreviated when presented in “tight text” where space can be at a premium, as in tables and figures.
- Use the ampersand symbol (&) in company names if the companies themselves do so in their literature, but avoid using the symbol as a narrative substitute for the word “and” in your text.
- In text, spell out addresses (Third Avenue; the Chrysler Building) but abbreviate city addresses that are part of street names (Central Street SW).
- Try to avoid opening a sentence with an abbreviation; instead, write the word out.
- When presenting a references page, follow the conventions of abbreviation employed by a journal in your field. To preserve space, many journals commonly use abbreviations, without periods, in their references pages (e.g., “J” for Journal; “Am” for “American”).

Acronyms

- Always write out the first in-text reference to an acronym, followed by the acronym itself written in capital letters and enclosed by parentheses. Subsequent references to the acronym can be made just by the capital letters alone. For example:

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is a rapidly expanding field. GIS technology . . .

- Unless they appear at the end of a sentence, do not follow acronyms with a period.
- Generally, acronyms can be pluralized with the addition of a lowercase “s” (“three URLs”); acronyms can be made possessive with an apostrophe followed by a lowercase “s” (“the DOD’s mandate”).
- As subjects, acronyms should be treated as singulars, even when they stand for plurals; therefore, they require a singular verb (“NIOSH is committed to . . .”).
- Be sure to learn and correctly use acronyms associated with professional organizations or certifications within your field (e.g., ASME for American Society of Mechanical Engineers; PE for Professional Engineer).
- With few exceptions, present acronyms in full capital letters (FORTRAN; NIOSH). Some acronyms, such as “scuba” and “radar,” are so commonly used that they are not capitalized. Consult the table that follows in the next section to help determine which commonly used acronyms do not appear in all capital letters.
- When an acronym must be preceded by “a” or “an” in a sentence, discern which word to use based on sound rather than the acronym’s meaning. If a soft vowel sound opens the acronym, use “an,” even if the acronym stands for words that open with a hard sound (i.e., “a special boat unit,” but “an SBU”). If the acronym opens with a hard sound, use “a” (“a KC-135 tanker”).

2.4.2 The Punctuation Errors

Making it easy to read and understand written or printed matter”. The data obtained from the students, their examination and homework assignments, has shown that Capitalization, the use of comma and semicolon were among others are most common punctuation errors. Experienced teachers of English as a second language have noticed punctuation to be extremely difficult and Confusing for many ESL/EFL students. They do not use commas in Combining simple or compound sentences to make new sentences. An Example of that is:

Students love Science [, and] they plan to study more
They usually do not combine the two simple sentences by using a semicolon
An example of that:

Students like Science [;] they plan to major in that disciplinary area.
It is not unusual to see students write compound sentences using a comma
Without a coordinating conjunction. They use an adverb instead of
Conjunction. An example:

Students love Science, therefore, they want to major in this area.

Another common punctuation error noticed in the students' papers is the
Ability to write sentence after sentence without a period at the end of one
Sentence or a capital letter at the beginning of the next. Sentences just run
Together. An example: "I do not forget the invitation that I sent it to you before
several weeks as you said that you are very busy now you do not have any
excuse to reject my invitation so however I hope you choose the time that you
want to get the dinner together and sent the date to me. Thank you very
much""He likes English and he wants to continue study "Students were asked
to rewrite some passages and sentences in the correct forms of punctuation.

Their errors can be categorized into the following:

1. Starting new sentences with lower case letters.
2. Not using capital letters for proper nouns.
3. Using the colon incorrectly.
4. Using the semicolon incorrectly at the beginning of the passages and after the words.
5. The exclamation mark hardly used.
6. Forgetting to use full stops at the end of a sentence.
7. Not using enough space between words.
8. Hardly using question marks.
9. Hardly using hyphens.

2.4.3 Capitalization

Metering and O'Hare (1980: 438) says that the basis rule, to which there are very few exceptions, it to capitalize "first" words and words that are Considered proper names or titles. The followings are some rules of using capitalization as quoted from Cowan and Cowan (1980: 676-677).

As a technical writer, who must often refer to such things as geographic locations, company names, temperature scales, and processes or apparatuses named after people, you must learn to capitalize consistently and accurately. What follows are ten fundamental rules for capitalization. Check out the first rule. It gets fumbled in papers all the time.

Capitalize the names of major portions of your paper and all references to figures and tables. Note: Some journals and publications do not follow this rule, but most do.

Capitalize the names of established regions, localities, and political divisions.

Capitalize the names of highways, routes, bridges, buildings, monuments, parks, ships, automobiles, hotels, forts, dams, railroads, and major coal and mineral deposits.

Capitalize the proper names of persons, places and their derivatives, and geographic names (continents, countries, states, cities, oceans, rivers, mountains, lakes, harbors, and valleys).

Capitalize the names of historic events and documents, government units, political parties, business and fraternal organizations, clubs and societies, companies, and institutions.

Capitalize titles of rank when they are joined to a person's name, and the names of stars and planets. Note: The names earth, sun, and moon are not normally capitalized, although they may be capitalized when used in connection with other bodies of the solar system.

Capitalize words named after geographic locations, the names of major historical or geological time frames, and most words derived from proper names. Note: The only way to be sure if a word derived from a person's name should be capitalized is to look it up in the dictionary. For example, "Bunsen burner" (after Robert Bunsen) is capitalized, while "diesel engine" (after Rudolph Diesel) is not. Also, referring to specific geologic time frames, the *Chicago Manual of Style* says not to capitalize the words "era," "period," and "epoch," but the American Association of Petroleum Geologists says that these words should be capitalized. I choose to capitalize them, as those who write in the geological sciences should by convention.

Capitalize references to major sections of a country or the world.

Capitalize the names of specific courses, the names of languages, and the names of semesters.

2.4.4 Common Capitalization Errors

Just as important as knowing when to capitalize is knowing when not to. Below, I set forth a few instances where capital letters are commonly used when they should not be. Please review this advice carefully, in that we all have made such capitalization errors. When in doubt, simply consult a print dictionary.

Do not capitalize the names of the seasons, unless the seasons are personified, as in poetry (“Spring’s breath”). (It is, of course, highly unlikely that you would personify a season in a technical paper.)

Do not capitalize the words north, south, east, and west when they refer to directions, in that their meaning becomes generalized rather than site-specific.

In general, do not capitalize commonly used words that have come to have specialized meaning, even though their origins are in words that are capitalized.

Do not capitalize the names of elements. Note: This is a common capitalization error, and can often be found in published work. Confusion no doubt arises because the symbols for elements are capitalized.

2.4.5 Spelling

To understand the limited power of the spell checker, enjoy the following poem, which has an intriguing literary history [28]:

I have a spelling checker

It came with my PC;

It plainly marks four my revue

Mistakes I cannot sea.

I’ve run this poem threw it,

I’m sure your pleased too no,

Its letter perfect in its weigh,

My checker told me sew.

Just as so many of us rely on calculators to do all our math for us—even to the point that we do not trust calculations done by our own hand—far too many of us use spell checkers as proofreaders, and we ultimately use them to justify our own laziness. I once received a complaint from an outraged professor that a student had continually misspelled “miscellaneous” as “mescaline” (a hallucinogenic drug). The student’s spell checker did not pick up the error, but the professor certainly did, and he told me that he even speculated privately that the student who wrote the paper did so while on mescaline.

So proceed with caution when using spell checkers. They are not gods, and they do not substitute for meticulous proofreading and clear thinking. There is an instructive moment in an M*A*S*H episode, when Father Mulch complains to Colonel Potter about a typo in a new set of Bibles—one of the commandments reads “thou salt commit adultery.” Father sheepishly worries aloud that “These

lads are taught to follow orders.” For want of a single word the intended meaning is lost. Always proofread a hard copy, with your own two eyes.

2.4.6 Six Rules for Spelling

I have a crusty old copy of a book called *Instant Spelling Dictionary* [29], now in its third edition but first published in 1964, that I still use frequently. I adapted the six basic spelling rules that appear below from that dictionary. Even without memorizing the rules, you can improve your spelling simply by reviewing them and scanning the examples and exceptions until the fundamental concepts begins to sink in. When in doubt, always look up the word. And do not forget that desktop dictionaries work just as well as electronic ones.

Rule 1. In words ending with a silent "e," you usually drop the "e" before a suffix that begins with a vowel.

Rule 2. In words ending with a silent "e," you usually retain the "e" before a suffix than begins with a consonant.

Rule 3. In words of two or more syllables that are accented on the final syllable and end in a single consonant preceded by a single vowel, you double the final consonant before a suffix beginning with a vowel.

Rule 4. In words of one syllable ending in a single consonant that is preceded by a single vowel, you double the final consonant before a suffix that begins with a vowel. (It sounds more complex than it is; just look at the examples.)

Rule 5. In words ending in "y" preceded by a consonant, you usually change the "y" to "i" before any suffix that does not begin with an "i."

Rule 6. Use "i" before "e" except when the two letters follow "c" and have an "e" sound, or when they have an "a" sound as in "neighbor" and "weigh."

2.4.7 Spelling Errors

Misspelled words are distraction to educated reader. They add that apoor speller’s first step should be to learn to proofread composition carefully for misspellings.

Many learners of English find the spellings difficult to remember. However, to spell well is something that cannot be ignored. The followings are examples for misspelled words:

Academi~~y~~ for *academy*, _alloon for *address*, adverticement for *advertisement*, archetect for archetict, _alloon _e/asociate for *associate*, autum for *autumn*, _alloon/ ballon for *balloon*, between for *believe*, braught for *brought*, curculum/ curicullum for *curriculum*, develop.

2.5 Previous Studies

Study of Ahmed Awad (2012): *The Most Common Punctuation Errors Made by the English and the TEFL Majors at An-Najah National University*

The aim of this study is was to investigate the most common punctuation mistakes which the English and the TEFL majors at An-Najah National University make in their writing.

The study has adopted the descriptive analytical approach and (100) students have been chosen

The results revealed that the most common errors among the English and the TEFL majors at An-Najah University were: the overuse of comma at the expense of the period, the incorrect use of the capital letter, the wrong use of the quotation marks and the misuse of semicolon respectively.

Furthermore, the results indicated that there were no significant differences in the number of punctuation errors due to gender and department; however, the results revealed that there were significant differences in the number of punctuation errors among the participants due to academic level.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher reviews the methodology adopted in the study. The sample used and the method of data collection along with procedure followed is discussed as well. The researcher reviews also the validity and reliability on data collection and analysis.

3.1 Methodology

The study has adopted the descriptive analytical method where primary data have been collected from students' test. The secondary data source was the literature review done with regard to study topic. The research adopted such method in a quest to obtain overall result and finding of the problem being tackled.

3.2 Study sample

The researcher has choose (30) students who study English within curriculum in school level. The sample has been extracted from the entire population available in secondary schools. The researcher has delivered the test to (30) students who compose the study the sample.

3.3 Tools and Instruments

The only tool used in this study is a test designed for students which consists of Two main question.

3.3.1 The Test

The test was done to obtain the required results about the problem as well as reflecting the different aspects of it. The test paper consists of two main questions.

The first question covers the claim of the first hypothesis, the second questions cover the claim of the second hypothesis as well as the third hypothesis.

3.4 Procedures

The researcher has delivered the sample of the study test papers and asked them to give their correct answer within specific time. For paving the way for students to give their good performance, the researcher advised participants to take the test in an empty classroom without giving their names. The data have been collected then and analysis was done through qualitative measures.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

The researcher has consulted experts in the design of the test paper. Some modifications were made and the final version of the paper was printed.

The reliability analysis was done through SPSS program and the result was obtained with degree of 89.4% which indicates the reliability of the questionnaire.

Chapter Four

Data analysis

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher carries on analysis on the obtained data from students' test. The tests consists of two parts: the first part asks students to write down a paragraph topic, while the second part asks students to correct some mistakes in capitalization and punctuation.

4.1 First Question Analysis

Punctuation Analysis

Subject	Frequency	Percentage
Comma	38	29.6%
Full stop	81	63.3%
Semi colon	0	0%
Apostrophe	8	6.3%
Colon	1	0.8%
Question mark	0	0%
Exclamation	0	0%
Brackets	0	0%
Dash	0	0%
<u>Total</u>	128	100%

The table above shows the frequencies and percentage of the punctuation marks students use within their written text.

As it can be seen in the table, students use (38) times the comma (,) with percentage of (29.6%). The use of comma is somehow tricky for most of the students. Most of the students use comma just to separate parts of their text without reasonable positioning of it. Most of the students are not aware of using comma to pause speech or to list items, choices.

The use of Full stop (.) is more frequent in students' text as they use (81) times full stop mark. The percentage (63.3%) which is the maximum percentage shows that students focus on using full stop more than any punctuation mark in their text.

The use of full stop mark is somewhat easy, because no ambiguous usages can be found for full stop but to end any sentence.

As can be shown, no one of the students uses semi-colon (;) to explain extra sentences or to give a reason of a preceding sentence. The indication is that students are not aware of using semi colon and the (0%) proves that clearly.

In using apostrophe ('), only (8) students with percentage (6.3) use apostrophe. The researcher notices that students ignore using apostrophe mark in approximately (42) possibly places with percentage (19%). It is believed that students are not aware of the importance of using apostrophe in writing or in other word do not know how to put them in their proper places.

In using colon, only one students uses colon (:) when quotes a speech within the context of the text with percentage (0.8%). The colon is important in written text and it shows easily where indirect speech is quoted. Students ignore using colon in approximately (14) possible places.

When it comes to using question mark, no one of the students employed (?) for no questions are used within the text. The same case for exclamation, brackets and dash mark. Students misuse the punctuation marks in general.

The clear indicator of the overall result in this question is that most of the students do not know how to use punctuation marks properly. The misuse of any of the punctuation marks affects the entire text mechanically and then in terms of cohesion and coherence.

Capitalization Analysis

The researcher notices that the places where capitalization covered are: beginning of sentences, names, proper nouns and labels.

Subject	Frequency of error	Percentage of the error
Beginning of new sentences	14	100%
Names, proper nouns and labels	-	-

The table shows the statistical results on the use of capitalization. As it is shown in the table, students commit (14) mistakes when they begin new sentences. It notices that students have no much problem in capitalizing beginnings of sentences when they finish the last one in full stop. The researcher also notices that there is relationship between the usage of full stop and starting sentences in capital; each one

the students use full stop properly use capitalization in the beginning of sentences properly.

Spelling Analysis

The researcher analyzes the spelling mistakes of the students in their produced text and give some reasoning about it.

Most Frequent Spelling Occurrence

The incorrect word	The correct word
Sester, sistar and sestar	Sister
Decited	Decided
Exsampal	Example
Blace	Place
Obsulitli	Absolutely
Viste	Visit

The table shows most frequent spelling words students have written. The spelling error is something commonly found in students' written text. Most of them spell the word incorrectly.

4.2 Second Question Analysis:

In this question, students are asked to correct any error in punctuation or capitalization.

4.2.1 Punctuation and Capitalization

Question	Frequency of correct answer	Percentage of correct Ans.	Frequency of incorrect Ans.	Percentage of incorrect Ans.
1)	17	56.5%	13	43.5%
2)	14	46.6%	16	53.4%
3)	12	40%	18	60%
4)	9	30%	21	70%
5)	11	36.6%	19	63.4%
6)	17	56.5%	13	43.5%
7)	14	46.6%	16	53.4%
8)	12	40%	18	60%
9)	11	36.6%	19	63.4%
10)	8	26.6%	22	77.4%

The table shows the frequencies and percentage of the second question from students' test. Each sub-question is given frequency and percentage for the whole (30) participants.

As it is shown in the first sub-question, students get (17) correct answer out of (30) with percentage (56.6%) while they get (13) incorrect answer with percentage (43.5%).

In the second sub-question, students get (12) correct answer with percentage (46.6%) while they get (18) incorrect answer with associated percentage (53.4%). As it is noticed, the percentage of incorrect answer is higher than the one of correct answer.

The third sub-question, students get (12) correct answers and (18) incorrect answers with percentages (40%) and (60%) respectively. Like the case in the previous sub-question, the percentage of incorrect answer is greater than the percentage of correct answer.

In the fourth sub-question, only (9) students get the correct answer with percentage (30%) while (21) get incorrect answer with percentage (70%). This is a clear result of students' problem in correcting sentences with punctuation and capitalization error.

The same case is in the fifth sub-question as students get (11) correct answers with percentage (36.6%) while they get (19) incorrect answers with percentage (63.4%).

In the sixth the frequency of the correct answer rises to (17) unlike the case in the previous question with percentage (56.5%).

From the 7th question to last one, the frequencies of correct answers as they are noticed less than the frequencies of incorrect answers. This indicate that students find difficulties in distinguishing the punctuation and capitalization errors among written sentences.

4.3 Overall result

Looking at the results of the first question, the statistics show that there is some problem accompany students' writing in terms of using punctuation and capitalization along with clear spelling errors. As it is found in the question, there are words used frequently with spelling errors such as "*sister, absolutely and example*".

In the second question, students shows some point of weakness with regard to punctuation and capitalization when they asked to correct the mistakes within the sentences.

Based on the previous discussion the researcher can confirm that students find face problem of mechanical errors in spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

Chapter Five

Conclusion, Findings and Recommendations

5.0 Conclusion

The main aim of the study is to investigate "the effect of mechanical errors on EFL student's writing". the descriptive analytical approach was adopted where data have been collected from two different sources: literature review and test. The study consists of five chapters divided as follows: the first chapter contains the framework of the study and is an introduction. The second chapter discusses the literature review and the previous studies. In the third chapter methodology approach was reviewed and discussed. The analysis was done in the fourth chapter according to the obtained data of the questionnaire. The last chapter concluded the research with some findings, recommendations and suggestions.

5.1 Findings

Based on the results of the analysis, the research has reached into some findings the most important are:

- 1- Students of secondary level have considerable problems in mechanics as they misuse the punctuation, capitalization and commit spelling errors.
- 2- Students use full stop most when they punctuate their writing, and they are not aware of the rest of punctuations marks.
- 3- Students do not know how to capitalize words within the sentences. They use capital letters often with names and labels.
- 4- Students have serious problem in spelling as they spell common words incorrectly such as "*sister, example*".

- 5- There is a good relationship between students writing error and the coherence and cohesion of the text.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researcher recommends the following:

- 1- Teachers need to guide students through overcoming the problem of using punctuation, capitalization within the sentences.
- 2- The problem of spelling needs to be solved by giving students more practices in words phonetics and phonology.
- 3- Teachers have to analyze students texts so as to locate any error in mechanics and see how they can help students overcome their obstacles.

5.3 Suggestion for Further Researches

The following suggestion can be helpful for further studies.

- Conducting study on basic level that investigate the same field of the study.
- Conducting a study that investigate the relationship of good level of basic English and the mechanic errors.

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Appendix

Q.1: Choose and write about one of the following topics please be attention to: punctuation, capitalization, and spelling:

1-The friendship.

2- Journey in the memory.

3-The advantages and disadvantages of the Technology.

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Q.2: Correct any errors in punctuation or capitalization in the following sentences:

1. the woman, who is standing there, is his ex wife.

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2. Is that book your's?

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3. we have much to do, for example, the carpets need vacuuming.

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4. "Would you like to accompany me"? he asked?

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5. It is hailing; not raining.

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6. Finish your job, it is imperative that you do.

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7. You are required to bring the following Sleeping bag foods and a sewing kit.

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8. one of the lawyer's left her briefcase.

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9. I enjoy re covering chairs.

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10. the american river is extremely cold all year.

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