



Sudan University of Science and Technology
College of Graduate Studies
College of Languages



Investigating Difficulties Encountered by Sudanese Undergraduates in Academic Writing

تقصي الصعوبات التي يواجهها الطلاب
الجامعيون السودانيون في الكتابة الأكاديمية

A Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Ph.D in English (Applied Linguistics)

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Dedication

To my beloved mother Fatouma who devoted her life for bringing me up.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor **Dr. Abdalla Yassin Abdalla** who has carefully guided the study from beginning to end. His help has been significant in bringing this study to fruition. My heartfelt thanks are to my colleagues who have graciously helped me with their opinions when I interviewed them.

My thanks also go to all the teachers at AL Neelain and Ahfad Universities.

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate difficulties that are encountered by university undergraduate students in their academic writing. To achieve this purpose, three instruments were used:

A students questionnaire (third year students, faculty of Law AL Neelain university). A writing test for third year students, faculty of Arts at Al-Neelain University.

An interview for teachers of English language from different universities. The data were analysed statistically by using tables and figures to find out the difficulties that encounter students and the reasons that transcend these difficulties. What possible solutions could be offered to solve these difficulties were also considered. To do this, different statistical methods were used to analyze the data. These methods were statistical passage for social studies (SPSS) and Alpha Conbach as well as Pearson factor.

The findings of the study showed that university undergraduate students were encountered by some difficulties in academic writing such as grammar, spelling, punctuation and use of the language. The results also revealed that the syllabus was behind these difficulties.

Based on the findings, the researcher presented some recommendations and some possible solutions to the difficulties.

المستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى بحث الصعوبات التي تواجه طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية في الجامعات السودانية في الكتابة الأكاديمية. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف استخدم الباحث ثلاثة آليات لجمع المعلومات هي الاستبيان لطلاب السنة الثالثة بكلية القانون بجامعة النيلين ومقابلات مع بعض أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية بالجامعات وامتحان في الكتابة وذلك لجمع المعلومات ثم إحصائها وتحليلها وذلك باستعمال الجداول والبيانات لمعرفة الصعوبات التي تواجه الطلاب.

أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن طلاب الجامعات تواجههم بعض الصعوبات في الكتابة الأكاديمية أهمها النحو وقواعد الإملاء والترقيم واستعمال اللغة وذلك من خلال آليات جمع المعلومات.

قام الباحث باستعمال عدة طرق لتحليل المعلومات هي:

برنامج الحزمة الإحصائية للدراسات الإجتماعية (إس، بي، إس، إس) وبرنامج الفا ونباخ ومعامل بيرسون.

أثبتت الدراسة أيضاً أن منهج اللغة الإنجليزية هو من الأسباب الرئيسية التي أدت إلى مواجهة تلك الصعوبات للطلاب.

وبناءً على نتائج الدراسة قدم الباحث بعض التوصيات لإيجاد الحلول الممكنة لمواجهة تلك الصعوبات.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides description of the theoretical framework of the study. It particularly focuses on the research problem, the research questions, hypotheses and research methodology.

1.1 Background

What is writing? It is a form of graphic letters or symbols which make marks on a flat surface. These letters form words according to certain conventions and words form sentences.

It is a human communication that signs or symbols are used to record the spoken word, (Bowker, 2007).

Writing in a foreign language is difficult. It requires the writer to know the conventions and the rules that govern it. It is a communicative event, which the writer makes and maintains. Blanchard and Root, (No date) indicate that not everybody is a naturally gifted writer. Writing is a skill that can be learnt and mastered, in many situations; writing is like driving a car. If you have ever driven a car in a foreign country you know that some of the rules of the traffic may be different. Since the rules for driving differ from country to country, the conventions for writing may change from language to language. Writing in a different language includes more than mastering its words and grammar. Language, including its written forms reflects the thought pattern of native speakers. To write well in a different language, it is essential to understand how native speakers of that language organize their thoughts. That is why it is not advisable to write something in your native language and then translate it into English. The words may be in English, but the logic, organization and thought pattern reveal those of your own native language.

Writing is human intercommunication between people who may not meet face to face. It is one of the four Language learning skills. It is a long and winding process and difficult as well. It is a skill, which is required in many fields throughout life.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

University EFL students in Sudan are often required to write assignments about the courses they study. They write answers to their tests and exams. They also write research papers. It is expected that EFL students are likely to face some difficulties in academic writing. This study will investigate these difficulties and try to find some possible solutions to them.

1.3 The Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- 1- To show characteristics of academic writing.
- 2- To investigate types of problems that university EFL students encounter in their academic writing.
- 3- To find out if the syllabus deals sufficiently with academic writing.
- 4- To find out some possible solutions to academic writing problems.
- 5- To enable students to know the difference between academic writing and other writing text and what exactly academic writing is.

1.4 The Significance of the Research

The research is significant because:

1. It is expected to be useful for university students, university teachers and policy – makers.
2. It is expected to contribute some possible solutions to the problem of the study.

3. It enhances university EFL students' performance in academic writing and inculcates more confidence in writing their essays and researches.
4. It reveals areas of weakness in students' writing and enables them to get rid of their errors and mistakes.
5. It familiarizes students with the academic writing process. In other words to write through rules and conventions of academic writing.

1.5 The Research Questions

In this study, the following questions are raised:

1. What are the main difficulties that university EFL students encounter in their academic writing?
2. To what extent does the syllabus deal with academic writing?
3. What possible solutions could be offered for solving these problems?

1.6 The Research Hypotheses

In this study the following hypotheses have been formulated:

1. Students are expected to encounter some difficulties in writing perhaps grammar, spelling, punctuation and usage of the Language and use of academic writing cause the main difficulties.
2. Academic writing is a crucial skill for university students. They need to know more about its conventions.
3. It is expected that the study will arrive at some possible solutions.

1.7 Methodology of the Research

The methodology of the research will be both descriptive and analytical methodology. The tools are questionnaire for students, writing test and interviews for teachers. Population for the questionnaire are third year students, faculty of Arts and Law, Al Neelain University. The validity and reliability of the tools will be confirmed before the distribution.

1.8 The Limits of the Research

The research is limited to third year students, faculty of Law AL Neelain University.

1.9 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has provided description of the theoretical framework of the study problem, hypotheses and methodology.

The next chapter will be chapter two, Literature review.

CHAPTER TWO

The Literature Review

CHAPTER TWO

The Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on the conceptional framework of this study.

Additionally, it reviews some previous related studies.

2.1 Conceptional Framework

2.1.1 Writing

Writing means a method of human intercommunication by means of conventional visible marks. It means communication between people who may never met face to face. Writing can be distressing and a daunting task because it is an extremely complex process which requires many things to do simultaneously: forming an idea, putting the idea into words, spelling of the words correctly, capitalizing and punctuating appropriately and shaping letters. In addition, while working on one sentence, the mind is probably racing ahead to consider the next one. A Key to successful writing and successful writing instruction is to break the writing process into manageable parts in order to focus one step at a time. This dispels the panic or confusion that may paralyze the brain which is overburdened with so many ideas. This shows that writing is a stressful challenge.

2.1.2 Academic Writing

Al Badi, (2015: 65) stated the following definitions and description of academic writing:

“Academic writing can be defined as a mental and cognitive activity since it is a product of the mind. It is also described as the logical organization and arrangement of the written sentences within a paragraph and paragraphs within the units of discourse and the expression of the ideas. Another aspect of academic

writing is that it can be understood only from the perspective of a society rather than a single individual”

From the above definitions, it can be seen that academic writing is a complex process. It involves a variety of aspects that are believed to be the base of successful academic writing.

Mattabi and shedifat, (2010) stated that writing has different types, the most significant one is academic writing. It is a formal way of writing that follows certain rules and conventions. In other words, it has its own rules and conventions and it also has its own characteristics and features as well. Moreover, academic writing has a specific structure.

Bowker, (2007) added that academic writing differs from other types of writing in many ways. It describes its own rules and practices. In addition, topics of academic writing focus on abstracts, things like ideas and concepts which cannot necessarily be given in a concrete or physical form.

Bowker continues to give more characteristics about academic writing by claiming that academic writing requires the writer to clearly describe the abstract forms as well as where they are positioned in relation to general abstract, processes and relationships.

Academic writing is also different from many practically oriented or socially oriented tasks. This is because academic writing tasks require the writer to look beneath the surface for understanding principles, theories and concepts that can offer main stream as well as alternative explanations for common practices, processes and procedures. She concluded that writing is a special genre of writing that prescribes its own set of rules and practices.

She emphasized that a writer should follow rules of punctuation and grammar. It is vital that a writer should be clear in punctuation as well as the conventions of

grammar are universally known systems (within English speaking cultures) that maintain clarity and avoid ambiguity in expression.

Some kind of structure is required in academic writing, such as beginning, middle and end. Citing the work of other authors is central to academic writing. Because it shows that the writer has read the literature, understood the ideas and integrated these issues and varying perspectives into the assignments' tasks. (ibid)

Zemach and Rumisek, (no date, P.1) added that "academic writing in English is different from academic writing in other Languages, even different than writing in English?

James Hartley (2008, P.10) highlighted that 'writing is often characterized as a hierarchically organized, goal directed, problem solving process. Writing, it is said consists of four main recursive processes. Planning, writing, editing and reviewing'.

James Hartley also discussed more points about academic writing. He claimed that Academic writing is:

- Unnecessarily complicated.
- Pompous, long, winded, technical.
- Impersonal, authoritative, humorless.
- Elitists, and excludes outsiders.

But can be:

- Appropriate in specific circumstances.
- Easier for non- native speaker to follow.

Banchard and Root, (no date) stated that academic writing, the writing that students have to do for university courses. University students are often required to do their assignments in correct academic writing. Hence academic writing became a crucial skill for EFL university students. It is expected that EFL

university students are likely to encounter some difficulties in academic writing. Grammar, spelling, punctuation and use of the Language are some of their main obstacles in academic writing. Their mistakes in these skills are very common. Planning, organization, cohesion, unity and coherence are suspected to be another area of weak performance.

According to Boardman and Frydenberg, (2003), from the early stages of writing students have to use certain format and style of writing. Students are expected to write legible paragraphs and essays and use correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.

They should also use correct formats in their writing. There are two most common formats in academic writing, the paragraph and the essay formats. The paragraph is used to answer test questions and to write laboratory reports, while the essay format is made up of several paragraphs and it is used to write compositions, term papers and research papers.

2.1.3 The Significance of Writing Skills

Writing skills are an important part of communication. Good writing skills allow you to communicate your message with clarity and ease to a far larger audience than through face to face or telephone conversations one might be called upon to write a report, plan or strategy at work, write a grant application or press release or press within a volunteering role or you may fancy communicating your ideas on line via a blog. And of course, a well written C.V or resume with no spelling or grammatical mistakes is essential if you want a new job.

Today when any one can be their own publisher, we see more and more examples of poor writing skills both in print and on the web. Poor writing skills create poor first impression and many readers will have an immediate negative reaction. They spot a spelling or grammatical mistake. As just one example a spelling mistake on a commercial web page may cause potential customers to

doubt the credibility of the web side and the organization (www.skillyouneed.com)

2.1.4 Why Academic Writing/ What is the Goal of Academic Writing?

Whitaker, (September, 2009) asked these two questions and answered simultaneously. She stated that academic writing is essential because it is the writing that students have to do for their university courses. Their constructors may have various names for academic writing assignments (essay, paper/essay, analysis paper, research paper, term paper, argumentative paper, analysis paper, essay, informative essay, position paper).

As for the goal of writing, she argued that academic papers are specially designed torture instrument. Papers are preferred because instructors are not directly involved in the torture. Usually students torture themselves by writing until the last minute to write their papers and by not knowing what they are doing. A paper is not supposed to be torture.

Academic writing is used to be an opportunity to explore something that is interesting from your course. There is a freedom to choose a topic, empty papers on which to express your ideas and an audience that is interested in reading what you think.

In academic writing assignments one will start by asking a good question then find and analyze answers to it, and choose your own best answers to discuss in your paper. This paper will share the writers own thoughts and findings, and justify your writing is not to show off everything that you know about your topic, but rather to show that you understand and can think critically about your topic. (and this what earns one good grade), plus you will develop skills researching, evaluating information, organizing, responding and expressing yourself clearly in writing (in English too). These skills by the way are all valued by employers.

2.1.5 Principles of Academic Writing

Academic writing has many important principles that lead to efficient and effective writing. Understanding these principles enables writers to produce refined prose:

Whitaker, (September, 2009) discussed these principles in details ending them with a useful advice to writers.

These principles are as follows:

Clear purposes: The goal of the academic writing paper is to answer the question the writer chose for his topic. This question gives the purpose. The most common purposes in academic writing are to persuade, analyze synthesize and inform.

Persuasive purpose: In this kind the purpose is to get the research to adopt the answer to the question. So, one answer will be chosen, support the answer using reason and evidence, and try to change the readers point of view about the topic persuasive writing assignments include argumentative and position paper.

Analytical Purpose: In analytical academic writing, the purpose is to explain and evaluate possible answer to your question, choosing the best answers based on your own criteria. Analytical assignments often investigate causes, examine effects. Evaluate effectiveness, asses ways to solve problems, find the relationships between various ideas, or analyze other people's arguments. The syntheses is part of the purpose comes in when you put together all parts and come up with your own answer to the question. Examples of these assignments include analysis papers and critical analysis.

Informative purpose: In informative academic writing the purpose is to explain possible answers to your question, giving the readers new information about your topic. This differs from analytical topic in that you do not push your view points on the reader, but rather try to enlarge the readers view.

Some assignments will have a pre-determined purpose, for other assignments, you will have to choose a topic (research paper, term paper). And some assignments may have two purposes. In all cases, the purpose will be clear at the beginning of your paper, and your paper must achieve its purpose in order to be successful.

Audience Engagement: as with all writing, academic writing is directed to a specific audience in mind. Unless your instructor says otherwise, consider your audience to be fellow students with the same level of knowledge as yourself. As a student in the field, they are interested in your topic, but perhaps not so interested in reading a paper, so you will have to engage them with your ideas and catch their interest with your writing style. Imagine that they are also skeptical, so that you must use the appropriate reasoning and evidence to convince them with your ideas.

Clear point of view: academic writing even that with an informative purpose, is not just a list of facts or summaries of sources. Although you will present other people's ideas and research, the goal of your paper is to show what you think about these things. Your paper will have to support your own original idea about the topic. This is called the thesis statement and it is your answer to the question. To put it more clearly, the writer should have a sense of critical thinking while writing. Throughout his writing, he must keep his thesis statement in mind so as not to write something irrelevant or needless in his topic or the main idea. A writer or a researcher should think and evaluate information that is relevant and support his topic. All facts he collected may not be relevant and all information that he found from source may not be suitable or useful. A writer should not copy or write blindly (without thinking).

Single Focus: every paragraph (even every sentence) in your paper will support your thesis statement.

There will be no unnecessary, irrelevant, unimportant or contradicting information. (your paper will likely include contradictory or alternative points of

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Single Focus: every paragraph (even every sentence) in your paper will support your thesis statement.

There will be no unnecessary, irrelevant, unimportant or contradicting information. (your paper will likely include contradictory or alternative points of

view, but you will respond to and critique them to further strength your own point of view.

Logical Organization: academic writing follows a standard organization pattern for academic essays and papers there is an introduction, body and conclusion. Each paragraph logically leads to next one.

The Introduction: catches the reader's attention, provides background information and lets the reader knows what to expect. It also has the thesis statement.

The body paragraphs: support the thesis statement each body paragraph has one main point to support the thesis which is named in the topic sentence. Each point is then supported in the paragraph with logical reasoning and evidence. Each sentence connects to the one before and after it, the reader do not have to work to find the connection between ideas.

Strong support: each body paragraph will have sufficient and relevant support for the topic sentence and thesis statement the support will consist of facts, examples, description, personal experience and expert opinion and quotation.

Clear and Complete Explanation: this is very important as a writer, you need to do all the work for the reader. The reader should not have to think hard to understand your ideas, logic or organization. English readers expect everything to be done for them your thoughts and thought processes should be clearly and completely explained.

Effective Use of Research: A research paper should refer to a variety current high quality, professional and academic sources. You will use tour research to support your own ideas, therefore, it must be integrated into your writing and not presented separately. That means source material will be introduced, and analyzed, explained and then cited.

Correct American psychological association: All academic papers should follow the guidelines of the American psychological association.

Writing style: Because this is your work, you use your own words whenever possible. Don't try to write like boring overly formal, scholarly article. Use the materials conversational style that you would use in the classroom. Your writing should be clear, concise and easy to read. It is also very important that there are no grammar, spelling punctuation or Vocabulary mistakes in academe writing. Errors convey to the reader that you do not care. And finally, this rule will override all the principles. Always follow the direction of your instructor. Every instructor has a reason for giving you an assignment, and each instructor's requirements may differ. Follow your instructors' directions to get the most from an assignment.

2.1.6 Type of Writing

There are three types of writing in academic writing (some writers say there are four types of writing adding persuasive writing. These types are descriptive writing, narrative writing, and expository writing. These types are different according to their forms. They include marking notes, writing letters, reports, novels, prose, poetry etc... these forms are divided into four categories, descriptive, expository, narration and persuasive.

(a) Exposition writing: the aim of this kind of writing is to provide the readers with information. It is precise and clear. It should be well organized so that it results in a flow of ideas. It has no details.

It is used for the following purposes:

1. It gives directions.
2. It describes a process.
3. It is used in making notes.
4. it presents information through the use of facts and data"

In addition to these aims the writer can add his own personal ideas or experience to retain the enjoyment of the text.

(b) Descriptive writing: Its purposes is to give the reader a word picture of specific person, place or object. The event in this type should be arranged according to their degree of importance having from less important to the most important details. It uses a lot of descriptive language and details. It can be used in an essay format (5 paragraphs) or as a story or a poem.

(c) Narrative writing: It is used to tell stories or personal experiences in the past. It provides the reader or the audience with something new. It also reveals a good description of details of the thoughts, feeling and reactions of the writer.

(d) Persuasive writing: Its objective is to convince the researcher to believe in something to change his mind about it or to do it. The writer should present specific reasons to support his opinion. It generally appeals to emotions or reasons. It is used also to win acceptance of your ideas where others don't agree with you. A persuasive paper helps a reader to look at evidence, state ideas more clearly and to consider the claims of opposition fairly.

Boardman and Frydenberg (2003) concluded types of writing in three types of paragraphs descriptive paragraph. Narrative paragraph and expository paragraph.

1- Descriptive paragraph: It is used to describe what something look like. For example, describing a city for an essay about life abroad, the equipments in an experiment for a laboratory report or the persons appearance for an essay about that person.

2- Narrative paragraph: It tells a story which is the most important feature of this type of paragraphs, narrative writing is as sort of "creative writing" examples of narrative writing are story, (personally, imaginative, true, fiction, myth, poem, play or biography. A narrative paragraph usually starts with background information. It is divided into beginning, middle and end. The beginning usually tells what happened first in the story. The middle of the story is usually the main part and

tells most of the events of the story. The end of the story concludes the story and tells the final event and has a concluding remarks.

3- Expository paragraph: the goal of this writing is to explain something to the reader. You can explain something in many ways. Some of these are:

1. Comparing two things or people.
2. Showing the steps in a process.
3. By analyzing something.
4. By persuading.

2.1.7 Good Writing Skills and Audience

Buetten, (2003) claimed that a writer should focus his writing to his audience and should know the background interests of his audience. The writer can think of these questions when he considers his audience.

Buetten (2003) also stated the following question for the writer to focus his writing to his audience:

1. Who is going to read this piece of writing?
2. What does my audience know or not know about my topic?
3. What background information about my topic will my audience need to know?
4. What will my audience find interesting?
5. What is the main point I want my audience to understand?
6. How can I best get my audience to understand my point?

A writer should develop good writing skills.

Bowker, (2007) mentioned that good writing skills are essential for a writer.

A writer should develop good writing skills for several reasons:

The reader needs to be able to understand what the writer is trying to say, because the only way a writer demonstrates his skill in communicating to the marker or the

reader is throughout his writing. In addition, developing writing and research skills are essential for succeeding at university. Developing these skills also a fundamental aim of course coordinators, teacher and lecturers. It accord with the principles behind university education. Another point which the writer should be aware of is the audience (the readers).

Whitaker, (September 2009) articulated that writers should consider the audience engagement in their writing. The final objective of writing is communication.

Therefore, writers should be careful about their audience (people who read what they write).audience are so many and they are different people who have different views and cultures they're students, teachers, tutors, customers, colleagues, employees and general public.

Banchard and Root, (no date) added that what the writer writes about his topic and his purpose are greatly influenced by people whom he expects to need the final product of his writing because he will always be writing for an audience. He will communicate his ideas more effectively if he keeps the audience in his mind.

A writer should remember that all audiences have expectations but those expectations vary from one audience to another.

2.1.8 Writing Process

Anyone who wishes to become a good writer should Endeavour before allows himself to be tempted by the more showy qualities, be direct, simple, brief, vigorous and lucid.

(flower and flower, 1906, P.M)

Writing is a tedious process. It requires a lot of tasks and techniques to produce efficient and effective prose. To do this, writers should follow certain procedures and methods. The process writing method is the best method to follow in order to produce a good written text. Process writing is used in all types of writing especially in academic writing. It is used by millions of students in universities of the world. (Whiteaker. Sep. 2009).

In the following pages different type of writing processes will be described. These processes show the steps that the writer should follow so as to produce a refine prose.

Boardman and Frydenberg, (2003) reported that good writers think, plan, write a draft, think, revise, think and rewrite until they are satisfied. Writing is a continuous process of thinking organizing, rethinking and reorganizing. Good writers go over six steps. Each step can be repeated as many times as necessary.

These steps are:

Step 1: assessing the assignment. The first step in the witting process is to Understand exactly what the professor wants on a particular assignment, the important piece of information, the topic or (ranges of topics) and the purpose of the assignment another important point is to know the sources of information that you may use (where it comes from), the due date then do research and decide the length of the paper and its format.

Step 2: generating ideas:

The purpose is to think about a certain topic and generate as many ideas as possible. There are two ways: Brainstorming (gathering ideas about the topic) and free writing (write whatever comes into your mind about your topic without stopping).

Step 3: organizing your ideas.

To get some ideas for your paragraph, you need to organize those ideas. There are two methods to do this: topic outline and tree diagram. Topic outline means what the main idea of the paragraph is, write the idea on the top of your paper. Then which point to include in order best support your main point. Once you have your ideas gathered, you have an organizational pattern to follow.

Step 4: write your first draft.

Step 5: rewriting: revising and writing.

Revising: ask two questions: have I made myself clear to the reader? 2: have I said what I want to say? These are about the content of writing.

Organization: does this paragraph have a topic sentence? What is my topic? What is my controlling idea? What are my major supports? And do I have a concluding sentence?

Editing other aspects of rewriting: check spelling, grammar, capitalization, punctuation and vocabulary.

Step 6: writing the final draft is the last step in the writing process. Step 3 and 4 can be repeated. Use correct paragraph format. Add a title (Boardman and Frydenberg, Writing to communicate, page 30).

Bowker, (2007) articulated about essay writing stating that the most comprehensive and sophisticated assignments in writing is essay writing.

She suggested six steps to follow in writing an essay. The steps are guidelines on how to go about writing an essay. These steps go as follows:

1. Think About a topic: interpret the topic carefully, brainstorm to generate ideas, formulate a point of view. Look up some key words in the course materials and text books, have a glance through relevant reading in your study guide- familiarize yourself with the questions.

2. Research Topic: start reading study guide and text books, lecture notes) if available) then look in the libraries, on line catalogues (if there is a useful material relevant to the topic).

3. Plan your Essay: keep your argument in your mind, write the main points, arrange them in order that best support your stance. The sentences function as an essay plan. Each sentence represents a paragraph in your essay.

4. Write your Essay: get your ideas down on paper. Work on refining them if you have already made summaries and notes, the process of writing your essay will be easier.

5. Revise your Essay: look over your essay. Have you answered the essay questions?

Are they stuck to the topic? Have you left anything vital? Revise your essay several times.

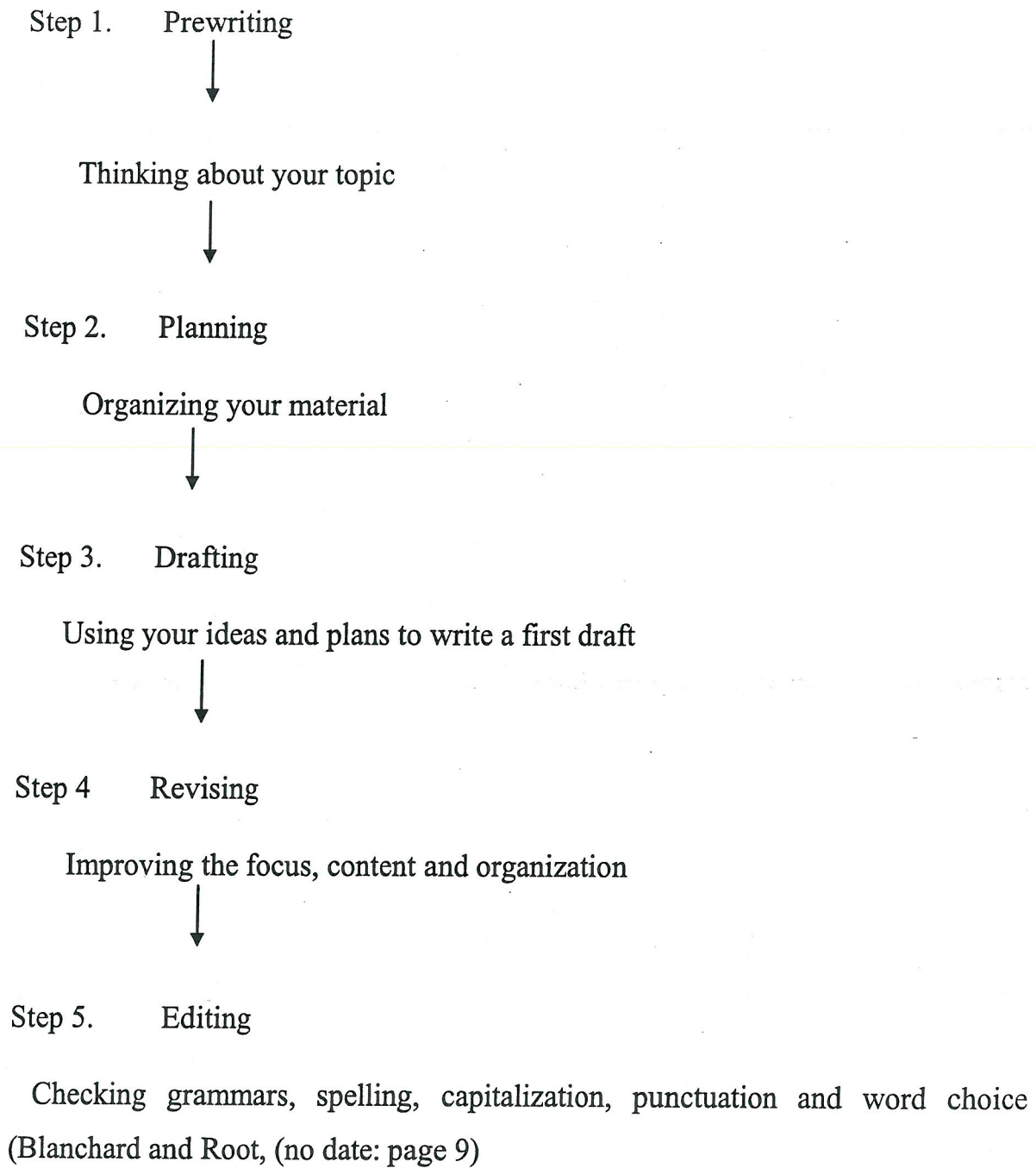
6. Edit your Essay: check for errors (spelling punctuation, grammar, bad sentence structure, jargon, slang etc.

Is your presentation ok? Can it be improved?

Is the referencing correct?

Blanchard and Root (no date) asserted that good writing cannot be done from the first time. It needs revising and repetition of many steps. Few people pick up a pen and or sit down at a computer and produce a perfect piece of writing on the first try. Most writers spend a lot of time thinking before they write and then work through a series of steps which they are composing. The final product is often the

result of several careful revisions. It takes patience as well as a skill to write well. You should think of writing as a process involving the following steps:



Whitaker, (September 2009) mentioned that the process writing has worked for millions of university students and advised students to take it step by step as a guide for their writing. She concluded the process in the following nine steps:

- Chose A Topic.
- Think (Brainstorm).

- Research.
- Discover Your Thesis.
- Plan (Outline).
- Write.
- Revise.
- Edit.
- Proofread.

2.1.9 Purposes of Writing

Everybody needs to write but EFL university students need to write more. Writers have purposes when they write, of course, there are several purposes for writing.

Boardman and Frydenberg, (2003) pointed out several common purpose of writing. They are to:

1. Compare or to contrast two topics.
2. Argue for a solution to problem.
3. Describe a project.
4. Summarize information.
5. Report on a laboratory experiment or research.

EFL university students are asked to write for these purposes in different academic situations such as compositions, essays test, term papers and laboratory reports.

Whitaker (2009) gave university assignments more different names such as essay papers, research papers, term papers, argumentative essay, position papers, analysis paper, essay papers. All of these types of assignments have the same goal and principles.

Blanchar and Root, (no date) mentioned the three most common purposes of writing:

To **entertain**, to **inform** and to **persuade**. The three purposes are not always mutually exclusive it is possible a piece of writing to include many purposes at one time. For example, an article may be interesting but also convincing. They also mentioned that when a writer writes something, it is essential to think about his purpose. To decide his purpose. He should ask himself the question why am I writing?"

Whitaker, (2009) also mentioned the most common three purposes of writing according to the three types of writing: persuasive purposes, analytic purposes and informative purposes. She described them as follows:

1. Persuasive purpose: the purposed in this type is to get your readers to adopt your answer to your question. The answer should be supported by using reason and evidence. The writer tries to change the readers' point of view about the topic.

2.1.10 Mechanics of Writing (Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation)

Correct grammar, punctuation and spelling are key to written communication. The reader will form an opinion of you, the author, based on both the content and presentation, and errors are likely to lead them to form a negative impression.

If you are unconvinced about the importance of accurate writing, think of the clues we use to identify spam emails, fishing, web sides and counterfeit products: poer grammar and spelling. Similarly some employers state publicly that any CV or resume containing spelling or grammatical mistakes will be rejected immediately while a BBC article quotes research that calculates spelling mistakes cost online business "millions" in lost sales. Checking for poor writing and spelling mistakes should be seen as courtesy to your readers since it can take them much longer to understand the message in your writing if they have to think and re read text to decipher these. All written communication should therefore be re read

before sending to print, or hitting the send button in case of emails. As it is likely there will be errors. Don't assume that grammar and spelling checkers will identify all mistakes as many incorrect words can indeed be spelt correctly. (for example, where "there" or "principle" instead of "principal" or entire words may be missing if all possible, take a break before re reading and checking your writing, as you are more likely to notice problems when you read it fresh. Even if you know spelling and grammar rules you should still double check your work or, even better have it proofread by somebody else. Our brains work faster than our fingers can type and accidental typographical errors (types) inevitably creep in. (Find more: at: <http://www.skillsyouneeds.com/writing>)

2.1.11 Spelling

Mattabi and shedifat, (2010) talked about the importance of correct spelling in writing and stated that it causes difficulties for writers. English spelling is problematic because it is so irregular and inconsistent, they also presented some devices for improving ones spelling nevertheless, correct spelling is necessary in writing. Memorizing lists of words and spelling rules, using memory devices to learn the spelling of difficult words, looking at the words in print, learning some tricks of the trade all these help in mastering English spelling. Writing words down is also recommended. The dictionary is the best friend in this respect.

Spelling is important for exactly the same reason that grammar and punctuation are important. Poor spelling makes for poor communication. Academic writing requires a high degree of accuracy and this is reflected in the quality of the writing. Sloppy spelling gives the impression that the writer doesn't care about the assignment.

English spelling is notoriously whimsical and inconsistent. Spelling conventions have grown up over centuries as the result of the mixing of different languages (French, German, Latin) as well as different social fashions. For example:

before sending to print, or hitting the send button in case of emails. As it is likely there will be errors. Don't assume that grammar and spelling checkers will identify all mistakes as many incorrect words can indeed be spelt correctly. (for example, where "there" or "principle" instead of "principal" or entire words may be missing if all possible, take a break before re reading and checking your writing, as you are more likely to notice problems when you read it fresh. Even if you know spelling and grammar rules you should still double check your work or, even better have it proofread by somebody else. Our brains work faster than our fingers can type and accidental typographical errors (types) inevitably creep in. (Find more: at: <http://www.skillsyouneeds.com/writing>)

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Many of the differences between spelling in British English and American English can be traced to different social fashions (www.kent.ac.uk/learning) university of ken student learning.

2.1.12 Punctuation

Punctuation is essential in writing as well as grammar and spelling. Without correct punctuation, the meaning will not be clear and the reader will be confused.

Mattabi and shedifat stated that punctuation is used to create sense, clarity and stress in sentences. There are many reasons to writing proper punctuation. It is important, very important.

When we talk, we punctuate what we say with frequent pauses. Often we raise or lower our voice to stress or bring attention to certain phrases. We also gesture with our arms or raise our eyebrows to enhance what we are saying. We do all this without thinking about it. It is natural when we write we can't rely on raising or lowering our voice or using hand gestures to make our point yet somehow we must clue the reader in what we want our words and phrases to "sound" on page, this is where punctuation comes in.

Punctuation helps the reader navigates what you have written. It can tell the reader where to pause, what emotion behind certain phrases, what points you are trying emphasize etc.

A writer's job is to make life easy for the reader. Punctuation provides a frame work that eliminates confusion and keeps the reader interested in what you have to say. If the reader is tripped up by poor punctuation or an awkward sentence, you have ruined the flow of your piece, and your message is lost.

You use punctuation marks to structure and organize you writing. The most common of these are the period (or full stop in British English, the comma. The exclamation mark, the question mark, the colon and semi. Colon, the quote, the apostrophe, the hyphen, and dash and the parentheses and brackets) Capital letters

are also used to help us to organize meaning and to structure the sense of our writing.

Punctuation is a system of signs or symbols, how a sentence is constructed and how:

- Sentences are the building blocks used. They are complete statements.
- Punctuation should be read and makes the meaning.

Every sentence should include at least a full stop, exclamation mark, or question mark system indicates that the sentence is correct.

2.1.13 Grammar

Grammar is the core unit of the language. It is a complex subject and a skill that requires a lot of tasks. Nevertheless, it is crucial in writing. Grammar has conventional rules. Therefore, writers should have a good command of these rules, because effective academic writing requires good grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Since the sentence is the basic unit of academic writing writers should know the forms of all types of sentences (simple sentences) they should also be aware of fragment sentences, run- on sentences and subject verb agreement.

Grammar contains all parts of speech (subjects, verbs, adjectives, nouns, pronouns, preposition etc.) so, it is essential for writers to know when and where to use these parts of language in a sentence.

Another point which writers should give special awareness is the basic structure of the English sentence such as:

S + V	Ali sleeps.
S + V + O	The boy kicked the ball.
S + V + adj	She is a beautiful girl.
S + V + adv	The car ran quickly.
S + V + N	These ladies are doctors.

A third point which writers should be aware of in writing is the syntax of the language which is particularly important in English where a small change in word order can completely change the meaning of a sentence, for example:

“The doctor saw the patient” is different from “The patient saw the doctor”

So, word order or syntax is absolutely crucial for clarity, accuracy and meaning. Writers should write complete grammatically correct sentences and make sure that their sentences make sense and that they mean what they want them to mean.

(at:<http://www.skillsyouneed.com/writing.skills>.

Htm/#ixzz4ftupzxRod more at:<http://www:skills>)

2.1.14 A Paragraph

What is a paragraph?

A paragraph is a group of sentences about a single topic. Together the sentence of a paragraph explain the writer's main idea (most important idea) about the topic. In academic writing, a paragraph is often between five and ten sentences long (Zemach and Rumisk, (No date).

But it can be longer or shorter, depending on the topic. The first of a paragraph is indented (moved in) a few spaces.

A paragraph has three main parts:

1. The topic sentence: this is the main idea of the paragraph. It is usually the first sentence of the paragraph and it is the most general sentence of the paragraph.
2. The supporting sentences: these are sentences, that talk about or explain the topic sentence.
3. The concluding sentence: this may be found as the last sentence of a paragraph. It can finish a paragraph by repeating the main idea or just giving a final comment about the topic.

There are three common ways to develop a paragraph: giving details, giving an explanation and giving an example.

Details are specific points that tell more about a general statement. An explanation tells the reader what something means or how something works. An example is specific person, thing or event that supports an idea or statement.

The final sentence of a paragraph is called the concluding sentence. It sums up the main point or restates the main idea in a different way. A concluding sentence should not introduce a new point.

Paragraph are different types:

- a descriptive paragraph.
- a process paragraph.
- an opinion paragraph.
- a comparison / contracts paragraph.
- Problem / paragraph.

2.1.15 An Essay

What is an essay? Zemach and Rumisek (un dated) defined an essay as a group of paragraphs written about a single topic and a central main idea. It must have at least three paragraphs, but a five paragraph essay is a common .length for academic writing.

2.1.16 The Structure of an Essay

There are three main .parts of an essay:

1. Introduction:

This the first paragraph of an essay. It explains the topic with general ideas. It also has a thesis statement. This is a sentence that gives the main idea. It usually comes at or the end of the first paragraph.

2. The main Body:

These are the paragraphs that explain and support the thesis statement and come between the introduction and the conclusion. There must be one or more paragraphs in the main body of an essay.

3. The conclusion:

This is the last paragraph of an essay. It summarizes or restates the thesis and the supporting ideas of the essay. (web [www.thomis](http://www.thomis.com) on rights.com)

Bowker (2007) added that all essays share the same basic structure. Although they may differ in content and style. The essence of an essay is an opinion expressed as thesis statement or proposition, and logical sequence of arguments and information organized in support of the proposition.

2.2 Review of Previous Related Studies

Many academic have written about academic writing which indicates how academic writing is crucial for writing. The following studies are theses and dissertations which are related to the present study in some way or another. They will be discussed on the pages below as follows:

2.2.1 Moonkhan, (December, 2012) This a PhD thesis IN EFL. Writing development Among Thai University Students, University of Thouthampton, faculty of Laws, Arts and social students. School of Humanities.

The objectives of this study were to assist Thai university students to develop their writing by using a teaching approach that focuses on the introduction of discourse within a genre approach based on the teaching and learning cycle of Feez (1998).

This approach is considered suitable for an approach to teaching writing focused on discourse, because its design requires English Language teaching to consider the importance of the whole text.

It allows students to view text as a whole, not in separated sentences, especially when they organize and connect ideas during writing.

The study draws on both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The quantitative approach concentrates on the development of the students writing by comparing the mean scores from the initial and final writing of the students. Forty students were requested to complete four writing assignments during the course. The data were analysed by employing a pair sample t, test to compare initial and final scores. The qualitative approach deals with how peer feedback helps promote readers awareness and the attitude of students and teachers. The qualitative data were gathered by various instruments such as questionnaire, interviews, students' reflective writing. Peer feedback, and so on.

The results of the study revealed that: 1) students can perform better in writing ability, demonstrated from the overall scores. There is significant difference between the overall mean score in the final assignment and the initial assignment: 2) students are concerned about how to provide sufficient information for the readers, and are aware of the role of reader: 3) the use of peer feedback is beneficial for students and it also promotes students' awareness of the sense of audience.

This study is using a teaching approach to develop students ability in writing. It focused in viewing the whole text in writing instead of writing separate sentences. The study provides a new technique in teaching writing. This approach is useful since it seeks ways to help students improve their writing and overcome the difficulties that encounter them while writing. Hence, this study has something common with the present study since they are both investigating these difficulties and try to help students develop their writing skills.

2.2.2 Arkawi, (2015) M.A in Academic writing. Academic writing: Writing challenges faced by Saudi students studying in New Zealand, Auckland University of Technology.

In this study the writer investigated the challenges of academic writing facing Saudi Arabian students at one New Zealand university. The methodology employed involved surveys and interviews with Saudi Arabian students. The survey was designed to collect participants demography information in addition to other information, which was used to frame question for the interviews. A total of 58 male and 7 Female participants were involved in the survey.

The study aims at identifying the challenges of academic writing facing Saudi Arabian students at one New Zealand university. The study also aims to investigate findings to understand Saudi students perception of academic writing challenges. From these aims, it is obvious that this study is similar to the present study in some ways and there are similarities as the two studies investigate the topic, "Difficulties

or challenges facing students in academic writing” however, the universities are in different countries.

2.2.3 AL Badi, (2015) Master Degree: Academic writing difficulties of ESL learner's, college of Applied sciences Sohar, the sultanate of Oman.

This study investigated the academic writing challenges of ESL learners. It aims at answering two questions which are: what are the academic writing difficulties encountered by ESL learners and what are the factors that may cause these difficulties? The subjects were 20 postgraduate students of four nationalities studying at a university in Australia. Two questionnaires were used to gather the data of the study. Questionnaire 1 contained closed questions. To support the questionnaire data collected from the first questionnaire. Two students were asked to complete a similar questionnaire and it mostly contained open ended questions. The results suggested that the students tend to have similar difficulties in academic writing regardless of their previous educational contexts. The most common one is related to Language use as well as coherence and cohesion. Others are related to writing own voice, finding relevant topics and sources, and the last and less problematic one is referencing and citations. Another conclusion which can be drawn is that a variety of factors may contribute to these difficulties. The main factors are the lack of previous experience and knowledge about the conventions of academic writing and the expectations of the institution they are studying at.

The writer of this study was writing about the difficulties that encountered those students in academic writing the topic which has a relationship to the topic of the present study. So the two main questions the writer asked or investigated are rather similar to present studies questions.

2.2.4 Saba, (2 December, 2013) Doctor of philosophy in rhetoric and writing: writing in a new environment: Saudi ESL students learning academic writing, Faculty of Virginia polytechnic institute and state university.

This qualitative case study thought to gain a deeper understanding of the obstacles that students from the kingdom of Saudi Arabia face when learning English in a writing course that implement critical thinking and writing process pedagogy. Ten participants six female and four male Saudi Arabian ESL students participated in the study I 1) how do sex differences affect Saudi students perception of their teachers and peer's authority? 2) How do these perceptions affect their development as writers and critical thinkers when learning in an intensive writing course at high intermediate level? The researcher documented data through three sources: classroom observation, interviews with ESL students and teachers and students' writing samples.

The aim of this sample was to give a rich and in deep description of the two students in whom the focus was primarily done (one female student and one male student). The main question guided this study I) how do sex differences affect Saudi students perception of their teachers and peers authority? 2) How those perceptions affect their development as writers and critical thinkers when learning in an intensive writing course at the high intermediate level. The study found that the Saudi Female students in the case study more reading accepted their teachers and peers as authorities than the male students did.

The findings also show that, for cultural reasons working in groups of mixed sex more problematic for female students than for male students. The study also showed that how students perceived their teachers and peers authority affected their development as writers.

Again this study is concerned with writing however there is a comparison in learning between females and males. The study shows that differences affect Saudi students perception of their teachers and peers authority. The study is relevant to the present study as for as academic writing is concerned.

2.2.5 Zuhor Bani Younes and Fatma Salmh AL Balawi, (2015) exploring the most common types of writing problems among English language and translation major sophomore female students at Tabuk university, ELC, Tabuk university.

The objective of this study is to explore the most common types of writing problems among English languages and translation major sophomore female students at Tabuk University. The study was conducted in the department of English and translation at Tabuk University. Forty students participated in this study: they were asked to give a sample of their own writing modules and to answer a questionnaire about what they think the reasons behind the types of writing problems they face when they write in English. The data revealed that there are different types of writing problems among English Language and translation major sophomore female students at Tabuk University. The findings of the study showed that most language problems which manifested themselves in the students writing were as follows:

1. Grammatical problems in the field of tenses, prepositions, syntactic, subject, verb agreement and use of articles.
 2. Punctuation problems as the level of the absence, the misuse or the addition of punctuation marks.
 - 3 spelling problems in the field of substitution, omission, addition, disordering, segmentation and unrecognizable words.
- The findings also revealed the reasons behind students writing weaknesses from their perspectives. The results also revealed and indicated that the students faced the following problems while writing:
- Grammatical problems.
 - Punctuation problems.
 - Spelling problems.

The findings also showed the reasons behind the students weaknesses in grammar, punctuation and spelling. These weaknesses or problems manifested themselves in the writing skill.

The following are the underlying reasons:

From the students perspectives.

- Teachers use Arabic to simplify rules and facilitate instructions.
- Teacher teach grammar in isolation from its authentic context.
- Teaching instructions focus on rote rules and memorization.
- Teachers teach grammar to master grammatical concepts under study.

Too much focus is given to the correctness and primary focus of grammar instructions is given to grammar form. Grammar practice is limited in writing by investigating amongst students and the findings showed that grammar, spelling and punctuation are the main problems. The study gave some solutions to these problems. The study closely related to the present study which is investigating the same problems in writing that encounter the students, such as grammar, spelling and punctuation.

2.2.6 Ibrahim Babikir Ahmed, (November, 2015) study for ph D: Analysis and Evaluation of English language academic writing. Processes of third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools, Sudan University of Science and Technology.

The objectives of the study is to evaluate academic writing processes of third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools. The study started to find out ways that help raise their awareness of academic writing techniques and how to use them effectively to improve their writing achievement. A target group of third year secondary students in the Sudanese secondary schools represented by 215 secondary schools at Omdurman locality for the school year 2013 – 2014. The descriptive and analytical method to analyze data collected from respondents is used. The findings of the study came as follows:

1. Third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools rarely use effective writing techniques with very little awareness of the strategies.
2. The study revealed no significant relationship between awareness of the academic writing processes and their role in writing process.

The study focuses on analysis and evaluation of English language academic writing. therefore, it has some relationship to the present study.

2.2.7 Mahjoub AL Dugul Jaily (August, 2016) study for ph D: Effects of Multimedia based materials on teaching writing at university level: A case study of Medical Sciences and technology (UMST), Khartoum.

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of multimedia based- materials on teaching writing at university level.

Both qualitative and qualitative methods were used to collect the data from a sample of university students who were studying writing skills as requirement. Two questionnaires were designed to use data for this study, the first one was responded to university English language teachers while the other was answered by the EFL students who were studying the writing as university requirement at the university of medical sciences and technology. An interview was also conducted with 10 EFL learners from various Sudanese universities. The data were analysed using a variation of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The findings showed that the multimedia based material assisted the students to develop their ability to write appropriate texts. They also showed that the multimedia based materials helped both teachers and students with the time and effort experienced in the writing tasks. The findings also displayed that university English language teachers did not effectively use multimedia based materials to teach English as a university requirement. It was, however, demonstrated that these teachers had significant roles to play in multimediated environment.

The study aims at finding the effects of multimedia based materials on teaching writing at university level. Hence, English is taught as a requirement. The methods used to collect the data for this study is similar to methods used in the present study. Both this study and the present study have an aim in common which is investigation about writing.

2.2.8 AL Sidig Abaker Mohamed Samhon, (2016) A study for doctor of philosophy: Analysis of Using Punctuation Errors in Writing Among Sudanese Secondary Schools Students. Nyala Locality.

The objectives of the study is to analyze punctuation errors made by third year students of secondary schools. The context of the problem is to analyze students errors in using punctuation marks in texts and sentences. Descriptive analytical method was adopted. The instruments for collecting data were test for students of Sudanese secondary schools, in third year. The test was administered to (80) students of Sudanese secondary schools, Nyala locality, Darfur. The study also used an English questionnaire of English. The questionnaire was given to (40) teachers in order to know their opinions about the errors students commit as they use punctuation marks. The validity and reliability of the test and questionnaire being used measured. Alpha correlation, coefficient was used for the test reliability 0.92 the test was statically analyzed using frequencies and, percentages. Four hypotheses were formulated and supported by four questions.

These hypotheses were positively confirmed the results of the investigation have revealed the following findings:

1. Lack of punctuation exercises provided by spine (6) textbook that student's secondary schools should practice to improve their writing.
2. There is weakness in student's punctuation writing due to lack of punctuation teaching provided by English teachers.

3. Punctuating specific topic will significantly improve students' performance in writing if are introduced into the English syllabus.

Punctuation is significant in writing as well as spelling and grammar. This study is related to the present study which is investigating difficulties that EFL students encounter in academic writing including punctuation.

2.3 Conclusion

These previous studies were from different countries and the students who were investigated are from different countries and nationalities as well they are males and females. Investigating difficulties and problems that encounter students in academic writing is the common factor that connects these studies. The methods of collecting the data is almost the same in all the studies. Nevertheless there are some little differences: As for the findings, all the studies found out that the students really encounter some difficulties when students really encounter some difficulties when they come to write their assignments, especially in grammar, spelling and punctuation. These studies are very useful because they investigated the same difficulties that the present study investigates. In conclusion, these studies are a completeness to the present study and added very useful information to it.

2.4 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter included two parts: the conceptual framework and the previous related studies. The conceptual framework contained many aspects about academic writing. First, the definition of academic writing, types of writing, purposes of writing and principles of writing were discussed. Following these various steps the process writing, mechanics of writing, a paragraph and an essay writing were added.

In the previous related studies, a number of studies were discussed. The aims, the methods of collecting the data were discussed and then how they are related to the present study was also explained the titles of the studies, the writers' names, the

dates and universities and institutions of where these studies were conducted were also documented. How these studies are related to the present study was included. Based on the findings of the above mentioned studies and their relevance to the present study, it is clear that university undergraduate students encounter many difficulties in academic writing. These difficulties were known, therefore, possible solutions to these problems could be found and the university under graduate students will be able to write good and correct assignments.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

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Research Methodology

3.0 Overview

This chapter aims to investigate difficulties that encounter university undergraduates in academic writing. The descriptive and analytical statistical method is used. The study examines the matters related to the methodology implemented in this study and procedures used in the collection of data gathered for this investigation. The chapter provides details of information about the adopted methodology and data collection tools.

The respondents of the questionnaire the subjects of the interview and the test were included.

The means of determining the validity and reliability of the data were also added.

3.1 The Study Methodology

A mixed methodology approach including descriptive and analytical statistical methods were adopted. A questionnaire, and interview and a writing test were designed. These research tools were used to address the research question and hypotheses.

3.2 Population

The population of the research were third year law students at faculty of Law at AL Neelain university teachers of English from different universities and students from faculty of Arts at AL Neelain university.

3.3 Samples

Hundred students (Males and females) were selected from the faculty of law at AL Neelain University to answer the questionnaire and 10 English language teachers were selected for the interview to give their opinions about difficulties facing undergraduates students as well as possible solutions to these problems. The

students answered the questionnaire and the teacher answered the interview questions as well. Twenty-five students (males and females) did the writing test.

3.4 The Tools

This study adopts a descriptive method as it uses a questionnaire to answer the questions of the research and teachers of English Language to be interviewed.

The data for this study were collected by three tools, a questionnaire, a writing test and an interview.

The questionnaire was designed to investigate the difficulties that encounter undergraduate students in academic writing when they write their assignments. The interview for teachers is used in this study to investigate teacher's opinions about these difficulties and the reasons behind them. The writing test was used to show what types of errors students make in academic writing. The purpose of this tool is to know these difficulties and find out possible solutions to them.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

A series of items were designed to collect statistical information about the study. The questionnaire (appendix 1) of this study was designed by the researcher to find out the major difficulties that encounter students in academic writing. It includes a hundred students (male and females).

3.4.2 The Teachers Interview

The purpose behind the teachers' interview (appendix 2) was to find out the possible reasons behind these difficulties and to evaluate the syllabus at the universities as well as to find solutions to these difficulties. Teachers from different universities were selected and interviewed by the researcher. They were asked about their opinions about the reasons of students weak performance in academic writing. They were also asked about what possible solutions could be suggested to solve these obstacles. All teachers answered the questions and gave their opinions

about the questions showing difficulties encountering students in academic writing and suggested some possible solutions to problems students encounter.

3.4.3 The Writing Test

The purpose of this test (appendix 3) was to find out difficulties that encounter undergraduate students in academic writing and what common types of mistakes they usually commit.

On the 15th of January, 2018, the researcher designed an evaluation writing test for 25 students at faculty of Arts at AL Neelain university in Khartoum, Sudan. They were asked to write four paragraphs-essay about the advantages and the disadvantages of the Whats APP. The students were the third level in the faculty. All of them answered the questions.

3.4.4 Procedure

Fist, the reliability of the questionnaire was achieved by conducting a pilot study 100 of students were given the questionnaire. After a slight modification, a total number of 100 of papers were distributed among students at Al Neelain University, faculty of Law. Sixty eight students answered the questionnaire papers. The data were collected and all the questionnaires were reported for validity. Eventually the information was analysed. The findings were discussed and supported by literature.

3.5 Reliability and validity of the questionnaire

3.5.1 Reliability

It is worthy to note that Lack of reliability may arise from divergences between observers or instruments of measurements or instability of the attribute being measured. The reliability of the questionnaire is usually carried out using a pilot test. The objective of conducting the reliability in the questionnaire study is to reflect the consistency of the proposed test to be determined. The Alfa reliability

was conducted for the questionnaire at the significance of $P=0.000 < 0.05$ giving a reliability = 0.83

		Reliability
Participants	68	0.83
Items of the questionnaire	27	

3.5.2 Validity

Validity can be defined as the extent to which any measuring instrument measures it what is intended to measure. It is about interpretation of data arising from a specific procedure. It is not a test. Thus, validity is not about measuring instrument in relation to the purpose which it is being used.

In the present study, content validity was used for measuring the validity of the likert scale. Thus the judgment that had been provided by the main supervisor, and teachers studying for higher degree as real participants were considered as a means for measuring the validity of the questionnaire which is 0.91 for this study reliability coefficient.

Reliability coefficient		Reliability	Validity
Participants	68	0.83	0.91
Items of the questionnaire	27		

The following table shows the jury of the questionnaire who validated the questionnaire. They accepted that the items were appropriate to measure the purpose of the study, however they made some remarks about some statements. The researcher responded to their comments and accordingly made some modifications.

Name	Qualification	Status	Place Of Work
Elsir Taj Elsir	Master degree	lecturer	Ahfad University for women
Abbasher AL Haj Abdo AL seed	Ph D	lecturer	Ahfad University for women
Abozar Yousuf Al Awad	Ph D	lecturer	Ahfad University for women

3.5.3 Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, the researcher described the methodology tools of the study and the procedures used for conducting this research.

A full description of the population and the selected sample of the study was given. The research tools which were the questionnaire, the writing test and the teachers' interview were also described. Eventually, the validity and reliability of the tools were described.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Analysis, Results and Discussion

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Analysis, Results and Discussion

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents data analysis results and discussion of the research findings of the study under the title: "Investigating Difficulties that Encounter Undergraduate Students in Academic Writing". Based on the hypotheses and objectives, which were stated in chapter one. Descriptive statistics in form of frequencies and percentages have been used to present the results and to test the three hypotheses of the study. Reliability were at P 0.05. A discussion follows the presentation of the findings based on each hypothesis and a conclusion is made indicating whether a hypothesis is accepted or rejected. Finally, the researcher presents the results that will help determine if the strategies used to build better writing skills were effective to help students to achieve high performance in writing academically.

4.1 Results

The questionnaire was the tool used to provide data of the study. The aim of this questionnaire is to find out the views and opinions of the participants about the difficulties that encounter university undergraduate students in academic writing.

Moreover, it is also used to find out reasons and causes behind the difficulties and how to solve them. The total sample of the questionnaire was 68 participants all of them are undergraduate students at the university. The questionnaire is divided in three dimensions.

They are (2) difficulties that face students in academic writing, (1) importance of academic writing for university students and, (3) possible solutions.

Likert 5- point scale was used to show responses of the participants. In scoring participants answers, five points were given strongly agree (SA); four points were

given to agree (A) three points to neutral (n), two point to disagree (D) and one point to strongly disagree (SD). The weight of the responses is shown in the table (4-1) below.

Table (4-1): The Weight of Responses on Likert Scale

Category	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
symbol	SA	A	N	D	SD
weight	5	4	3	2	1

Table (4-2): Students Responses to Difficulties that Face Them in Academic Writing

Items	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. Academic writing is different from other types of writing.	13	19.1	32	47.1	10	14.7	12	17.6	1	1.5
2. Some teachers are not sufficiently aware of strategies of academic writing.	17	25.0	17	25.0	15	22.1	12	17.6	7	10.3
3. The difference between spoken and written language is one of the reasons behind spelling mistakes	22	32.4	26	38.2	6	8.8	9	13.2	5	7.4
4. The differences between Arabic and English punctuation are among the main reasons behind the students' writing mistakes	11	16.2	28	41.1	11	16.2	11	16.2	7	10.3
5. Most students know little about academic writing techniques.	20	29.5	29	42.6	6	8.8	6	8.8	7	10.3
6. Phonological differences between Arabic and English are among the main reasons behind	20	29.5	23	33.8	7	10.3	8	11.7	10	14.7

the students' spelling errors.										
7. do you feel bored when you do writing exercises	17	25.0	28	41.2	7	10.3	12	17.6	4	5.9
8. Most students are not interested in academic writing in my University?	15	22.1	33	48.5	6	8.8	5	7.4	9	13.2
9. Academic writing is a difficult skill.	15	22.1	12	17.6	9	13.2	22	32.4	10	14.7
10. you often read outside the classroom	13	19.1	14	20.6	9	13.2	14	20.6	18	26.5
11. Students do little practice in academic writing	15	22.1	28	41.2	13	19.1	7	10.3	5	7.3
12. Unclear handwriting is one of the problems in academic writing in universities	15	22.1	26	38.2	11	16.2	9	13.2	7	10.3
13. In your university the learning environment is not helpful	21	31.0	29	42.6	2	2.9	10	14.7	6	8.8
14. Writing requires the reader to understand what has been written	24	35.3	24	35.3	9	13.2	6	8.8	5	7.4
15. Writing materials are not familiar to the students' surroundings and abilities	14	20.6	23	33.8	8	11.7	15	22.1	8	11.8
16. spelling is a major obstacle for you to overcome	20	29.5	29	42.6	9	13.2	2	2.9	8	11.8

Table (4-2) shows the frequencies and percentages of the participants toward the difficulties that face students in academic writing.

When participants were asked to answer item number one, 13 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (19.1%), 32 responded (agree) which represents (47.1%), 10 responded (neutral) which represents (14.7%), 12 responded (disagree) which represents (17.6%) whereas only 1 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (1.5%).

the students' spelling errors.										
7. do you feel bored when you do writing exercises	17	25.0	28	41.2	7	10.3	12	17.6	4	5.9
8. Most students are not interested in academic writing in my University?	15	22.1	33	48.5	6	8.8	5	7.4	9	13.2
9. Academic writing is a difficult skill.	15	22.1	12	17.6	9	13.2	22	32.4	10	14.7
10. you often read outside the classroom	13	19.1	14	20.6	9	13.2	14	20.6	18	26.5
11. Students do little practice in academic writing	15	22.1	28	41.2	13	19.1	7	10.3	5	7.3
12. Unclear handwriting is one of the problems in academic writing in universities	15	22.1	26	38.2	11	16.2	9	13.2	7	10.3
13. In your university the learning environment is not helpful	21	31.0	29	42.6	2	2.9	10	14.7	6	8.8
14. Writing requires the reader to understand what has been written	24	35.3	24	35.3	9	13.2	6	8.8	5	7.4
15. Writing materials are not familiar to the students' surroundings and abilities	14	20.6	23	33.8	8	11.7	15	22.1	8	11.8
16. spelling is a major obstacle for you to overcome	20	29.5	29	42.6	9	13.2	2	2.9	8	11.8

Table (4-2) shows the frequencies and percentages of the participants toward the difficulties that face students in academic writing.

When participants were asked to answer item number one, 13 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (19.1%), 32 responded (agree) which represents (47.1%), 10 responded (neutral) which represents (14.7%), 12 responded (disagree) which represents (17.6%) whereas only 1 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (1.5%).

When participants were asked to answer item number two, 17 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (25.0%), 17 responded (agree) which represents (25.0%), 15 responded (neutral) which represents (22.1%), 12 responded (disagree) which represents (17.6%) and 7 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (10.3%).

When participants were asked to answer item number three, 22 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (32.4%), 26 responded (agree) which represents (38.2%), 6 responded (neutral) which represents (8.8%), 9 responded (disagree) which represents (13.2%) and 5 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (7.4%)

When participants were asked to answer item number four, 11 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (16.2%), 28 responded (agree) which represents (41.1%), 11 responded (neutral) which represents (16.2%), 11 responded (disagree) which represents (16.2%) and 7 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (10.3%)

When participants were asked to answer item number five, 20 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (29.5%), 29 responded (agree) which represents (42.6%), 6 responded (neutral) which represents (8.8%), 6 responded (disagree) which represents (8.8%) and 7 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (10.3%).

When participants were asked to answer item number six, 20 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (29.5%), 23 responded (agree) which represents (33.8%), 7 responded (neutral) which represents (10.3%), 8 responded (disagree) which represents (11.7%) and 10 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (14.7%)

When participants were asked to answer item number seven, 17 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (25.0%), 28 responded (agree) which represents (41.2%), 7 responded (neutral) which represents (10.3%),

12 Responded (disagree) which represents (1.7.6%) and 4 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (5.9 %).

When participants were asked to answer item number eight, 15 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (22.1%), 33 responded (agree) which represents (48.5%), 6 responded (neutral) which represents (8.8%), 5 responded (disagree) which represents (7.4 %) and 9 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (13.2 %).

When participants were asked to answer item number nine, 15 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (22.1%), 12 responded (agree) which represents (17.6%), 9 responded (neutral) which-represents (13.2%), 22 responded (disagree) which represents (32.4%) and, 10 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (14.7%).

When participants were asked to answer item number ten, 13 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (19.1%), 14 responded (agree) which represents (20.6%), 9 responded (neutral) which represents, (13.2%), 14 responded (disagree) which represents (20.6%) and 18 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (26.5%).

When participants were asked to answer item number eleven, 15 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (22.1%), 28 responded (agree) which represents (41.2%), 13 responded (neutral) which represents (19.1%), 7 responded (disagree) which represents (10.3%) and 5 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (7.3%).

When participants were asked to answer item number twelve, 15 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (22.1%), 26 responded (agree) which represents (38.2%), 11 responded (neutral) which represents (16.2%), 9 responded (disagree) which represents (13.2%) and 7 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (10.3%).

When participants were asked to answer item number thirteen, 21 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (31.0%), 29 responded (agree) which represents (42.6%), 2 responded (neutral) which represents (2.9%), 10 responded (disagree) which represents (14.7 %) and ,6 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (8.8%).

When participants were asked to answer item number fourteen, 24 out of 68 participants responded, (strongly agree) which represents (35.3%), 24 responded (agree) which represents (35.3%), 9 responded (neutral) which represents (13.2%), 6 responded (disagree) which represents (8.8%) and 5 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (7.4%).

When participants were asked to answer item number fifteen, 14 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (20.6%), 23 responded (agree) which represents (33.8%), 8 responded (neutral) which represents (11.7%), 15 responded (disagree) which represents (22.1%) and 8 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (11.8 %).

When participants were asked to answer item number sixteen, 20 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (29,5%), 29 responded (agree) which represents (42.6%), 9 responded (neutral) which represents (13.2%), 2 responded (disagree) which represents (2.9%) and 8 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (11.8%).

Table (4-3) Detailed Participants' Opinions towards Difficulties in Writing

Question	Agree	%	Neutral	%	Disagree	%	Total	%
2	45	66.2	10	14.7	13	19.1	68	100
6	34	50.0	15	22.1	19	27.9	68	100
7	48	70.6	6	8.8	14	20.6	68	100
8	39	57.4	11	16.2	18	26.4	68	100
9	49	72.1	6	8.8	13	19.1	68	100
10	43	63.2	7	10.3	18	26.4	68	100
12	45	66.2	7	10.3	16	23.5	68	100
16	48	70.6	6	8.8	14	20.6	68	100
17	27	39.7	9	13.2	32	47.1	68	100
19	27	39.7	9	13.2	32	47.1	68	100
20	43	63.2	13	19.1	12	17.6	68	100
21	41	60.3	11	16.2	16	23.5	68	100
22	50	73.5	2	2.9	16	23.5	68	100
23	48	70.6	9	13.2	11	16.2	68	100
25	37	54.4	8	11.8	23	33.8	68	100
26	49	72.1	9	13.2	10	14.7	68	100

Table (4-3) shows detailed participants opinions towards difficulties in writing. It is found that 45 out of 68 participants, who represent 66.2%, agreed that academic writing is different from other types of writing while 10 who represent 14.7% are neutral and 13 who represent 19.1% disagreed. Moreover, 34 participants who represent 50.0% agreed that teachers are not sufficiently aware of academic writing strategies whereas 15 who represent 22.1% are neutral and 19 who represent 27.9% disagreed. Furthermore, 48 out of 68 participants, who represent 70.6%, agreed that the difference between spoken and written language is a great reason of spelling mistakes while 6 who represent 8.8% are neutral and 14 who represent 20.6% disagreed. In addition, 39 participants who represent 57.9 % agreed that the

difference in punctuation between Arabic and is one among the main reasons in academic writing problems while 11 who represent 16.2% are neutral and 18 who represent 26.4% disagreed. Analysis of data shows that 49 out of 68 participants who represent 72.1% know little about academic writing while 6 who represent 8.8% are neutral whereas 13 who represent 19.1% disagreed. Phonological differences between Arabic and English is a hindrance as 43 out of 68 participants who represent 63.2% agreed, 7 who represent 10.3% are neutral and 18 who represent 26.4% disagreed. The analysis Shows that 45 out of 68 participants who represent 66.2% agreed that students often feel bored when they do writing exercises while 7 who represent 10.3% are neutral and 16 who represent 23.5 % disagreed. The study reveals that students are not interested in academic writing as 48 out of 68 who represent 70.6% agreed, 6 who represent 8.8% are neutral while 14 who represent 20.6% disagreed. It is found that 27 out of 68 participants who represent 39.7% say that academic writing is a difficult skill while 9 who represent 13.2% are neutral and 32 who represent 47.1% disagreed. For reading outside the classroom, 27 out of 68 that represent 39.7% say that academic writing is a difficult skill while 9 who represent 13.2% are neutral and 32 who represent 47.1% disagreed. Practicing academic writing is little and poor as 43 out of 68 participants who represent 63.2% agreed, 13 who represent 19.1% are neutral and 12 who represent 17.6% disagreed. Unclear or bad handwriting is one of the problems as 41 out of 68 participants who represent 60.3% agreed while 11 who represent 16.2% are neutral and 16 who represent 23.5% disagreed. The study shows that 50 out of 68 participants who represent 73.5% agreed that learning environment is not helpful, 2 who represent 2.9% are neutral and 16 who represent 23.5% disagreed. The statement twenty-three of the questionnaire says that readers should understand what they read. It is found that 48 out of 68 participants who represent 70.6% agreed while 9 who represent 13.2% are neutral and 11 who represent 16.2% disagreed. Analysis shows that 37 out of 68 participants who represent 54.4% agreed that writing materials are not familiar to the students' surroundings and abilities while 8 who represent 11.8% are neutral and 23 who

represent 33.8% disagreed. Finally, 49 out of 68 participants who represent 72.1% agreed that spelling is an obstacle for most students while 9 who represent 13.2% are neutral and 10 who represent 14.7% disagreed.

Table (4-4): Frequency Distribution of the First Dimension

Options	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
Number of Participants Answers	272	411	128	160	117	1088
Percentage	25.0%	37.8%	11.7%	14.7%	10.8%	100%

From the results of this dimension shown in table (4-2), (4-3) and (4-4) it is found that 25.0% strongly agreed, 37.8% agreed, 11.7% are neutral, 14.7% disagreed and 10.8% strongly disagreed that students face difficulties when they write academically.

Table (4-5) The T-test results of the First Dimension's Item

Statements of the First Dimension of the Questionnaire	No.	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Academic writing is different from other types of writing.	68	3.6	1.1
2. Some teachers are not sufficiently aware of strategies of academic writing.	68	3.4	1.3
3. The difference between spoken and written language is one of the reasons behind spelling mistakes	68	3.8	1.3
4. The differences between Arabic and English punctuation are among the main reasons behind the students' writing mistakes.	68	3.4	1.2
5. Most students know little about academic writing techniques.	68	3.6	1.4
6. Phonological differences between Arabic and English are among the main reasons behind the students' spelling errors.	68	3.5	1.4
7. Students often feel bored when they do writing exercises.	68	3.7	1.1

8. Most students are not interested in academic writing.	68	3.6	1.3
9. Academic writing is a difficult skill.	68	3.0	1.3
10. Students often read out the classroom.	68	3.0	1.3
11. Students do little in academic writing.	68	3.6	1.2
12. Unclear handwriting is one of the problems in academic writing in universities.	68	3.5	1.3
13. In most universities, the learning environment is not helpful.	68	3.7	1.3
14. Writing requires the reader to understand what has been written.	68	3.8	1.2
15. Writing materials are not familiar to the students' surroundings and abilities.	68	3.3	1.3
16. Spelling is a major obstacle for most students to overcome.	68	3.8	1.3

Table (4-5) shows the T-test results of the first dimension items of the questionnaire. According to the tables (4-2), (4-3), (4-4) and (4-5) the participants' opinions towards difficulties that face undergraduate students in academic writing tend to be agreeing.

For example, in answering item sixteen of the first dimension, 72.1 % agreed that spelling is an obstacle for most students to overcome, which is a high percentage. The mean of all the items is higher than 3 (neutral value). All standard deviations' results indicated that there was no difference in the participants' responses and more than 60% of them agreed with the 16 items.

Table (4-6) First Dimension Statements Arithmetic Mean and Answers

Statements of the First Dimension of the Questionnaire	Arith. mean	Answer
1. Academic writing is different from other types of writing.	4	A
2. Some teachers are not sufficiently aware of strategies of academic writing.	4	A
3. The difference between spoken and written language is one of the reasons behind spelling mistakes	4	A
4. The differences between Arabic and English punctuation are among the main reasons behind the students' writing mistakes	4	A
5. Most students know little about academic writing techniques.	4	A
6. Phonological differences between Arabic and English are among the main reasons behind the Students' spelling errors.	4	A
7. Students often feel bored when they do writing exercises.	4	A
8. Most students are not interested in academic writing.	2	A
9. Academic writing is a difficult skill.	2	D
10. Students often read out the classroom.	1	SD
11. Students do little in academic writing.	4	A
12. Unclear handwriting is one of the problems in academic writing in universities.	4	A
13. In most universities, the learning environment is in helpful.	4	A
14. Writing requires the reader to under-stand what has been written.	4	A
15. Writing materials are not fem to the, students' surroundings and abilities.	4	A
16. Spelling is a major obstacle for most students to overcome.	4	A

Table (4-6) shows the arithmetic mean and answers of the statements of the first dimension of the questionnaire

(1) The arithmetic mean of the first item of the first dimension is 4, which means that most of the participants agree to the second statement of the questionnaire.

- (2) The arithmetic mean of the second item of the first dimension is 4, which means that most of the participants agree to the sixth statement of the questionnaire.
- (3) The arithmetic mean of the third item of the first dimension is 4, which means that most of the participants agree to the seventh statement of the questionnaire.
- (4) The arithmetic mean of the fourth item of the first dimension is 4, which means that most of the participants agree to the eighth statement of the questionnaire.
- (5) The arithmetic mean of the fifth item of the first dimension is 4, which means that most of the participants agree to the ninth statement of the questionnaire.
- (6) The arithmetic mean of the sixth item of the first dimension is 4, which means that most of the participants agree to the tenth statement of the questionnaire.
- (7) The arithmetic mean of the seventh item of the first dimension is 4, which means that most of the participants agree to the twelfth statement of the questionnaire.
- (8) The arithmetic mean of the eighth item of the first dimension is 4, (which means that most of the participants agree to the sixteenth statement of the questionnaire.
- (9) The arithmetic mean of the ninth item of the first dimension is 2, which means that most of the participants disagree to the seventeenth statement of the questionnaire.
- (10) The arithmetic mean of the tenth item of the first dimension is 1, which means that most of the participants strongly disagree to the nineteenth statement of the questionnaire.
- (11) The arithmetic mean of the eleventh item of the first dimension is 4, which means that most of the participants agree to the twentieth statement of the questionnaire.

(12) The arithmetic mean of the twelfth item of the first dimension is 4, which means that most of the participants agree to the twenty-first statement of the questionnaire.

(13) The arithmetic mean of the thirteenth item of the first dimension is 4, which means that most of the participants agree to the twenty-second statement of the questionnaire.

(14) The arithmetic mean of the fourteenth item of the first dimension is 4, which means that most of the participants agree to the twenty-third statement of the questionnaire.

(15) The arithmetic mean of the fifteenth item of the first dimension is 4, which means that - most of the participants agree to the twenty-fifth statement of the questionnaire.

(16) The arithmetic mean of the sixteenth item of the first dimension is 4, which means that most of the participants agree to the twenty-sixth statement of the questionnaire.

Table (4-7) Chi-square Test for the Statements of the First Dimension

Statements of the First Dimension of the Questionnaire	df	Chi sq. values	Sig.
1. Academic writing is different from other types of writing.	4	37.735	0.00
2. Some teachers W are sufficiently aware of strategies of academic writing.		5.235	0.20
3. The difference between spoken and written language is one of the reasons behind spelling mistakes	4	27.735	0.00
4. The differences between Arabic and English punctuation are among the main reasons behind the students' writing mistakes.	4	22.588	0.00
5. Most students know little about academic writing	4	20.382	0.00

techniques.			
6. Phonological differences between Arabic and English are among the main reasons behind the students' spelling errors.	4	14.353	0.06
7. do you feel bored when you do writing exercises.	4	29.059	0.00
8. Most students are not interested in academic writing.	4	39.059	0.00
9. Academic writing is a difficult skill.	4	7.735	0.10
10. Students often read out the classroom.	4	3.029	0.50
11. Students do little in academic writing.	4	24.059	0.00
12. Unclear handwriting is on the problems in academic writing in universities.	4	16.706	0.00
13. In your universities, the learning environment is not helpful.	4	36.559	0.00
14. Writing requires the reader to understand what has been written.	4	27.147	0.00
15. Writing materials are not familiar to the students surroundings and abilities.	4	11.265	0.20
16. Spelling is a major obstacle for you to overcome.	4	34.206	0.00

1 - Chi square value calculated for the first item of the first dimension is (37.735) with df (4), and sig. (0.00) < (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the second statement of the questionnaire.

2 - Chi square value calculated for the second item of the first dimension is (5.235) with df (4), and sig. (0.20) > (0.05) in favour of disagreeing participants to the sixth statement of the questionnaire.

3 - Chi square value calculated for the third item of the first dimension is (27.735) with df (4), and sig. (0.00) < (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the seventh statement of the questionnaire.

- 4 - Chi square value calculated for the fourth item of the first dimension is (22.588) with df (4), and sig. (0.00) < (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the eighth statement of the questionnaire.
- 5 - Chi square value calculated for the fifth item of the first dimension is (20.382) with df (4), and Sig. (0.00) < (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the ninth statement of the questionnaire.
- 6 - Chi square value calculated for the sixth item of the first dimension is (14.353) with df (4), and sig. (0.06) > (0.05) in favour of disagreeing participants to the tenth statement of the questionnaire.
- 7- Chi square value calculated for the seventh item of the first dimension is (29.059) with df (4), and sig. (0.00) < (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the twelfth statement of the questionnaire.
- 8 - Chi square value calculated for the eighth item of the first dimension is (39.059) with (if (4), and sig. (0.00) > (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the sixteenth statement of the questionnaire.
- 9 - Chi square value calculated for the ninth item of the first dimension is (7.735) with df (4), and sig. (0.10) > (0.05) in favour of disagreeing participants to the seventeenth statement of the questionnaire.
- 10 - Chi square value calculated for the tenth item of the first dimension is (3.029) with df (4), and sig. (0.50) > (0.05) in favour of disagreeing participants to the nineteenth statement of the questionnaire.
- 11 - Chi square value calculated for the eleventh item of the first dimension is (24.059) with df (4), and sig. (0.00) < (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the twenties statement of the questionnaire.
- 12 - Chi square value calculated for the twelfth item of the first dimension is (16.706) with df (4), and sig. (0.06) > (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the twenty-first statement of the questionnaire.

13 - Chi square value calculated for the thirteenth item of the first dimension is (36.559) with fd (4), and Sig. (0.00) < (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the twenty-second statement of the questionnaire.

14 - Chi square value calculated for the fourteenth item of the first dimension is (27.147) with df (4), and Sig. (0.00) < (0.05) in favour of disagreeing participants to the twenty-third statement of the questionnaire.

15 - Chi square value calculated for the fifteenth item of the first dimension is (11.265) with df (4), and Sig. (0.20) > (0.05) in favour of disagreeing participants to the twenty-fifth statement of the questionnaire.

16 - Chi square value calculated for the sixteenth item of the first dimension is (34.206) with (if (4), and sig. (0.00) < (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the twenty-sixth statement of the questionnaire.

The results in table (4-6) do not mean that all participants of the study sample agree with the statement of the first dimension of the questionnaire, since there are participants neutral or do not agree with it. However, test for the presence of statistically significant differences between the numbers of agreeing, neutral and disagreeing to the result above required the use of chi square test for significant differences between the answers on each of the statements related to the first dimension. Table (4-7) can explain the results.

According to the results in table (4-7), the opinions of the participants tend to agree to the statements. To assure 'this, there are 16 statements in the questionnaire about the first dimension and the number of participants is 68. That means there are 1088 answers enhance or refute the statements of the first dimension of the questionnaire summarized in Table (4-8) and Figure (4-1).

Table (4-8): Frequency Distribution of the First Dimension's Statements

Options	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
Number of Participants' Answers	272	411	128	160	117	1088
Percentage	25.0%	37.8%	11.7%	14.7%	10.8%	100%

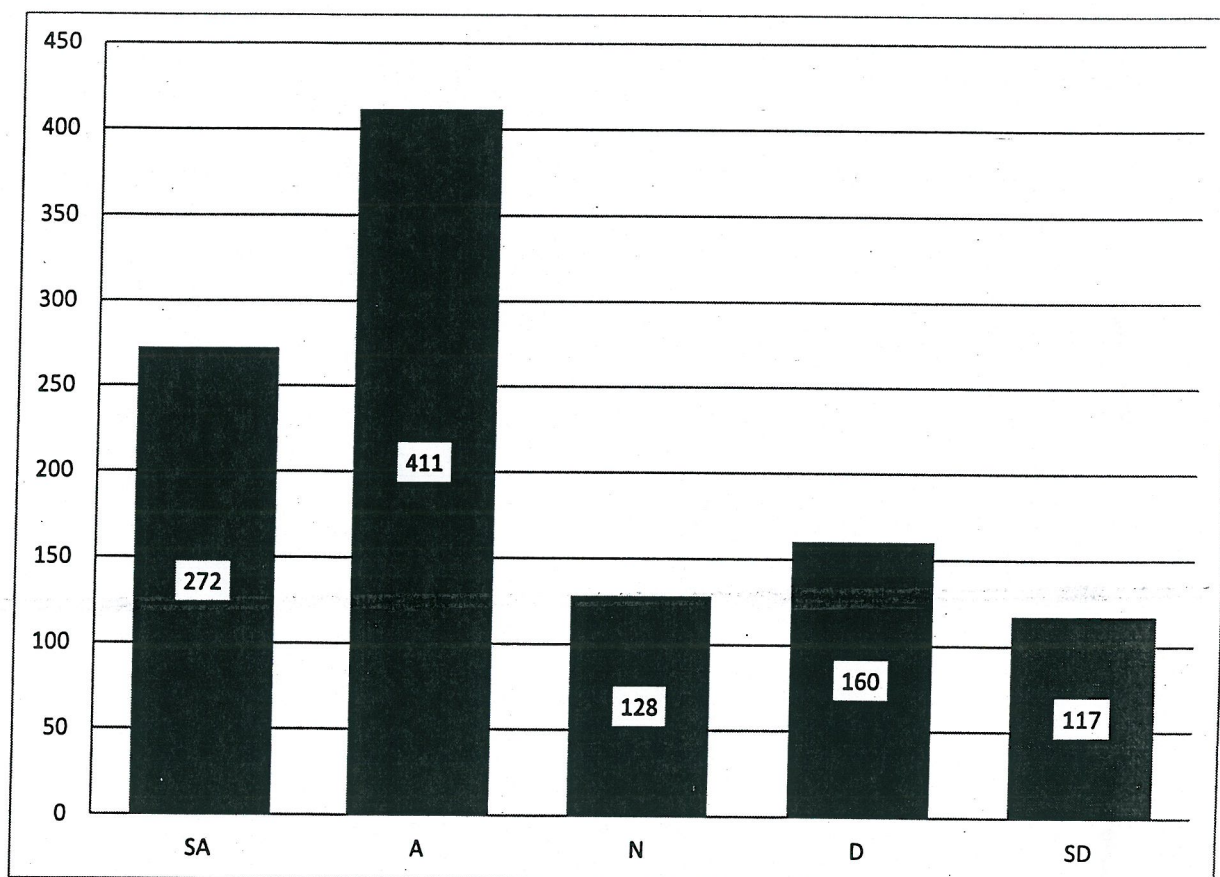


Figure (4-1) Frequency distribution of the First Dimension

According to Tables (4-2), (4-3), (4-4), (4-5), (4-6), (4-7), (4-8) and Figure (4-1), It is found that more than 60% of the study participant tend to agree to the statements of the first dimension of the questionnaire; This indicates that most of the, participants agree that university undergraduate students encounter different problems when they practice academic writing. In fact, 683 (62.8%) of the participants' answers agreed to the statements that say undergraduate students face difficulties in academic writing.

Table (4-9) Responses to Importance of Academic Writing for University Students

Items	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
(1) Academic writing is essential for students at the universities.	15	22.1	38	55.9	4	5.9	2	2.9	9	13.2
(2) Grammar practice is not sufficient in the English language courses of the students.	12	17.6	28	41.2	3	4.4	11	16.2	14	20.6
(3) The syllabuses of English at Sudanese universities do not sufficiently provide practice in academic writing.	19	27.9	22	32.4	5	7.4	13	19.1	9	13.2
(4) The syllabus at university does not cope sufficiently with academic writing.	22	32.4	19	27.9	13	19.1	8	11.8	6	8.8
(5) Grammar is not taught in context.	15	22.1	26	38.2	7	10.2	15	22.1	5	7.4
(6) Writing is a basic skill that needs to be mastered by all English language major students.	24	35.2	32	47.1	4	5.9	4	5.9	4	5.9

Table (4-9) shows the frequencies and percentages of the participants toward the importance of academic writing for university undergraduate students.

Table (4-9) Responses to Importance of Academic Writing for University Students

Items	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
(1) Academic writing is essential for students at the universities.	15	22.1	38	55.9	4	5.9	2	2.9	9	13.2
(2) Grammar practice is not sufficient in the English language courses of the students.	12	17.6	28	41.2	3	4.4	11	16.2	14	20.6
(3) The syllabuses of English at Sudanese universities do not sufficiently provide practice in academic writing.	19	27.9	22	32.4	5	7.4	13	19.1	9	13.2
(4) The syllabus at university does not cope sufficiently with academic writing.	22	32.4	19	27.9	13	19.1	8	11.8	6	8.8
(5) Grammar is not taught in context.	15	22.1	26	38.2	7	10.2	15	22.1	5	7.4
(6) Writing is a basic skill that needs to be mastered by all English language major students.	24	35.2	32	47.1	4	5.9	4	5.9	4	5.9

Table (4-9) shows the frequencies and percentages of the participants toward the importance of academic writing for university undergraduate students.

When participants were asked to answer item number one, 15 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (22.1%), 38 responded (agree) which represents (55.9%), 4 responded (neutral) which represents (5.9%), 2 responded (disagree) which represents (2.9%) whereas 9 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (13.2%).

When participants were asked to answer, item number two, 12 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which (represents (17.6%), 28 responded (agree) which represents (41.2%), 3 responded (neutral) which represents (4.4%), 11 responded (disagree) which represents. (16.2%) and 14 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (20.6%).

When participants were asked to answer item number three, 19 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (27.9%), 22 responded (agree) which represents (32.4%), 5 responded (neutral) which represents, (7.4%), 13 responded (disagree) which represents (19.1%) and 9 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (13.2%)

When participants were asked to answer item number four, 22 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (32.4%), 19 responded (agree) which represents (27.9%), 13 responded (neutral) which represents (19.1%), 8 responded (disagree) which represents (11.8%) and 6 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (8.8%)

When participants were asked to answer item number five, 15 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (22.1%), 26 responded (agree) which represents (38.2 0/0), 7 responded (neutral) which represents (10.2%), 15 responded (disagree) which represents (22.1%) and 5 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (7.4 %)

When participants were asked to answer item number six, 24 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (35.2%), 32 responded (agree) which represents (47.1%), 4 responded (neutral) which represents (5.9%), 4

responded (disagree) which represents (5.9 %) and 4 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (5.9%)

Table (4-10) Participants' Opinions towards Importance of Academic Writing

Question	Agree	%	Neutral	%	Disagree	%	Total	%
1	53	77.9	4	5.9	11	16.2	68	100
11	40	58.8	3	4.4	25	36.8	68	100
13	41	60.3	5	7.4	22	32.3	68	100
14	41	60.3	13	19.1	14	20.6	68	100
15	41	60.3	7	10.3	20	29.4	68	100
24	56	82.3	4	5.9	8	11.8	68	100

Table (4-10) shows detailed participants opinions 'towards difficulties in writing, It is found that 53 out of 68 participants who represent 77.9%, agreed that academic writing is essential for university students while 4 who represent 5.9 % are neutral and 11 who represent 16.2% disagreed. Moreover, 40 participants who represent 58.8% agreed that grammar practice is not sufficient whereas 3 who represent 4.4% are neutral and 25 who represent 36.8% disagreed. Furthermore, 41 out of 68 participants, who represent 60.3%, agreed that the syllabus does not sufficiently provide practice in academic writing while 5 who represent 7.4% are neutral and 22 who represent 32.3% disagreed. In addition, 41 participants who represent 60.3% agreed that the syllabus in universities does not cope with academic writing While 13 who represent 19.1% are neutral and 14 who represent 20.6% disagreed. Analysis of data shows that 41 out of 68 participants who represent 60.3% agreed that grammar is not taught in context while 7 who represent 10.3% are neutral whereas 20 who represent 29.4% disagreed. Finally, 56 out of 68 participants who represent 82.3% agreed that English language major students do not master academic writing skills while 4 who represent 5.9% are neutral and 8 who represent 11.8% disagreed.

Table (4-11): Frequency Distribution of the Second Dimension

Options	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
Number of Participants Answers	107	165	36	53	47	408
Percentage	26.3%	40.4%	8.8%	13.0%	11.5%	100%

From the results of this dimension shown in tables (4-9), (4-10) and (4-11), it is found that 26.3% strongly agreed, 40.4% agreed, 8.8% are neutral, 13.0% disagreed and 11.5% strongly disagreed that academic writing is important for university undergraduate students.

Table (4-12) T-test results of the Second Dimension's Item

Statements of the First Dimension of the Questionnaire	No.	Mean	Std. Deviation
(1) Academic writing is essential for students at the universities.	68	4.0	1.3
(2) Grammar practice is not sufficient in the English language courses of the students.	68	3.2	1.4
(3) The syllabuses of English at Sudanese universities do not sufficiently provide practice in academic writing.	68	3.5	1.3
(4) The syllabus at university does not cope sufficiently with academic writing.	68	4.0	1.3
(5) Grammar is not taught in context.	68	3.5	1.3
(6) Writing is a basic skill that needs to be mastered by all English language major students	68	4.0	1.1

Table (4-12) shows the T-test results of the second dimension items of the questionnaire. According to the tables (4-8, 4-9 and 4-10) the participants' opinions towards the importance of academic writing for university undergraduate students tend to be agreeing.

(3) The arithmetic mean of the third item of the second dimension is 4, which means that most of the participants agree to the thirteenth statement of the questionnaire.

(4) The arithmetic mean of the fourth item of the second dimension is 5, which means that most of the participants strongly agree to the fourteenth statement of the questionnaire.

(5) The arithmetic mean of the fifth item of the second dimension is 4, which means that most of the participants agree to the fifteenth statement of the questionnaire.

(6) The arithmetic mean of the sixth item of the second dimension is 4, which means that most of the participants agree to the twenty-fourth statement of the questionnaire.

Table (4-14) Chi-square Test for statements of the Second Dimension

Statements of the First Dimension of the Questionnaire	df	Chi sq. values	Sig.
(1) Academic writing is essential for students at the universities.	4	62.147	0.00
(2) Grammar practice is not sufficient in the English language courses of the students.	4	32.000	0.00
(3) The syllabuses of English 'Sudanese universities do not sufficiently provide practice in academic writing.	4	21.412	0.00
(4) The syllabus at university does not cope sufficiently with academic writing.	4	12.000	0.02
(5) Grammar is not taught in context.	4	23.912	0.00
(6) Writing is a basic skill that needs to be mastered by all English language major students.	4	53.176	0.06

Table (4-14) shows the values- of Chi square of the second dimension statements.

- (1) Chi square value 4 calculated for the first item of the second dimension of the questionnaire is (62.147) with df (4), and sig. (0.00) < (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the first statement of the questionnaire.
- (2) Chi square value calculated for the second item of the second dimension of the questionnaire is (32.000) with df (4), and sig. (0.00) < (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the eleventh statement of the questionnaire.
- (3) Chi square value calculated for the third item of the second dimension of the questionnaire is (21.412) with df (4), and sig. (0.00) < (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the thirteenth statement of the questionnaire.
- (4) Chi square value calculated for the fourth item of the second dimension of the questionnaire is (12.000) with df (4), and sig. (0.02) < (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the fourteenth statement of the questionnaire.
- (5) Chi square value calculated for the fifth item of the second dimension of the questionnaire is (23.912) with df (4), and sig. (0.00) < (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the fifteenth statement of the questionnaire.
- (6) Chi square value calculated for the sixth item of the second dimension of the questionnaire is (53.176) with df (4), and sig. (0.00) < (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the second statement of the questionnaire.

The results in table (4-11) do not mean that all participants of the study sample agree with the statement of the second dimension of the questionnaire, since there are participants neutral or do not agree with it. However, test for the presence of statistically significant differences between the numbers of agreeing, neutral and disagreeing to the result above required the use of chi square test for significant differences between the answers on each of the statements related to the second dimension. Table (4-12) can explain the results.

According to the results in table (4-12), the opinions of the participants tend to agree to the statements. To assure 'this, there are 6 statements in the questionnaire

about the second dimension and the number of participants is 68. That means there are 408 answers enhance or refute the statements of the second dimension of the questionnaire summarized in Table (4-15) and Figure (4-2).

Table (4-15): Frequency Distribution of the Second Dimension' Statements

Options	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
Number of Participants Answers	107	165	36	53	47	408
Percentage	26.3%	40.4%	8.8%	13.0%	11.5%	100%

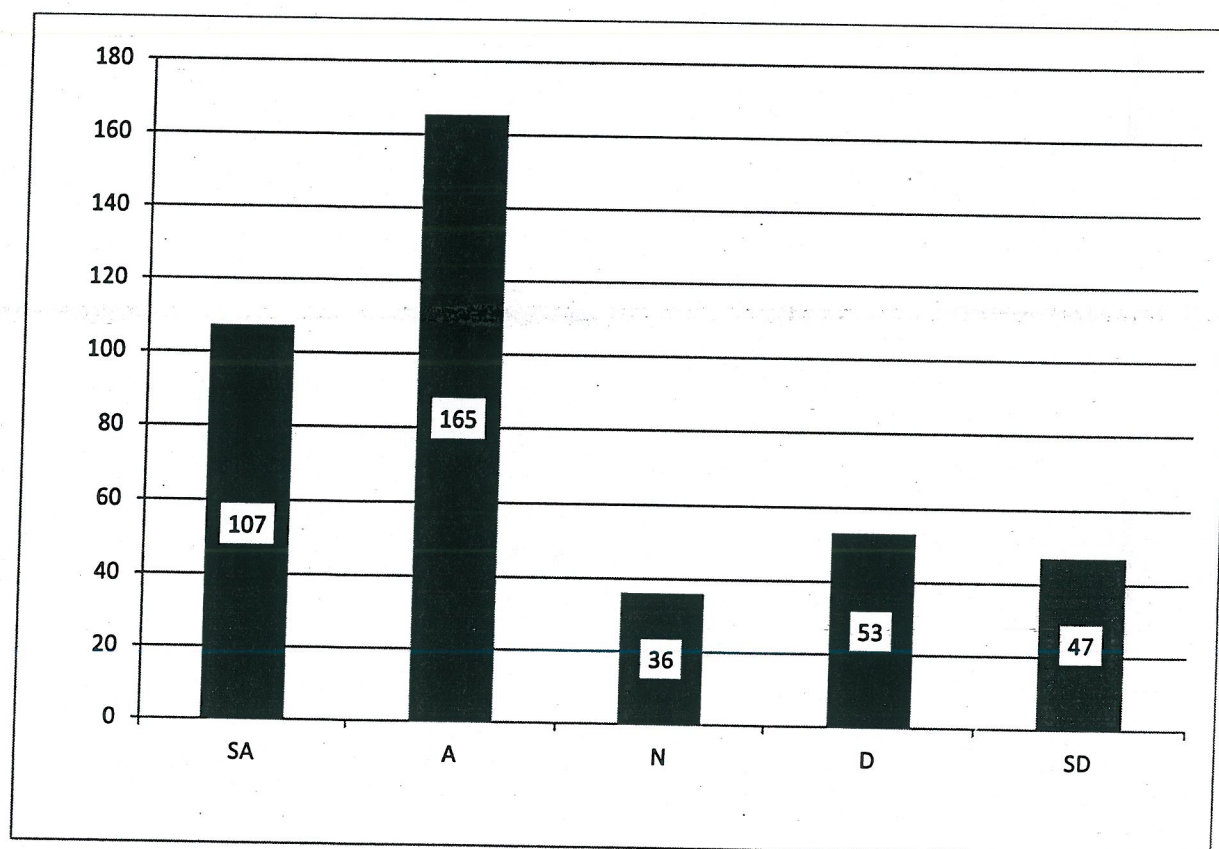


Figure (4-2) Frequency distribution of the Second Dimension

According to Tables (4-9), (4-10), (4-11), (4-12), (4-13), (4-14), (4-15) and Figure (4-2), It is found that more than 65% of the study participant tend to agree to the statements of the second dimension of the questionnaire. This indicates that majority of the participants agree that academic writing is an important skill for

university undergraduate students. In fact, 272 (66.7%) of the answers agreed, to the statements that say academic writing is important for university undergraduate students.

Table (4-16) Responses to Suggested Solutions for Academic Writing Difficulties

Items	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. Knowing academic writing techniques enables students to write efficiently.	27	39.7	21	30.9	6	8.8	6	8.8	8	11.8
2. Preparing an outline of their topics before starting to write helps students to be successful in academic writing.	19	27.9	30	44.1	9	13.2	5	7.4	5	7.4
3. Teaching students academic writing strategies helps them in their writing.	18	26.5	30	44.1	6	8.8	6	8.8	8	11.8
4. Easy topics for writing enable students to write confidently.	17	25.0	26	38.2	10	14.7	11	16.2	4	5.9
5. Students would become better spellers if they became better readers.	31	45.6	28	41.2	0	0	2	2.9	7	10.3

Table (4-16) shows the frequencies and percentages of the participants toward the suggested solutions for academic writing for university undergraduate students.

When participants were asked to answer item number one, 27 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (39.7%), 21 responded (agree) which represents (30.9%), 6 responded (neutral) which represents (8.8%), 6 responded (disagree) which represents (8.8%) whereas 8 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (11.8%).

When participants were asked to answer item number two, 19 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (27.9%), 30 responded (agree) which represents (44.1%), 9 responded (neutral) which represents (13.2%), 5 responded (disagree) which represents (7.4%) and 5 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (7.4%).

When participants were asked to answer item number three, 18 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (26.5%), 30 responded (agree) which represents (44.1%), 6 responded (neutral) which represents (8.8%), 6 responded (disagree) which represents (8.8%) and 8 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (11.8%).

When participants were asked to answer item number four, 17 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (25.0%), 26 responded (agree) which represents (38.2%), 10 responded (neutral) which represents (14.7%), 11 responded (disagree) which represents (16.2%) and 4 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (5.9%).

When participants were asked to answer item number five, 31 out of 68 participants responded (strongly agree) which represents (45.6%), 28 responded (agree) which represents (41.2%), 0 responded (neutral) which represents (0.00%), 2 responded (disagree) which represents (2.9 %) and 7 responded (strongly disagree) which represents (10.3%).

Table (4-17) Participants' Opinions towards Suggested Solutions

Question	Agree	%	Neutral	%	Disagree	%	Total	%
3	48	70.6	6	8.8	14	20.6	68	100
4	49	72.1	9	13.2	10	14.7	68	100
5	48	70.6	6	8.8	14	20.6	68	100
18	41	60.3	13	19.1	14	20.6	68	100
24	41	60.3	7	10.3	20	29.4	68	100

Table (4-17) shows detailed participants opinions towards possible solutions of academic writing problems. It is found that 48 out of 68 participants, who represent 70.6% agreed that knowing techniques enables students to write efficiently while 6 who represent 8.8 % are neutral and 14 who represent 20.6% disagreed. Moreover, 49 participants who represent 72.1% agreed that outlining topics before writing helps much Whereas 9 who represent 13.2% are neutral and 10, who represent 14.7% disagreed. Furthermore, 48 out of 68 participants, who represent 70.6%, agreed that teaching academic writing skills is more efficient while 6 who represent 8.8% are neutral and 14 who represent 20.6% disagreed. In addition, 41 out of 68 participants who represent 60.3% agreed that easy topics help students to write confidently while 13 who represent 19.1% are neutral and 14 who represent 20.6% disagreed. Finally, analysis of data shows that 41 out of 68 participants who represent 60.3% agreed that reading is a helpful tool in writing while 7 who represent 10.3% are neutral whereas 20 who represent 29.4% disagreed.

Table (4-18): Frequency Distribution of the Third Dimension

Options	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
Number of Participants Answers	112	135	31	30	32	408
Percentage	32.9%	39.7%	9.2%	8.8%	9.4%	100 %

From the results of this dimension shown in table (4-16), (4-17) and (418) it is found that 32.9% strongly agreed, 39.7% agreed, 9.2% are neutral, 8.8% disagreed and 9.4% strongly disagreed to the suggested solutions for the difficulties that face university undergraduate students in academic writing.

Table (4-19) T-test results of the Third Dimension's Item

Statements of the First Dimension of the Questionnaire	No.	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Knowing academic writing techniques enables students to write efficiently.	68	3.8	1.4
2. Preparing an outline of their topics before starting to write helps students be successful in academic writing.	68	3.8	1.2
3. Teaching students academic writing strategies helps them in their writing.	68	3.5	1.3
4. Easy topics for writing enable students to write confidently.	68	3.6	1.2
5. Students would become better spellers if they became better readers.	68	4.0	1.2

Table (4-19) shows the T-test results of the third dimension items of the questionnaire. According to, the tables (4-14, 4-15 and 4-16) the participants' opinions towards the suggested solutions for academic writing difficulties that face university undergraduate students tend to be agreeing.

For example, in answering item five of the third dimension, 86.8% agreed that students would become better spellers if they became better readers which is a high percentage. The mean of all the items is higher than 3 (neutral value). All standard deviations' results indicated that there was no difference in the participants' responses and more than 70% of them agreed with the 5 items.

Table (4-20) Third Dimension Statements Arithmetic Mean and Answers

Statements of the First Dimension of the Questionnaire	Arith. Mean	Answer
1. Knowing academic writing techniques enables students to write efficiently.	5	SA
2. Preparing an outline of their topics before starting to write helps students to be successful in academic writing.	4	A
3. Teaching students academic writing strategies helps them in their writing.	4	A
4. Easy topics for writing enable students to write confidently.	5	A
5. Students would become better spellers if they became better readers.	4	SA

Table (4-20) shows the arithmetic mean and answers of the statements of the third dimension of the questionnaire

(1) The arithmetic mean of the first item of the third dimension is 5, which means that most of the participants strongly agree to the third statement of the questionnaire.

(2) The arithmetic mean of the second item of the third dimension is 4, which means that most of the participants agree to the fourth statement of the questionnaire.

(3) The arithmetic mean of the third item of the third dimension is 4, which means that most of the participants agree to the fifth statement of the questionnaire.

(4) The arithmetic mean of the fourth item of the third dimension is 4, which means that most of the participants agree to the eighteenth statement of the questionnaire.

(5) The arithmetic mean of the fifth item of the third dimension is 5, which means that most of the participants strongly agree to the twenty-seventh statement of the questionnaire.

Table (4-21) Chi-square Test for statements of the Third Dimension

Statements of the First Dimension of the Questionnaire	df	Chi sq. values	Sig.
1. Knowing academic writing techniques enables students to write efficiently.	4	28.029	0.00
2. Preparing an outline of their topics before starting to write helps students to be successful in academic writing.	4	34.353	0.00
3. Teaching students academic writing strategies helps them in their writing.	4	32.000	0.00
4. Easy topics for writing enable students to write confidently.	4	20.382	0.00
5. Students would become better spellers if they became better readers.	4	37.765	0.00

Table (4-21) shows the Chi square values of the statements of the third dimension of the questionnaire.

(1) Chi square value calculated for the first item of the third dimension of the questionnaire is (28.029) with df (4), and sig. (0.00) < (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the third statement of the questionnaire.

(2) Chi square value calculated for the second item of the third dimension of the questionnaire is (34.353) with df (4), and sig. (0.00) < (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the fourth statement of the questionnaire.

(3) Chi square value calculated for the third item of the third dimension of the questionnaire is (32.000) with df (4), and Sig. (0.00) < (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the fifth statement of the questionnaire.

(4) Chi square value calculated for the fourth item of the third dimension of the questionnaire is (20.382) with (if (4), and sig. (0.00) < (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the eighteenth statement of the questionnaire.

(5) Chi square value calculated for the fifth item of the second dimension of the questionnaire is (37.765) with df (3), and sig. (0.00) < (0.05) in favour of agreeing participants to the twenty-seventh statement of the questionnaire.

The results in tables (4-16) and (4-17) do not mean that all participants of the study sample agree with the statement of the third dimension of the questionnaire, since there are participants neutral or do not agree with it. However, test for the presence of statistically significant differences between the numbers of agreeing, neutral and disagreeing to the result above required the use of chi square test for significant differences between the answers on each of the statements related to the third dimension. Table (4-18) can explain the results.

According to the results in Table (4-18), the opinions of the participants tend to agree to the statements. To assure this, there are 5 statements in the questionnaire about the third dimension and the number of participants is 68. That means there are 340 answers enhance or refute the statements of the third dimension of the questionnaire summarized in Table (4-15) above and Figure (4-3).

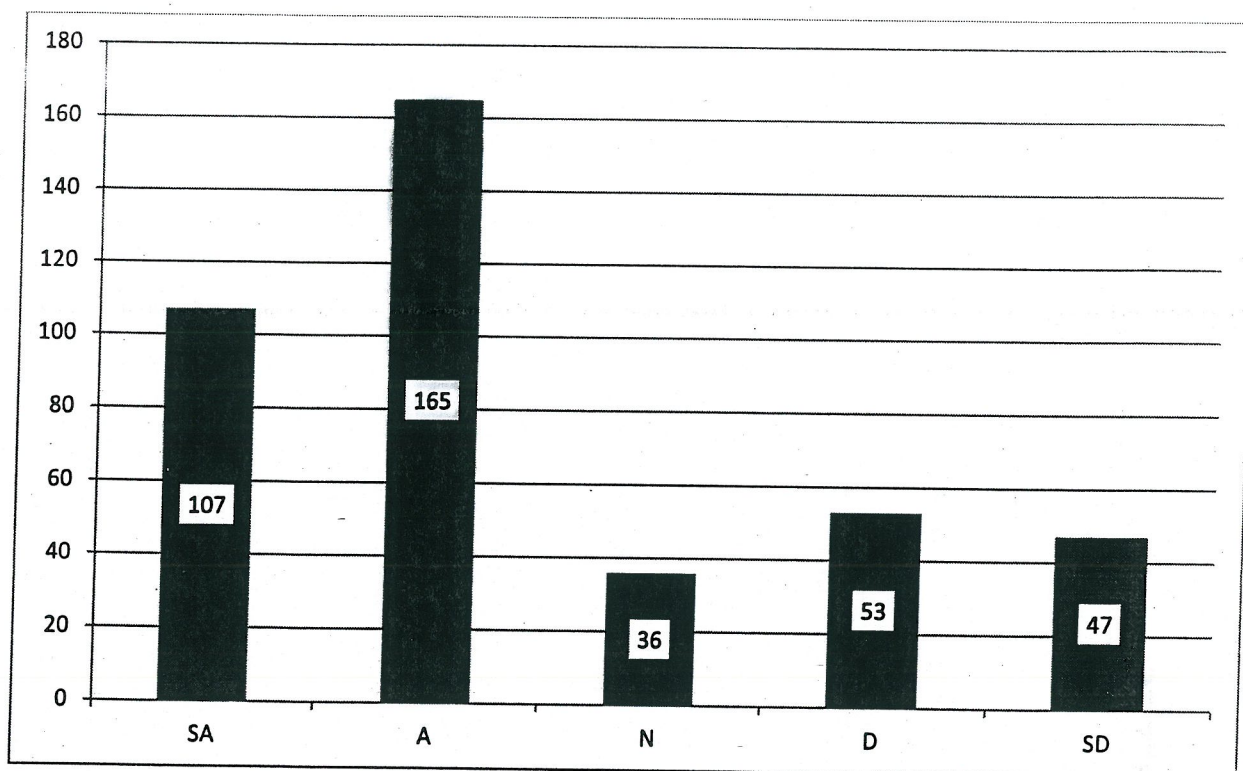


Figure (4-3) Frequency Distribution of the Third Dimension

According to Tables (4-16), (4-17), (4-18), (4-19), (4-20), (4-21) and Figure (4-3), It is found that more than 65% of the study participant tend to agree to the statements of the third dimension of the questionnaire. This indicates that majority of the participants agree that solution suggested to solve academic writing problems are efficient and helpful to university undergraduate students. In fact, 247 (72.6%) of the participants' answers agreed that they are practical solutions for academic writing problems that encounter university undergraduate students.

To sum up, all the results of the three dimensions show that university undergraduate students suffer from academic writing problems. Although these problems differ from one to another, there were many causes behind these problems. Some of these problems originate by the students themselves because they do not try to improve themselves. Other problems are caused by the syllabus in the universities, the learning environment, the families and also the teachers of the academic writing.

The key problems found out from the questionnaire were: 72.1% agreed that students have spelling problems which they cannot overcome easily. The majority of the students do not know about the techniques of academic writing. Another problem that face them topics which are not familiar and don not cope with the student's environment and surroundings. Moreover, 82.4% agreed that academic writing is a basic skill which should be mastered by all English learners. Unfortunately, students lack this skill. Finally, about 86.6% of the participants agreed that undergraduate students do not practice reading whether extensive or intensive and the result is poor vocabulary and weak spelling which is the realm of the coin in academic writing.

4.2 Verification of the Study Hypotheses

This study was conducted to investigate the types of mistakes and problems with academic writing. A total of 68 respondents completed the questionnaire based on their perceptions towards the causes of the academic writing problems. The findings of the study showed that students committed many mistakes in academic writing in relation to sentence structure, vocabulary and expressing ideas. The results presented the most mistakes made by participants in a simple writing task. The findings also showed information highlighted in the questionnaire like demographic information of the respondents and the causes of academic writing problems.

Table (4-7) of chi square calculated for significant differences between the number of responses strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree to what has been hypothesized in all statements of hypothesis (1) is (455.020) degree of freedom (2), and the value of error allowed in the sample $(0.000) < (0.05)$. Depending on what is analyzed in tables (4-2), (4-3), (4-4), (4-5), (4-6), (4-7), (4-8) and figure (4-1), results indicate the presence of significant differences at the level of significant (5%) between the answers in favour of hypothesis 1 and answers disagreed to the hypothesis. Hence, the analysis of hypothesis 1 proved that hypothesis 1 which was: (Students are expected to encounter some difficulties in

writing, perhaps grammar, spelling, punctuation and usage of language because use of academic writing causes the main difficulties) has been achieved. In addition, from the analysis of the tool (the questionnaire) used in the study, it is found that the first hypothesis which was: (Students are expected to encounter some difficulties in writing, perhaps, grammar, spelling, punctuation and usage of language because use of academic writing causes the main difficulties) is true. The hypothesis was confirmed by the questionnaire items (2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25 and 26). So improving of these aspects of the language will lead to enhance students to perform better in writing and determine the goal of this hypothesis which is to prove that using suitable academic writing strategies and techniques help students develop their writing.

Table (4-14) shows chi square values calculated for significant differences between the numbers of responses strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree to what has been hypothesized in all statements of hypothesis 2, is (219.059) degree of freedom (2), and the value of error allowed in the sample $(0.000) < (0.05)$. Depending on what is analyzed in tables (4-9), (4-10), (4-11), (4-12), (4-13), (4-14), (4-15) and figure (4-2), results indicate the presence of significant differences at the level of significant (5%) between the answers in favour of hypothesis 2 and answers disagreed to hypothesis (2).

Hence, the analysis of hypothesis (2) which was: (Academic writing is a crucial skill for university students who need to know more about its conventions) has been achieved. In addition, from the analysis of the tool (the questionnaire) used in the study, it is found that the second hypothesis is true. The frequencies and percentages of the items (1, 11, 13, 14, 15 and 18) of the questionnaire proved and confirmed validity of the second hypothesis which was (Academic writing is a crucial skill for university students who need to know more about its conventions). The hypothesis aims to validate that academic writing is a very important skill for university students in the classroom and they should master it without hesitation and fear. From the results of the mentioned above items, it was found that English

syllabus of Sudanese universities, lack of grammar and imperfection of mastering writing skills and techniques play a great role in academic writing difficulties.

As for the third hypothesis which was (It is expected that the study will come to some possible solutions). Table (4-21) shows values of chi square calculated for significant differences between the numbers of responses strongly agree, agree, unspecified, disagree and strongly disagree to what has been hypothesized in all statements of hypothesis (3) (240.712) with degree of freedom (2), and the value of error allowed in the sample $(0.000) < (0.05)$. Depending on what is analyzed in tables (4-16), (4-17), (4-18), (4-19), (4-20), (4-21) and figure (4-3), results indicate the presence of significant differences at the level of significant (5%) between the answers in favour of hypothesis 3 and answers disagreed to hypothesis 3. Hence, the analysis of hypothesis 3 items proved that the hypothesis has been achieved. This hypothesis aims to confirm that there are effective and different solutions that can help students to develop their academic writing performance. The analysis of the items (3, 4, 5, 18 and 27) determined the hypothesis by the suggested solutions. The hypothesis highlights the knowing of academic writing techniques, strategies, and easiness of the topics, better reading and planning before start writing. More than 80% agreed they will be the best solution for academic writing difficulties.

4.3 Summary of the Chapter

This research was designed and conducted to probe problems and mistakes that face university undergraduate students in academic writing. The sample of the study was 68 respondents all of them university undergraduate students. They completed a questionnaire based on their perceptions towards the reasons and causes of the academic writing, problems. The findings of the study showed that students committed a lot of mistakes in academic writing in relation to sentence structure, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, style and expressing ideas. The results presented the most mistakes made by participants in a simple writing task. The findings also showed information highlighted in the questionnaire like

demographic information of the respondents and the causes of academic writing problems.

According to Tables (4-4), (4-11) and (4-15) the respondents agreed with all items under potential problems in academic writing. The potential problems included; spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, style and vocabulary. It is found that 65.5% of the total answers agreed that the above mentioned problems are obstacles that face them when practicing academic writing.

Table (4-7) of chi square calculated for significant differences between the number of responses strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree to what has been hypothesized in all statements of hypothesis 1, is (455.020) with degree of freedom (2), and the value of error allowed in the sample $(0.000) < (0.05)$. Depending on what is in table (4-7), it indicates the presence of significant differences at the level of significant (5%) between the answers in favour of the hypothesis and answers disagreed to hypothesis 1. Hence the analytical results of hypothesis 1: (Students are expected to encounter some differences in writing, perhaps grammar, spelling, punctuation and usage of language because use of academic writing causes the main difficulties) proved that hypothesis 1 has been achieved.

Table (4-14) shows value of chi square calculated for significant differences between the numbers of responses strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree to what has been hypothesized in all statements of hypothesis 2, is (219.059) with degree of freedom (2), and the value of error allowed in the sample $(0.000) < (0.05)$. Depending on what is in Table (4-14), it indicates the presence of significant differences at the level of significant (5%) between the answers in favour of hypothesis 2 and the answers disagreed to hypothesis 2. Hence, the study hypothesis 2 which was: (Academic writing is a crucial skill for university students who need to know more about it conventions) has been achieved.

Table (4-18) shows the value of chi square calculated for significant differences between the numbers of responses strongly agree, agree, unspecified, disagree and strongly disagree to what has been hypothesized in all statements of hypothesis 3, is (240.712) with degree of freedom (2), and the value of error allowed in the sample $(0.000) < (0.05)$. Depending on what is in table (4-21), it indicates the presence of significant differences at the level of significant (5%) between the answers in favour of hypothesis 3 and the answers disagreed to hypothesis 3. Hence the study hypothesis 3 which was: (It is expected that the study will come to some possible solutions) has been achieved.

On the basis of the results of this study some solutions can be suggested to avoid writing difficulties presented above and this improves writing proficiency. Various basic points should be taken into consideration when dealing with academic writing especially in EFL contexts. For example, adequate exposure to academic writing conventions, academic words and phrases and grammar can play an essential role in producing a satisfying piece of writing. Therefore, academic writing should be considered as an integral part of universities programs as students at this level need effective writing skills to achieve the assigned tasks like writing essays or even to take lecture notes. That is students should be equipped with these necessary skills to accomplish their writing tasks of their faculty.

Many factors can be observed regarding the results of the questionnaire and writing task. These factors should be taught with precision at schools, universities, and English training institutions. The students need to see the whole picture of the methods used in academic writing that involve using certain strategies and steps to improve their writing skills. English language specialists and lecturers used strategies to teach academic writing like constructivist approach. It can provide learners with the chance to gain experience practicing academic writing and to focus on the aspects of teaching academic writing such as daily writing practice, and to reveal their abilities and skills in terms of direct interaction with native speakers in using the appropriate sentence structures. So, learners may enhance

their attitudes and perceptions when communicating with native speakers of English language. In other words, brainstorming and mind-mapping can be used among students to enhance their ideas and writing styles in discussing and group working. There are some other factors that can be developed for future research to help students produce a good piece of academic writing. One of these factors is increasing students' motivation towards writing by using different styles of sentence structures, good vocabulary, and organizing their ideas and critical thinking. Actually, this could happen if the division and persons in charge of teaching academic writing had obtained effective and adequate methods that other researchers and scholars use in delivering information about academic writing. Moreover, undergraduate students can motivate themselves to learn English, as a genuine interest in the target language can inspire students to improve their abilities to express themselves in English. Other studies should be undertaken to understand and explore the causes behind the problems of academic writing. It may be because of the English curriculum, the lack of institutes educational systems, and snowballing techniques that are used in the distributed questionnaire. To have a better inference for this kind of study, it may be suggested that a more systematic sample procedure be taken.

Furthermore, the study shows that the students faced numerous challenges relating to academic writing at university level. Successful academic writing is considered of utmost importance to the academic accomplishment of the English as second language students, especially in content areas in the contexts of tertiary levels. The present study investigated the challenging aspects of academic writing encountered by undergraduate students in Sudan. The significant results from this research revealed that students sampled were not familiar with the academic writing strategies. It is noteworthy that academic writing is reportedly considered as the most common activity at the university level. Unfortunately, related studies have discovered that the students are not always aware of the potential benefits of both the conscious and continuous use of academic writing which may help

expedite and make the writing process more efficient. In answering the first research question of the study, i.e., What the academic writing problems encountered by English second language learners are, it was discovered that many challenges about academic writing experienced by the students while writing, they were articles, punctuation, prepositions, irregular verbs, poor expressions, consistency paralleled structure, and use of verb tense. In answering the second research question of the study, i.e., what the factors that may cause difficulties in academic writing problems are, a considerable number of the project that was examined reported that they faced problems regardless of their language level proficiency when, using morphology and syntactic properties to understand the meanings of words from the point of view of the students the results indicated that the students face difficulties in grammar, spelling, punctuations and usage of the language.

The current study investigated the challenges of a small number of university undergraduate students specialization in a non-English-speaking country. Therefore, there should be an in-depth investigation to be carried out on the difficulties of academic writing of a larger number of ESL learners of different majors rather than educational field. Finally, learners in EFL contexts could have different difficulties and different external and internal factors causing the difficulties in academic writing. This issue is also worth investigation.

The Sudanese education system in general, is course-based even for undergraduate or postgraduate students. Students are required to study many courses before they can start writing their thesis or dissertation. Arabic language is used mostly on a daily basis in other contexts rather than educational context. One of the problems faced by Sudanese undergraduate students in universities is that they have a low competency level in academic writing because of their undergraduate study background. Consequently, they face difficulties in their academic writing while pursuing their studies whether inside Sudan or abroad. The findings indicate that the students face many difficulties in academic writing which

could be reduced through improving the students' academic writing skills. The students could be provided with support such as the production of visual practices of academic writing since Video courses on academic writing practices are considered to be an efficient method to improve students' level of academic writing. These courses need to satisfy the various levels of students' needs, i.e. beginners, moderate and high levels. Another suggestion is to produce standard methods in evaluating students' writing performance. Students need to know their current strengths and weaknesses in academic writing to improve on their academic writing ability.

The lecturers often decided on the topics but in instances when students had to decide on a topic by themselves, they tended to write on topics that they were interested in, or were familiar with. Some students brainstormed prior to drafting their writing, but made limited use of resources such as the internet and textbooks. This evidence demonstrates the low motivation of students with regard to reading higher level articles when doing a writing assignment. Reading articles is important for them to understand the language and writing discourse in their discipline, the knowledge of which will help them develop their ability to write in their disciplines. In the drafting stage, students found it difficult to come up with outlines detailing their topic sentences and supporting details. A student for example, did not understand what topic sentences and supporting details were. In terms of unity and coherence, students seemed to understand what they really meant but they had difficulties in applying those concepts in their writing. Consequently, they used relatively limited transitional signals and at times they used them inappropriately.

The organization of ideas became another impediment in students' writing. While some students seemed to understand exactly what they needed to do with their ideas, others did not know which appropriate organization best suited their topics. Poor organization of ideas may have influenced the development of their ideas and to some extent may have distracted them from their purpose of writing.

Another common feature was that students' tended to copy the whole sentences or phrases when citing other people's opinions or thought. This might have been because it was easier to do than paraphrasing and summarizing. In conclusion, considering that the Students' understanding of academic writing might have resulted from insufficient knowledge, practice, exposure, and the lack of clear lecturer' instructions as well as requirements of academic assignments, an improvement program aimed to enhance students' academic writing knowledge and to bridge different lecturers' instructions is deemed necessary.

4.4 Results of the Writing Test

All students wrote the four paragraphs of the writing test. A marking guide was designed for marking the papers. Then the papers were marked and checked.

The results of the test were as follows:

1. Most of the students' writing lack unity, coherence and cohesion.
2. Grammar, spelling and punctuation errors were the most common mistakes in their writing.
3. Most papers lack correct organization.
4. Capitalization errors were also very common.
5. Students lack use of language.
6. Students knowledge of academic writing convention is poor.

Based on the results of the writing test, grammar, spelling and punctuation were the main difficulties that undergraduates encounter in their academic writing.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions or Future Studies

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Studies

5.0 Introduction

This is the last chapter for this study. It includes the summary of the study, the conclusion, recommendations and some suggestion for further studies.

5.1 Summary of the Study

This study aimed at investigating difficulties encountered by undergraduate students in academic writing.

The study was written to answer the flowing research questions:

1. What are the main difficulties that encountered by university undergraduates in academic writing?

2. To what extent does the syllabus deal with academic writing.

3. What possible solutions could be offered to solve these problems. For investigation the purpose of the study, the following hypotheses were formulated from the research questions above:

1. Students are expected to encounter some difficulties in writing, perhaps grammar, spelling, punctuation and usage of the language cause the main difficulties.

2. Academic writing is a crucial skill for university students. They need to know more about its conventions.

3. It is expected that the study will arrive at some possible solutions. To achieve this, mixed methods approach such as the descriptive and statistical analytical

methods were used. The data of the study were gathered by three tools test and examined the hypotheses of the dissertation.

A questionnaire was designed and distributed to third year students of law in faculty of law at AL Neelain University. Questions for an interview were designed and given to some teachers of English language to answer them to support the data of the dissertation. Twenty-five students from Faculty of Arts at Al-Neelain University answered a writing test.

A hundred students from the faculty of law participated in the questionnaire. Ten teachers of English language answered the questions. The data of the study were analysed by using different statistical methods. They were statistical package for social study (SPSS) and alpha and Cronbach well as Pearson coefficient factor.

The results which appeared from the analysis of the tools were put in tables and discussed in the previous chapter.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the results of the questionnaire undergraduate students faced many difficulties in academic writing grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage of language and use of academic writing cause the main difficulties.

Academic writing is a crucial skill for university students. They need to know more about its conventions. The study suggested some possible solutions.

Writing is the most challenging skill of English language learning.

The phonological differences between Arabic and English are one of the main reasons behind spelling errors.

Undergraduate students lack interest in writing, that is why they get bored and anxious where they sit to write.

There are many factors affecting academic writing such as content, vocabulary, composing, developing and analyzing ideas:

Actually there are many factors regarding the results of the questionnaire and writing tasks.

These tasks should be taught with precision at schools, universities, and English training institutions. The students need to see the whole picture of the methods used in academic writing that involves using certain strategies and steps to improve their writing skills.

English language specialists and lecturers used strategies to teach academic writing like constructivists approach. It can provide learners with the chance to gain experience practicing academic writing and to focus on the aspects of teaching academic writing such as daily writing practice, and to reveal their abilities and skills. In terms of direct Interaction with native speakers in using the appropriate sentence structures so, learners may enhance their attitudes and perceptions when communicating with native speakers of English language. In other words, brainstorming and mind mapping can be used among students to enhance their ideas and writing styles in discussing and group working. There are some other factors that can be developed for further research to help students produce a good piece of academic writing. One of these factors is to increase students motivation towards writing by using different styles sentence structures, good vocabulary, and organizing their ideas and critical thinking. Actually, this could happen if the divisions and persons in charge of teaching academic writing had had obtained effective and adequate methods that other researchers and scholars use in information about academic writing moreover, undergraduate students can be motivated to learn English as a genuine interest in the target language which can inspire students to improve their abilities to express themselves in English other studies should be understood and explore the causes behind the problems of academic writing. It may be because of the English curriculum the lack of institutes educational systems and snowballing techniques that are used in the distributed questionnaire. To have a better reference for this kind of study, it may be suggested that a more systematic sample procedure can be taken.

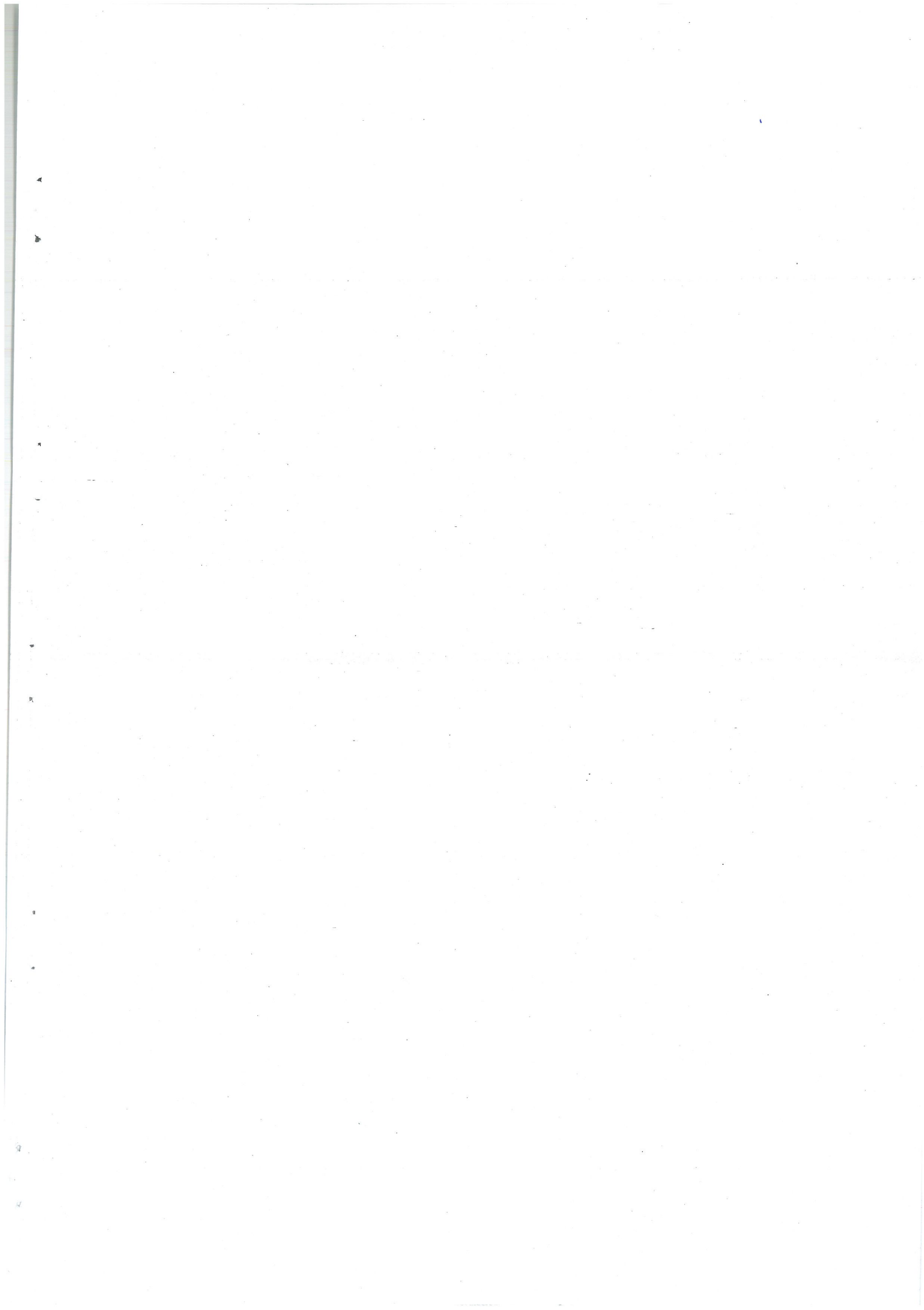
Moreover, the study shows that the students face numerous challenges relating to academic writing at university level. Successful academic writing is considered of utmost importance to the academic accomplishment of the English as a second language students, especially in content area in the contexts of tertiary level the present study investigated the challenging aspects of academic writing encountered by undergraduate students in Sudan. The significant results from this research revealed that students sampled were not familiar with the academic writing strategies. It is noteworthy that academic writing is reportedly considered as the most common activity at the university level. Unfortunately, related studies have discovered that the students are not always aware of the potential benefits of both the conscious and continues use of academic writing which may help expedite and make the writing process more efficient. In answering the first research question of the study, i.e. what academic writing problems encountered by English second language learners are, it was discovered that many challenges about academic writing faced by the students while writing, they were article, punctuation, prepositions irregular verbs, poor expressions, consistency paralleled structure and use of verb tense. In answering the second research question of the study, i.e, what the factors that may cause difficulties in academic writing problems are, considerable number of the project that was examined reported that they faced problems regardless of their language level proficiency when using morphology and syntactic properties to understand the meaning of words.

5.3 Recommendations

University students have numerous obstacles in academic writing. Based on the results of this study, the recommendations below seemed useful.

1. Academic writing should be considered as an integral part of university program because students at this level need effective writing skills to achieve the assigned tasks like writing essays or even to write lecture notes.

2. In order to identify student's problems and needs, a diagnostic test at the beginning of the semester is very important because the content of the program will be designed according to it.
3. Teaching planning, writing and editing might help novice writers to be successful in academic writing.
4. Enough exposure to academic writing conventions, academic words and phrases and grammar play a significant role in producing a satisfying piece of writing.
5. Teachers should identify student's needs and difficulties providing them with the required skills.
6. Students should be taught to learn from their errors by giving them samples of writing for correction.
7. The classroom environment should be friendly, helpful and co operative enough to help students overcome their writing anxiety.
8. Students should be trained how to write not merely what to write.
9. Writing tasks should be based on the students' needs and abilities.
10. Teachers should simplify the topics to make them easier, more interesting and relevant to the students' liking and every day real life situations.
11. Teachers should give well defined essay rules (for the thesis statements, introduction, conclusion and transition words).
12. Students fear or failure should be reduced and they should be motivated.
13. Teaching students how to brainstorm ideas can minimize their problems in academic writing.
14. Teaching should tell students and draw their attention to the fact that good writers are basically good readers.



15. Reminding students with the requirements of academic writing throughout the writing process is very crucial.

5.4 Suggestions or Further Studies

The following are some suggestions for further studies:

1. Further studies are required to investigate reasons behind student's weak performance in academic writing.
2. More focus on punctuation is needed to enable students to produce good piece of writing.
3. Academic writing conventions are a necessity in writing. How can students be exposed to them?
4. How to teach grammar is a topic that needs more research as well as what ways or methods to be followed to solve this common problem.
5. Spelling is still a challenging skill for learners of English language. More research is required for solving this difficulty. How spelling could be made an easy and interesting skill.

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Appendix 1

Students Questionnaire

Dear Students

I would be grateful to receive your responses to the Statements in the questionnaire which are intended to collect data for a Ph.D. study entitled:

Investigating Difficulties in Academic Writing that Encounter Undergraduate Students in Universities of Sudan. Below are the statements about the study. To indicate your opinion, please tick the option that. Best suits your choice.

Thank you for cooperation

Hussain Mohammed Hamid Al- Nahla

Ph.D. candidate - Sudan University

of Science and Technology

SD: Strongly disagree	D = Disagree	Neu = Neutral
SA= Strongly Agree	A= Agree	

No	Statement	SD	D	Neu	A	AS
11	Grammar practice is not sufficient in the English language courses of the students.					
12	Students often feel bored when they do writing exercises.					
13	The syllabuses of English at Sudanese universities do not sufficiently provide practice in academic writing.					
14	The syllabus at the university doesn't cope sufficiently with academic writing.					
15	Grammar is not taught in context.					
16	Most students are not interested in academic writing.					
17	Academic writing is a difficult skill.					
18	Easy topics for writing enable students to write confidently.					
19	Students often read outside the classroom.					
20	Students do little in academic writing.					
21	Unclear handwriting is one of the problems in academic writing in the universities.					
22	In most universities, the learning environment is not helpful.					
23	Writing requires the reader to understand what has been written.					

No	Statement	SD	D	Neu	A	AS
24	Writing is a basic skill that needs to be mastered by all English language major students.					
25	Writing materials are not familiar to Students surroundings and abilities.					
26	Spelling is a major obstacle for most students to overcome.					
27	Students would be better spellers if they became better readers.					

Appendix 2

Teachers' Interview Questions

Dear Teacher,

I should be grateful to receive your answers to the following questions which are intended to collect data for a Ph.D. study under the title:

Investigating difficulties that encounter undergraduate students in academic writing. Your opinions are highly appreciated for the study.

Thank you

Hussain Mohammed Hamid Al-Nahla.

Ph.D Candidate

Sudan University

of Science and Technology

Questions

1. University undergraduates are encountered by various difficulties in academic writing. What do you say?
2. What are the main causes behind these difficulties?
3. Why do students feel bored and anxious when they start to write?
4. Writing is the most difficult skill to learn in English language. Do you agree?
5. Academic writing needs experienced teachers to teach it. What do you think?

Appendix 3

University of AL Neelain

Faculty of Arts

Department of English

Writing Test

Third year

15/1/2018

Name:

serial No.....

Write a four paragraphs - essay about the advantages and disadvantages of Whats App.

[illegible]