

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

College of Languages

**Investigating the Problems of Using Punctuation
Marks at secondary school level**

(A Case Study: 3rd Year Secondary School Level (Alqabas Secondary
School))

تقصي المشكلات التي تواجه طلاب المرحلة الثانوية في إستخدام علامات الترقيم
في المرحلة الثانوية
(دراسة حالة المستوى الثالث الثانوي – مدارس القبس الثانوية)

*A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements
of MA Degree in English Language (Applied Linguistic)*

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DEDICATION

TO MY PARENTS

TO MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS I DEDICATE THIS SIMPLE EFFORT

Acknowledgements

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the problems of using punctuation marks particularly the comma, semi-colon, colon and full-stop in writing encountered by Sudanese students at secondary school level. The data were collected through questionnaire and test. The test for the students and questionnaire for teachers. Sample of this study consisted of 30 students and 30 teachers chosen randomly. To analyze the data, the researcher uses the SPSS programme. The researcher uses descriptive analytical method. The findings revealed that comma, semi-colon and colon are the most difficult for the students to perceive and use. Also the results proved that students face difficulties in differentiating between using comma and semi-colon. The study shows that the reasons for the above problems refer to the syllabus itself and ways that are taught are not effective and syllabus doesn't cover or provide enough exercises on punctuation marks. The study also proved that many teachers don't give enough attention in teaching punctuation marks in particular the comma, semi-colon, colon and full stop. The study found that activities on punctuation marks are not enough to enable the EFL students to practice these activities in classroom. It also found out that most of the visual-aids are not available for teachers when teaching punctuation marks. Furthermore, it proves that most of teachers do not develop their methods of teaching writing skills due to the lack of training workshops. Finally this study recommends that students should improve their skills and knowledge in punctuation marks specifically Comma, semi-colon, colon and full stop with more practice. It also recommends to strengthening the curriculum, giving them a lot of adaptations and practice to increase their knowledge of punctuation marks. Moreover, teachers should develop themselves because the knowledge becomes available in all media such as internet, satellite and mobile web services.

مستخلص البحث

تهدف هذه الدراسة لتقصي أخطاء علامات الترقيم التي تواجه طلاب المرحلة الثانوية في الكتابة . كما تهدف أيضاً لتقصي ومعرفة العوامل التي تكمن وراء هذه الأخطاء . استخدم الباحث طريقة الإختبار للطلاب للإستبيان للمعلمين لجمع المعلومات . ولتحليل تلك البيانات أختار الباحث ثلاثون طالباً للإختبار وثلاثون معلماً للإستبيان . استخدم الباحث نظام الحزمة الإحصائية للعلوم الإجتماعية. أظهرت الدراسة أن الفاصلة والمنقوطة والنقطتين أكثر علامات الترقيم صعوبة في الإستيعاب والإستخدام . وأيضاً وجدت الدراسة أن الطلاب يواجهون مشاكل في التفریق بين إستخدامات الفاصلة والمنقوطة . وكذلك أظهرت الدراسة أيضاً عدم إهتمام بعض المعلمين لعلامات الترقيم وأن المنهج نفسه هو أحد أسباب صعوبات علامات الترقيم إذ لا يقدم المنهج تمارين ونشاطات كافية في كيفية إستخدام علامات الترقيم خاصة الفاصلة والمنقوطة والنقطتين والنقطة. أوجدت الدراسة أيضاً بأن الأدوات المرئية المساعدة غير متوفرة ليتم إستخدامها في تدريس علامات الترقيم مما يسهل إستيعابها. وأن الكثير من المعلمين لا يستحدثون طرق تدريسهم وذلك لقلة ورش التدريب المستمر. أخيراً توصي هذه الدراسة الطلاب بتطوير مهاراتهم وزيادة معرفتهم بعلامات الترقيم وذلك بالممارسة لدورها الكبير في فهم معاني اللغة . كما توصي الدراسة أيضاً إلى تعزيز المنهج ورفعده بالمزيد من النشاطات والتدريبات. أختتمت الدراسة بتوصية المعلمين بتطوير أنفسهم فالمعرفة أصبحت متوفرة ومتاحة في متناول الأيدي

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CHAPTER ONE

INTERODUCTION

1.0. Overview:

This chapter comprises background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, and hypotheses of the study, significance of the study, methodology, and limitation of the study.

1.1. Background of the study:

Writing is one of the important skills in language mastery. It involves spelling, punctuation marks, knowledge of words use, grammatical construction, style, selection of words and the imagination on the creativity side.

So teaching punctuation is a significant factor in language teaching. Since, punctuation plays an important role in expressing our feelings, emotions and ideas to others during the act of communication. Punctuation difficulties could lead to reading comprehension problems. In many EFL classes, even where teachers have devoted much time to teach punctuation marks, the results have been disappointing. For years, punctuation skills have mostly been taught by using exercises in which students memorized how to use punctuation.

Many EFL teachers experience student resistance when they introduce an instructional activity in the classroom. Some students want more opportunities to participate in free writing, expressing their wishes towards a more communicatively oriented approach. On the other hand, there are some prefer more emphasis on grammar teaching.

It's thought that the teacher's decisions towards the type of activities to be conducted in a language classroom should take into account such learner diversities. Using style is consistent way of functioning that reflects the underline causes of using behavior. Using styles are internally based on characteristics of individuals for intake or

understanding of new information. All attributes relating to their uses process. Teaching punctuation has traditionally been reviewed by researchers and most curricula.

Good knowledge of punctuation marks show that student's or a writer's good ability in mastering grammatical structure. Moreover, to understand the text, you should obviously grasp what are simple, a complex sentence and the meaning of each punctuation marks and where to use them. Hopefully, the Researcher will discuss in the next chapter as we go gradually and grow our writing skills by using the basic of English language if there are no marks of punctuation, sentences will be hopelessly jumbled. We wouldn't be able to communicate ideas so that others couldn't understand exactly what we were trying to convey.

1.2 Statement of the Problem:

The researcher observed through his teaching experience in secondary schools that most of the students face difficulties in using correct punctuation marks specially the comma, Semi-colon, colon and full stop, the area which the study is going to focus. Therefore, the researcher assumed that third year students have to masterusing punctuation markssince they have been studying English for four years at basic level and completed two years in secondary school.

Therefore, the present study is an attempt to analyze and identify the most difficult punctuation marks. Also to find the students abilities in differentiation between comma and semi-colon. Furthermore, to figure out the factors behind the errors the students make in using punctuation marks.

1.3. Significance of the study

teaching punctuation is regarded asa significant factor in language teaching. So the important of the study results from the fact that wrong punctuation marks lead to misunderstanding and confusing which negatively effect on the intended meaning.

The four skills listening, speaking, reading and writing complete each other. Reading skills depends on writing skills, if there is no standard writing then there is no standard reading.

The study may assist in solving the problems of using punctuation in third-class students and lead to get rid of them at the other level. The

study can be considered as a teacher resource in the library to guide and help the teacher to deal with punctuation.

Appropriately, again students in general may get benefit of it either in researching or learning writing skills. On the other hand, syllabus developers can make remedies in the light of the results of this study. In addition, it may lead to standard writing among students and go further to other levels.

1.4. Objective of the Study:

This study intends to achieve the following objectives:

- 1- To find out which of these punctuation marks (comma, Semi-colon, colon and full stop) are the most difficult to be used by the students.
- 2- To investigate to what extend third year secondary level students differentiate between using comma and semi-colon.
- 3- To investigate the punctuation marks (comma, Semi-colon, colon and full stop) difficulties that face third year students at secondary school level.

1.5 Questions of the study:

This study sets to answer the following questions:

1. Which of these punctuation marks (comma, Semi-colon, colon and full stop) are the most difficult to be used by the students?
2. Do secondary level students differentiate between using comma and semi-colon?
3. Why do third year secondary level students face difficulties in using comma, Semi-colon, colon and full stop?

1.6. Hypotheses of the study:

In conducting this research on errors of using comma, Semi-colon and full stop, the researcher hypothesizes the following:

1. Comma and semi-colon are more difficult for the students to perceive and use than colon and full stop.
2. The students face difficulties in differentiating between comma and semi-colon.
3. Secondary school students face problems in using punctuation marks specifically comma, Semi-colon, colon and full stop.

1.7. Methodology of the study:

Since this study is concerned with punctuation marks, the researcher adopted the descriptive-analytical method as it fits the nature of the study. The data were collected through questionnaire and test. The test for the students and questionnaire for teachers. Sample of this study consisted of 30 students and 30 teachers chosen randomly. To analyze the data, the researcher used the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program.

1.8. Limitation of the study:

In this research, the researcher focuses on analyzing punctuation marks targeting third year students of Alqabasschool, Omdurman Locality, Khartoum State, during the academic year of 2018-2019.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

2.0. Introduction

This section constitutes of two subsections; the first is a brief review of theoretical aspects related to punctuation marks by the scholars of this particular field, and the second subsection is a brief review of some related previous empirical studies that have been conducted.

2.1.literature Review

This subsection provides definitions and other concepts that related to punctuation marks which have been suggested in some different similar studies.

2.1.1 Writing skills

Byrne, (1995) states that When we write we use graphic symbols letter or combination of letters which relates sound we make when we speak.

Abdel.Monim (1995) mentions that writing involve the encoding of message of some kinds, that we translate our thought into language when someone graphic symbols letters or combination of letter which related to the sound we make when speak on one level, it can be said that writing is an art of forming process in much more than the production of these symbols.

2.1.3The Importance of Writing Skills:

Wehmeier, (2001) says that managers are expected to write reports, emails, memos and letters which their subordinates are supposed to read. Now if this written communication is badly structured and written, the subordinates will waste time trying to decipher it. Badly written communication is also open to misinterpretation. In order for a manager's career to prosper, they need to possess or fine-tune this important skill-set.

Those managers who lack this will spend a huge amount of their time trying to get their communication right. It is essentially unproductive for a manager to waste time and effort looking for the correct words or phrases to use in their written communication. This time spent has an impact on the cost to the company. Therefore, bad writing skills mean greater expenditure for an organization.

Managers can also reap positive benefits through writing well. A manager may come up with an innovative idea that can improve a process or lead to cost saving. In order to present the idea to senior management, the manager would need to send out some sort of written communication asking for permission to explain the idea further. Now if this written communication is not convincing enough, there is very little chance of senior management even considering the idea, leave alone talking the time to attend the presentation. Many outstanding ideas die a natural death simply because they were not communicated effectively.

Corder, (1967) says that the more you write the better you will be at it. You could get coaching on improving your business writing ability where you would be able to assess your strengths and weaknesses and focus on improving your skills. Remember, your writing skills have a direct impact on your career and your future. So it is well worth the extra effort and the time you would spend on improving them.

2.1.4 Teacher's role in writing skills:

The role of the teacher is to facilitate the learning in which learners are given both opportunity and encouragement to write and express their ideas, this role is going to be taken separately whether he/she is controller organizer a participant.

Crystal, (1995) states that your role as a language teacher is to create the best conditions for learning, and you have specific roles to play at a different stage of the learning process, classroom composition does not motivate individual learners but it is also imitates group and discussion.

However, Richards and Lock(1974) specify certain dimensions of classroom behavior for example:

- 1- Appropriate role for displaying knowledge.

- 2- When to ask and answer the questions.
- 3- How and when to get feedback, therefore the teaching should allow learners more opportunity to achieve their role successfully in classroom interaction.

2.1.5. Steps of teaching writing:

Enough planning for the writing lesson requires the teacher to follow these steps – preparation – writing correction and relearning.

2.1.5.1. Preparation:

David. N (1991) claims that in preparation step of teaching writing, the teacher on the first day of writing lesson should introduce the subject that the pupils are going to write about. He should ease any difficulties and write necessary out- line or vocabulary and expression related to the subject.

It may take the form of a short oral introduction or of showing the class pictures, slides or even a film.

Then, the teacher conducts an oral discussion with the class. This provides the pupils with a good chance to transform facts and ideas from their own experiences to express themselves freely.

If discussions are help in the class, they help the teacher as well, because they let him to observe and have an idea about the language problems in the pupils knowledge, so that he can remedy them in due time. Then after the discussion, the teacher should write the out-lines on the blackboard.

Direct questions to pupils must be asked, to enable them to give orally information about the particular point and by encouraging the rest of the class to ask further questions to get more information.

2.1.5.2. Correcting writing:

Allan. (1982) claims that in correcting pupil's writing, the teacher may correct all the mistakes, or select some of them; he also circles those errors that he feels they can correct themselves, because the correct forms were given during the discussion stage. The teacher reform writing the correct alternative forms Instead of writingcorrected items on the pupil's paper.

2.1.6. Procedure of teaching writing:

Teaching writing was and up to date is one of terrible problems that confront teachers of English language.

Huddleston, R. (1984: 2001) says that in many countries teachers and experts begin to produce text books on guided writing that were not strongly dominated by any one linguists (theory) in these texts simple reading selection formed the basis of frame – work to enable the students to communicate ideas with no or a minimum of errors.

On the other hand, much of the work on guided writing consisted of "initiation of models" the selection deals with the real life – structure of a kind suitable for adult students.

David Nunan (1991) states that guided writing is usually took the form of "précis writing". The context could be mostly imaginative, consisting of simple narrative selections of a type that would appeal to older adolescents.

Many teachers, especially the well trained and the most qualified teachers use clear techniques and good procedures of teaching writing.

Some paragraphs are about the everyday life of individuals, others are information pieces about their country's geography, historical figures or social and political life.

The model writing call for the students to provide information from their own life.

2.1.7. The Role Of Learners:

Learners should be given more opportunities to participate classroom to be able contribute to make the problems clear by play the role of the participant in the situation.

Richard and Lock hard, (1974) specify certain dimension of classroom behavior for example:

- 1- When to ask and answer the question.
- 2- Appropriate rule for displaying knowledge.
- 3- How and when to get feedback.

Learners have more opportunities to achieve role successfully in classroom interaction.

2.1.8. Teaching Writing Skills Strategies:

Byrrne (1976) states that choosing the target area depends on many factors; what level are the students? What is the average age of the students? Why are the students learning English? Are there any specific future intentions for the writing? (i.e school tests or job application letters etc.). Other important questions to ask oneself are: What should the students be able to produce at the end of this exercise? (A well written letter, basic communication of ideas... etc.) What is the focus of the exercise? (Structure, tense usage, creative writing). Once these factors are clear in the mind of the teacher, the teacher can begin to focus on how to involve the students in the activity thus promoting a positive, long-term learning experience.

Byrrne (1976: 193) also states that with both the target area and means of production, clear in the teachers mind, the teacher can begin to consider how to involve the students by considering what type of activities are interesting to the students; Are they preparing for something specific such as a holiday or test?, Will they need any of the skills pragmatically? What has been effective in the past? A good way to approach this is by class feedback, or brainstorming sessions. By choosing a topic that involves the students the teacher is providing a context within which effective learning on the target area can be undertaken.

2.1.9 Concept Punctuation Marks:

Kane, (1960) states that all punctuation exist, basically, to help readers understand what you wish to say. It means that punctuation is signs that show what the appropriate expression with the sentence that have been built by the writer. Punctuation makes good writing and make a reading easier.

Harmer, (1970) argues that if we want our students to be good writers in English we need to teach them how to use punctuation conventions correctly. Further he states Using punctuation correctly is an important skill. Many people judge the quality of what written just on the content,

language and the writer's handwriting but also on their use of punctuation. If the capital letters, comma, full stop, sentence and paragraph boundaries, etc. are not used correctly, this cannot only make a negative impression but can, of course, also make text difficult to understand.

It is supported by Jackson, (1985) who states the purpose of punctuation is to enable your reader to interpret unambiguously the structure, and therefore the meaning, of your writing. The absence of full stops to distinguish the sentences in the email above is, in effect, an insult to the readers. It tells the readers to work it out for themselves. Poorly punctuated writing can make for frustrated and annoyed readers, who will be less sympathetic to appreciating the content of what you are writing. So, punctuation is important.

McCaskillet.*al.*(2005) states that the various punctuation marks perform four functions: they (1) separate (a period separates sentences), (2) group or enclose (brackets enclose extraneous information), (3) connect (a hyphen connects a unit modifier), and (4) impart meaning (a question mark may make an otherwise declarative sentence interrogative.)

According to Harmer,(2004) states that "Punctuation has twelve characters, they are: capital letter, full stop, comma, question mark, exclamation mark, colon, semi-colon, hyphen, quotation mark, brackets, dash, and apostrophe. The function of them are:

2.1.9.1. Capital Letter (A, B, C)

Capital letters used for the first letter of a sentence. It should be used in the following cases:

- a. Proper names.

Example: James Pieter, Mary Winter, etc.

- b. The first person pronoun.

Example: I agree with you.

- c. Use capital letters for the days of the week, months, special days, and holidays. But not for the names of the seasons.

Example:

- On Monday, 24th July they celebrated her birthday at a local restaurant.
- My favorite holiday is Thanksgiving, but Valentine's Day is a close second.
- Last fall they spent Thanksgiving in Denmark.

- d. The names of public places, countries and language, institutions, title of books and films.

Example: White House, Italy, the Hollow, Because of You.

- e. Personal titles, like doctor, professor, and judge, when they refer to a specific person. Do not capitalize those words when they refer only to an occupation.

Example:

- 1) The course was taught by Professor Johnson.
 - 2) When I was a kid, I thought I'd be a doctor, but I became a professor instead.
- f. Acronyms are almost always formed with capital letters Example: Asian Free Trade Area(AFTA)

2.1.9.2. Full stop (.)

The full stop is a mark of separation.⁴⁸ It is used at the end of sentence that is not a question or an exclamation.

- a. Mark boundaries between two thoughts or ideas.

Example: He stopped. She stopped too.

- b. Use full stop to end statement and request.

Examples:

- I tell story to him.(statement)
- Tell me a story, please.(request)

- c. After most abbreviations.

Example:

- Prof. H. Gulton, M.Sc.
- Mr. Adelino is my English teacher.

- d. Place full stop before closing quotation marks Example:

The operator presses the letter *n* to indicate "no" and the

letter y to indicate “yes.”

2.1.9. 3. Comma (,)

The comma separates groups of words. It used for:⁴⁹

- i. Use comma before direct quotes.
Examples: She said, “I do love you.”
- ii. Use comma between items in a series (more than two items)
Examples: I would like to Spain, Italy, Australia, and Germany.
- iii. To separate address, letter, and dates.
Examples:
 - Tuesday, December 20, 2006.
 - IAIN RadanIntan is located on Letcol.
EndroSuratmainStreet, Sukarame, BanderLmpung.
 - Dear Mum, I have received your letter last week.
- iv. Use after introductory word or phrase.
Examples:
 - Since you asked, I will tell you
 - Unfortunately, we had lost her address.
- v. Use comma before coordinating conjunction compound
Examples:
 - I come to work early, but no one washere.
 - There is no one in Mr. Freddy’s home, so I comeback.

2.1.9.4. Question Mark (?)

The purpose of the question mark is to terminate a direct question.⁵⁰ Example: What is your name?

2.1.9.5. Exclamation Mark (!)

Exclamation mark is set within a sentence in order to stress the preceding word or phrase. It is usual functionto:⁵¹

2.1.9.6. Colon (:)

In modern writing the most common function of the colon is to introduce a specification. The colon is used as follows:⁵²

- Signal that something like a list or extra information.
Example: There are many kinds of guitar: acoustic, electric, Spanish, or bass guitar.

- Between hours and minutes in time
Example: 11:30a.m.
- To express ratios
Example:
2:1mixture

2.1.9.7. Semi-colon (;)

Semi-colon indicates that the main thrust of a sentence continues, but it temporarily halted. It is used in:⁵³

- I. If coordinate clauses are not joined by a coordinate conjunction, they must be joined by a semi-colon.
Example: The work in the office was quite simple; she had merely to answer her phone and do a little typing.
- II. Semi-colon may separate elements of a series that are complex or require internal commas.
Example: The Capital of the South East of Asian countries are; Indonesia, Jakarta; Philippine, Manila; Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur; Thailand, Bangkok; etc.
- III. If coordinate clauses are joined by a conjunctive adverb (*however, thus, therefore, hence*), a semi-colon (or a period) must precede the conjunctive adverb.
Example: It's raining very hard; therefore, the club will cancel the picnic.

2.1.9.8. Hyphen (-)

Hyphen used to join two or more words together in user-friendly way. It is used in:⁵⁴

- a. Words may be hyphenated at the ends of lines between syllables.
Example: Fatimah didn't go to school
yesterday, be- cause she was ill.
- b. Two-word adjectives where the second part ends in *-edor -ing*.
Example:
- The sad-looking man.

- He was well-informed.
- c. Two-word adjectives which describe a connection „between“ the two elements.

Example:

1. The Paris-Dacca rally.
2. Anglo-Argentine relations.

d. Nouns, verbs, and adjectives (sometimes) to separate prefixes from word roots. Example:

1. A TVco-production
2. Herex-husband

2.1.9.9. Quotation Mark (“”)

Quotation marks used to enclose words quoted from another source, direct discourse, or words requiring differentiation from the surrounding text. It is used for:⁵⁵

- a. Enclose quotation of direct speech.
Example: He said, “Watch out!”
- b. Use quotation marks to indicate the titles of short story or poem and song title. Examples:
 1. “The Snow White” is a memorable short story.
 2. My dad and I danced to “When a Man Loves a Woman” at my wedding.

2.1.9.10. Brackets [()]

Used to enclose extra information that is not absolutely necessary and which may seem outside the meaning thrust of the sentence.⁵⁶

Example:

The Cambridge Folk Festival (held in the grounds of Cherry Hinton Hall) is one of the most enjoyable dates in the Cambridge calendar.

2.1.9.11 Dash (–)

It used to separates an idea from the rest of the sentence.⁵⁷

Example: If you want to succeed – really succeed – you must study hard.

2.1.9.12. Apostrophe (')

The functions of the apostrophe are to indicate possession and contractions.⁵⁸

- i. Use the apostrophe to show possession.

Example: This is Mike's book.

- ii. Use the apostrophe with contractions.

Example: She's a great teacher.

Based on the theory above, it can be summarized that punctuation is the sign of writing to make clear the writer's ideas. Punctuation can help the writer express their meaning in writing. In other words, using punctuation correctly will help the readers understand what the writers intend to communicate. In conclusion, punctuation is placed in a text to make the meaning clear and to make reading easier. Each character has different meaning. In this research, the researcher only focused on nine punctuations, because they usually used in writing; they are: capital letter, full stop, comma, colon, quotation mark, exclamation mark, brackets, hyphen, and apostrophe.

2.2. Previous studies:

This sub-section provides three local and two international previous studies that have been conducted in the same area as the present study.

2.2.1. Study No. (1):

In the first study conducted by (Alsiraj, M., 2012) *in his thesis Investigating Teaching and Using Punctuation Marks at the Basic Schools*. The research aims to investigate the teachers techniques, and students strategies in punctuation teaching and learning. It also investigates, if the level of the learner influences his choice of each strategy of learning punctuation marks. The subjects of the study were 100 students and 20 teachers. They are utilized for data collection.

The study revealed that students have lack of knowledge in using Punctuation Marks. also found that the teachers teach punctuation marks through lesson get (sometimes) and provide much material to

help students to improve their writing skills. The study shows that there is a gap in text books about the activities and drills to supplement to cover the storage of the syllabus content. The study recommends Teachers to develop themselves with lots of training works shops.

In contrary with present study it is found that the two studies agreed that the problem is traced back to syllabus itself and the way it was taught.

2.2.2. Study No. (2):

In the second study conducted by (Salim, M., 2005) in his thesis under the title the "Investigating of Problems of Using Punctuation Marks to the first year students" investigate the most common punctuation errors made by first year secondary school students. The researcher uses the methodology of testing. In that she gives students a test on punctuation to determine the areas of difficulty in using these marks.

The study manifests that Sudanese students face difficulty in using punctuation marks due to the lack of background knowledge in the types and using punctuation marks. Also proved that most of teachers don't use visual aids when they come to teach punctuation marks. the study recommends teachers to use visual aid so as facilitate understanding the uses punctuation marks and recommends students to give lots of attention to this important area in writing .

In contrary with the present study it is clear that they agreed that the problem is traced back to the lack of background knowledge in the types of using punctuation marks and the lack of using visual aids in the classroom.

2.2.3. Study No. (3):

The third study conducted by (Bokhari, A., 2013) "Investigating Punctuation and Spelling Errors on Writing English Composition of Sudanese Secondary School Students". at Sudan University for

science and Technology, College of graduate Studies, the research aims to investigate punctuation marks and spelling errors in writing English composition of Sudanese secondary EFL learners. The study also investigates the factors behind these errors. In order to collect the research data two tests, a guided composition and a questionnaire were used. The two tests intended to investigate the spelling errors. The questionnaire was used to measure the student's attitude towards punctuation marks and spelling in English. The results of the tests proved that the EFL learners have punctuation and spelling as problematic areas. The questionnaire results showed that the reasons for punctuation marks errors refer to the syllabus itself and the ways were taught aren't effective and the syllabus doesn't cover or provide enough exercises on punctuation marks and spelling. The study also proves that many teachers don't give enough attention in teaching punctuation marks and spelling.

The study recommended that punctuation marks and spelling should be taught throughout contexts and students should be aware that punctuation and spelling are a part of their problems. It also recommended that the EFL learners should be provided with effective syllabus that covers the problematic areas on punctuation and spelling.

In contrary with the present study , the two study agreed the reasons for punctuation marks errors refer to the syllabus itself and the ways were taught aren't effective and the syllabus doesn't cover or provide enough exercises on punctuation marks and spelling. The study also proves that many teachers don't give enough attention in teaching punctuation marks and spelling.

2.2.4. STUDY NO. (4):

In the fourth study conducted by (Zaru,Z., 2016) at Hebron University, the researcher aims to investigate the most frequent punctuation and capitalization errors made by EFL learners and to find out whether there were significant differences in the frequency of such errors due to the learner academic level, major, and/ or gender.

The sample consisted of 157 students from the English department of Hebron University / Palestine in the academic year 2014/2015. Specially designed test was administered whereby the students were asked to fill in necessary punctuation marks and correct capitalization errors. The findings revealed that the most frequent errors were made in capitalization, comma, semi-colon, period, quotation mark respectively from the highest to lowest occurrence. Unexpectedly, there were no significant differences in the frequency of the punctuation and capitalization errors made by the students due to their academic level, major, or gender.

In contrary with the present study, it is found the two study agreed that most of the frequent errors were made in comma, semi-colon and colon.

2.2.5. Study No. (5):

In the fifth study conducted by (Awad,A., 2012) the researcher aims to investigate the most common punctuation errors made by the English and TEFL Majors at Al-najah National University make in their writing. To this end, the researcher administered a test in a stratified random sample of 100 students from Al-najah National University: 45 males and 55 females from the TEFL Department in the Faculty of Education and the English department in Faculty of Arts.

The findings revealed that the most common errors among the English and the TEFL majors at Al-najah University were: the over use of comma at the expense use of period, the incorrect use of the capital letter, the wrong use of quotation mark and the misuse of semicolon respectively. Furthermore the results indicate that there were no significant differences in the number of punctuation errors due to gender and department; however, the result revealed that there were significant differences in the number of punctuation errors among the participant due to academic level. In the light of the study findings, the researcher recommended that all the teaching staff should over stress the

importance of all punctuation marks in writing and oral communication courses.

In contrary with the present study, it was proved and agreed that there is a problematic are in teaching punctuation marks.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction:

This chapter provides a brief look on the methodology adopted to carry out the study. It gives information about the population, the sample and the selection of participants. It also describes the validity and reliability of the instruments and finally it shows the steps and stages used in the study and it concludes with data analysis.

3.1.The Method:

To answer the present study questions, two methods of data collection were conducted; a teachers' questionnaire and diagnostic test for students. The teachers' questionnaire was developed and distributed to (30) EFL secondary teachers who were selected randomly. Whilst, the testing was carried out on two classes.

3.2. Population and Sampling:

The population of this study consisted of both teachers and students in secondary schools in Khartoum state.(30) students were selected from Alqabas Secondary School in Omdurman Locality and(30) teachers were randomly chosen to represent the study sample.

3.3. The tools:

The tools utilized for data collection were a test and questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to thirty EFL teachers who are experienced teaching different levels of (SPINE) in secondary schools. Five of those selected teachers have experienced teaching for more than 20 years and the rest has been working in the field for two to ten years. And the test was distributed to (30) students in grade three at Alqabas Secondary School (two classes).

3.4.The Test:

The test contents of two section and 24 items. The purpose of the first section is to identify which of these punctuation marks (comma, semi-colon, colon and full-stop) are the most difficult to be understood by the students and the second section to find out if the students differentiate between using comma and semicolon.

The test was distributed to two classes at Alqabas Secondary School provided the researcher with an opportunity to investigate on which of these punctuation marks (comma, Semi-colon, colon and full stop) are the most difficult to be used by the students and to some extent do secondary level students differentiate between using comma and semi-colon.

The students test (see appendix) is composed of two questions. The purpose behind using these options was to facilitate the process of obtaining data from the respondents.

3.4.1. Validity of the test:

The test was reviewed by some experts in the field of linguistic whose participation was valuable and requested for establishing the content validity of the test. The experts commented on the content of the test items and the researcher modified and updated them upon their request.

3.4.2. Reliability of the test:

To establish the reliability of the test, this was carried out on some students from the same school and who were not part of the main sample. Furthermore, to avoid forgetfulness the researcher gave the target students a revision in using punctuation marks (comma, semi-colon, colon and full stop).

3.5. Questionnaire:

The purpose of the questionnaire was to investigate the views of teachers upon why do secondary level students make errors in using comma,

Semi-colon, colon and full stop. The questionnaire consisted of eight multiple-choice type questions. It took the teacher approximately three to five minutes to fill out the questionnaire. Fortunately, all teachers responded to answer all the questions.

3.5.1. Validity of the Questionnaire:

The questionnaire was given to a lecturer at Sudan University and another expert lecturer at Sinnar University to judge its validity. The two experts were asked to review and check its convenience. The experts' advice, comments, modification and suggestions were taken into consideration. The researcher followed all which said by experts until he came up with a final draft that to great extent convinced all of them.

3.5.2 Reliability of the Questionnaire:

The questionnaire was piloted to check its reliability. Four teachers who were not part of the main samples were selected to respond to the questionnaire. Then it was administrated again for the second time and the results showed stability in the answers.

Reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of item
0.032	8

Cronbach's Alpha is 0.032 which indicates very slowly reliability of the test

3.6. Research Procedures:

- 1) The research procedures began with a review of theoretical and empirical studies related to the topic under investigation for the purpose of establishing the tools of the current study and to set the research procedures.

- 2) The researcher obtained a letter of permission from Sudan University of Science and technology, registering office to facilitate the process of researching.
- 3) The researcher constructed the teachers' questionnaire and the test and checked their validity and reliability by some experts.
- 4) The tools were applied during the last two weeks of December, 2018.
- 5) After the data were collected, the items of the test and questionnaire statements were analyzed and described.
- 6) Results were discussed and recommendations were suggested.

3.7. Data Analysis:

The data collected through the test and the questionnaire were tabulated and treated statistically by the (SPSS) programme.

3.8. Summary:

The aim of this chapter is to give a clear description of methodology and design of the present study and how data was collected and analyzed in fulfilling the research purpose. Besides that, this chapter gives a description of testing the validity and reliability of tools used. Finally, the chapter displays the procedures followed in conducting the study. In the next two chapters, data will be analyzed and discussed and findings of the research will be provided and followed by further discussion and conclusion to the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

4.0 Introduction:

After presenting a detailed description of the subjects and the tools of collecting and classifying the data in the previous chapter, this chapter is set to provide a statistical analysis for the data collected through the test and teachers' questionnaire.

The purpose of this chapter is to find answers to the below-listed questions raised by the study through testing the research hypotheses:

1. Which of these punctuation marks (comma, semi-colon, colon and full stop) are the most difficult to be used by the students?
2. Do secondary level students differentiate between using comma and semi-colon?
3. Why do secondary level students make errors in using comma, semi-colon, colon and full stop?

4.1. Test analysis:

This section answers the researcher's first and second questions which are mentioned above.

In order to provide acceptable answers to these two questions the researcher used a test tool, through which the following results were obtained.

4.1.1. Question one

Which of these punctuation marks (comma, semi-colon, colon and full stop) are the most difficult to be used by the student?

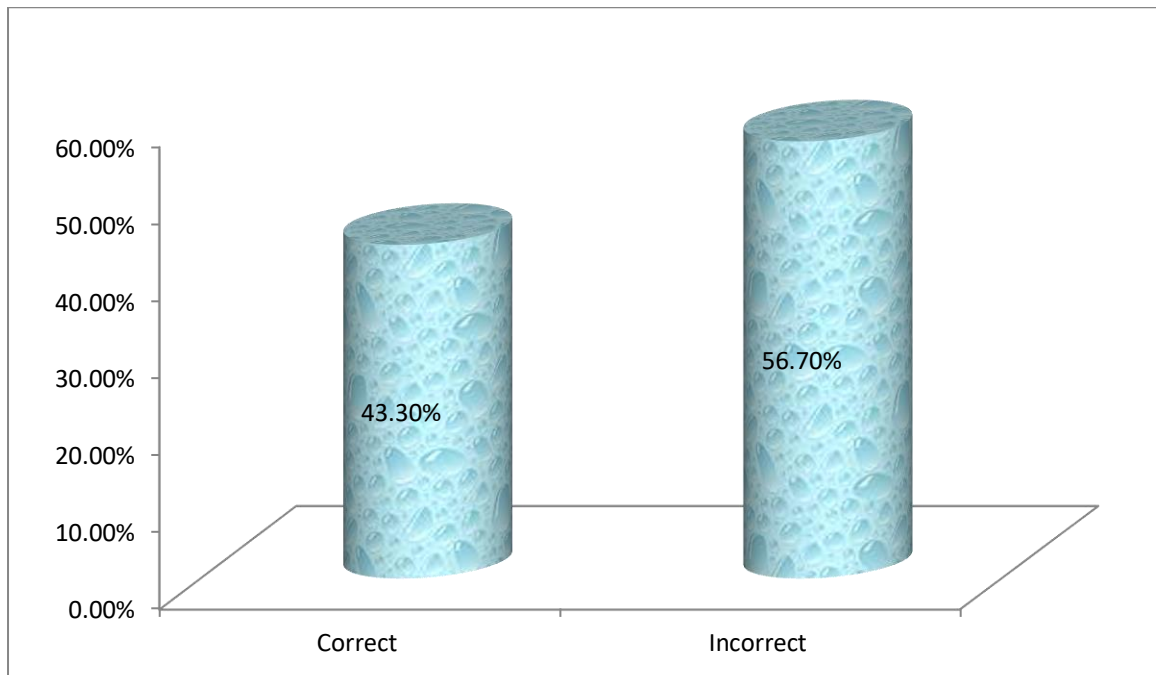
4.1.1.1. Semi-colon

Item (1): Call me tomorrow_ you can give me answer then.

Table (4.1) frequencies and percentage to item one

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	13	43.3%
Incorrect answer	17	56.7%
Total	30	100%

Figure (1) frequencies and percentage to item(1)



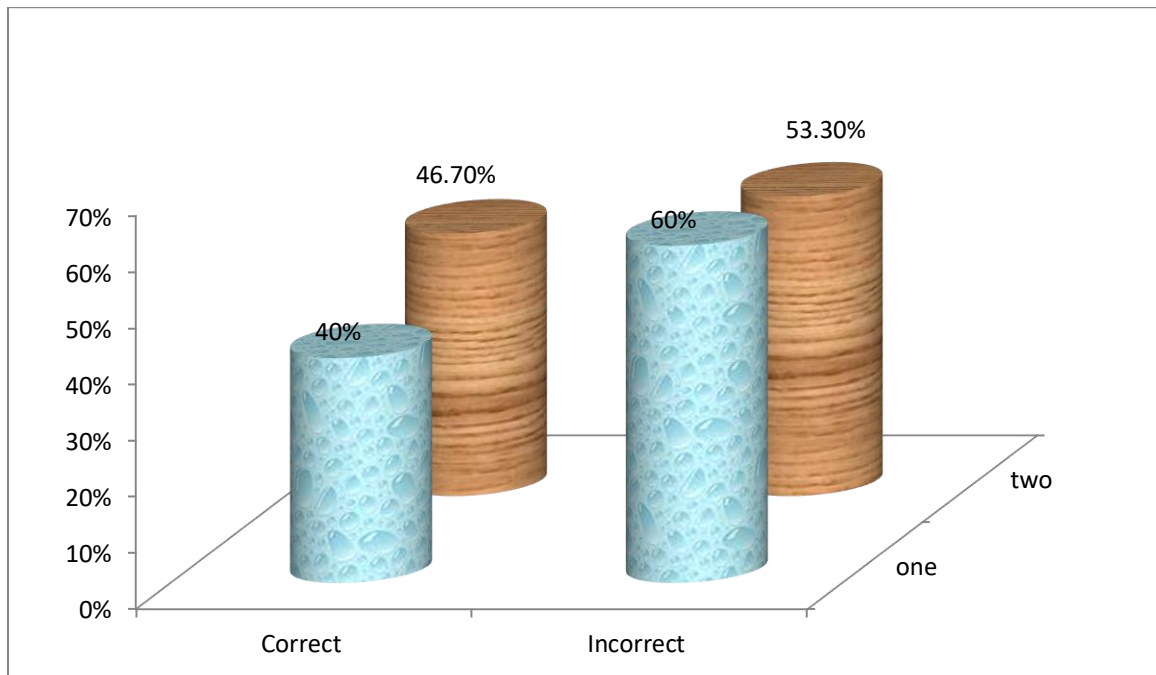
Based on the statistics and figure (1) above it has been seen that there were 43.3% of the sample got the correct answer in contrast to 56.7% who failed.

Item (4.2): I planned to study Saturday morning ---- (1) --- however---(2)-- the power in our house went out due to a storm.

Table (4.2) frequencies and percentage to item(2)

	One		Two	
	F	%	F	%
Correct answer	12	40%	14	46.7%
Incorrect answer	18	60%	16	53.3%
Total	30	100%	30	100%

Figure (4.2) frequencies and percentage to item (2)



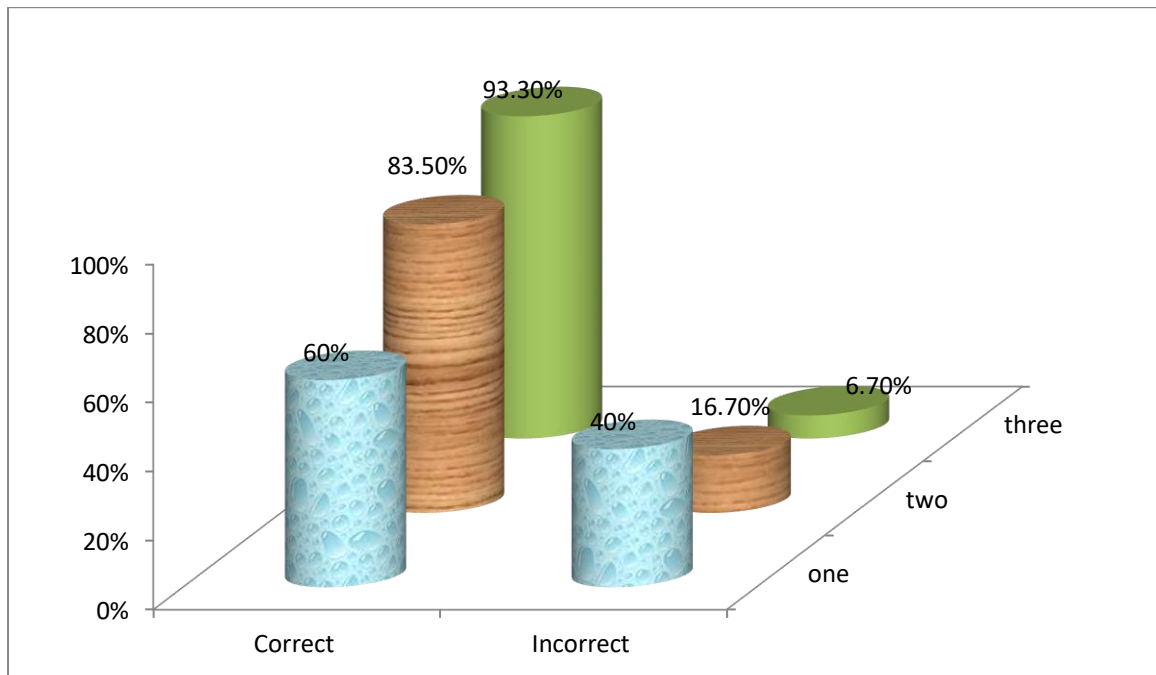
With regard to the item (4.2) as shown in the table and figure above, the percentage of the correct responses to first part of the statement was 40% while 60% of responses were incorrect. As for the second part of the statement 46.7% of the sample got the correct answer in contrast to 53.3% of them did not.

Item (4.3): I have lived in Los Angeles, California _ Boston, Massachusetts _ Trenton, New Jersey _ and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Table (3) frequencies and percentage to item (3)

	One		Two		Three	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Correct answer	18	60%	25	83.3%	28	93.3%
Incorrect answer	12	40%	5	16.7%	2	6.7%
Total	30	100%	30	100%	30	100%

Figure (4.3) frequencies and percentage to item (3)



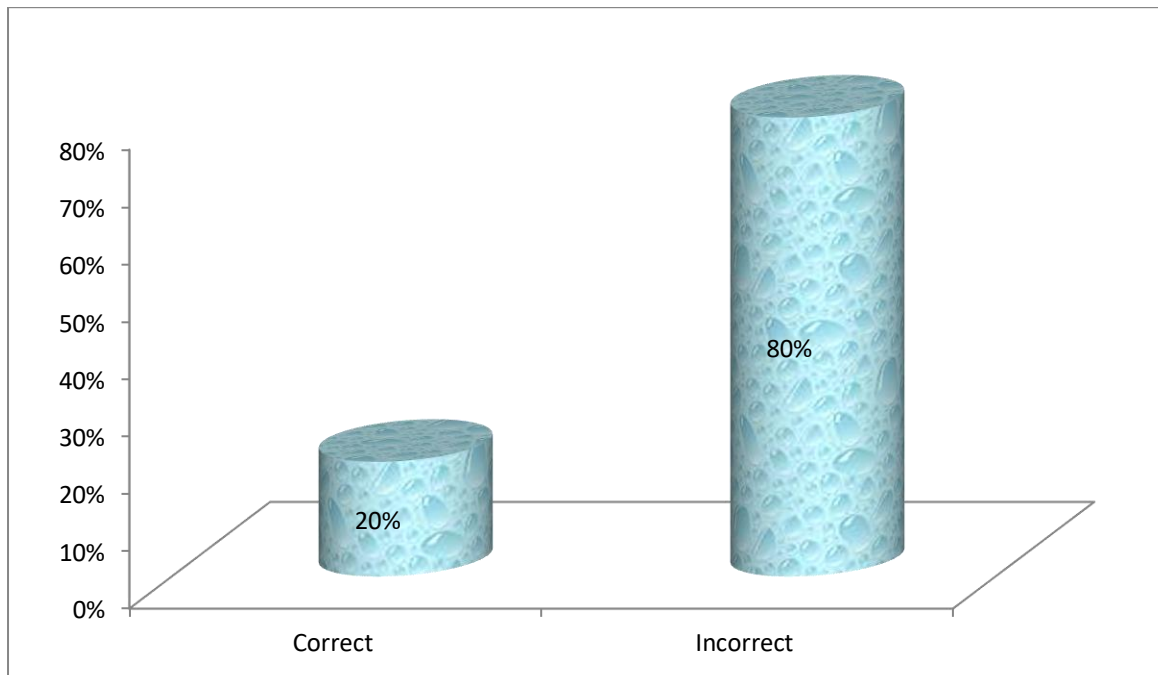
With reference to the test item (3) the statistical table and figure above show that: for part one 60% of the responses were correct in contrast to 40% of incorrect answers. As for part two, 83.3% of sample's responses were correct in contrast to 16.7% of incorrect responses. Regarding the part three, 93.3% of participants' responses to this part was correct comparing to only 6.7% of incorrect responses. The overall result of the three parts of this item obviously is good although it is in the favor of the hypothesis.

Item (4.4): Some people write with a word processor, tablet, or even a phone _ but others, for different reasons, choose to write with a pen or pencil.

Table (4) frequencies and percentage to item (4)

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	6	20%
Incorrect answer	24	80%
Total	30	100%

Figure (4) frequencies and percentage to item (4)



With regard to table and figure (4) above it is clearly seen that: there were 20% of sample size responded correctly to item four while 80% of them failed. Certainly, this result is in the favour of the hypothesis (1).

4.1.1.2. Comma:

5-They own a cat _ a dog _ two rabbits and seven mice .

Table (5) frequencies and percentage to item (5)

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	10	50%
Incorrect answer	20	50%
Total	30	100%

Figure (5) frequencies and percentage to question one

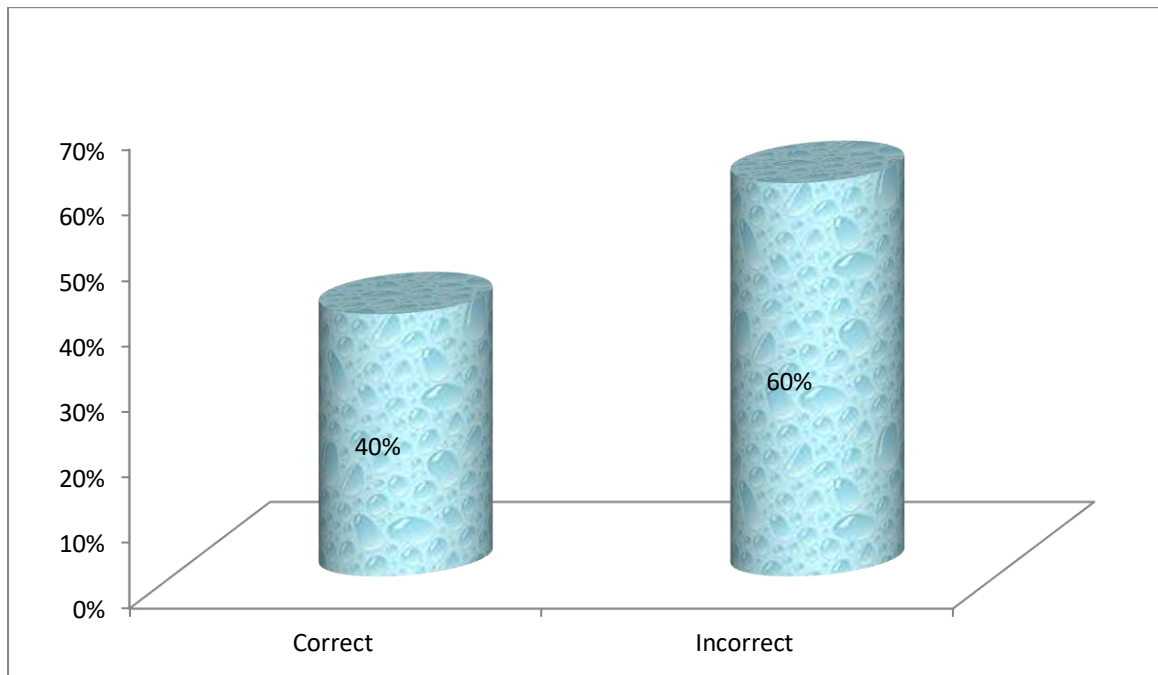


Table and figure (5) showed that there were 40.% of sample size got correct answer where 60% of them got incorrect answer.

6-Are you Gabriel Gama _ Jr?

Table (4.6) frequencies and percentage to item (6)

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	23	66.7%
Incorrect answer	7	33.4%
Total	30	100%

Figure (6) frequencies and percentage to item(6)

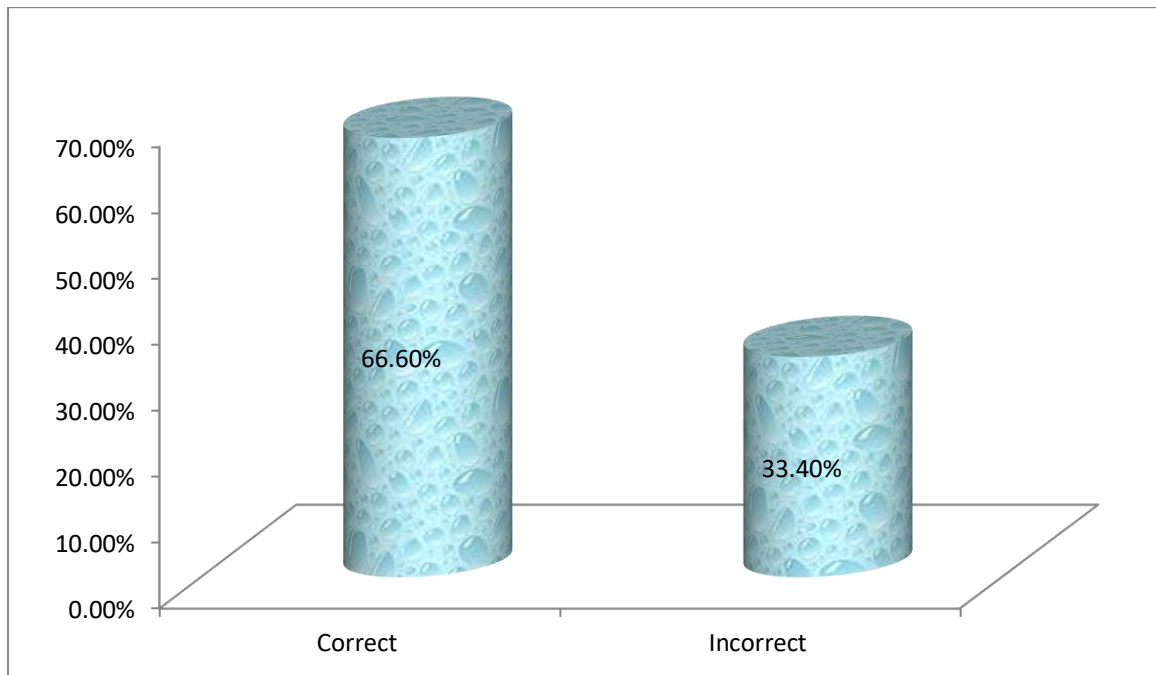


Table and figure (6) showed that there were 66.6% of sample size got correct answer where 33.4% of them got incorrect answer. Certainly, this result is not in the favour of the hypothesis (1) but forward.

7-My best friend _Yomna_ arrived

Table (7) frequencies and percentage to item (7)

	One		Two	
	F	%	F	%
Correct answer	7	23.3%	11	36.7%
Incorrect answer	23	76.7%	19	63.3%
Total	30	100%	30	100%

Figure (7) frequencies and percentage to item (7)

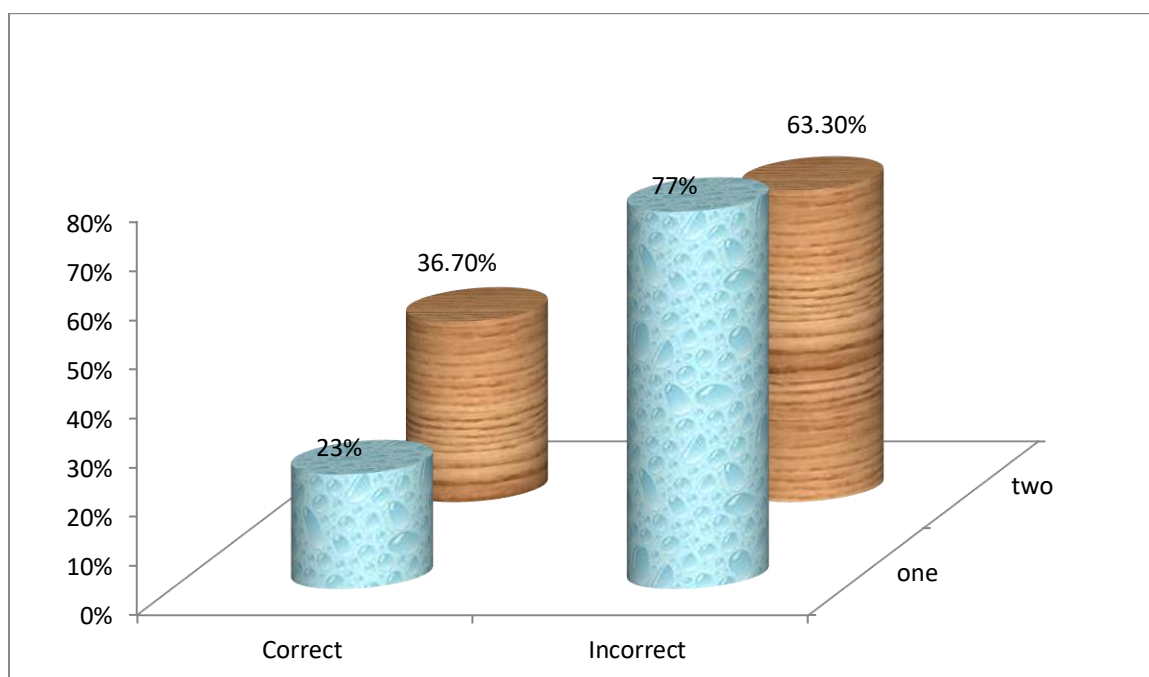


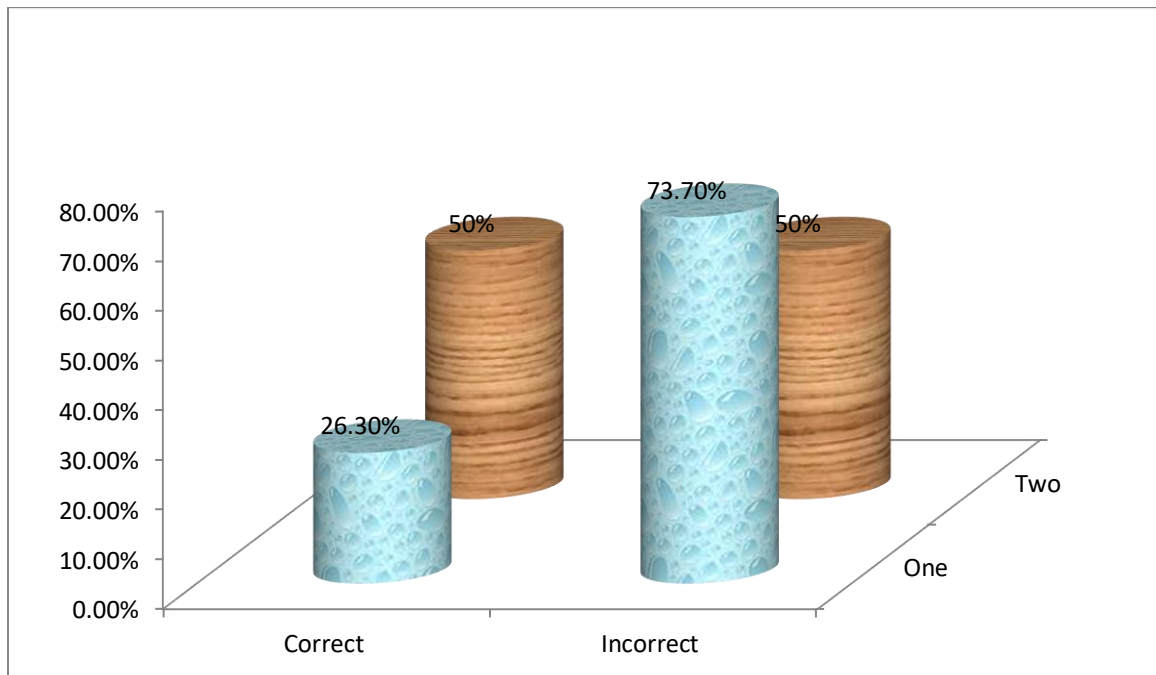
Table and figure (7) showed that: for part one there was 23% of sample size got correct answer where 77% of them got incorrect answer. For part two there was 36.7% of sample size got correct answer where 63.3% of them got incorrect answer. Obviously, this result is in the favour of the hypothesis (1).

8-The man _whose car is white _is my friend.

Table (8) frequencies and percentage to item (8)

	One		Two	
	F	%	F	%
Correct answer	22	73.4%	15	50%
Incorrect answer	8	126.6%	15	50%
Total	30		100%	

Figure (8) frequencies and percentage to item (8)



With regard to table and figure (8) above it is clearly seen that: there were 26.3% of sample size responded correctly to item (8) while 73.7% of them failed. For part two the correct and incorrect answer had the same percent 50%. Certainly, the first part result in the favour of the hypothesis (1).

4.1.1.3. Colon

9- The program will start at 22_30 a.m.

Table (9) frequencies and percentage to item (9)

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	6	20%
Incorrect answer	24	80%
Total	30	100%

Figure (9) frequencies and percentage to item (9)

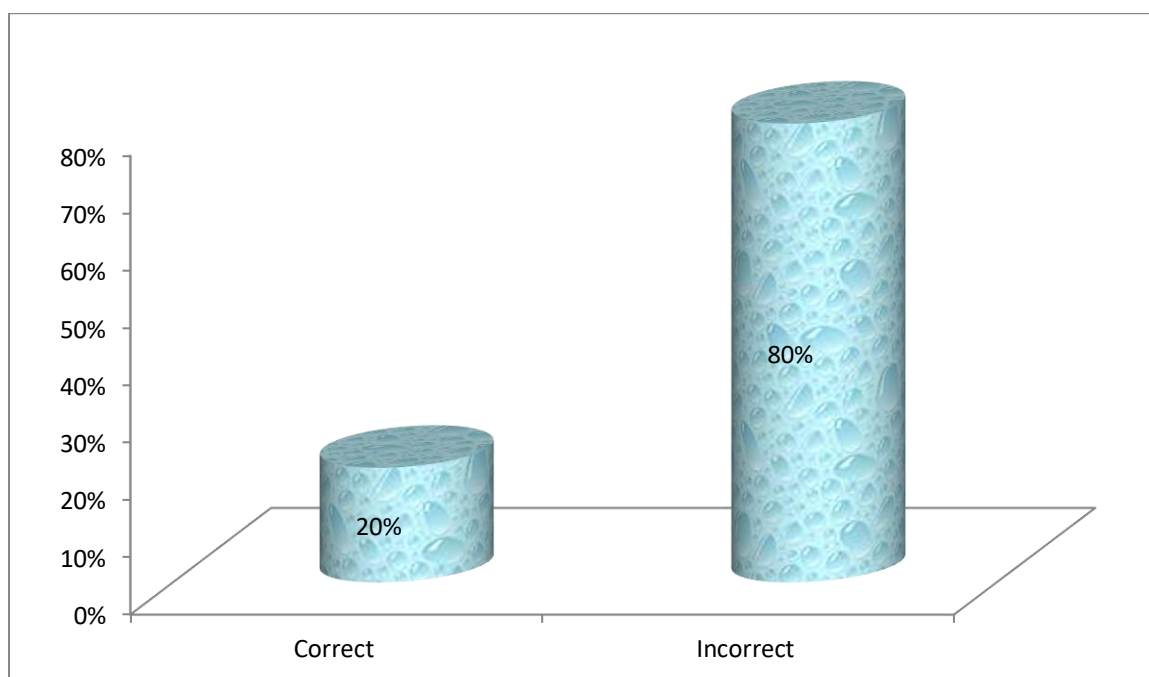


Table and figure (9) showed that there were (20) % of sample size got correct answer where 80% of them got incorrect answer. Obviously, this result is not in the favour of the hypothesis (1) but forward it indicates it is one of the most difficult punctuation marks to be perceived and used.

10-I was so hungry that I ate everything in the house _ chips, cold pizza, hot dogs, peanut butter and candy.

Table (10) frequencies and percentage to item (10)

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	1	3.4%
Incorrect answer	29	96.6%
Total	30	100%

Figure (10) frequencies and percentage to item (10)

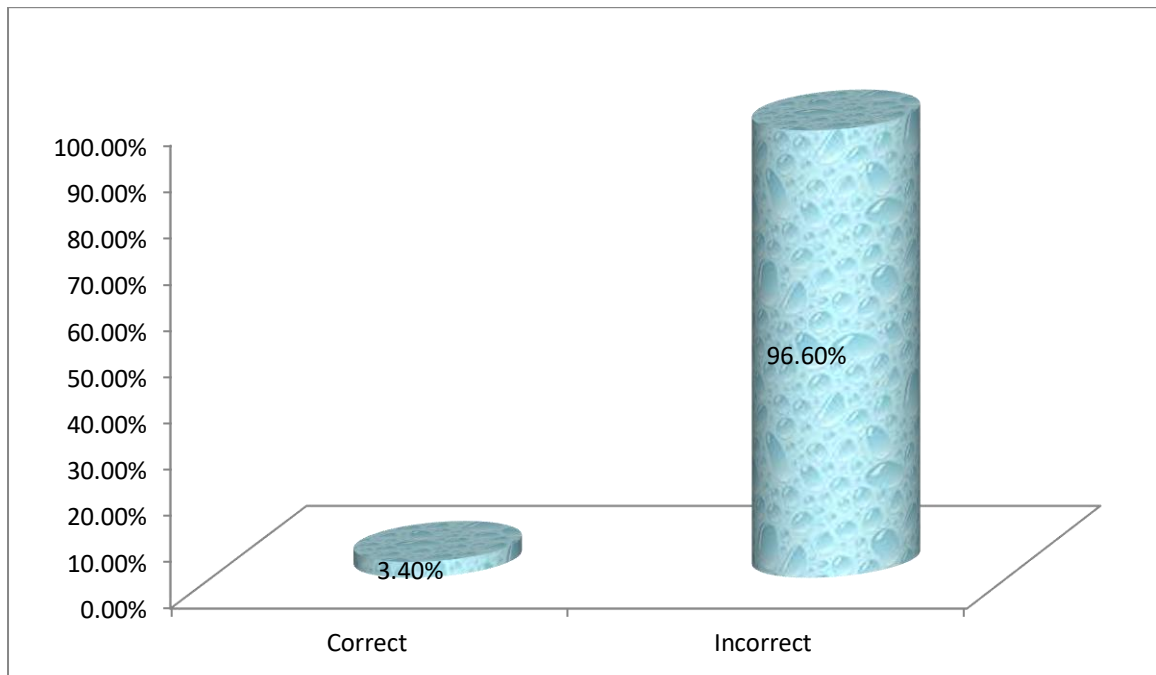


Table and figure (10) showed that there were 96.6% of sample size got correct answer where 3.4% of them got incorrect answer. Obviously, this result is not in the favour of the hypothesis (1) but forward it indicates it is one of the most difficult punctuation marks to be perceived and used.

11-You have two choices _ finish the work today or lose the contract.

Table (11) frequencies and percentage to item (11)

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	2	93.4%
Incorrect answer	28	6.7%
Total	30	100%

Figure (11) frequencies and percentage to item (11)

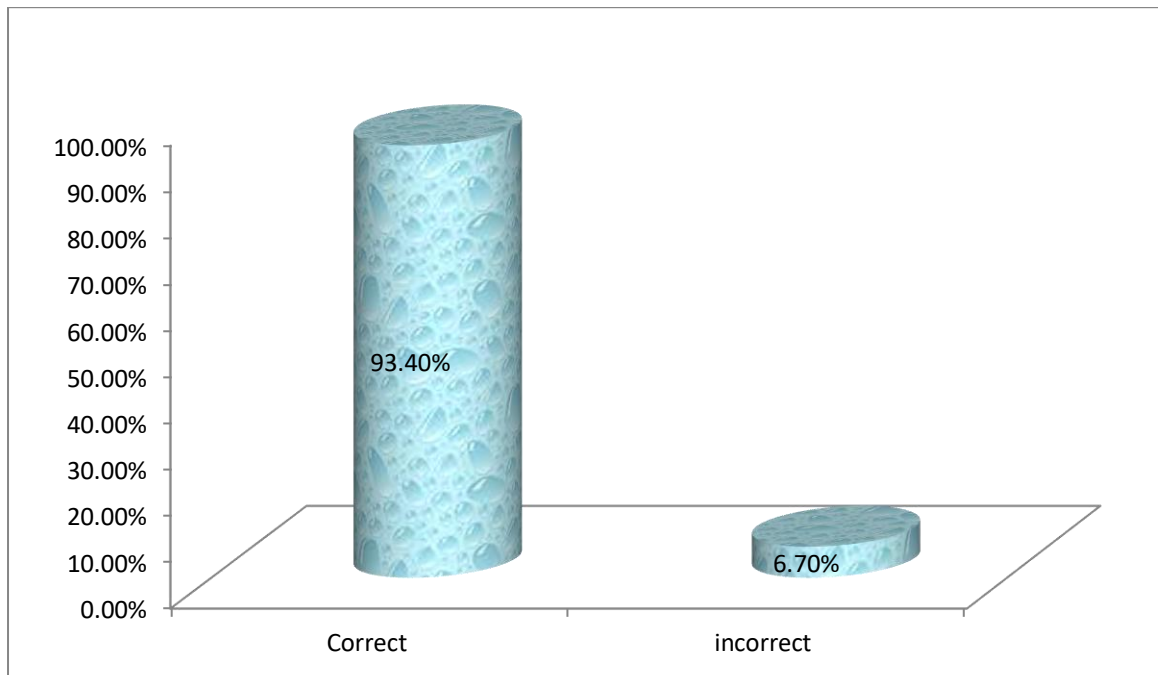


Table and figure (11) showed that there were 93.4% of sample size got correct answer where 6.7% of them got incorrect answer. Obviously, this result is not in the favour of the hypothesis (1) but forward it indicates it is one of the most difficult punctuation marks to be perceived and used.

12-Adam _ who did this?

John _ I don't know.

Table (12) frequencies and percentage to item (12)

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	10	25%
Incorrect answer	20	75%
Total	30	100%

Figure (12) frequencies and percentage to item (12)

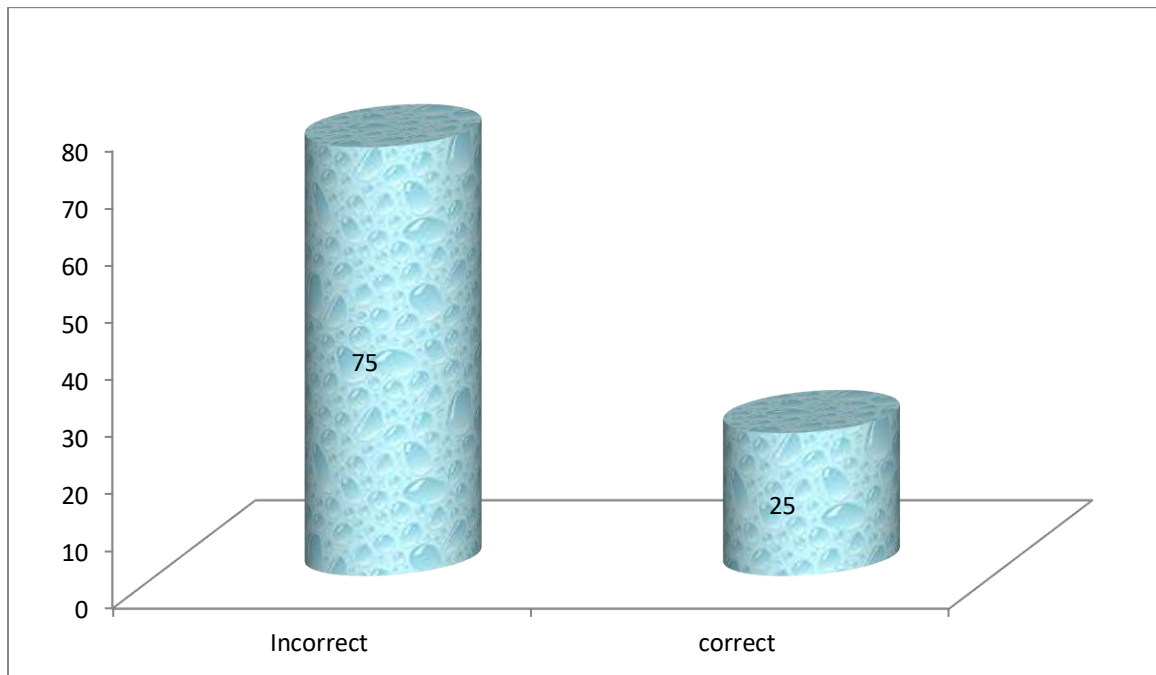


Table and figure (12) showed that there were (25) % of sample size got correct answer where (75) % of them got incorrect answer. Obviously, this result is not in the favour of the hypothesis (1) but forward it indicates it is one of the most difficult punctuation marks to be perceived and used.

4.1.1.4. Full stop

13-I live in Omdurman _

Table (13) frequencies and percentage to item (13)

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	30	100%
Incorrect answer	0.0	0.0%
Total	30	100%

Figure (13) frequencies and percentage to item (13)

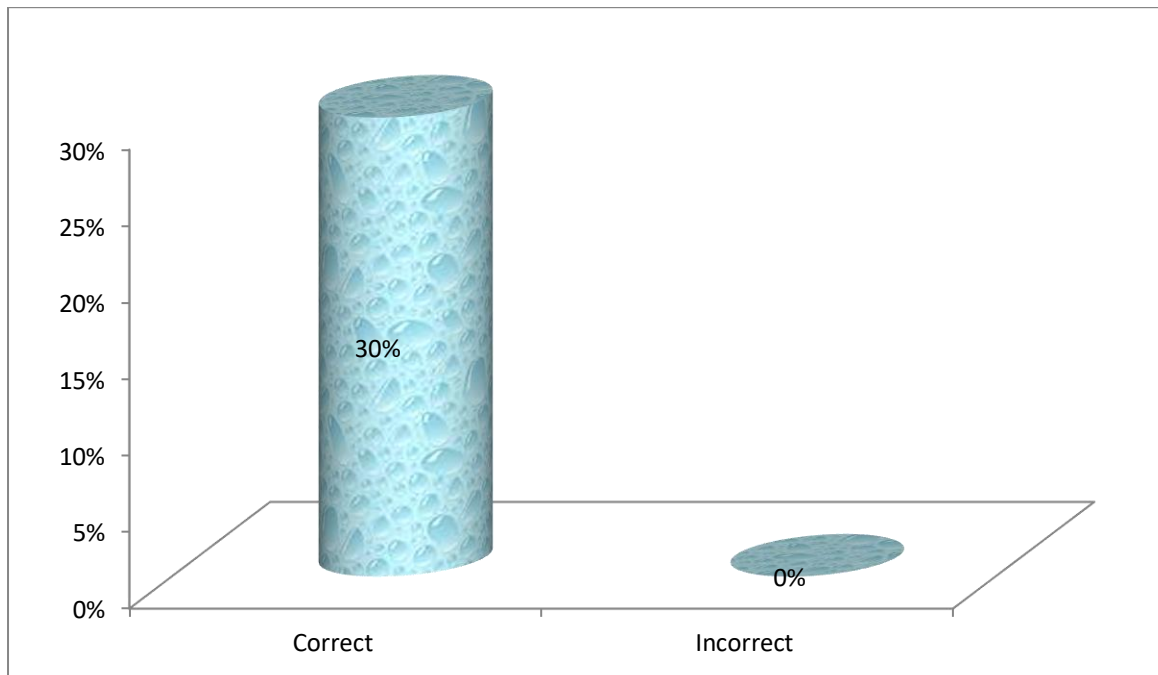


Table and figure (13) showed that all answer were correct. Obviously, this result is in the favour of the hypothesis (1)

14- I live in U_S_A.

Table (14) frequencies and percentage to item (14)

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	10	25%
Incorrect answer	20	75%
Total	30	100%

Figure (14) frequencies and percentage to item (14)

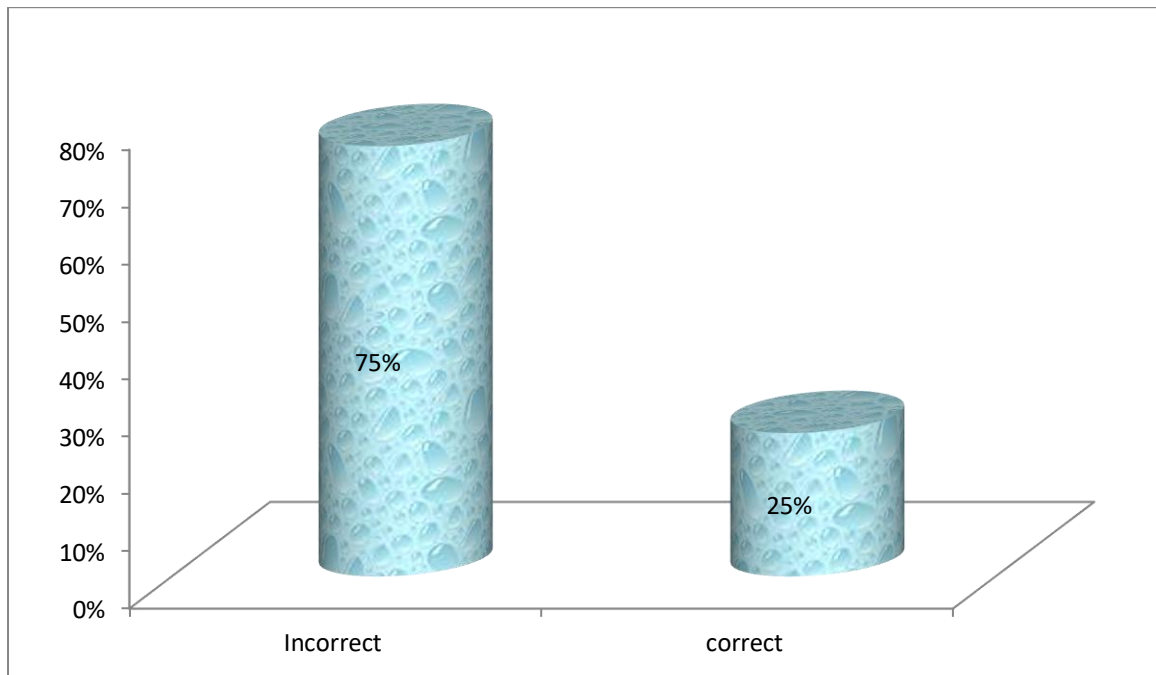


Table and figure (14) showed that there were 25% of sample size got correct answer where 75% of them got incorrect answer.

15- There's a wide range of sandwiches, pies, cakes, etc _ at very reasonable a prices.

Table (15) frequencies and percentage to item (15)

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	14	46.7%
Incorrect answer	16	53.3%
Total	30	100%

Figure (15) frequencies and percentage to (15)

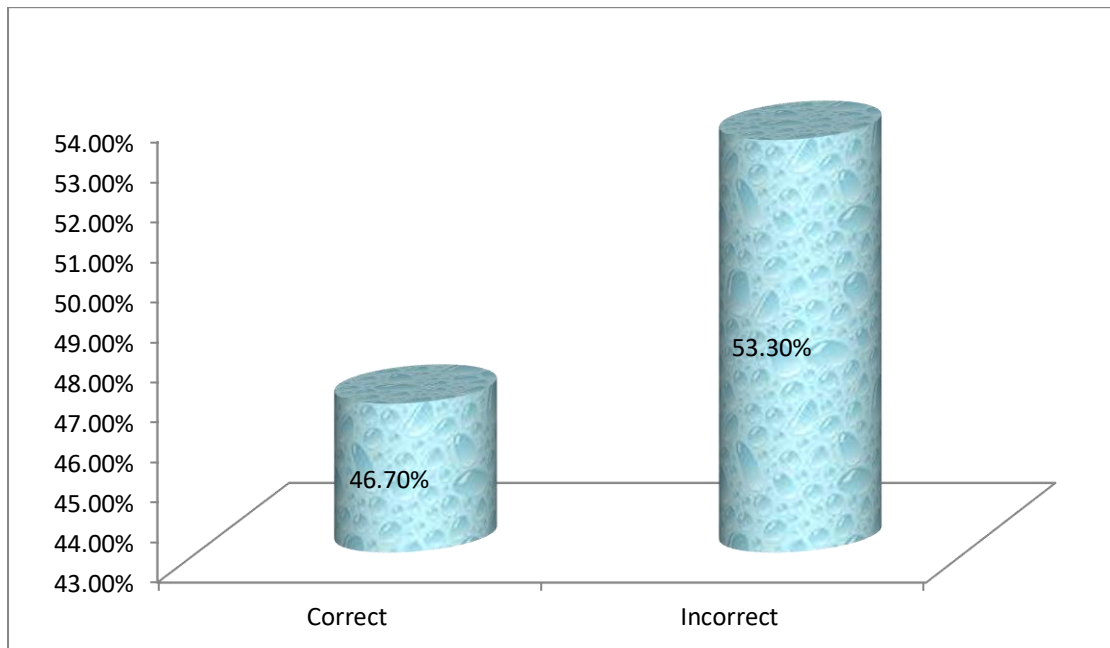


Table and figure (15) showed that there were 46.7% of sample size got correct answer where 53.3% of them got incorrect answer. Obviously, this result is in the favour of the hypothesis (1)

16-Alice Email is elice 444 @ gmail _com.

Table (15) frequencies and percentage to question sixteen

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	4	13.3%
Incorrect answer	26	86.7%
Total	30	100%

Figure (16) frequencies and percentage to item (16)

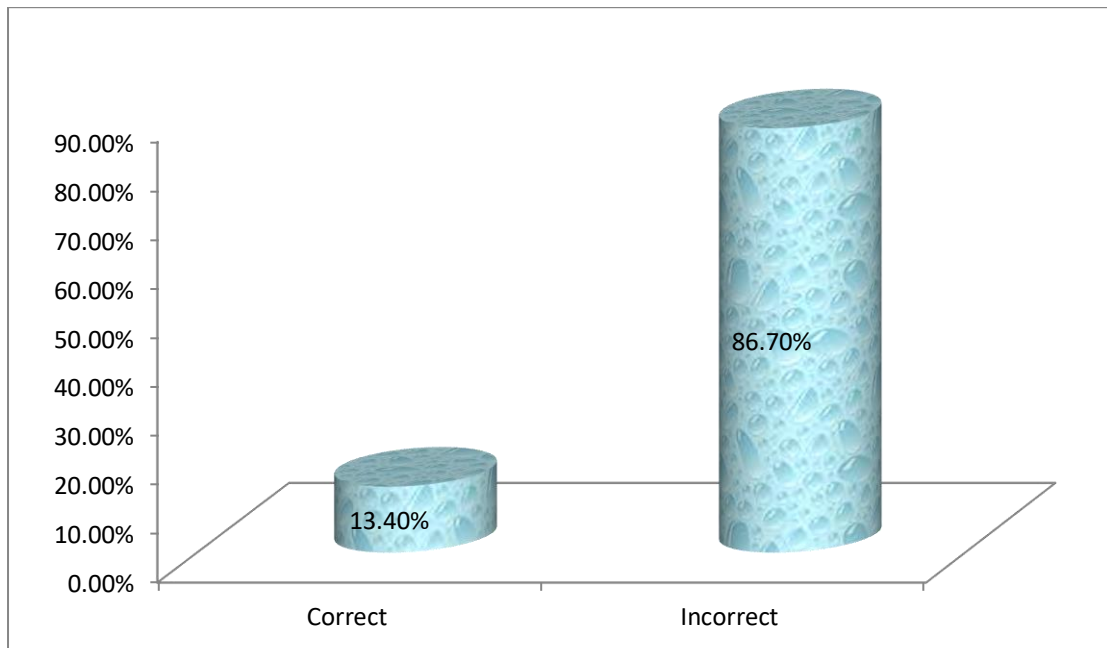


Table and figure (16) showed that there were 13.3% of sample size got correct answer where 86.7% of them got incorrect answer. Obviously, this result is not in the favour of the hypothesis (1) but forward.

Question two:

Do secondary level students differentiate between using comma and semi-colon?

Comma and semi-colon

1-I was born in June 18_1992.

Table (17) frequencies and percentage to question one

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	18	60%
Incorrect answer	12	40%
Total	30	100%

Figure (17) frequencies and percentage to question one

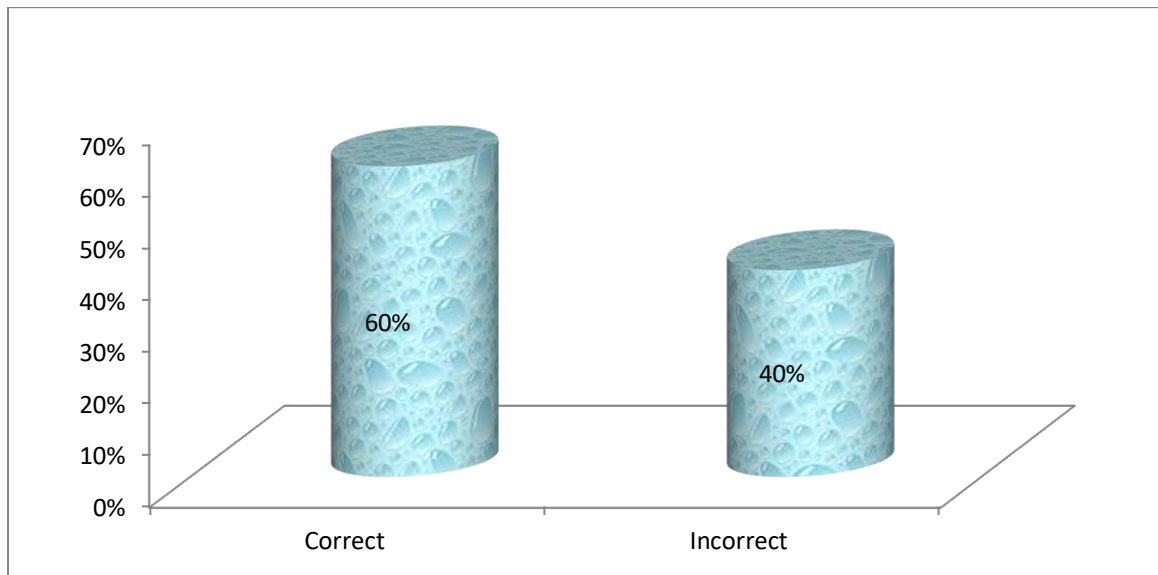


Table and figure (17) showed that there were (60) % of sample size got correct answer where 40% of them got incorrect answer.

2-I like cows _ however _ I hate the way they smell.

Table (18) frequencies and percentage to question two

	One		Two	
	F	%	F	%
Correct answer	4	13.3%	8	26.7%
Incorrect answer	26	86.7%	22	73.3%
Total	30	100%	100%	100%

Figure (18) frequencies and percentage to question two

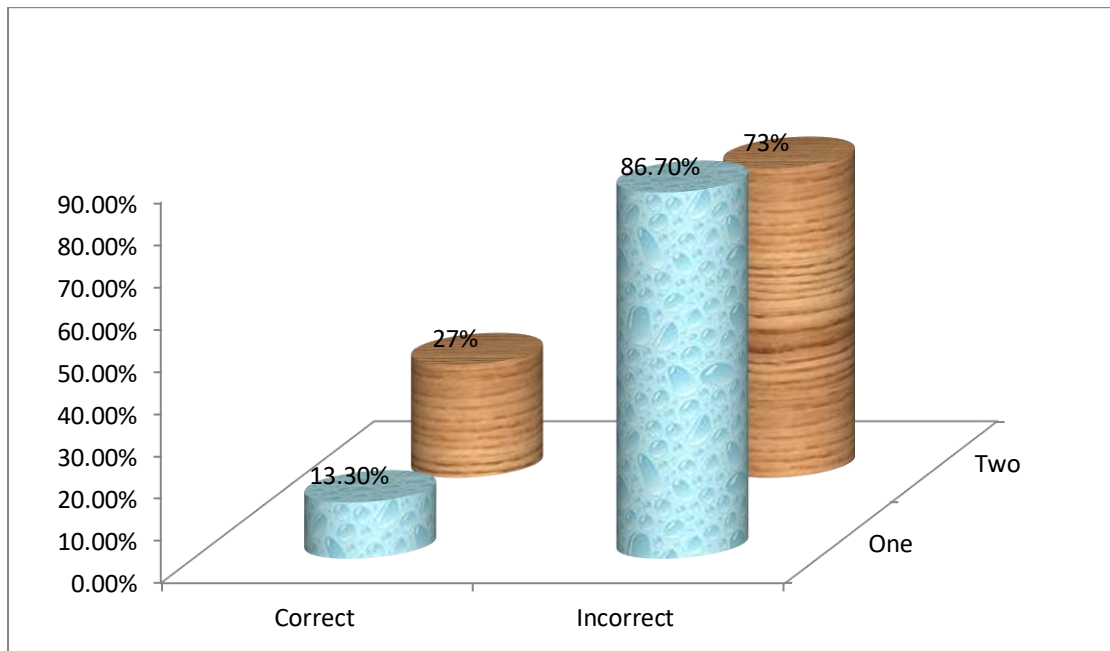


Table and figure (18) showed that: for part one there was 13.3% of sample size got correct answer where 86.7% of them got incorrect answer. For part two there was 27% of sample size got correct answer where 73% of them got incorrect

3-When I finish here, and I will soon, I'll be glad to help you _and that is a promise I will keep.

Answer Table (19) frequencies and percentage to question nineteen

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	10	33.4%
Incorrect answer	20	66.7%
Total	30	100%

Figure (19) frequencies and percentage to question nineteen

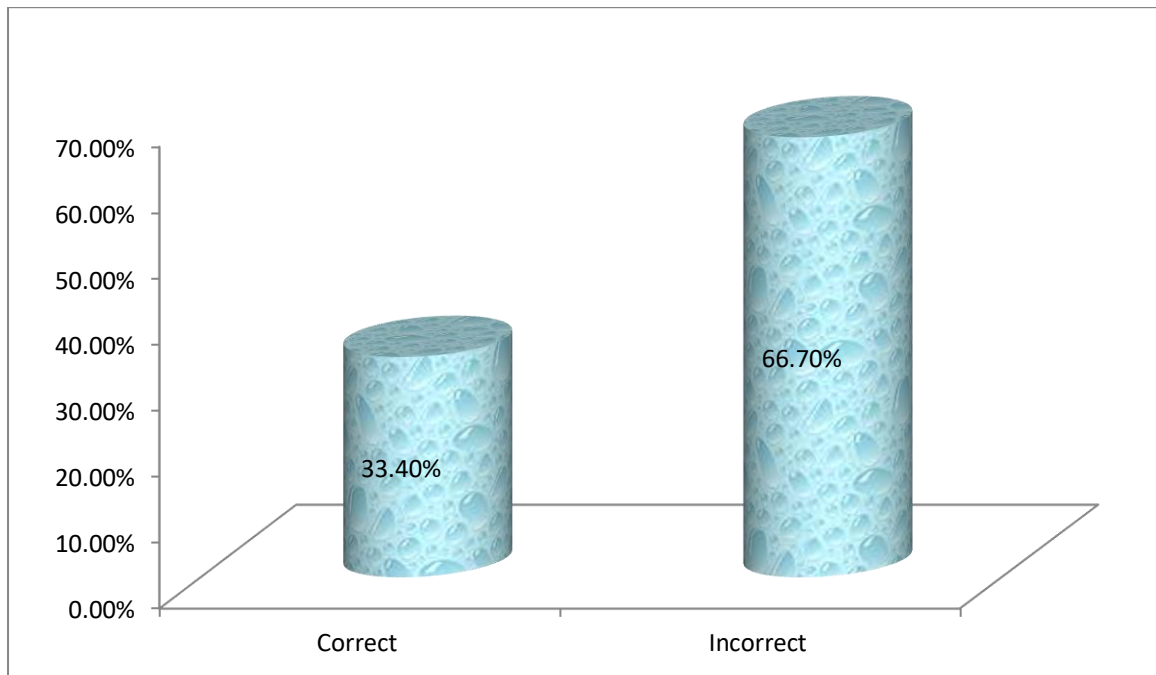


Table and figure (19) showed that there were 33.4% of sample size got correct answer where 66.7% of them got incorrect answer.

4-We wanted to go the beach _ but it rained that day.

Table (20) frequencies and percentage to question twenty

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	11	36.7%
Incorrect answer	19	63.3%
Total	30	100%

Figure (20) frequencies and percentage to question twenty

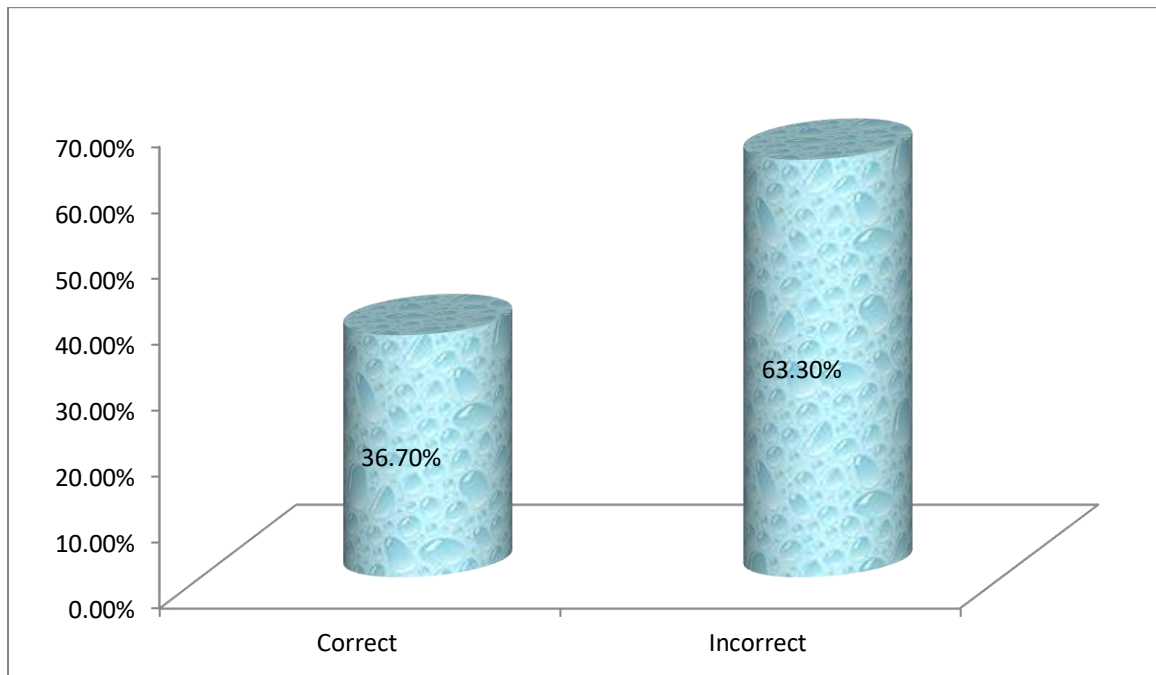


Table and figure (20) showed that there were 36.7% of sample size got correct answer where 63.3% of them got incorrect answer.

5-The plane landed in Kampala _Uganda_ that evening.

Table (21) frequencies and percentage to question twenty one

	One		Two	
	F	%	F	%
Correct answer	7	23.3%	17	56.7%
Incorrect answer	23	76.6%	13	43.3%
Total	30	100%	30	100%

Figure (21) frequencies and percentage to question twenty one

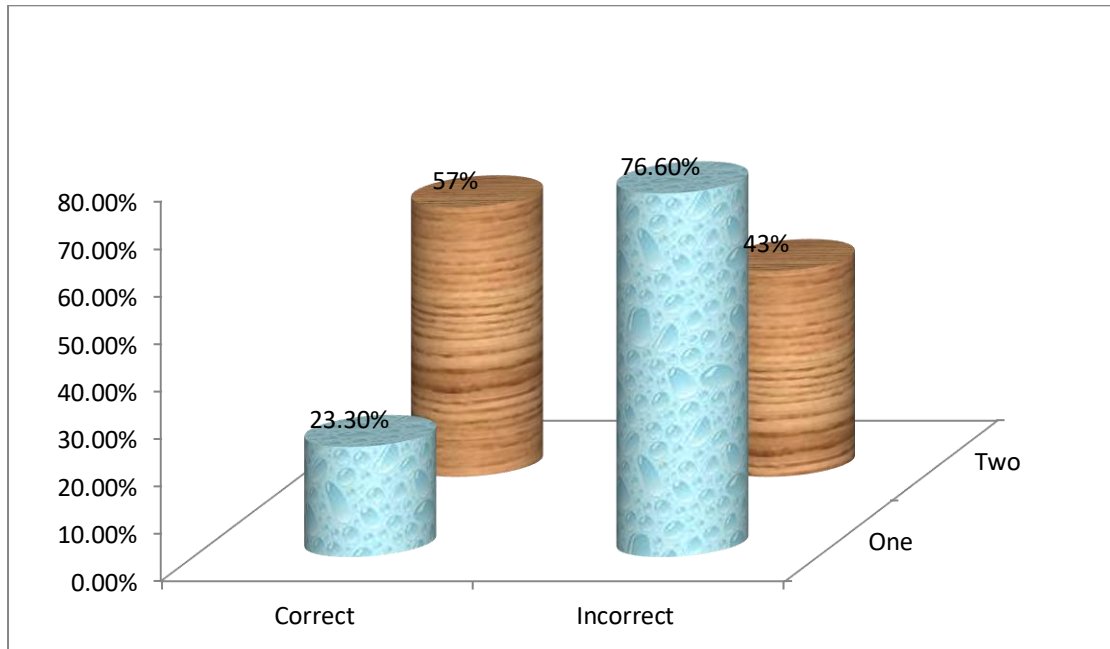


Table and figure (21) showed that: for part one there was 23.3% of sample size got correct answer where 76.7% of them got incorrect answer. For part two there was 57% of sample size got correct answer where 43% of them got incorrect answer.

6- The dog is fluffy _ it is also brown.

Table (22) frequencies and percentage to question twenty two

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	9	30%
Incorrect answer	21	70%
Total	30	100%

Figure (22) frequencies and percentage to question twenty two

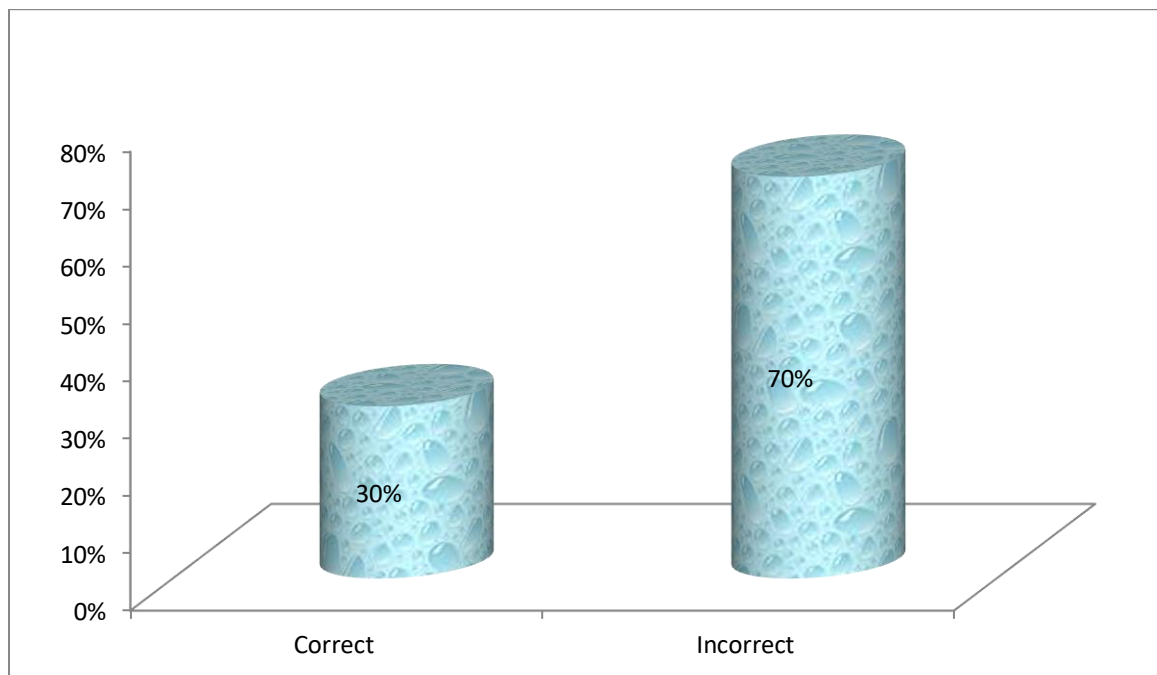


Table and figure (22) showed that there were 30% of sample size got correct answer where 70% of them got incorrect answer.

7-The conference has people who have come from Moscow , Idaho; Springfield , California _ Alamo , Tennessee _ and other places as well .

Table (23) frequencies and percentage to question one

	One		Two	
	F	%	F	%
Correct answer	3	10%	5	16.7%
Incorrect answer	27	90%	25	83.3%
Total	30	100%	30	100%

Figure (23) frequencies and percentage to question one

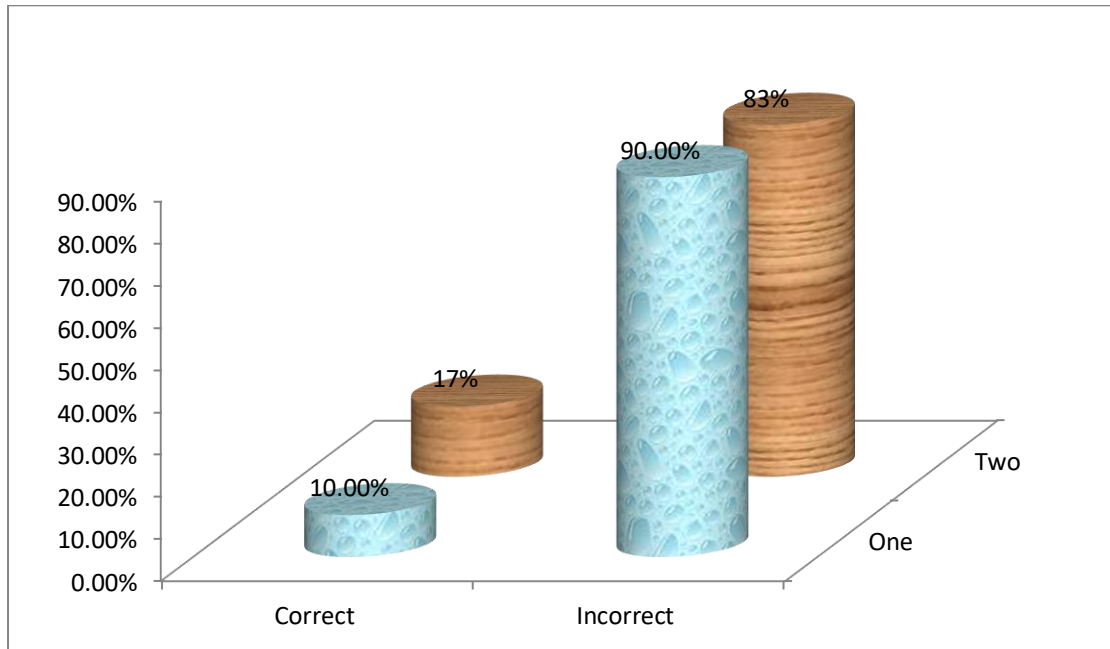


Table and figure (23) showed that: for part one there was 10% of sample size got correct answer where 90% of them got incorrect answer. For part two there was 16.6% of sample size got correct answer where 83.3% of them got incorrect answer.

8- Although they tried _ they failed.

Table (24) frequencies and percentage to question one

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	10	25%
Incorrect answer	20	75%
Total	30	100%

Figure (24) frequencies and percentage to question one

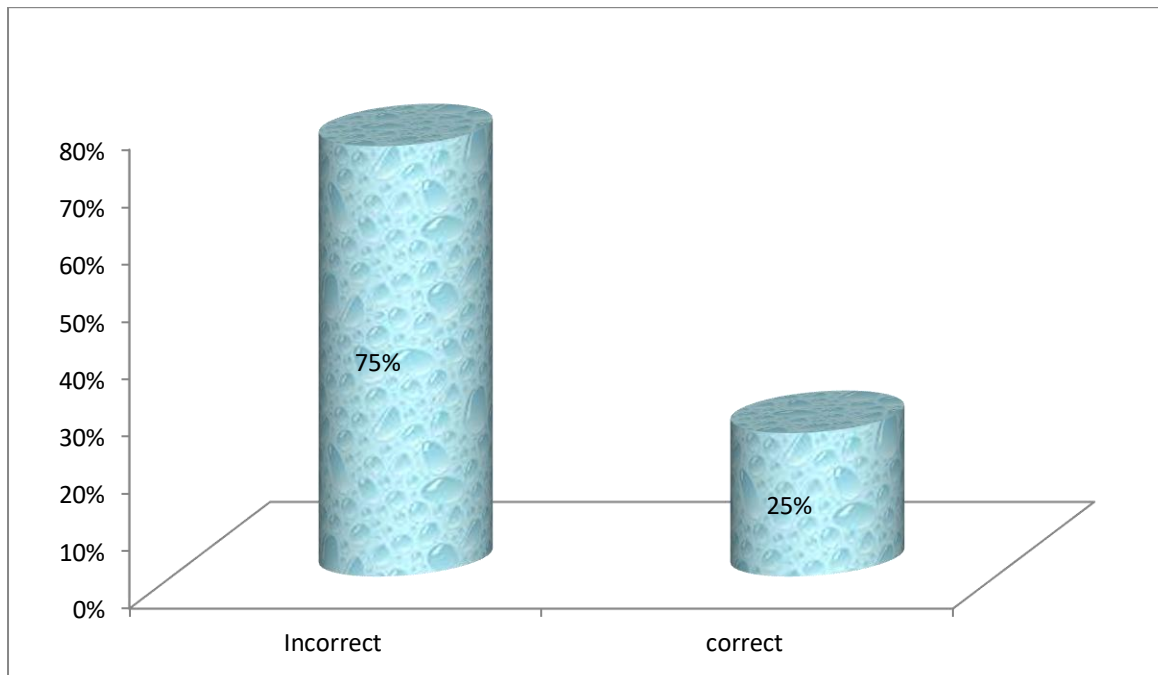


Table and figure (24) showed that there were (25%) have got the correct answer while (75%) have got the incorrect answers the same answer of sample size.

The General results to test Hypotheses:

First Hypothesis

1- Semi colon

Table (25) frequencies and percentage to question one

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	1	20
Incorrect answer	4	80
Total	5	100%

Figure (25) frequencies and percentage to question one

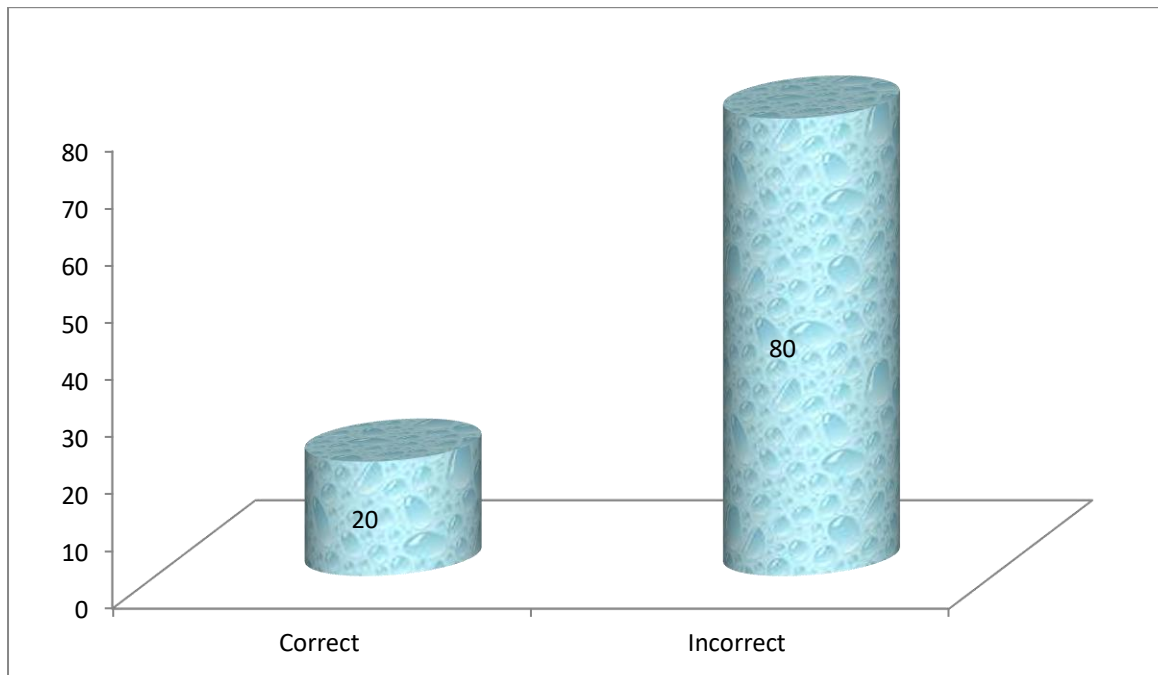


Table and figure (25) showed that there were 80% of sample size got incorrect answer where 20% of them got correct answer. This result indicates the performance of students in using semi colon is bad.

2-Comma

Table (25) frequencies and percentage to question one

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	1	20
Incorrect answer	4	80
Total	5	100%

Figure (25) frequencies and percentage to question one

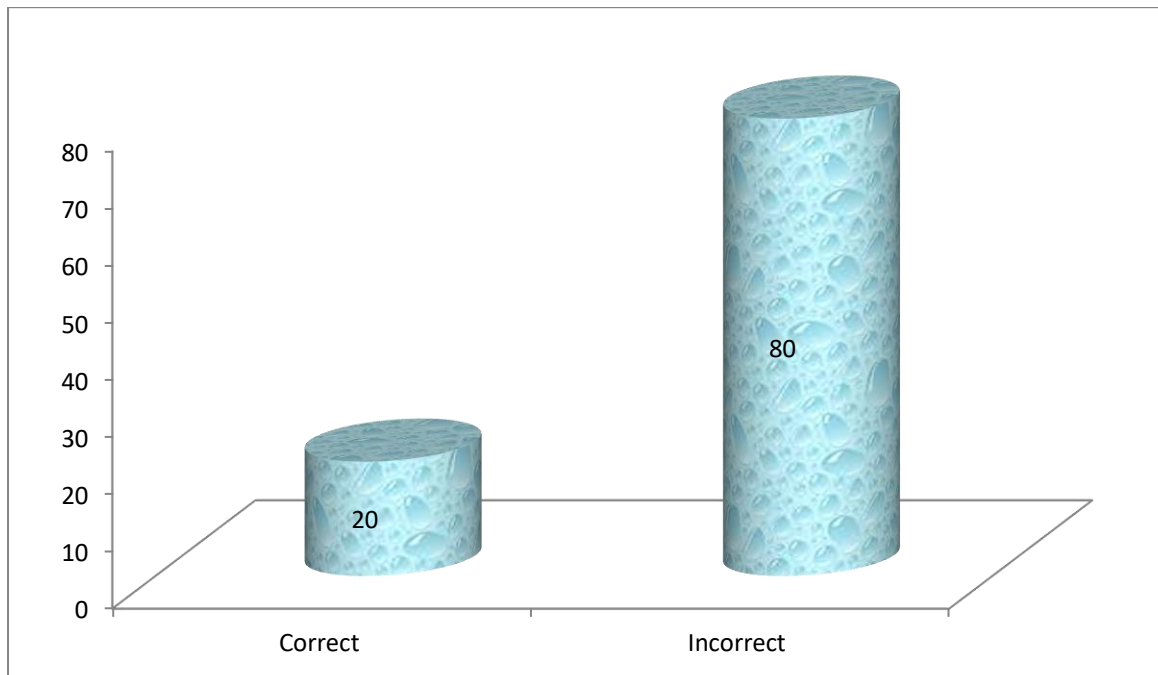


Table and figure (25) showed that there were 80% of sample size got incorrect answer where 20% of them got correct answer. This result indicates the performance of students in using comma colon is bad.

3-Colon

Table (25) frequencies and percentage to question one

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	1	25
Incorrect answer	3	75
Total	4	100%

Figure (25) frequencies and percentage to question one

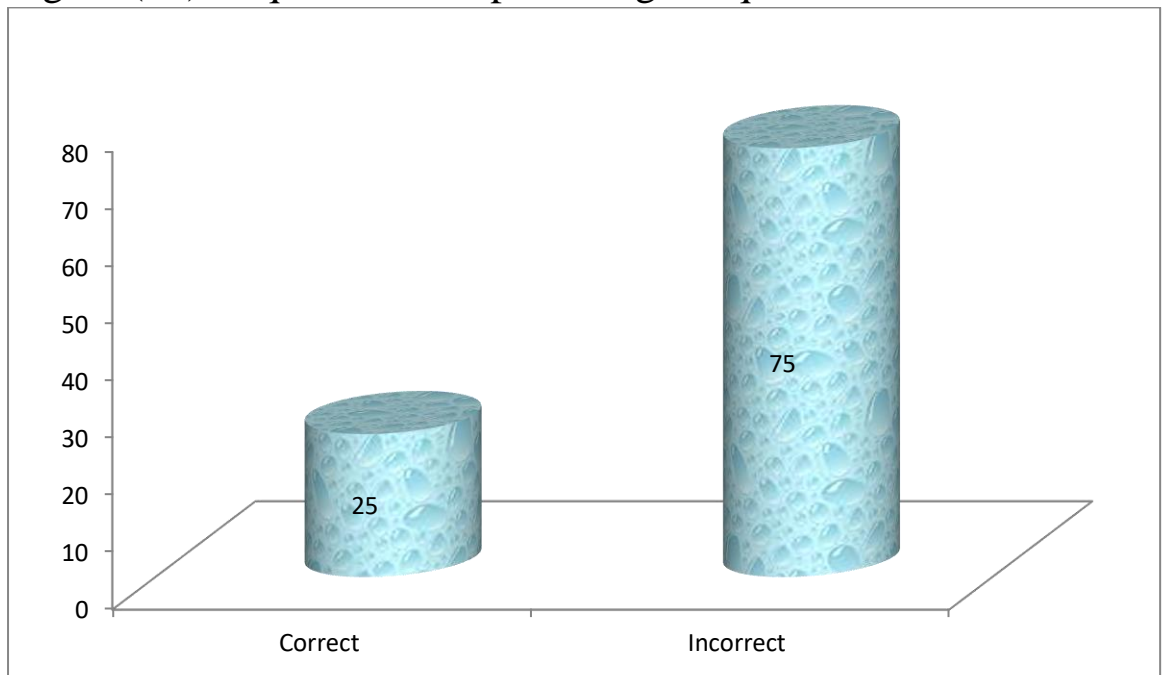


Table and figure (25) showed that there were 75% of sample size got incorrect answer where 25% of them got correct answer. This result indicates the performance of students in using colon is bad.

4- Full stop

Table (25) frequencies and percentage to question one

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	2	50
Incorrect answer	2	50
Total	4	100%

Figure (25) frequencies and percentage to question one

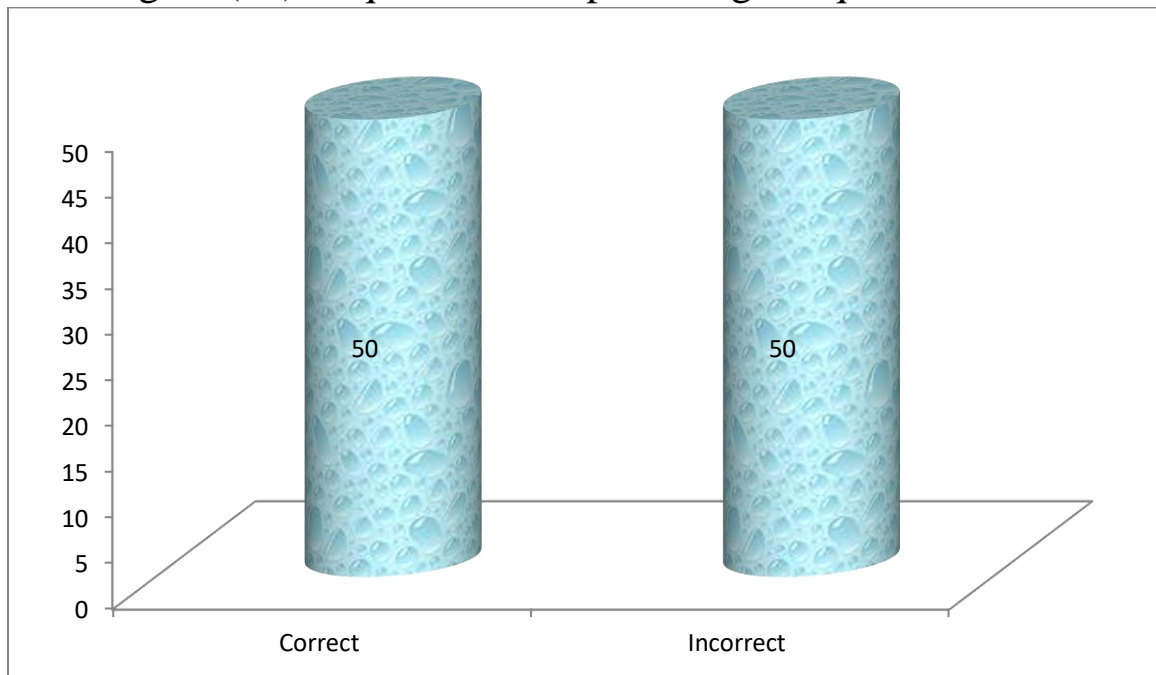


Table and figure (25) showed that there were 50% of sample size got incorrect answer where 50% of them got correct answer. This result indicates the performance of students in using colon is the same.

As shown above the results obtained indicating that Comma, semi-colon and colon are the most difficult for the students to perceive and used.

Second Hypothesis

Table (25) frequencies and percentage to question two

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	1	11.1%
Incorrect answer	8	88.9%
Total	9	100%

Figure (25) frequencies and percentage to **question two**

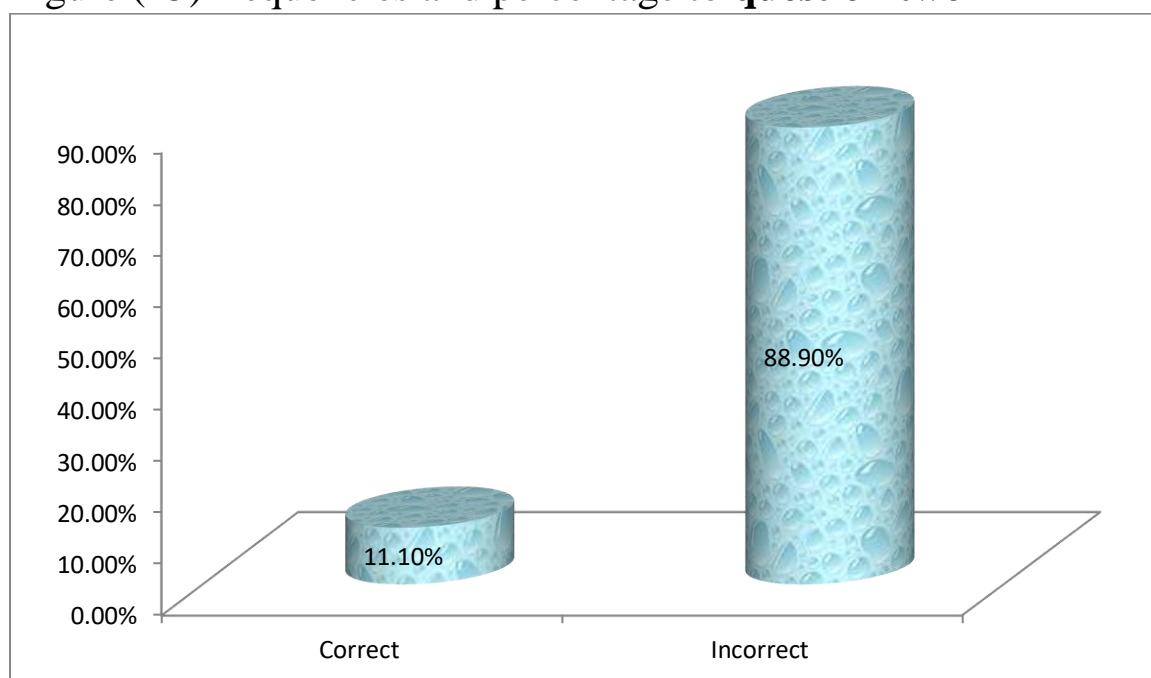


Table and figure (25) showed that there were 88.9% of sample size got incorrect answer where 11.1% of them got correct answer. This result indicates that the students are not able to distinguish between comma and semi colon.

The obtained results shown above improve that the student face problem in differentiation between comma and semi-colon.

The General Performance

This section shows the general performance of sample size of the test.

Table (26) frequencies and percentage of the test

	Frequency	Percent
Correct answer	6	22.2%
Incorrect answer	21	77.8%
Total	27	100%

Figure (26) frequencies and percentage to test

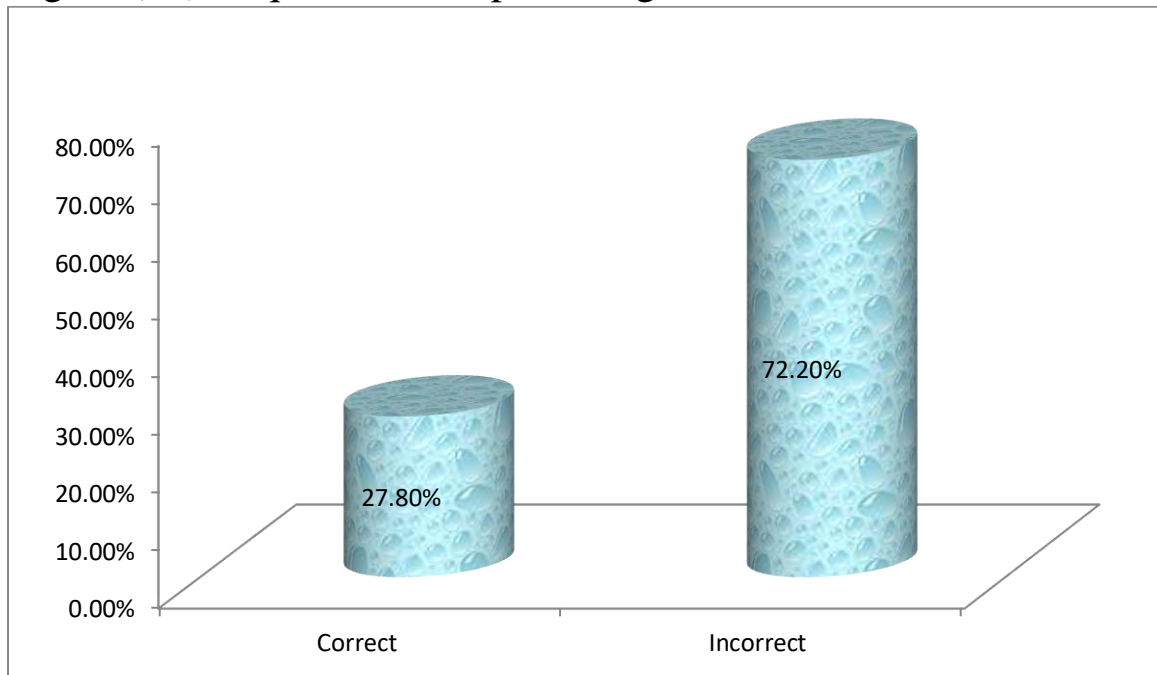


Table and figure (26) showed that there were 22.2% of sample size got correct answer over all questions of the test, where 77.8% of them got incorrect answer. This result indicates bad performance of students in using comma, colon semi colon and dot. We can say the students have no knowledge in using Punctuation.

4.2 Results Related to Question Three:

This section answers the study third question which is:

Why do secondary level students make errors in using comma, Semi-colon, colon and full stop?

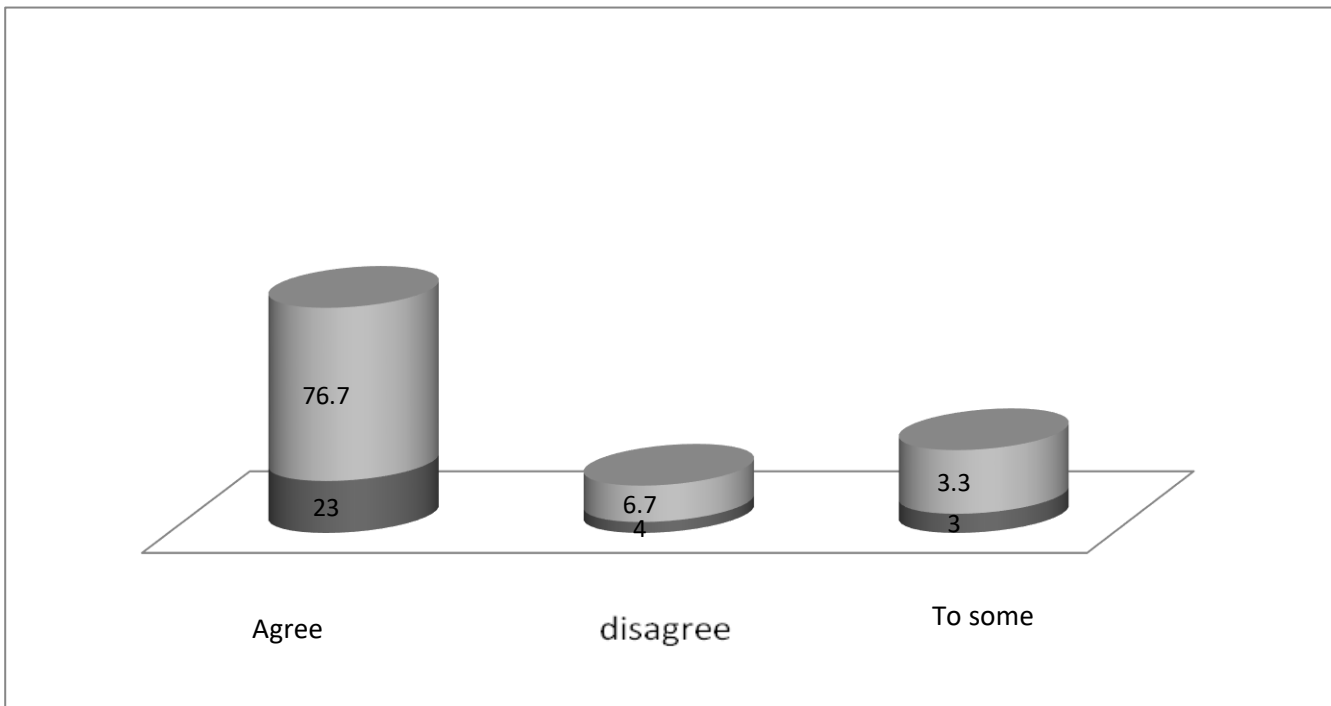
So as to provide positive answer to this question the researcher used a questionnaire tool for the teachers, through which the following results were obtained.

4.2.1 The Analysis of Questionnaire Responses:

The questionnaire presents the teachers' responses on, why do secondary level students make errors in using comma, Semi-colon, colon and full stop. Below the questionnaire statements are shown in separate tables and bar figures.

1. Table (4-1) Most of the visual-aids are not available for teachers when teaching punctuation marks.

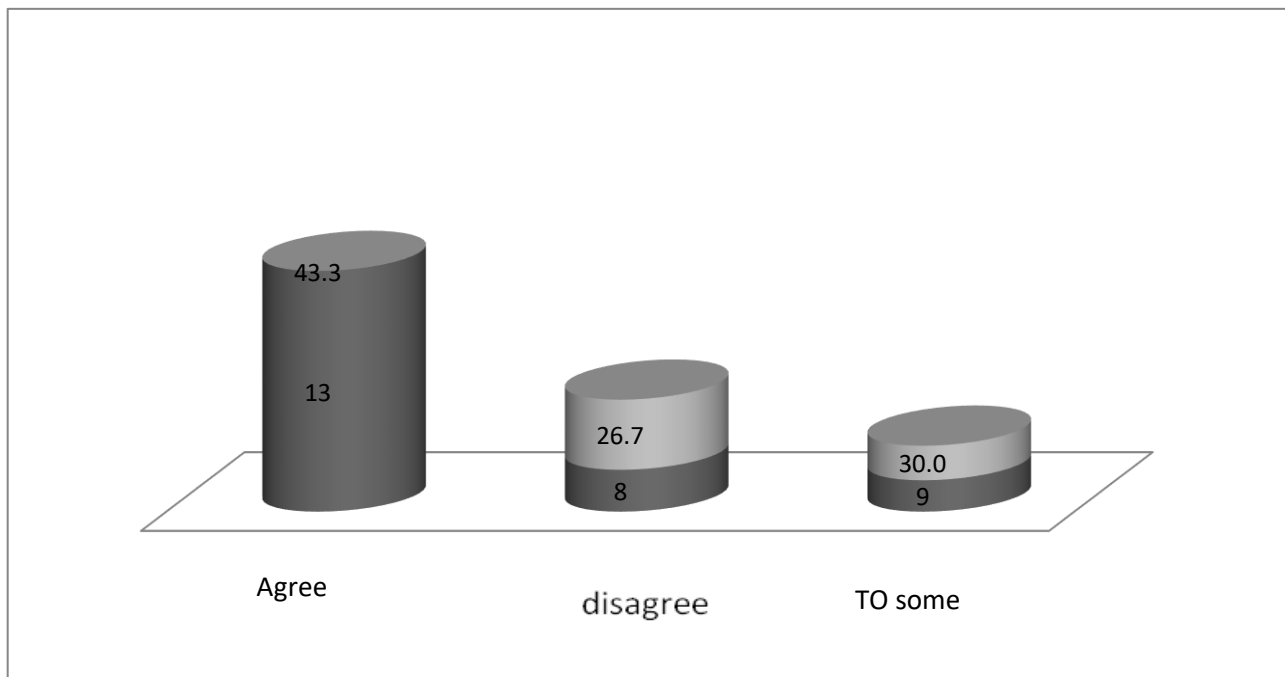
Statement	Frequency	percentage
Agree	23	76.7
Disagree	4	6.7
To some extent	3	3.3
Total	30	100



The table and the figure above show that :(76.7%) of the respondents agreed with the statement (1) in contrast to (6.7%) who disagreed and (3.3%) who agreed to some extent. This result obviously supports the third hypothesis of the current study.

Table (4-2): The time allotted for the lesson is not quite enough for developing the students' abilities of using English punctuation marks.

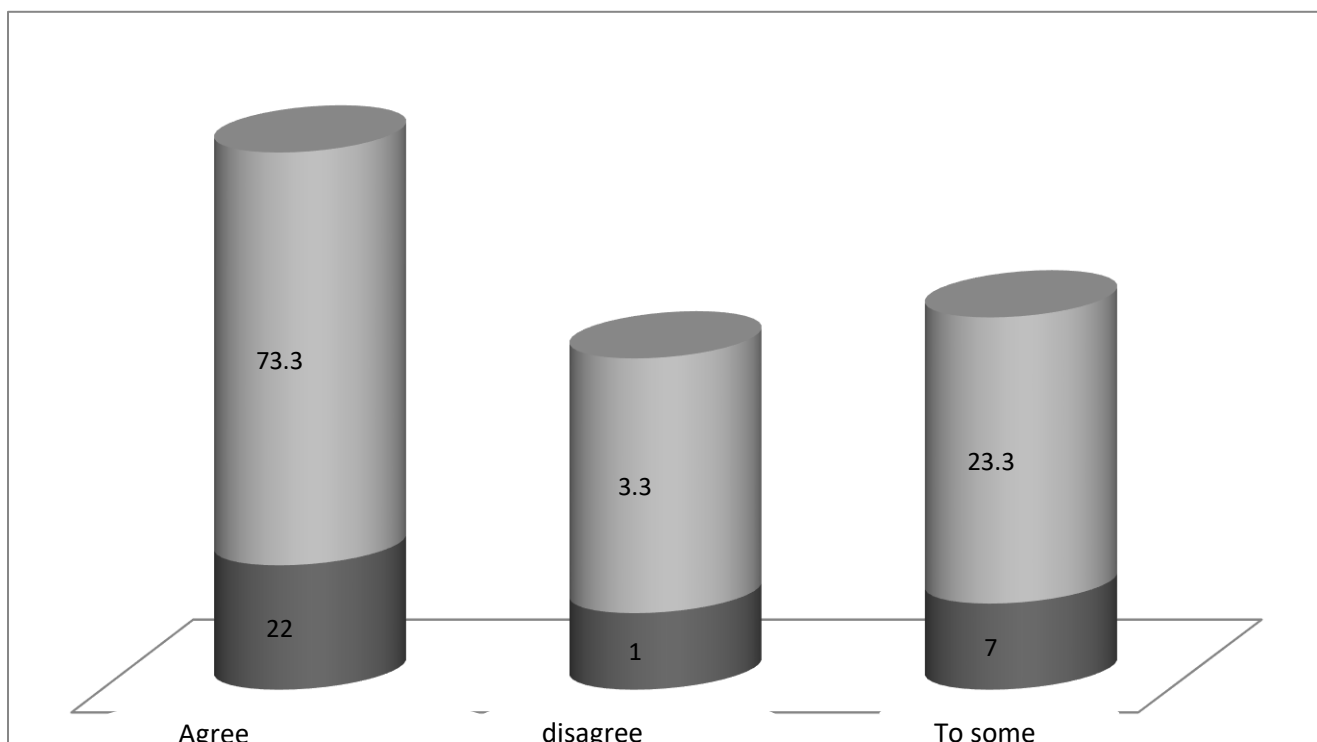
Statement	Frequency	percent age
Agree	13	43.3
Disagree	8	26.7
To some extent	9	30.0
Total	30	100



The table and the figure above show that :(43.3%) of the respondents agreed with the statement (2) in contrast to (26.7%) who disagreed and (30.3%) who agreed to some extent. This result obviously supports the third hypothesis of the current study.

1. **Table (4-3): Many schools lack the adequate amounts of pupils' books to develop using punctuation.**

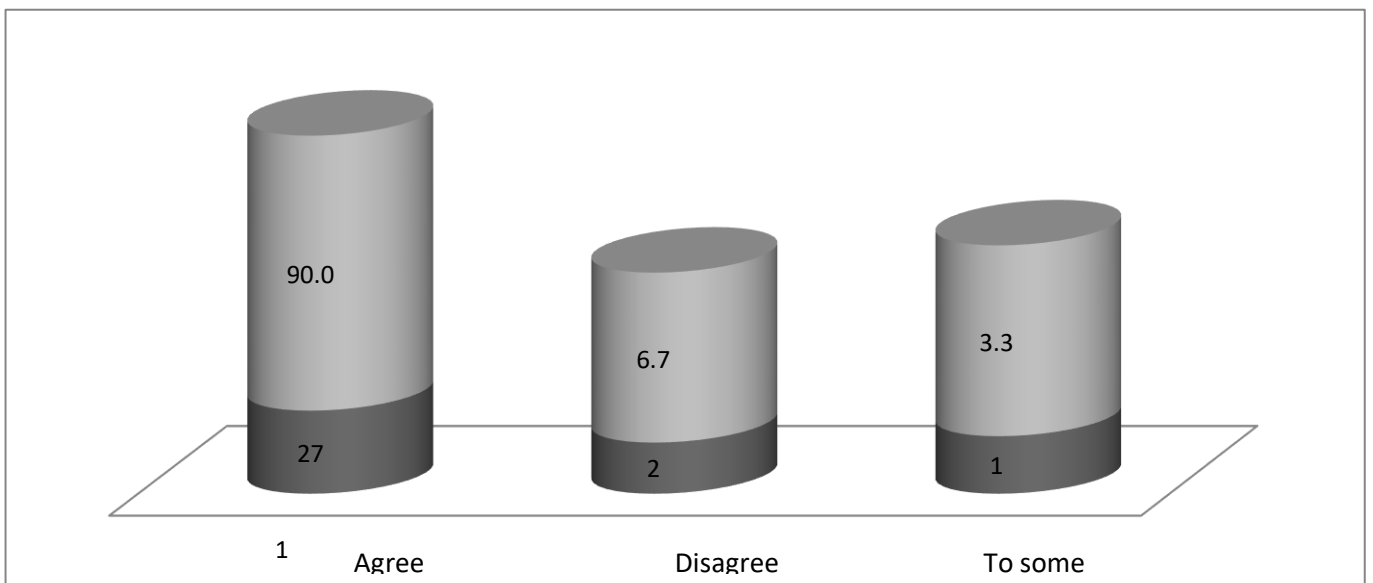
Statement	Frequency	percentage
Agree	22	73.3
Disagree	1	3.3
To some extent	7	23.3
Total	30	100



The table and the figure above show that :(73.3%) of the respondents agreed with the statement (3) in contrast to (3.3%) who disagreed and (23.3%) who agreed to some extent. This result obviously supports the third hypothesis of the current study.

2. Table (4-4): Secondary level students aren't given enough practice in using punctuation marks.

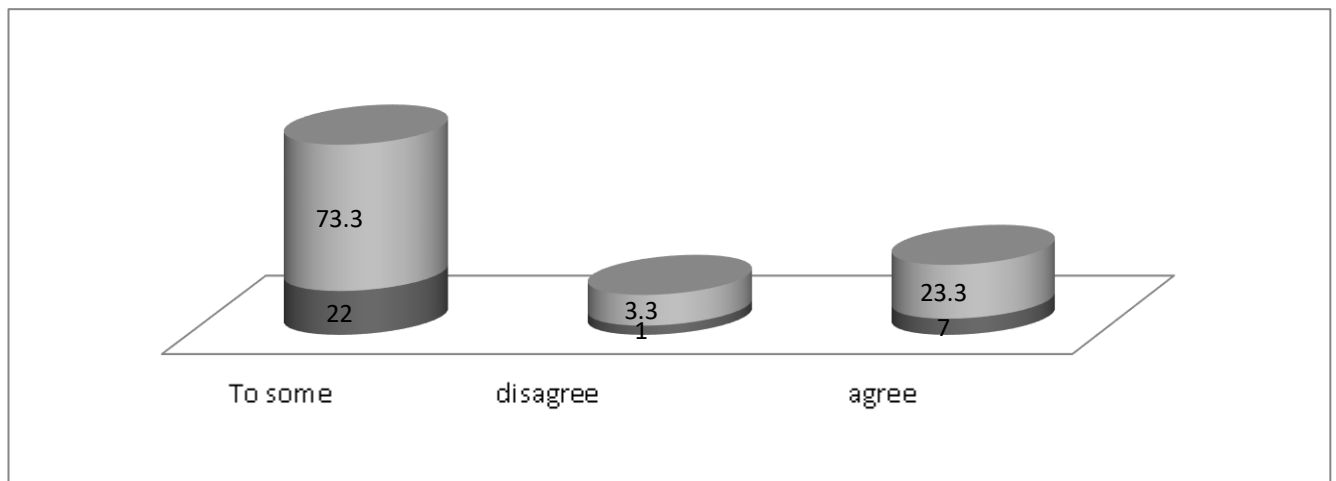
Statement	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	27	90.0
Disagree	2	6.7
To some extent	1	3.3
Total	30	100



The table and the figure above show that: (90.0%) of the respondents agreed with the statement (4) in contrast to (6.7%) who disagreed and (3.3%) who agreed to some extent. This result obviously supports the third hypothesis of the current study.

3. Table (4-5) :Many teachers lack the basic training which could help them to teach English punctuation marks.

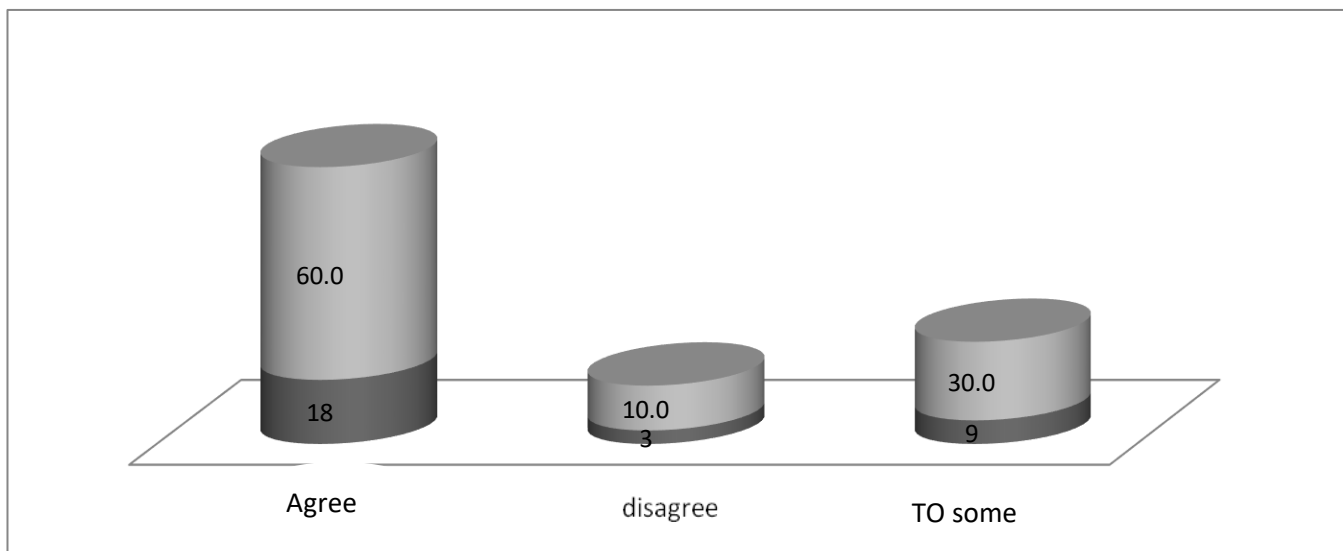
Statement	Frequency	percentage
Agree	22	73.3
Disagree	1	3.3
To some extent	7	23.3
Total	30	100



The table and the figure above show that :(73.3%) of the respondents agreed with the statement (5) in contrast to (3.3%) who disagreed and (23.3%) who agreed to some extent. This result obviously supports the third hypothesis of the current study.

4. Table (4-6): Most of the schools have crowded classes; this affects the standard of teaching and learning punctuation marks.

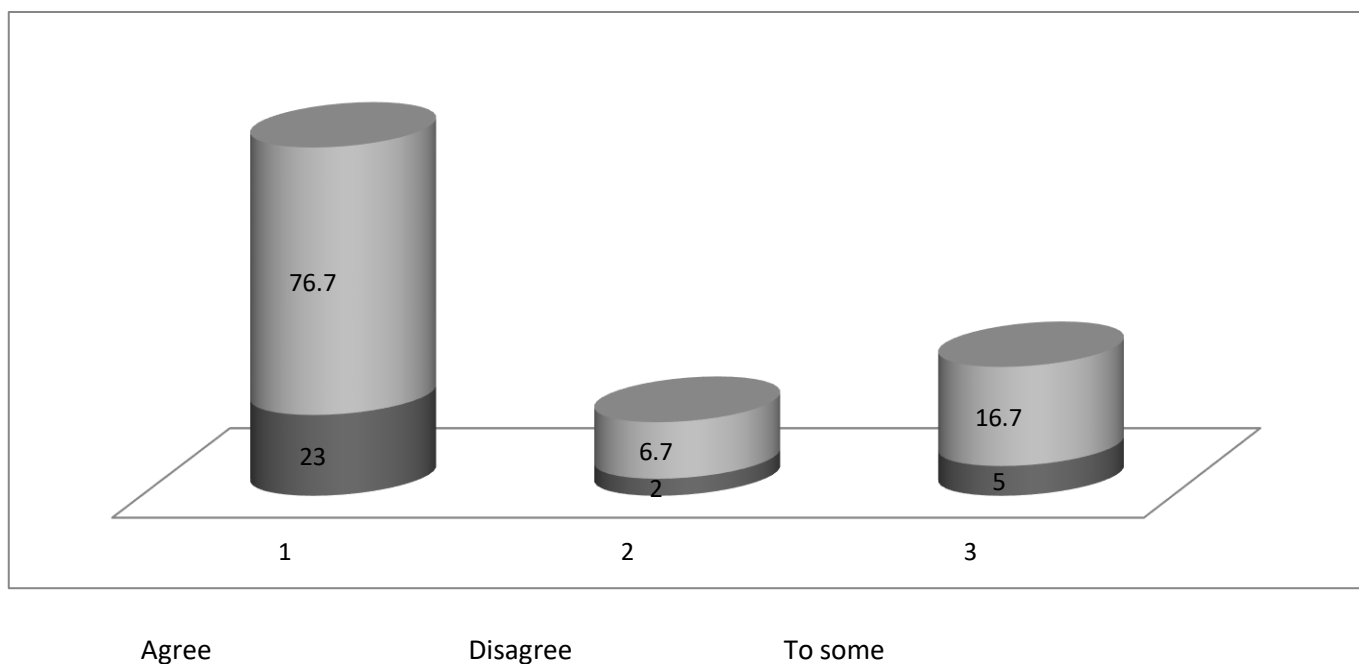
Statement	Frequency	percentage
Agree	18	60.0
Disagree	3	10.0
To some extent	9	30.0
Total	30	100



The table and the figure above show that :(60.0%) of the respondents agreed with the statement (6) in contrast to (10.0%) who disagreed and (30.3%) who agreed to some extent. This result obviously supports the third hypothesis of the current study.

5. Table (4-7): Most of teachers do not develop their methods of teaching English due to the lack of training workshops.

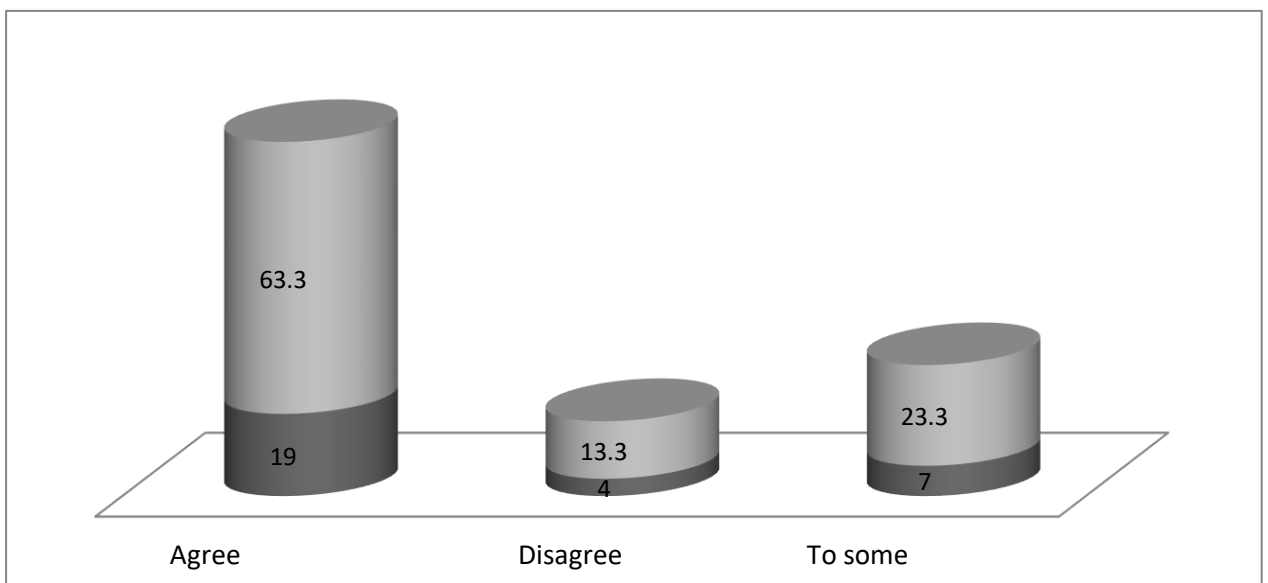
Statement	Frequency	percentage
Agree	23	76.7
Disagree	2	6.7
To some extent	5	16.7
Total	30	100



The table and the figure above show that (76.7%) of the respondents agreed with the statement (7) in contrast to (6.7%) who disagreed and (16.7%) who agreed to some extent. This result obviously supports the third hypothesis of the current study.

6. Table (4-8): The syllabus is not well designed for teaching punctuation marks.

Statement	Frequency	percentage
Agree	19	63.3
Disagree	4	13.3
To some extent	7	23.3
Total	30	100



The table and the figure above show that (63.3%) of the respondents agreed with the statement (8) in contrast to (13.3%) who disagreed and (23.3%) who agreed to some extent. This result obviously supports the third hypothesis of the current study.

1.3. Results and Discussion in Terms of Hypotheses

Testing:

The purpose of this section of the chapter is to discuss the final statistical findings as they pertain to the hypotheses involved in the current study. Each of the three hypotheses put forward in chapter one is restated below and followed by discussions of the statistical results which relate to it. SPSS tests, including mean, Standard Deviation, Chi-square and significance were carried out in order to measure these hypotheses.

Table (4-9): Statistics

No		Mean	Std.deviation	Chi-square	Sig
1	Most of the visual-aids are not available for teachers when teaching punctuation marks.	1.37	0.718	25.400	0.00
2	The time allotted for the lesson is not quite enough for developing the students' abilities of using English punctuation marks.	1.83	0.834	1.400	0.497
3	Many schools lack the adequate amounts of pupils' books to develop using punctuation.	1.40	0.563	16.200	0.000
4	Secondary level students aren't given enough practice in using	1.17	0.531	43.400	0.000

punctuation marks.

5	Many teachers lack the basic training which could help them to teach English punctuation marks.	1.30	0.535	23.400	0.000
6	Most of the schools have crowded classes; this affects the standard of teaching and learning punctuation marks.	1.50	0.682	11.400	0.03
7	Most of teachers do not develop their methods of teaching English due to the lack of training workshops.	1.30	0.596	25.800	0.000
8	The syllabus is not well designed for teaching punctuation marks.	1.50	0.731	12.600	0.002

From the table above the researcher observes that the statements indicate that all the probable values in chi-square was a little or less than a significant standard (0.05) that stand for the many different statistical evidences among the of respondents, except the statement No (2) because the proper significant are more than (0.05) statistical which indicate that there is no significant difference between the results of the respondents.

As shown above, this confirmed that there is a problematic area in teaching punctuation marks specifically the comma, semi-colon, colon and full stop.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

5.1 Findings

From the analysis of data the researcher has reached to the following finding:

1. Comma, semi-colon and colon are the most difficult for the students to be perceived and used.
2. Students face difficulties in differentiating between using comma and semi-colon.
3. Most of the visual-aids are not available for teachers when teaching punctuation marks.
4. The time allotted for the lesson is not quite enough for developing the students' abilities of using English punctuation marks specifically Comma, semi-colon, colon and full stop.
5. Many schools lack the adequate amounts of pupils' books to develop using punctuation marks.
6. Many teachers lack the basic training which could help them to teach English punctuation marks.
7. Most of teachers do not develop their methods of teaching English due to the lack of training workshops.
8. The syllabus is not well designed for teaching punctuation marks.
9. Most of the students have no knowledge of using these punctuation marks (comma, Semi-colon, colon and full stop).

5.3. Recommendations

English language needs more efforts to be given to. Generally, grammar and specifically punctuation, so there should be a great attention and care about it by the following:

1. Students should improve their skills and knowledge of punctuation marks specifically Comma, semi-colon, colon and full stop in learning by more practice.

2. Strengthening the curriculums, giving them a lot of adaptations and practice to increase their knowledge of punctuation marks.
3. In the other hand of teaching, the teachers are very weak. They have no enough ability to teach the students of such a level. Because it is found that: Most of the teachers are not qualified well to such level of education to be taught. In addition to migration of qualified teachers who go to work abroad. This shows the lack of experience which is very important. So there should be great qualification and training processes for those teachers.
4. In the side of practice milieu, the students have no enough opportunities to practice the language. So there should be great care given to such matter. The availability of English clubs is very important and effective. There should clubs to ease the matter of practice. The encouragement of practicing the language during the day is beneficial. So it is recommended.
5. Teachers should develop themselves because the knowledge became available in all media such as internet, satellite and mobile web services.

5.4. Suggestions for Further Studies

1. Other effective techniques of teaching English punctuation and capitalization.
2. Activating pupil's role in minimizing punctuation marks and capitalization problems.

5.5. Summary:

This chapter concluded the study by providing answers to the research questions and verifying the hypotheses. It also presented the findings of the study and it offered some recommendations and suggested two topics for further researches.

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REFERENCES:

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Sudan University for Science and Technology

Faculty of High Studies

College of Arts-English Department

Diagnostic Test in English Punctuation Marks

Time: 30 minutes

third class

Year: 2018

Dear students, this test is produced for you as study purposes to obtain the master degree. Thank you for your efforts .

• **Question one:**

Put in a coma, semicolons, colons, and full stop where ever they are needed in the following sentences.

1. They own a cat__a dog__ two rabbits and seven mice.
2. I live in Omdurman__
3. The prgramme will start at 22__30 a.m.
4. I live in U__S__A__
5. Call me tomorrow__ you can give me an answer then.
6. I planned to study Saturday morning__however__ the power in our house went out due to a storm.
7. Are you Gabriel Gama__ Jr?
8. My best friend__Yomna__arrived.
9. There's a wide range of sandwiches, pies, cakes, etc__ at very reasonable prices.
10. Alice Email is elice444__gmail__com.
11. I have lived in Los Angeles, California__Boston, Massachusetts__ Trenton, New Jersey__and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

12. I was so hungry that I ate everything in the house__ chips, cold pizza, hot dogs, peanut butter and candy.
13. You have two choices__ finish the work today or lose the contract.
14. Some people write with a word processor, tablet, or even a phone__ but others, for different reasons, choose to write with a pen or pencil.
15. The man__ whose car is white__ is my friend.
16. Adam__ who did this?
John__ I don't know.

Question two:

Put in a comma or semicolon where ever they are needed in the following sentences.

1. I was born in June 18__ 1992.
2. I like cows__ however__I hate the way they smell.
3. When I finish here, and I will soon, I'll be glad to help you__ and that is a promise I will keep.
4. We wanted to go to the beach__but it rained that day.
5. The plane landed in Kampala__ Uganda__ that evening.
6. The dog is fluffy__it is also brown.
7. The conference has people who have come from Moscow, Idaho; Springfield, California__ Alamo, Tennessee__and other places as well.
8. Although they tried__they failed.

APPENDIX B

Sudan University for Science and Technology
 Faculty of High Studies
 College of Arts-English Department

Year: 2018

Dear teachers, this questionnaire is produced for you as study requirements to obtain the master degree.
 Thank you for your efforts.

**Investigating Problems of Using Punctuation Marks specifically Comma, Semi-Colon, colon and Full-
 Stop Encountered by Secondary School Students**

	Agree	To some extent	disagree
1. Most of the visual-aids are not available for teachers when teaching punctuation marks.			
2. The time allotted for the lesson is not quite enough for developing the students' abilities of using English punctuation marks.			
3. Many schools lack the adequate amounts of pupils' books to develop using punctuation.			
4. Secondary level students aren't given enough practice in using punctuation marks.			
5. Many teachers lack the basic training which could help them to teach English punctuation marks.			
6. Most of the schools have crowded classes; this affects the standard of teaching and learning punctuation marks.			
7. Most of teachers do not develop their			

methods of teaching English due to the lack of training workshops.			
8. The syllabus is not well designed for teaching punctuation marks.			