

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Sudan University of Science & Technology
College of Graduate Studies
College of Education



**Investigating Linguistic Difficulties Encountered by
Sudanese University Freshman In Academic Writing**

تقصي الصعوبات اللغوية الأكاديمية التي يواجهها الطلاب الجامعيين الجدد
السودانيون في الكتابة الأكاديمية

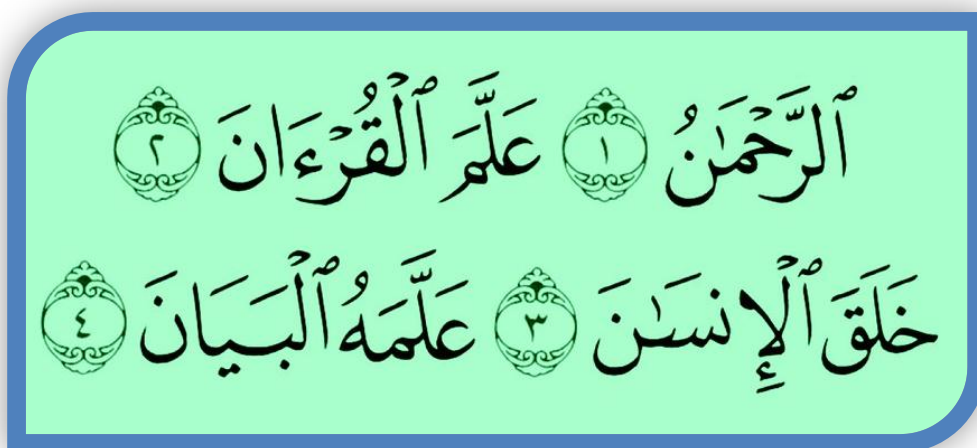
A Thesis Submitted in fulfillment of The Requirements for the Degree
of PhD in Education, (ELT)

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September 2019

VERSE FROM QURAN



In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The Most Beneficent (Allah)! (1) Has taught (you mankind) the Qur'an (by His Mercy). (2) He created man. (3) He taught him eloquent speech (4)

DEDICATION

To my parents' souls ,
beloved family members and to my husband.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Great thanks are due to Allah the Almighty, for empower of me to achieve this academic task. Iam deeply indebted to my supervisor Dr. Mahmoud Ali for providing me with enlightenment, support, encouragement . For his remarkable supervision, guidance, enthusiasm and invaluable support throughout the research. My sincere thanks are also to Dr. Hadia Salah for helpful advice and ongoing encouragement .

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of those students and teachers who had contributed to this research for their responding to test and questionnaire. I would like to express my gratitude to the wonderful staff at Sudan University Faculty of Translation who has given me insight suggestions and constructive comments on this research.

Abstract

This study attempted to explore the difficulties in academic writing that encounter freshmen in Sudanese tertiary level instructions that use English as a medium of instruction as well as the colleges where students major in English language. The study focused on two main and closely related aspects: (1) Linguistic competence, and (2) meta-linguistic awareness. The study adopted the descriptive methodology. Its population is the entire body of freshmen in Sudanese tertiary level instructions that use English as a medium of instruction as well as the colleges where students major in English language. The sample consisted of 50 students and 30 university teachers. The study used three tools for data collection (1) Linguistic competence test, (2) Meta-linguistic awareness test, and (3) Teachers' questionnaire. Data were treated statistically by using SPSS program. Four statistical techniques were used: (1) Exploring data, (2) One-sample t-test, (3) Computing weighted means, and (4) Correlations. The statistical analysis revealed that the students face difficulties in the two aspects explored. The overall mean score of the students in the linguistic competence test was 15.20, which far below the pass mark. The means of the individual sections ranged between 2.3800 and 3.7000, which are far less than the pass mark. The weighted means showed a unanimous agreement among teachers that the students are weak in linguistic competence. There was also a strong relationship between the teachers' views and the students' performance. As for the meta-linguistic awareness test, the overall mean was 13.82, far below the pass mark. The means of the individual sections ranged between 2.2200 and 3.1200. There is a unanimous agreement among the teachers that the students are weak in their meta-linguistic awareness. The study made some practical recommendations and suggested topics for further research.

Keywords freshmen, linguistic competence, meta-linguistic awareness, One-sample t-test, weighted means, correlation.

(Abstract)

(Arabic Version)

المستخلص

هدفت هذه الدراسة وحاولت استكشاف الصعوبات المتصلة بالكتابة الأكاديمية و التي تواجه طلاب السنة الأولى في مؤسسات التعليم الجامعية السودانية و التي تستخدم الإنجليزية لغة للتدريس إضافة للكليات التي يتخذ طلابها اللغة الإنجليزية تخصصاً رئيساً. ركزت الدراسة على منحيين رئيسين وثيقي الصلة ببعضهما البعض: (1) الكفاءة اللغوية ، و (2) الوعي فوق اللغوي. اتبعت الدراسة المنهجية الوصفية. تمثل مجتمع الدراسة في كل طلاب السنة الأولى في مؤسسات التعليم الجامعية السودانية و التي تستخدم الإنجليزية لغة للتدريس إضافة للكليات التي يتخذ طلابها اللغة الإنجليزية تخصصاً رئيساً. تكونت العينة من 50 من الطلاب و 30 من أساتذة الجامعات. استخدمت الدراسة ثلاث أدوات لجمع البيانات (1) اختبار الكفاءة اللغوية ، و(2) اختبار الوعي فوق اللغوي ، و (3) إستبانة للأساتذة. عولجت البيانات التي جمعت باستخدام برنامج SPSS . استخدمت أربعة أساليب إحصائية : (1) استكشاف البيانات ، و (2) اختبار "ت" لعينة واحدة ، و (3) حساب الوسط المرجح ، و (4) الارتباط. وضح من التحليل الإحصائي أن الطلاب يواجهون صعوبات في المنحيين الذين خضعوا للاستكشاف. كان الوسط الكلي لأداء الطلاب في اختبار الكفاءة اللغوية 15.20 و هو أقل بكثير من درجة المرور. تراوحت متوسطات الأجزاء المفردة بين 2.3800 و 3.7000 و هي أقل بكثير من درجة المرور. وضح من المتوسطات المرجحة أن هناك إجماع كامل من الأساتذة على ضعف الطلاب في الكفاءة اللغوية. أما فيما يتعلق باختبار الوعي فوق اللغوي، فقد كان الوسط الكلي 13.82 و هو يقل كثيراً عن درجة المرور. تراوحت متوسطات الأجزاء المفردة بين 2.2200 و 3.1200. كان هناك إجماع كامل من الأساتذة على ضعف الطلاب في الوعي فوق اللغوي. قدمت الدراسة بعض التوصيات العملية كما اقترحت بعض المجالات التي تحتاج للمزيد من البحث.

الكلمات المفتاحية: طلاب السنة الأولى – الكفاءة اللغوية – الوعي فوق اللغوي – استكشاف البيانات – اختبار "ت" للعينة الواحدة – الوسط المرجح – الارتباط.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background(About the chapter)

Academic writing is one of the most daunting academic activities that student come across. According to the web page, (<http://www.papersunlimited.biz/importance-academicwriting/>), academic writing is no way an easy task as it consists of

(1) Lengthy procedures of conducting thorough research.

(2) The ability to write skillfully.

The point is that most of the students either,

(1) Lack sufficient writing skills, or

(2) Fear criticism from their professors once they complete their papers.

In either way, academic writing is something that cannot be avoided as long as a student is a part of academia. In fact, academic writing is vital for enhancement of important skills which are essential for leading a successful life after the completion of studies. Some of these skills are:

- **Critical Thinking Skills**

Academic papers are not limited to just providing information. The procedure of academic writing also consists of conducting thorough research and identification of relevant and irrelevant information. The student has to identify what is relevant and what is not with ample evidence to prove or disprove the claims made. This process develops intellectual capacity and enables students to think critically. Moreover, it allows students to look into a problem from various dimensions and arrive at appropriate solutions relevant to the situation under discussion,

- **Increases Knowledge**

During their studies, students come across a number of subjects and courses from different academic disciplines to write academic papers. This helps increase knowledge in many other academic disciplines.

It broadens a student's horizon and enables him/her to write on any given academic topic.

- **Prepares the Student For the Future**

Academic writing assignments prepare the student for the future when she/he takes on more challenging projects that call for analytical skills. When students enter the real practical world, they become accustomed to undertake complex challenges. Academic essay writing helps them solve various problems. It allows them to see a problem with different dimensions.

- **Intellectual Growth**

Academic writing develops the student's mental faculties in terms of sharpening observational and analytical skills. It helps him/her identify what is relevant and what is not. It strengthens their memory and helps them remember things easily.

- **Improves Writing Skills**

Engaging in academic writing improves the language of the students. This will empower them by honoring their research skills. They will become better at making research on numerous topics from a number of academic disciplines.

- **Intellectual Capacity**

Academic writing arguments are an intellectual growth. When a student has to do a term, she/he will get involved in an in-depth analysis of a particular topic in order to be able to present something rational and relevant so as to make it debatable and argumentative among the audience. This exercise increases their intellectual capacity and in this way makes them ready for more complicated future tasks.

Technically speaking, academic writing comes under the umbrella of writing as one of the macro language skills. However, it differs from other types of writing in many ways. Moreover, the requirements and

challenges of academic writing are specific, and it is usually clearly defined by the particular university department the differences between academic writing and other types of writing are due to the expectations of the academics who will assess it.

It has been observed that many students and researchers are confused about how to write good academic papers in English. According to Jordan (1986, p. 18), Academic writing must be distinguished from other formal styles of writing such as official and business .The major characteristics of “good academic writing” have been subject to much debate in the general field of writing skills.

Jordan (1999, p. 8) states that “academic writing” must be written in a proper formal style. Hamp-Lyons and Poole (2006, p. 16-17) agree with Jordan on the aspect of formality in academic writing. They state that academic writing is a formal piece of paper. They add that the work will contain specific grammatical patterns, organization and argument. They elaborate on this point of formality of academic writing arguing that it comes from:

- (1) Its readers who must be academics,
- (2) Its content that must be a serious thought,
- (3) Its construction which should be use a variety of complex error-free grammatical structures,
- (4) Its vocabulary which should be varied and of a technical level appropriate to the subject matter.

Academic writing can be defined as the way of expressing ideas, knowledge and information clearly in terms of addressing an academic problem.

- (1) It must address a topic or title clearly.
- (2) It has some characteristics that must be present in the text such as:

- Accuracy,
- Organization,
- Argument,
- Coherence,
- Cohesion,
- Appropriateness, and
- Referencing.

These characteristics enable the reader to understand the academic problem in clear way. Many researchers such as Anderson and Poole (2001), Jordan (1986, 1999) discuss those features in different ways. These characteristics are:

- **Organization**

Organization in academic writing stresses the importance of having a clear introduction, body and conclusion. In addition, the progression of ideas and paragraphing must be clear and supported with examples. There must also be a reasonable number of alternative points of view and it is crucial to achieve a sense of argumentation. Greetham (2001, p. 182-202) emphasizes the importance of the introduction, paragraphs and conclusion that must be clear and coherent. He believes that the introduction is a key part in which the writer must interpret the title or question and tell the readers the map that they are going to follow through the piece of writing. He also emphasizes that the body paragraphs must follow the map which the writer outlined in the introduction. He points out that the writer should have a topic sentence for each paragraph which gives the reader a brief description about what is going to follow. With respect to conclusions, Greetham (2001 p. 197) says: “The opinions you express in the conclusion must reflect the strength and balance of the arguments that have preceded them in the body of the essay.”

Along the same lines, Anderson and Poole (2001, p. 17) suggest that a text in academic writing should have an introduction, body and conclusion. They believe that the introduction has to begin with a clear statement of the problem and provide the readers with all essential data that is to follow. Anderson and Poole (2001, p. 17) argue that the body “should be an attempt at a progressive solution to the problem stated in the introduction”. They stress that the conclusion should present the results of the investigation and provide a solution to the problem that has been set.

- **Task Achievement**

In academic writing, it is imperative that the work must be directly relevant to the title. The writer has to approach the task in a direct and efficient way. The development of the argument must be relevant, accurate and appropriate. According to Davies (2008), successful academic writing must address a topic or title clearly. He focuses on the fact that writers must be careful about what information they include in the essay and to focus on the relationships between the ideas that have been discussed.

- **Accuracy**

Accuracy is reflected in:

- (1) a high standards of grammar,
- (2) good quality of word choice,
- (3) usage of register-specific (academic) vocabulary,
- (4) Correct spelling and punctuation.

Jordan (1986, pp. 10-18) points the importance of grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation. He explains that the misuse of tenses changes the meaning and spelling mistakes causes confusion. He argues that, it is not the reader’s job to guess what words the writer chose. He also distinguishes the differences between some verbs lead to confusion such

as 'lend' and 'borrow', 'rise', 'arise', 'raise' and 'increase', 'make' and 'do' and 'say' and 'tell' as a part of taking care of word choice and the use of words.

- **Coherence and Cohesion**

In an academic context, it is important to use linking words to join the ideas within and between sentences and paragraphs. Moreover, it is crucial to have excellent usage of 'signposting words' to show the development of argument. This is known as cohesion. As for 'coherence', Carter (1999, p.245) states that a text is perceived as coherent "when it makes consistent sense, with or without the help of devices". He defines cohesion as the demonstrable pattern of the text's integrity or the marks of its 'hanging together. Simply coherence implies that the text must make sense and cohesion means that it must be appropriately structured and interlinked by suitable signposts and linking words.

Appropriateness and Referencing

The language used by the writer must be appropriate to the given topic within an academic context. Furthermore, the writers have to make appropriate use of source texts and of direct and indirect quotations too. They also have to provide adequate references and/or bibliography details. From another angles, Jordan (1986, p. 18) points out that written academic English rarely contains the following: Contractions: (I do not agree.....) would be used instead of (I don't agree...); (I am trying..)Instead of (I'm trying...).

In light of what has been said above, the present study will attempt to investigate the difficulties which Sudanese students face in academic writing in their first year of tertiary education.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The researcher noticed that freshmen college students in English medium universities and those who take up English as a specialty in colleges of languages and faculties of education in the Sudan suffer a lot through their preparatory courses in academic writing. They also manifest weaknesses and serious gaps in their performance in later years of their education.

This suffering stems from two sources:

- (1) The huge gap between English language standard in secondary schools and the standard required by the first year of university.
- (2) The enormous difference between the students' reality and the high expectations of their tutors.

The gap in the former results from the treatment of writing in the school textbooks which focus mainly on writing as a skill that reinforces what is taught orally. Although these books, especially in the last two books of the series, introduce the students to the conventional four types of writing (expository, descriptive, persuasive, and narration), still they do not gear them towards academic writing as such. In addition, the school teachers tend to focus on preparing the students to get as high marks as possible in the school certificate examination at the expense of the proper development of their language skills. So; when the students join university (with extremely high grades in English language), they discover that they are unable to cope with the demands of the new situation.

The difference in the latter is due to the reluctance of university tutors and instructors to respond to the demands of the situation. They take it for granted that these students are (or should be) at the required level and they are not ready to make any compromises to remedy the situation.

They almost all repeat the same fallacy that it is the students who should upgrade themselves to match the standards required by the university; it is not the university who should yield to the demands of the students to come down to their levels.

As a result, the students fall victims of this nasty predicament and are caught in the crossfire between these two conflicting poles. They end up with a continuous suffering that will inevitably have its negative effects on their academic life and later on in the workplace. Unless these difficulties are addressed in due time, they will grow roots and become difficult to eradicate.

The problem which the present study attempts to address can be expressed in terms of two main aspects:

- (1) The freshmen academic linguistic competence has to be enhanced in order for the students to gain the knowledge and skill required for academic writing.
- (2) The freshmen academic metalinguistic awareness has to be raised in order for the students to be able to perform better in their academic writing.

These two aspects represent the weft and warp of the fabric of academic writing, so to speak. By the careful investigation of them, it is expected that the texture of academic writing will improve considerably.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the statement of the problem above, the study will attempt to provide answers for the following questions:

- (1) What are the linguistic difficulties which relate to academic writing that face freshmen college students in Sudanese English medium institutions at tertiary level?
- (2) To what extent are freshmen college students in Sudanese English medium institutions at tertiary level aware of the metalinguistic aspects of academic writing?

1.4 Hypotheses of the Study

In order to provide answers to the questions above, the study makes the following hypotheses:

- (1) Freshmen college students in Sudanese English medium institutions at tertiary level face linguistic difficulties in relation to academic writing. These difficulties are clear in:
 - (a) Choice of academic vocabulary (parts of speech, phrasal verbs, quantifying expressions, words with several meanings, and metaphors and idioms)
 - (b) Collocations.
 - (c) Ways of talking about sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams, and cause and effect.
 - (d) Expressing opinions and ideas.
 - (e) Functions.
- (2) Freshmen college students in Sudanese English medium institutions at tertiary level face metalinguistic difficulties in relation to academic writing. These difficulties are clear in:
 - (a) Understanding instructional words.
 - (b) Distinguishing between facts, opinions and feelings.
 - (c) Talking about points of view.
 - (d) Organization of writing.
 - (e) Describing research methods

1.5 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to:

- (1) Highlight the difficulties that face the students in academic writing.
- (2) Diagnose the problems which impede the students' acquisition of academic writing skills.
- (3) Seek remedy for the continuous deterioration in the ability of the students to perform adequately in academic writing.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is considered significant for the following reasons:

- (1) It addresses a problem that has been a source for concern in the academia.
- (2) It offers guidelines for focusing attention on the most important aspects of academic writing.
- (3) It attempts to make the preliminary courses of academic writing more useful and engaging.
- (4) It helps instructors to reflect on the materials they use for teaching the basics of academic writing.
- (5) It draws the attention of all stakeholders to the key issues related to improving the students' abilities in academic writing.

1.7 Limits of the Study:

This study will have the following limits:

- (1) It will focus on English medium institutions at tertiary level.
- (2) It will be restricted to Greater Khartoum
- (3) It will be carried out at the beginning of the first year of university.

1.8 Delimitations of the Study

The researcher will delimit the scope of the study in terms of:

- (1) The study design which adopt a descriptive methodology.
- (2) The theme of the study which will concentrate on the most important aspects of linguistic and metalinguistic dimensions of the problem.
- (3) The data collection tools which will consist of an MCQ test and two questionnaires; one for the students and the other for the teachers.

1.9 Summary of the chapter:

This chapter provided a review of the most important aspects that relate the problem in question. It stated the problem to be addressed, formulated the research questions and set the hypotheses. It also specified the aims of the study and explained why it is significant. Finally, it drew the limits of

the research imposed by the context of the study in terms of place and time and specified the restrictions delimited by the researcher in terms of the nature of the methodology to be adopted, the scope of aspects to be investigated and the data collection tools.

Chapter Two

Literature Review and Previous Studies

Chapter Two

Literature Review and Previous Studies

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the conceptual literature and the previous studies conducted in the same area as the current study. It starts with a review of writing as a macro-skill. Then it zooms in to focus on academic writing. It finally describes five previous studies carried out in situations and contexts similar to the present study.

2.2 Writing as a Macro-Skill

The growing interest in writing, especially at tertiary levels, has developed to become a well-recognized discipline in its own right. Different researchers have different views about the concept of writing. This is because everyone tries to define it from a different perspective according to a specific field of study.

Nunan (1989, p.36) defines writing as “an extremely complex, cognitive activity for all which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously”.. This definition reveals the complexity of the task of writing. Moreover, it shows the clear link to the cognitive aspect that often represents a difficulty to learners during their writing. Nunan’s idea about writing provides more details about the skill of writing than what is explicitly seen.

For Ransdell and Levy (as cited in Singleton- Jackson, 2003), writing is defined as a process that requires extensive self-regulation and intentional control...writers must change ideas into text, repair organization and mechanics, and monitor their success--all while trying to formulate a coherent message Dealing with writing entails the ability to manage all the different stages and aspects involved in order to arrive at producing a successful piece of writing.

According to Widdowson (1978) writing is an act of producing correct sentences and transmitting them into words on paper. This mainly involves the use of graphic language. This definition looks at the skill of writing as a way to recording one's ideas and feelings, using a correct grammar in a concrete manner. On the same line as Widdowson, Troyka and Nudelman (1994) asserted that writing is more than just taking a pen in hand and expecting words to flow perfectly on paper. This shows how sophisticated writing is, and the steps that are necessary for the process. In doing so, writers have to: generate their ideas. These idea need to be monitored, selected, and prioritized in order to translate the ordered ideas into text, using correct lexicon, grammar and genre rules; and to review the text to clarify meaning and eliminate errors. (Biggs, et al.(as cited in Singleton-Jackson, 2003, p. 60)

Flower and Hayes (1980) studied writing from the point of view of the involved mental operations as they acted recursively:

- Planning and generation of knowledge,
- Translation of the plan into speech, and
- Editing or reviewing the plan or the newly created text.

Accordingly, concepts about the skill of writing have shifted from simple considerations as the misconception that writing is just an extension of thinking (Mandel, 1984), or the way of communication through which we express our ideas, feelings, emotions etc. (Harmer, 2001, p. 79). As result, writing is no longer marginalized, and is regarded as significant as any of the other language skills.

2.3 Reasons for Writing

Unlike speaking that is acquired at an early stage throughout the process of exposition, writing is considered as a skill which is only achieved as a result of a more conscious process of learning (Harmer, 2004). As Harmer (2004, p. 3) “Thus, we no longer have to ask ourselves whether

writing is a good thing or not. We take it as a fundamental right.” In other words, Harmer means that we learn to write to fulfill our social needs, and being educated gives people the impression of self-esteem over those who are not so fortunate. Reid (as cited in Damayanti, 2009) identifies three main reasons for writing which are:

- To explain,
- To entertain and
- To persuade.

To sum up, while focusing on the purpose of writing, the writer moves onwards with his writing by aiming at other stages. Before starting to write, the writer at primary stage needs to give deep thoughts to the purpose of writing. This will justify later on the use of language, the information they require, and how to develop and organize them in their writing (Damayanti, 2009).

2.4 Speaking and Writing

It is not possible to speak about writing without referring to speaking. There are broad similarities and differences between speaking and writing in terms of form and process (Harmer, 2004). Raimes (1983) explained that learning to write is not just an extension of speaking a language. In her view, she distinguished between speaking that is learned at an early age without any systematic instruction, and writing that has to be taught at school. Raimes also presented various differences between the two skills such as the nature of speech of relying on voices and body language, while the use of graphic symbols in writing. Moreover, there are the variations of spoken language found in dialects, the use of intonation pronunciation and the face to face interaction found in the conversation. On the other hand writing depends more on standard forms such as grammar, vocabulary and style. This is because writing is a

planned process and the writer needs to convey the message to the reader accurately (pp. 4-5).

2.5 Micro Skills and Sub-Skills of Writing

In learning a language, one needs to be fluent and master all the four skills of that language (that is; speaking, reading, writing and listening). This mastery results from the continuous exposure and practice of a particular skill in order to perform well. Every skill consists of a set of levels of proficiency that makes the user of that skill an effective one. Speaking for example, requires the learners to be as interactive as possible during a conversation. Nonetheless, speaking a lot is not what makes speaking skill effective. Therefore, the mastery of the speaking skill requires, for instance; paying attention to the use of words, using correct grammar and the clarity of messages.

Writing goes in the same direction. This skill has certain micro skills in order to be mastered later on. Micro skills for writing are presented by Brown (Brown, 2001, p. 343) as follows:

1. Produce graphemes and orthographic patterns of English
2. Produce writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose
3. Produce an acceptable core of words and use appropriate word order patterns
4. Use acceptable grammatical systems(e.g., tense, agreement, pluralization) patterns, and rules
5. Express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms.
6. Use cohesive devices in written discourse.
7. Use the rhetorical forms and conventions of written discourse
8. Appropriately accomplish the communication functions of written texts according to form and purpose.

9. Convey links and connections between events and communicate such relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification.
10. Distinguish between literal and implied meanings when writing.
11. Correctly convey culturally specific references in the context of the written text.
12. Develop and use a battery of writing strategies, such as accurately assessing the drafts, using paragraphs and synonyms, soliciting peer and instructor feedback, and using feedback or revising and editing.
13. These writing skills combine the mechanical aspects of writing with the communicative purpose of writing (Damayanti, 2009).

Moreover, writing taken as a way of transmitting thoughts to the written form is challenge to both natives and non-natives. Nunan (1989, p. 35) assumed that ...learning to write fluently and expressively is the most difficult of the macro skills for all language users regardless of whether the language in question is a first, second or foreign language

Raimes (1983) explained the basic elements in producing a good piece of writing. He provides the following points summarizing the different factors teachers have to take into consideration in the teaching of writing.

- Syntax content Sentence structure, relevance, clarity, originality, sentence boundaries, logic, etc.
- The writer' stylistic choices, etc.
- Process getting ideas',
- Grammar rules for verbs, agreement, writing drafts articles, pronouns, etc.
- Mechanics audience Handwriting, spelling, , etc.
- Purpose organization word choice the reason for Paragraphs, topic and support, vocabulary, idiom writing

- Cohesion and unity tone,
- Producing a piece of writing (Raimes, 1983, p. 6)

Also, Heaton (as cited in Damayanti, 2009) describes four basic skills that have to do with writing proficiency. These are:

- The grammatical features i.e., the ability to write grammatically correct sentences,
- The stylistic skills which indicate the ability to control and manipulate the sentences effectively.
- The mechanical skill that applies to the skill of mastering the use of punctuation and spelling.
- The judgment skill as the ability to write appropriately with proper selection of relevant information (p. 138).

So, what makes a good piece of writing is the writer's ability and effective control over the elements that make a good writing, in addition it requires the writer to be as clear as possible in presenting his/her ideas to the audience.

To put it in a nutshell, Hedge (1988) summarizes the elements of effective writing as:

- The organization and development of ideas;
- The clarity of meaning; and
- The careful choice of discourse devices, and vocabulary that is appropriate to the readers.

2.6 Expert Writer vs. Novice Writers

Writing among students differs widely. In every skill there exist a number of features by which distinguish expert from novice writers. This issue was studied by Flower and Hayes (1981) who have listed some characteristics and differences between both types. They found out that writers of different skill levels employ different approaches to writing. On

the one hand, expert writers have shown a good response to factors such as rhetorical problem, and tend to start their writing by focusing on the problem and purpose of writing to help the readers later on.

Following Flower and Hayes work, Torrance (as cited in Singleton-Jackson, 2003) also points at the rhetorical problem which expert writers tend to consider, in which they focus on the addressed audience, the impact they wish to have on them, and how they represent themselves throughout the text.

Another characteristic is that expert writers take much time to revise their ideas before writing (Breetvelt et al.; Torrance as cited in Singleton-Jackson, 2003).

On the other hand, novice writers, according to Flower and Hayes, show that they are concerned primarily with basic conventions of writing such as the number of pages.

Singleton-Jackson (2003) indicates that “novice writers have a tendency to write like they talk, not recognizing the error in this approach” (p. 17), which leaves the reader with a sense of confusion and incomprehension. Unlike expert writers, novice writers put less effort in the writing process resulting in a slow progress while making much efforts (Singleton-Jackson), and engage in writing with less planning (Breetvelt et al. and Torrance as cited in Singleton-Jackson, 2003).

Consequently, the difference between expert writers and novice writers as suggested by Torrance depends on the basic knowledge of the writer himself.

2.7 EFL Writers

In describing the characteristics of EFL writers, it is at first worth mentioning the cognitive process of writing and composing. These processes have been studied by Flower and Hayes (1981) who identified them as “distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or

organize during the act of composing” (p. 366). However, these processes are not the only aspect to focus on during the composition, “when it comes to formulating a message, linguistic skills and knowledge become prominent in the writing process” (Chenoweth and Hayes as cited in Schoonen, Snellings, Stevenson & van Gelderen, 2009).

Consequently, studies have come to conclude that “writing in an L2 or FL is much harder and time consuming in the native language” (Chenoweth and Hayes, 2001; Roca de Larios et al., 2006 as cited in Schoonen, Snellings, Stevenson & van Gelderen, 2009). Therefore, FL writers are influenced by their experience in writing in their L1 to FL writing situations. Furthermore, they were identified to have limited linguistic knowledge that can hamper the use of metacognitive knowledge and writing experience (Jones and Tetroe, 1987; Whalen and Me´nard, 1995; Schoonen et al., 2003 as cited in Schoonen et al., 2009).

In addition, these L1 writing experiences at various occasions affect FL writing in different ways such as the writing process and accordingly make the writer struggle during composition due to his inadequate FL linguistic knowledge (Schoonen et al., 2009).

To conclude, most of EFL writers face difficulties in FL composition due to the interference of L1, and lack of FL linguistic knowledge resulting in a low proficiency in writing.

2.8 The Writing Process

Writing as a skill is a complicated process consisting of different steps to arrive at the final form. Although different types exist in writing, in terms of their content and the purposes behind them, they do share the same process. Singleton-Jackson (2003) refers to writing as “...a mystery to researchers with regard to how the process of writing occurs and what makes it proficient” (p.11). In this sense, emphasis is put on the complexity of this task illustrating the interference of different cognitive

activities in the task. Furthermore, in their study about writing, Flower and Hayes (as cited in Singleton-Jackson, 2003) account for the mental operations as they interact recursively, and have distinguished “planning and generation of knowledge, translation of the plan into speech, and editing or reviewing the plan or the newly created text”. This model proposed by Flower and Hayes has made an influential impact in the research on writing, and inspired many researchers later on to follow their studies.

Several researchers, among them Harmer (2004), depict the process of writing as of four basic steps that are as follows:

1. Planning

Williams (2003) claims that “Planning is one of the more effective features of the writing process, although it also can be one of the more challenging” (p. 114), and then returns to define planning as “Reflecting on the material produced during prewriting to develop a plan to achieve the aim of the paper” (p. 106). At this stage writers, before beginning to write, consider three main issues (Harmer, 2004).

- At first, Harmer indicates that writers need to think about the purpose of their writing; by doing so, they will identify the text type they will produce along with the language used, and the information included.
- Secondly, writers must account for the audience they are addressing allowing them to adjust their writing to leave a certain impact on the readers.
- Concluding, Harmer emphasized on the content structure of the piece of writing in which it is organized in terms of facts, ideas or arguments (p. 5). In short, planning is the step stone for the writing development by which the writers collect all sorts of information about the purpose of writing, the addressed audience, and the information that will used.

2. Drafting

After the first stage of planning for the writing, writers need to follow another step that is drafting. This is producing the first version of the piece of writing that is subject to amendment. Donohue (2009), refers to drafting as the stage where “the students are able to craft their own writing” (p.12). Therefore, in the drafting stage, writers need to put all what they see relevant to the piece of writing they are composing regardless to spelling mistakes, grammar mistakes and others. Therefore, the purpose behind drafting is to gather as much information, ideas and arguments that will be used later on in writing. Along the writing process there may exist a number of drafts until we reach the final version (Harmer, 2004).

3. Editing

During this step writers check their drafts for cohesion and coherence and rewrite what they think is unclear or ambiguous to form an understandable passage. This phase is about revising what a writer has done so far with careful emphasis on the elements of style and grammar lexis and so on. Editing also concerns “focusing on the sentence-level concerns, such as punctuation, sentence length, spelling, agreement of subjects and predicates, and style” (Williams, 2003). In fact, editing is an important stage whereby the writers shape their writing and prepare it to be published, Harmer (2004) suggests that revising of ones’ writing by another reader helps the writer improve the quality of his/her writing (p.5), Donohue (2009) describes drafting as the stage at which students’ reflect on the previous stages and plan for the next.

4. Publishing (The Final Version)

After editing the drafts and making the changes needed to be done, writers will be ready to make the final version of their piece of writing to be sent to the intended audience. Donohue concludes that “The final stage

of writing process includes sharing, reflection, and assessment of the students' writing" (p.14). The final version is therefore supposed to be the refined, errors-free copy delivered to the teacher or any other entity in order to be evaluated. When describing the writing process as listed above, these steps will be as follows:

1. Planning
2. Drafting
3. Editing
4. Final version (Harmer, 2004, p. 5)

However, the process of writing cannot be considered to follow such a linear representation. Harmer indicates that "The process of writing is not linear, as indicated above, but rather recursive" (p. 5). Agreeing with this, Donohue (2009) illustrates that the writing process is not linear as presented in this typical model, where a piece starts at the beginning with students prewriting their ideas, and ends when the piece is published. Instead, the writing process is recursive. This means that the writer is continually revising the previous stages and finding new ways of refining a piece of writing in order to improve it (p. 9)

Thus, each step is subject to repetition, and more often we can have more than one draft, and more than one planning and so on. For this reason, the conventional linear representation is not valid and does not reflect what most writers experience when writing. The process wheel as presented by Harmer shows a more agreeable scheme of the writing process, in which it explains the different steps involved in writing and demonstrates their interrelation. It is worth mentioning that these stages apply for the different kinds of writings; e-mails, invitations, letters, messages, shopping lists etc. (Harmer 2004, p. 6).

The process wheel suggested by Harmer and accepted by other researchers implies the students follow a cognitive process in which they

are constantly revisiting previous steps and to end up with the final version. 9

2.9 The Writing Strategies

Kirby and Crovitz (2013) stated that “Teaching Writing is challenging; it may be one of the toughest jobs a teacher faces” (p. 9), however “it can also be rewarding” (p.11). The effective teaching of writing for Kirby and Crovitz requires time divided between practice, sharing writing, completing the piece of writing, and time to respond and evaluate all of that writing (p.9).

The teaching of writing also occurs with the help of certain strategies that aim at enhancing students’ writing productions. Teaching these strategies to learners will surely have a positive effect on their writing. For instances, teaching strategies such as planning, revising and editing their compositions has made a remarkable impact on the quality of their writing (Graham & Perin, 2007).

The writing strategies differ in relation to their application and implementation in syllabuses. Thus, the teacher is the center point which directs the students towards a successful writing achievement. The writing strategies are identified by several researchers as the teaching of generic processes such as brainstorming (Troia & Graham, 2004), or the strategies for achieving writing tasks such as story writing (Fitzgerald & Markham, 1987).

In addition to the writing strategies which writers may employ in during their composition, there are a number of strategies used to engage students in writing. The NSW Department of Education and Training (2007) have proposed a series of strategies which promotes students to write and demonstrated their implementation in writing classes.

2.9.1 Modeled Writing

Teachers use this strategy to allow students “to gain knowledge about language, vocabulary and text structures required to write for a range of purposes” (The NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007, p. 29). Models used in this strategy are real world texts students read, they might vary from newspaper articles to literary works depending on the teacher’s selection. The implementation of this strategy starts by introducing the text type to students while clarifying the audience and the purpose behind writing the text. Then the teacher points out to the type and the features of language used by the author and its effect on the readers, and he ends up with providing students with chances to practice the writing skills they have acquired studying these models (p. 28). 10

2.9.2 Think aloud Writing

Think aloud strategy is one way to engage students in writing that function as a stimulator for writing. Think aloud is defined by The NSW Department of Education and Training (2007) as a method in which students are saying aloud what they are thinking about during their composition which helps them organize and edit their writing. In addition, The NSW Department of Education and Training asserts “It is a strategy that can be used to demonstrate a comprehensive range of skills, knowledge and understandings about writing” (p. 33).

Moreover, the implementation of this strategy can be used as the teacher selects a particular skill to focus on, and then s/he chooses a few writing samples and apply the think aloud strategy in order to illustrate the reasoning and editing during writing.

2.9.3 Guided Writing

In guided writing strategy, the teacher’s role is, as the name of the strategy denotes, a guide for students, and they work cooperatively in order to compose a written text. This strategy “...can involve the whole

class, small groups or individuals”, it can also be with help of the teacher “a key strategy for assisting students who need additional support in writing” (The NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007, p. 34). In short, guided writing emphasizes the role of the teacher in fostering and facilitating student’s writing, by focusing on their needs, measuring and assessing the students’ achievement of the outcomes. Then the teacher helps students building prior knowledge and skills students develop in writing (The NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007).

2.9.4 Independent Writing

The aim of this strategy is to provide students with opportunities to explore their own skills in writing different text types (The NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007), apart from the teacher’s guidance and collaborative writing with peers. In independent writing, students learn to identify the purpose of their writing, the audience, and the use of different skills to help them accomplish the writing tasks. This strategy also helps students become aware of their writings increases self-assessment

2.10 Teaching Writing

2.10.1 The Teaching of Writing

The teaching of writing is an essential element of every teaching programmer at all levels, and the goal for teaching writing is for students to become independent writers (NSW Board of Studies, 2000). Teachers responsible for this task are well aware of the complexity of the writing skill and process, though “teaching writing can be frustrating and challenging, but it can also be rewarding and a breath of fresh air in a rather stagnant educational context” (Kirby & Crovitz, 2013, p. 9).

Therefore, as suggested by NSW Board of Studies the teaching of writing needs to be explicit for students while distinguishing clearly between

academic and community purposes (p.21). Additionally, teaching writing is another complex process that requires several aspects to be satisfied. For the teaching of writing, NSW Board of Studies assumes that students are supposed to understand both the purposes and the context of their writing in order to succeed at written texts; this implies the teaching of writing for different audiences and purposes.

Despite the fact that students may become independent writers, there still other issues and challenges they face, and with which they need proper guidance (p. 26). In addition, students need to be personally involved in writing tasks in order to make the learning experience effective and valuable (Adas & Bakir, 2013). As a result, what are the main elements in the teaching of writing, and how are they taught?

2.10.2 Elements in the Teaching of Writing

NSW Board of Studies (2000) depicts the following elements in the teaching of writing program; it focuses on the compositions of text, the process of writing and the presentation of texts. It also indicates that the aim of teaching writing is for students to learn to write effectively for different purposes (p.21).

2.10.2.1 Composition of Texts

The composition of text as assumed by NSW Board of Studies includes the students developing a sense of the mechanics of writing; how it works and what makes it effective. In doing so, students need to learn how to think about the purpose for their writing according to different writing tasks, and to reflect on the context of their writing. Besides, the teacher evaluates the students' writing at different levels.

- First, the composition of the whole text (purpose, text structure and cohesion).
- Second, the teacher evaluates the linguistic features such as grammar, syntax and vocabulary, and

- Finally ends with the evaluation of surface features such as punctuation.

As a result, in the elements of composition of text, the teacher generally follow a gradual pattern in teaching writing in which he starts with main aspects, followed by a concluding evaluation of students writing.

2.10.2.2 The Process of Writing

In this element, the teacher focuses on the fundamental feature of the writing process. During this phase, the basic process is explicitly illustrated to students, in order to understand how writing occurs. The process of writing in generally a cognitive one (Flower & Hayes, 1982), that has to do with several mental operations, in spite of the complexity of this process students still need to practice writing following this pattern. Researchers differ in the distributing of the stages of writing but mainly agree on some of them. For NSW Board of Studies, the process is divided into seven main stages that are drafting, revising, and conferencing along with editing, proofreading and publishing. In short, teaching the writing process to students and the stages of composing enable them to engage in writing more often, and to think critically during writing which will improve it later on.

2.10.2.3 The Presentation of Written Texts

The presentation of written text goes through the explicit teaching of handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation. These features need to be present all the time in the student's writing for the sake of effective writing productions. As mentioned before, concerning the elements of teaching writing presented by NSW Board of Studies (2000), and which suggested the three elements. Further description of the elements in teaching writing was illustrated by Hyland (2002). In his description he focuses on three fundamental key elements that are; the writer, the text and the reader which are:

❖ The Writer

- Issues of proficiency, first language background, and prior experience
- Cognitive and motivational factors
- Knowledge of the topic
- The role of composing processes

❖ The Text

- Authenticity of purposes and writing tasks
- Number and variety of writing assignments
- Genre modeling and exploration
- Rhetorical and lexicon-grammatical consciousness raising

❖ The Reader

- Orientation to specific target discourse communities
- Need for real and multiple audiences
- Awareness of appropriate levels of involvement and interactional strategies
- Importance of feedback and audience response.(Hyland, 2002, p. 79)

2.10.2.4 The Writer

This element of the writer draws on the notion that writing is of two chunks; the first is that “writing as a cultural activity, and to engage students in the writing process” (Hyland, 2002, p. 80). Understanding the meaning of the cultural influence of the writers means the contribution of this factor in shaping the writer’s cognition during writing. Adding to that, writers of different cultural backgrounds will surely write according to their previous knowledge, for “Participants have their own ideas of what ‘good writing’ consist of based on their prior disciplinary, cultural or social experiences, and these expectations are internalized as different writing patterns” (p. 80). Moreover, the teacher needs to implement certain strategies in order to encourage students to write. These strategies

are generally drawn from the cognitive and motivational factors related to the students. Some of these strategies include: the choice of relevant topics, cooperative writing, and the use of varied tasks. These strategies will not only engage students in writing activities, but will also allow them to overcome the deficiencies they were suffering from in writing. Additionally, the teacher needs to understand that “not all students compose in the same way” (p. 81) and these are due to the cultural differences mentioned previously. Therefore, student’s cognition varies in the writing process. At this point, the teacher can deliver training sessions for students aiming at “developing strategies for writing...helping them to brainstorm, draft in stages...” provided that is accompanied by his continuous feedback to guide students.

2.10.2.5 The Text

In the teaching of writing, the text is a fundamental aspect. However, students as Hyland pointed out “are given little advice on how to structure their writing experiences according to the demands and constraints of target contexts” (p.81), and this also proves students lacks in acknowledging features of various texts. This element is crucial in the teaching of writing, for it has to deal with the different text types and how they are written. Teachers are therefore required to familiarize students with such types, and illustrate using strategies such as modeled writing. By this strategy teachers are supposed to “plan their writing syllabuses to focus on the formal constraints of texts to acquaint learners with the potentially unfamiliar patterns and rhetorical conventions they will need” (p. 81-82). This will include the authenticity of writing tasks, and the analysis of written texts.

2.10.2.6 The Reader

As a final element in the teaching of writing, teachers need to incorporate the notion of the audience in teaching writing. The element of the reader

or so-called the audience, largely contributes to the effective teaching of writing which “involves guiding students to an awareness of their readers...background understandings...these readers are likely to expect” (Hyland, 2002, p. 83). Further, teaching writing while focusing on the audience is implemented through encouraging students to think exhaustively of readers’ expectation and needs.

2.11 Approaches to the Teaching of Writing

The teaching of writing has been considerably marked by the adaptation of three major approaches.

1. The product approach,
2. The process approach, and
3. The genre approach.

Although these approaches have developed to make the teaching of writing as effective as possible, yet they differ in terms of principles and techniques on the one hand, and they demonstrate merits and drawbacks on the other.

2.11.1 The Product Approach

The product approach is the oldest and by far one of the most practiced approaches around the world in the teaching of writing (Palpanadan, Bin Salam & Bte Ismail, 2014). This approach focuses mainly on the final result of writing, and considers linguistic knowledge, syntax, vocabulary and cohesive devices as basic features of the writing product (Pincas as cited in Badger & White, 2000). Students in this approach are encouraged to imitate modeled text provided mostly by the teacher, where the chief purpose is to acquire linguistic knowledge. Pincas (1982b) explains learning to write in the product approach as consisting of four stages.

1. It starts with the familiarization stage in which students get acquainted with different features of texts,

2. Then they move to the controlled writing stage where they practice skills to be prepared
3. Then they move further to the stages of guided writing, and
4. Then they move to free writing (p. 22).

The product approach to the teaching of writing is based on several principles because teachers put a great emphasis on the teaching of features of grammar and sentence. Additionally, teachers regard the provision of modeled texts for students as the main tool for students to avoid committing mistakes (Lázaro, 1996, p. 92). Therefore, students generally rely on already-made samples in order to compose grammatically and syntactically correct pieces of writing.

2.11.2 The Process Approach

The process approach to teaching writing is defined as “a cyclical approach. In this approach, students are needed to move back and forth while going from one stage to another stage and taking part in the writing activities” (Palpanadan, Bin Salam & Bte Ismail, 2014, p. 790). Similarly to the process of writing which is “recursive” (Harmer, 2004), the process approach tend to focus on the explicit instruction of the writing stages to students. In contrast with the product approach, which emphasizes fostering the linguistic knowledge, the product approach “is seen as predominantly to do with linguistic skills, such as planning and drafting” (Badger & White, 2000, p. 154).

In the process approach, researchers identify different stages which writers go through, yet the most commonly stages agreed on suggested by Tribble (as cited in Badger & White, 2000) are four stages:

1. Prewriting,
2. Composing/drafts,
3. Revising, and
4. Editing.

In addition, the stages of writing in the process approach are complemented with various activities that the teacher supply while acting the role of a facilitator and monitor. Badger and White conclude stating the aim of process approach as to improve students' linguistic skills and writing development with the help of the teacher as a facilitator (p. 155), unlike the product approach which aims at just developing linguistic skills using modeled texts.

The process approach to teaching writing perceives students as active participants in learning to write. As such, it provides a good opportunity for them to develop their writing, and with the help of the teacher as monitor, and a facilitator, this approach is considered to be efficient.

2.11.3 The Genre Approach

Genre in writing mainly refers to the distinct structure of texts, the different use of language in terms of grammar, vocabulary that writers use to convey their ideas (Luu, 2011).

The genre approach is considered as the latest approach in the teaching of writing. However, it is thought to be an extension of the previous product approach (Badger & White, 2000). The notion of genre was explained by Swales (as cited in Badger & White, 2000) as "...a class of communication events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes" (p. 58). This notion was introduced in the genre approach as an explanation to the fact that writing differs across social contexts (Badger & White). In addition, with the features derived from the product approach that writing is merely about linguistic knowledge, students in the genre approach are exposed to different types of writing, and they write for various purposes. Moreover, this approach argues that successful writing occurs when students take into account both the context and the expectations of the readers in terms of grammar, organization and the content (p. 123). As for the role of the teacher, Luu

claims that the teacher is generally a guide who provides students with careful support during writing activities, so they will achieve a mastery over the genres (p. 124). As a result, students in the genre approach are first acquainted with the different features of texts, purposes for writing while considering the context and the needs of the readers before they can engage in writing.

2.12 Reading and Writing

The significance of reading in the foreign language context has been of interest to numerous studies (Krashen, 1982; Alderson, 1984; Carrell, 1988; Grabe, 1993). Reading was also acknowledged for having a typical association with writing (Trosky & Wood, 1982, Tierney, Soter, O’Flahavour & Mc Ginley, 1989, Mc Gingley, 1992). A simple definition of reading mainly suggests that it is a process of attaining linguistic information through print (Widdowson, 1979). Whereas Rumelhart (1977) argues that reading is a more complex cognitive process than it appears to be. Reading is a process which includes constructing meaning with the involvement of several elements such as the reader, the text and the relationship between them. Therefore; starting from the 1970s, a shift occurred regarding reading whereby it has changed from a simple way of decoding messages to a deeper concept of comprehension.

2.12.1 The Relationship between Reading and Writing

A large number of researchers have agreed that reading and writing are closely intertwined and connected. Olness (2005) and Tsai (2006) both consider reading and writing as similar processes of composing in which the reader or the author interact with a text. As it has been noticed in classroom experiences, good readers are mainly good writers (Williams, 2003). The explanation of this comes in Krashen’s (as cited in Williams, 2003) who claims that the skills of writing is similar to second language skill in which its mastery stems from a comprehensible input over a

period of time. By this, he means that proficiency in writing is a result of a sufficient and a comprehensible reading input. Krashen (1985, p. 23) also relates writing development to "... extensive reading in which the focus of the reader is on the message, i.e., reading for genuine interest and/or pleasure". When considering the view of reading as a way of improving writing proficiency, Krashen (1981a) introduced the reading hypothesis which is a way of explaining the differences of students' writing ability. As a result, he claimed that (a) "good writers will have done large amounts of pleasure reading" (p. 3); (b) "good writers, as a group, read and have read more than poor writers" (p. 3); (c) "reading remains the only way of developing competence in writing" (p. 9). However, Williams (2003, p. 166) does not completely agree with these arguments. He acknowledges the importance of reading as a factor in writing development but not as the only one.

On the whole, it is apparent that reading and writing are interrelated in terms of processes, and the tight impact which reading has on writing. Reading is a contributing factor in developing students' writing ability. This can also imply that reading may inhibit writing ability if not practiced often. So, it is important that reading should be encouraged to be integrated when teaching writing, without neglecting the effective instruction from the part of the teacher.

2.13 Planning Students' Writing

When speaking about planning students' writing, people generally refer to planning writing assignments. This procedure may not be as easy as it seems, for it may reflect the quality of the students' writing in most instances as Williams (2003) points out that "...problems in students' writing can be traced back to poorly constructed assignments" (p. 279). Therefore, effective planning of assignment is a delicate matter that requires attentive thought. Williams (2003) suggested few steps in order

to improve assignments planning. In his perspective, he emphasizes on the importance of outcomes and objectives of writing assignments. He argued that good assignments require time for planning, and are of measurable objectives related to broader goals in the teaching of writing. In relation to that, he distinguishes between goals that are linked with mastery of writing, and objectives that have to do more with performance and skill. In describing the goals for writing assignments; Williams indicates that students will be studying different forms of writing. In objectives, however, students are mainly expected to produce effective and successful writing by the end of the writing course (p. 280). Additionally, in planning for students assignments Lázaro (1996) proposed that teachers need to take students' level and the difficulties of the assignment into account. This generally means that writing assignments are distributed designed to meet students' actual level and addresses their lacks in writing. Therefore, teachers need to take into account all these aspects into account when designing writing activities for students.

2.14 Assessing Students' Writing

Assessing students' writing is a curtail element in the teaching of writing by which teachers are able to measure the degree at which their students are progressing. Assessing is defined as "the process of collecting, analyzing and recording information about student progress towards achievement of syllabus outcomes" (Writing and spelling strategies, 2007, p. 17). Harmer (2004) suggested that "when responding to students' work we are not only concerned with the accuracy of their performance but also – and this is crucial – with the content and design of their writing" (p. 108). He means that assessment of writing is not only concerned with rules of language and respecting stages of writing, but also with the information included within their writing. Supporting this

argument, Mackenzie, Scull and Munsie (2013) claim that “assessment systems should consider content and process” (p. 376). The notion of responding to students’ written works for Harmer is just a way by which the teacher discusses the students’ writings without any judgment. Whereas, when correcting their writing, teachers ought to observe and indicate errors and correct mistakes, and also make recommendations whenever necessary.

An effective process for assessing students’ writing achievement was highlighted in Writing and spelling strategies (2007). As a first step, teachers need to collect students writing samples over a period of time, and then the teacher needs to observe students’ behaviors’ as they engage in the process of writing. Then, take the analysis stage in which teachers analyze students’ writing skills based on a test which results are used to determine students’ progress.

As a conclusion, assessment of students’ writing is a critical process where the teacher needs to specify the basic elements of his evaluation. In doing so, teachers need to define the basic goals and objectives for assessment along with consideration to both process and the content of students’ writing so as to achieve the main aim behind assessment that is improving students’ writing ability.

2.15 Difficulties in Writing and Learning to Write

As they learn to write inside or outside the classroom settings, students, encounter difficulties which hinder their writing proficiency. The writing difficulties are commonly shared among English native speakers and students who are learning English both as a second or foreign language (Aragón, Baires & Rodriguez, 2013). Al-Khasawneh (as cited in Huwari & Al-Khasawneh, 2013) states that “EFL learners showed that they have many problems when writing in English... That is because they rarely write in English (p. 2). Writing is also highlighted as one of the most

difficult skills to master McIntyre and Gardner (as cited in Huwari & Al-Khasawneh, 2013). This issue may be traced back to the stages of writing, planning, drafting, editing and publishing (Harmer, 2004) as well as to the components of a good piece of writing (Raimes, 1983) which students need to take into account while composing in English. In addition, “Students do not write very often and most of what they write is classroom-bound” (Adas & Bakir, 2013, p. 254). This assumption is applicable in many settings where ESLs and EFLs are hindered with composition; where “they have to put into practice all the strategies and techniques that have been taught to them in their composition courses” (Aragón, Baires & Rodriguez, 2013, p. 13).

2.16 Aspects of Difficulties in Students’ Writing

The writing difficulties may be related to features like grammar, syntax, cohesion or others, and students usually vary in facing these difficulties. Furthermore, students’ writing difficulties may be a result of different factors, because “...not only self-strategies influence students’ performance, but also the effectiveness of the methods and techniques that teachers apply in their English composition courses” (Aragón, Baires & Rodriguez, 2013, p. 1).

Significant to the nature of writing as a cognitive process, and the amount of time and effort it requires, Aragón, Baires and Rodriguez (2013) argued that students who have low interest in writing and learning to write mostly have low writing proficiency (p. 1). Another research which confirmed writing difficulties was conducted by Salem (as cited in Huwari & Al-Khasawneh, 2013), in which he concluded that ESLs and EFLs encounter difficulties impeding them to writing effectively. His results came out of a study carried on undergraduate students majoring in English, and their views on writing in English. He argued that most learners faced difficulties in relation to vocabulary, idioms, cultural

knowledge and less experience with second language rhetorical strategies. Students in this study have displayed difficulty in beginning to write, developing ideas; they also found difficulties using technical skills and appropriate written compositions. In short, this implies that students faced a variety of difficulties, and encountered different problems during their writing composition.

2.16.1 Problems with Grammar

Grammar was defined by Neuleib (as cited in Hartwell, 1985) as “the internalized system that native speakers of a language share” (p. 205). A more detailed definition was proposed by Harmer (2001) as “the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language” (p. 12). These ways are called ‘the grammar rules’ that are basic elements in every language, and are also inseparable from writing (Hartwell, 1985). Grammar rules mainly include various rules such as tenses, prepositions, word class, voice and many others. These rules represent a problem for many students in writing. In investigating the effect of teaching grammar, Hartwell (1985) cited different studies which concluded that formal grammar instruction made no improvement on students writing ability or on their ability to avoid errors (Neuleib, 1977; Elley, Barham, Lamb & Wyllie 1979). The main writing difficulties students find in relation to grammar is the low understanding of grammar, which results later on in difficulties in arranging proper writing (Bahri & Sugeng, 2010).

2.16.2 Problems with Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a significant aspect in language skills as suggested by Nation (as cited in Mehring, 2005). Vocabulary is defined by Cambridge dictionary as “all the words known and used by a person”. Vocabulary related difficulties are generally:

- Students failure to recall important words to use,

- Students' failure to use the appropriate words, and
- Poor vocabulary.

More importantly, knowing words generally means knowing their meanings, basic forms (Shejbalová, 2006) and their distribution (Lado, 1955) which often leads to confusion for students at different occasions. Nakata (as cited in Mehring, 2005) noted that vocabulary acquisition is an ongoing process that requires students' constant repetition and use of words to be effectively attained in the long term memory, and then retrieved once needed. Developing vocabulary through memorizing words of a list is not sufficient, for students to acquire vocabulary they need to learn words as a part of the context in which they occur. This method is proven to be beneficial for "it helps the student understand the word's correct usage" (Mehring, 2005, p. 4). Moreover, Yongqi Gu (as cited in Mehring, 2005) asserts that "vocabulary acquisition is a learner-centered activity with the effectiveness of the learner's strategies depending on his/her attitude and motivation towards new vocabulary acquisition". As a result, vocabulary can have a great impact on students writing for the importance, and the contribution it adds to the value of writing ability. Therefore, learners are expected to have a positive attitude towards learning new vocabulary, and to recognize new words as part of their context of occurrence, while attempting to identify their meanings.

2.16.3 Problems with Spelling and Punctuation

Spelling and punctuation are two commonly shared writing difficulties among students. Learning to spell words correctly is expected to take place in the earliest stages of language teaching, yet it is not always the case since spelling may become difficult in some instances. Moreover, spelling is said to be closely interrelated with reading; Frith (1980) argues that "Learning to read should imply learning to spell, and learning to spell should imply learning to read" (p. 496). However, this is not always the

case, for there exist people with excellent reading abilities, but struggle when it comes to spelling words (Frith, 1980, p. 497). Writing difficulties of relevance to spelling mainly include the misspelling of words which are a result of the irregularities of the English spelling system (Banca, 2013).

While Harmer (2001) states that "...the correspondence between the sound of a word and the way it is spelt is not always obvious" (p. 256). Furthermore, he indicates that the reason spelling is difficult for students is "...the fact that not all varieties of English spell the same words in the same way". For instance, the way American English pronounce the word 'behavior', differs from British English 'behavior'. In this sense, Harmer (2001) proposed extensive reading as a remedy for students to overcome spelling difficulties.

On the other hand, punctuation represents an obstacle in writing. Carroll and Wilson (1993) illustrate three problems linked to punctuation.

- The first is that punctuation rules are not totally exact, punctuation is complex, and it depends on one's style to determine the meaning.
- The way a student punctuates writing can change the meaning completely, because each punctuation mark is a distinctive way of interpreting the meaning.
- Students need to pay attention to the way they punctuate, which is in most cases a problem for them.

2.17 Error Analysis of Students' Writing

Errors and mistakes are part of students' writing as they progress in learning to write. Hadler (as cited in Bahri & Sugeng, 2010) argued that Errors give the writer evidence of difficulty which students have problem in practicing writing, although they do not provide them with all the possible evidence, nor are they to be taken as the only proof (p. 3).

Considering errors as a proof that students face difficulties during writing, the emergence of error analysis (EA) was first established in the 1970s by Corder “as a type of linguistic study that focuses on the errors learners make” (Sawalmeh, 2013, p. 2). According to Corder (as cited in Sawalmeh, 2013) EA is of two main objectives.

- The first is to understand learners as they learn in a second language (L2) while,
- The second is to enable effective learning by using learners’ knowledge of his native language (L1).

Errors were classified by Brown (as cited in Sawalmeh, 2013) as of two origins:

- The first of which is Interlingua errors which “... are those errors that are traceable to first language interference” (p. 4).
- The second is intralingua errors were explained by Keshavarz, Fang and Jiang (as cited in Sawalmeh, 2013) “they result from faulty or partial learning of the target language rather than language” (p. 4).

Corder (as cited in Khasawneh, 2013) indicated that the process of error analysis is conducted through four stages. It starts with recognizing the meaning of an error and identifying its type. Then followed by an explicit description, and explanation of the error, and, by finally, classifying the error. In their investigation of writing difficulties among students, Bahri and Sugeng (2010) depicted a framework of errors along with stages of error analysis that explicitly illustrates the process of Error Analysis.

To conclude, Error Analysis is one way by which teachers are able to measure the students’ difficulties in writing, and build on them a particular remedy to improve their writing instruction in the future. More importantly, “...errors are advantageous for both learners and teacher” (Sawalmeh, 2013), for it offers clear insights of the areas of difficulties not only related to students, but also connected with teachers.

2.18 Academic Writing

Irvin (2010, p. 8) considers academic writing as

...a form of evaluation that asks you to demonstrate knowledge and show proficiency with certain disciplinary skills of thinking, interpreting, and presenting

According to Tarnopolsky and Kozhushko (2007) academic writing is “the most creative type of writing that can be taught to students of English as a foreign or second language” (para. 4), and they have also account for it as ...a unique means for learners’ consciously mastering the creative, productive, and expressive approach towards communicative performance in the target language (para. 5).

Academic writing is highly required for university courses (Whitaker, 2009). Whitaker have demonstrated that during academic writing assignments students are mainly required to

- ask good questions,
- examine their answers, and
- show good understanding of the main topic they are discussing and develop critical arguments about it.

Academic writing success at advanced level of education such as college or university calls for developed communicative skills referred to as academic literacies.

It also “involves adapting new ways of knowing: new ways of understanding, interpreting and organizing knowledge” (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 158). Coffin, Curry, Goodman, Hewings, Lillis and Swann (2003) listed what students’ need to do in academic writing; the list is as follows:

- Take up a position
- Adopt a particular perspective

- Put forward points for and against a particular position
- Explore possible positions
- Link theory and evidence
- Draw a conclusion
- Analyze
- Be critical
- Develop a central idea
- Use evidence to support an argument
- Express personal opinions
- Use personal interpretations

Academic writing is, therefore, a tool for success at higher educational levels if mastered perfectly by students. It will lead to a high sense of research skills, information analysis and other skills such as arguing, organizing and expressing personal views (Whitaker, 2009).

Academic writing plays an essential role in learning a foreign language. Non-native English speakers ought to be acquainted with writing procedures, components, and elements like conventions, objectivity, and unpredictability to utilize the language precisely and accurately.

Ismail (2011) pointed out that English writing offers chances for students to think critically and it also gives the inspiration to learn certain parts of academic writing like utilizing powerful word expressions and a using relevant vocabulary. Also, academic writing includes certain elements such as basic deduction and self-expression that undergraduates ought to get the aim of the courses they attend.

There are different parts of academic writing which must be studied and grasped such as arranging paragraphs by utilizing a specific style of expression, paraphrasing, and appropriate conjunctions.

Academic writing is commonly characterized as scientific writing which is described as organized research which is practiced and utilized by researchers at higher education levels. Dynamic and quality research has been the foundation of higher education. Research, which is mainly integrated with academic writing as genre-based pedagogies, acknowledges the writing procedure as a necessary element related to social and cultural response to specific contexts and communities. By applying different linguistics and rhetorical options to achieve important tasks in diverse settings, novice writers may allow themselves to accomplish their writing tasks after careful examination of the complicated variable in composition texts (Johns, 2008).

2.19 Writing Abilities

Writing abilities are a critical part of communication for the students throughout their academic life since it gives them the chance to express their thoughts obviously and additionally to pass on significance through well – developed content. Academic writing appears to be one of the most important, yet a problematic academic ability for university students to learn. This is mostly clear with second language learners (Negari, 2011). Students face problems in various areas ranging from spelling of words correctly to how to develop an argument.

Considerable amount of research has recommended that writing in a second language learning context is a difficult and demanding task. Alsamadani (2010) pointed out that the “difficulty and complexity of academic writing arise from the fact that writing includes discovering a thesis, developing support for it, organizing, revising, and finally editing it to ensure an effective, error-free piece of writing.” Moreover, Musa (2010) stated that writing is considered as a difficult skill to learn because it includes several components, for instance, grasp on spellings and punctuation, a comprehensive command of grammar, grasp on spellings

and punctuation, use of appropriate vocabulary, suitable style to meet the expected readers' expectations and organizational skills.

Yiu (2009) reports that a great deal of research offered valuable insights into the fact that this trend "...led to the exponential growth of research in second language writing over the last decade and a half." However, Chou (2011) explain that there has been an expanded enthusiasm for writing but there has also been lack of research in this field in English as second language settings as a significant portion of research studies identified related to writing skills has been done in English as second language contexts such as Australia, Canada, England, New Zealand, and America. He also clarified that research in this field can be separated into four classes:

1. The first group of studies explored the faculty standpoint concerning the academic writing for instance, Zhu (2004) and Casanave & Hubbard (1992).
2. The second type examined the students for instance, Grami (2010) and Yiu (2009).
3. The third class investigated the students writing sample for example, Ezza (2010) and Tahaineh (2010), and
4. The fourth group tried to examine the discernment of the students against the academic advisors for instance, Bacha and Bahous (2008) and Myles and Cheng (2003).

2.20 Difficulties in Academic Writing

It has also been stated that much of the research in the past two decades or so has mainly "concentrated on either product, process or both" (Yiu, 2009). Various studies have been carried out to investigate the difficulties that face the students of English as a foreign language in their writing. For instance, Arab students mostly fall in the classification of grammar and syntax. Noor (1996) explored and analyzed several of studies carried

out on syntactic mistakes made by students of English as second language. Noor expressed that the students' blunders can be sorted in seven syntactic subcategories:

1. verbs,
2. prepositions,
3. conjunctions,
4. articles,
5. relative clauses,
6. sentence structure, and
7. adverbial clauses.

Mahmoud (2005) explored the syntactic problems which face students of English as second language. He found out that verbs and prepositions are the most challenging areas in this regard.

Concerning the problems of academic writing, Khan (2011) conducted a study to explore the problems of Saudi university students. He mentioned that they face numerous difficulties in phoneme clusters, spellings, grammar, doubling of subjects, language interference, doubling of preposition, articles, tenses, appropriate vocabulary, wrong use of prefixes, and suffixes. Khan (2011) reviewed a number of studies in this respect and concluded that the difficulties that face Arab students are caused by the shortage in the English language textbooks used by some schools and universities, dreadful teaching methodology and the problems with appropriate language environments and the lack of personal motivation on the part of the students.

Al Murshidi (2014) pointed out that the low standard of the language proficiency might also hinder academic writing. As determined by Al-Khairi (2013), the subject of his study affirmed that the main difficulties faced by Arab students encompass the inappropriate choice of

vocabulary, grammatical errors, incorrect punctuation, and spelling irregular verbs.

Other causes that could lead to the problem in academic writing are first language interference, insufficiency of views, and unclear guidance of the task. According to Saddler, Moran, Graham, & Harris (2004), academic writing skills ought to start at elementary and secondary education so that when the learners are at university level, they should not struggle with academic writing. Besides, they recommend a few rules in avoiding writing problems, namely: to provide exemplary writing instruction to all the students from the start, beginning in university level, and to offer early supplementary writing instruction aimed at avoiding or at least alleviating later writing difficulties.

Further, Lea and Street (1998) employed an ethnographic qualitative approach which incorporated semi-structured interviews with the teachers and the learners, respondents' observations, models of students' writing, and written feedback to students. They found that the students experienced problems with writing, mainly with conflicting, distinct and implicit requirements for writing in various courses.

Gambell (1991) explored the students' discernments toward their own writing and how they go about doing academic writing. He found out that even successful students do not completely meet the requirements of their own universities. He also concluded that writing is challenging and distressing to a many of them.

Lee and Tajino (2008) pointed out that a number of researchers explored the discernments of the students of English as second and they all approve that it is significant to include the students' recommendations in developing academic writing programs. Some found that the students consider that interaction with native speakers will resolve their writing problems

2.21 Linguistic Competence in Academic Writing

It is imperative that academic writing employs certain linguistic features that are known as academic language (Schleppegrell, 2012). In particular, academic writing should mainly use complex, formal, objective accurate language (Gillett, 2017). These characteristics of academic writing can be explained as follows:

1. Complexity

Complexity in academic writing is characterized by longer words with more grammatical complexity, noun-based phrases, subordinate clauses, and passive forms (Gillett, 2017).

2. Objectivity

This feature is realized by using noun-based phrases that are known as nominalization or grammatical metaphor under functional grammar and impersonal passive in academic writing (Knapp & Watkins, 2005).

3. Formal Language

Formal language is characterized by using a suitable language in an academic context that should avoid abbreviated forms such as “doesn’t” (Gillett, 2017).

4. Hedged Language

Hedged language or hedging is a cautious language that is used to show the writer’s stance and the strength of the writer’s claims of a particular issue in his or her academic writing (Emilia, 2009; Gillett, 2017; Gillett, Hammond, & Martala-Lockett, 2009). This characteristic is realized through certain linguistic features such as modalities, mental processes, and circumstances (Gillett, 2017).

In the present study, these features come under the following:

- Choice of academic vocabulary (parts of speech, phrasal verbs, quantifying expressions, words with several meanings, and metaphors and idioms)

- Collocations
- Ways of talking about sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams, and cause and effect.
- Expressing opinions and ideas.
- Functions.

2.22 Metalinguistic Awareness

The competencies of academic writing require the knowledge base of a particular discipline (Maguire, Reynolds, & Delahunt, 2013) or background knowledge of what to write (Irvin, 2010), followed by the knowledge of a particular text that has a social function and patterns of organization with a system of language (Bruce, 2008, 2013). These features represent the core of metalinguistic awareness. They enable the students to communicate their idea into a unified text using certain language structures (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1995);

In the present study, these features are

- Understanding instructional words.
- Distinguishing between facts, opinions and feelings.
- Talking about points of view.
- Organization of writing.
- Describing research methods
- Functions.

2.23 Previous related Studies

This section presents some studies that were carried out in the same area as the present study. They were also conducted in situations and contexts similar to this study.

2.23.1 Study One

This study (Al Mubarak, 2017) focused on identifying the problems faced by the Arts Colleges within the University of Al Imam Al Mahdi, Sudan.

The researcher used the students' project graduation to investigate the problems encountered by the students when they used their academic writing skills.

To state the obstacles recognized by the examined students in academic writing skills, the researcher employed a descriptive method. The data for the present study were collected from 15 graduation project for the year 2017. The collect data was used in identifying the issues of academic writing for English as second language at Al Imam Al Mahdi University in Sudan.

A quantitative method was used in collecting the data: 15 B.A. graduation projects checked in order to identify the issues of academic writing for English as a Second language in Sudan. The number of the graduation project involved in this study was 15.

By examining the academic writing samples of the students, the study showed that a significant number of the students face academic writing problems. While writing, they show more concern for language related problems. The findings of the study revealed some issues that the students encountered in academic writing, for instance, the use of articles, punctuation, the use of prepositions, the use of irregular verbs, weak expressions, singular and plural, unparalleled structure, consistency and verb tense. The findings of the study revealed that the students face difficulties in using punctuation which is extremely significant in academic writing.

The study also revealed that the attitude of students towards academic writing with unique characteristics can be considered as a crucial factor in making academic writing more helpful for all students. Findings show that intervening strategies in using academic writing reveals the linguistics problems.

The significant results from this study revealed that students sampled were not familiar with the academic writing strategies.

2.23.2 Study Two

This study (Sajid and Jawaaid, 2015) applied a methodology which is based upon EA (error analysis) of lexicon-grammatical errors, particularly, focusing on diction and expression in the interdisciplinary texts of various genres written by EFL novice writers of Pakistan. The error taxonomy analyzing lexicon-grammatical errors in the academic writing of EFL at tertiary education level

The corpus used in this study consisted of 40 'INTRODUCTIONS' of published research articles downloaded online of 20 from medical sciences and 20 social sciences of diverse genres of interdisciplinary from various research journals of Pakistan. The above mentioned selected corpus is purposive based upon important variations concerning writing competence in linguistic and communicative skills of EFL novice writers. The findings of the study were grouped in two categories:

1. Causes

Causes refer to the factors leading majority EFL learners at higher education level, in Pakistan, to show lack of academic writing skills. Even among those who claim to be successful in achieving educational performance must have undergone certain difficulties as noticed in their written tasks the deficiencies in their work. Higher education system, especially, at postgraduate level, is concerned more with empirical studies than is intended to teach and develop fundamentals of English language. However, most of universities, particularly, public universities, face the existing challenge of lack of research writing skills.

2. Impacts

Impacts refer to negative effects on learners' educational performance and workplace due to their poor academic writing ability. The study

points out that all the studies undertaken in the area of applied linguistics revealed the following shortcomings:

- School characteristics greatly influence on students' academic success, thus, emphasizing the need to investigate the school factors which affect English language learning of students.
- One of the most immediate adverse impacts of lack of academic writing skills is on students' academic performance.
- Academic writing competence to produce a quality text for publication is prerequisite at higher education level as well as at workplace.

2.23.3 Study Three

This study (Aunurrahman and Enim 2017) aimed to explore the students' academic writing competencies that focus on critical thinking. The study involved thirty-six first-year tertiary EFL students from a regular class of a private university in Pontianak, West Kalimantan, Indonesia. The source for data collection was the students' texts. Three texts were selected and the students were categorized into low, medium, and high levels of writing achievement. The text analysis utilized functional grammar rooted in systemic functional linguistics. The analysis shows that the students, regardless of their levels of writing achievement, have little control over the schematic structure and linguistic features of an argumentative writing. The text analysis also shows that the students' texts have some limitations as regards their critical thinking capacity. Still, a few examples of academic language were detected in the texts. The findings suggest that the lecturer should incorporate explicit teaching and cooperative learning activities to alleviate the students' difficulties and develop their academic writing and critical thinking capacity.

The study employed a qualitative method that used documents as a source of evidence (Hamied, 2017; Stake, 2005). A writing test was conducted to

the students before taking the academic writing subject. The requirements of the writing test are as follows:

1. The issue to develop or to defend;
2. The arguments with supporting evidence that are relevant to the issue;
3. Concluding remarks which should include a position or recommendation towards the issue;
4. Word choices or proper words or lexical choices that form good sentences that could lead to good writing;
5. Conventions that include correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar

After the students' completion of the writing test, their writing texts were analyzed. The text analysis refers to the concept of text from the perspective of functional grammar. Following the academic writing competencies that have been elaborated earlier, the analysis focuses on the schematic structure and the linguistic features used in the texts. The results of the analysis are described in this paper following the concept of three language meta-functions, namely textual meta-function, ideational meta-function, and interpersonal meta-function of the students' text

The findings show that the students have little control over the schematic structure and linguistic features of argumentative writing. This also reflects limitations of information-organizing skills that reflect the students' critical thinking capacity. Other limitations are limited intellectual standards or dispositions and fallacies in reasoning. Still, several examples of academic language were identified in the students' texts.

An approach that addresses these issues is the systemic functional linguistics genre-based approach with its explicit teaching. Group work should also be incorporated into the approach, as tertiary level educational institutions in Indonesia commonly have large classes.

Moreover, future research can explore graduate students' academic writing competencies in the Indonesian university context.

2.23.4 Study Four

This study (Pineteh, 2014) addressed the academic writing challenges that face undergraduate students. It investigated challenges such as lack of a mastery of academic writing conventions, analysis of writing topics, using writing to construct social identities; ability to research and apply knowledge across different context and poor sentence skills. It also focused on the implications of these challenges for students' academic development and possible strategies to address these challenges.

The study drew on sustained interviews with twenty 2nd year students, 1st year student reflections and discussions with four communication lecturers. The data revealed that academic writing challenges of students in universities of technology are consequences of students' linguistic and general literacy backgrounds, their attitudes toward academic writing and the privileging of middle-class literacy practices in South African higher education. To mitigate these challenges, this study proposed the following strategies: the integration of academic literacies in disciplinary curricula, the promotion of multimodalities of teaching and assessment as well as collaboration between language lecturers and core course specialists. It also recommends intensive academic reading and writing workshops, and increased formative feedback.

2.23.5 Study Five

This study (Seifoori. 2013) focused mainly on conscious learning processes which marks the paramount role of metalinguistic awareness. The purpose of the study was to compare the impact of teacher-oriented vs. learner-generated metalinguistic awareness activities on Iranian TEFL student' writing accuracy.

Sixty participants in three intact classes were randomly assigned as one control, and two experimental groups. All the participants received the same process-oriented instruction based on identical teaching materials. In the first experimental group, the teacher-focus metalinguistic awareness (TFMA) group, however, a collection of various form-focused activities, compiled by the teacher, was assigned and reviewed in the class weekly. In the learner-focused metalinguistic awareness (LFMA) group, the same assignments were assigned as supplementary self-study activities. The control group did not receive any structural assignments. The treatment perpetuated for six sessions and the analyses of the data obtained from the writing post-test revealed that both TFMA and LFMA groups outperformed the control group by producing more accurate writing and that the TF group surpassed the LF group. The findings lend credence to the significance of language awareness in EFL contexts and offer a number of pedagogical implications.

The researcher employed three data collection instruments to collect the research data: The vocabulary and grammar sections of a TOEFL test to assess the homogeneity of the participants' lexical and grammar knowledge as two prerequisite requirements for writing, a writing pre-test to delineate whether the groups were homogeneous with regard to the accuracy and organization of their writing and a parallel writing post-test to compare the three groups and delineate probable significant differences. The finding revealed that making teachers linguistically aware does have an impact on teachers' linguistic behavior. The instructed group was found more accurate in the use of plural –s but less accurate in the use of progressive (ing-form). No difference however was found in the use of articles. The control group in achieved lower levels of accuracy compared to the other experimental groups. What differentiated the groups was the type of grammar instruction they received. In the

experimental groups, grammar instruction was more explicit, focused and intensive compared to the control group.

2.24 Summary of the chapter:

This chapter began by a survey of the issues and aspects related to writing in general (i.e. writing as a language macro-skill) and as any of the other language skills. In this respect, it reviewed different definitions of writing from different scholars. Then it moved on to state the reasons for writing (persuasion, exposition, etc.). To give a full picture, a comparison between two other skills was made, namely speaking and reading with more focus on the role of reading on developing writing skills. Also there was a review of the micro-skills and sub-skills of writing. Issues related to expert writers and novice writers were also discussed. In addition, teaching and learning strategies were reviewed together with the approaches to writing.

Then the chapter reviewed aspects of academic writing starting by definitions. After that it moved on to explore views about writing abilities and the difficulties that face students in academic writing. Special emphasis was made on the two aspects of the present study; linguistic competence and meta-linguistic awareness.

Finally, the chapter provided five previous studies conducted in the same field as the current one.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the different aspects of the methodology adopted for this study. It describes:

1. The nature of the methodology.
2. The population and sample.
3. The data collection tools.
4. The statistical techniques employed.

3.2 The Methodology

This study is descriptive in nature. It attempts to provide a clear picture about the problems that encounter freshmen in Sudanese tertiary level institutions. The picture will depict two important dimensions of academic writing:

1. Linguistic competence, and
2. Meta-linguistic awareness.

The study tries to give a clear picture of the actual situation on the ground. For that purpose it depends on first hand data collocated from freshmen and the teachers who teach them.

Being descriptive, this study will focus mainly on the 'what' aspect of the problem (i.e. how it looks like in reality). It will not go further to discover the 'why' aspect of the problem (i.e. why it is like that or why it has become the way it is.)

3.3 The Population and the Sample

The population of the study is represented by the entire body of freshmen in tertiary level institutions which use English as a medium of instruction and other colleges where the students take English language as a specialty.

The sample drawn from the population is as follows:

1. 50 students to sit the two tests, and
2. 30 teachers to complete the questionnaire.

3.4 Data Collocation Tools

The study employs three data collection tools:

1. Linguistic competence test,
2. Meta-linguistic awareness test, and
3. A questionnaire for teachers.

(Appendixes one, two and three)

3.4.1 Description of Tools

3.4.1.1 Linguistic Competence Test

This test is composed of five sections:

1. Using appropriate vocabulary pertinent to academic writing in terms of the degree of formality.
2. Knowledge of collocations in academic writing.
3. Ways of talking about sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams, and cause and effect.
4. Expressing opinions and ideas.
5. Functions.

Each section is made up of 10 MCQ items.

Each section bears 10 marks. The total mark is 50.

3.4.1.2 Meta-Linguistic Awareness Test

The test is composed of five sections:

- (a) Understanding instructional words.
- (b) Distinguishing between facts, opinions and feelings.
- (c) Talking about points of view.
- (d) Organization of writing..
- (e) Describing research methods

Each section is made up of 10 MCQ items.

Each section bears 10 marks. The total mark is 50.

3.4.1.3 Teachers' Questionnaire

The question is a 5-point Likert Scale. It has two parts:

1. Part one is about the teachers' views on the student's linguistic competence.
2. Part two is about the teachers' views on the students' meta-linguistic awareness.

3.5 Statistical Techniques

A number of statistical techniques have been used in the treatment of the data collected by the tools.

3.5.1 Exploration of Data

This is the initial statistical treatment of the data. It is meant to provide a bird's eye view of the data before delving into the more rigorous statistical analysis.

The exploration of data comes in three forms:

1. Frequency tables that provide basic information about numbers and percentages.
2. Pie charts that present the percentages of the items.
3. A histogram with a normal curve that provides information about:
4. The normal distribution of data.
5. The overall mean score.
6. The Standard Deviation.

3.5.2 One-Sample T-Tests

These tests will be run for the student's performance in the two tests:

1. The linguistic competence test, and
2. The meta-linguistic awareness test.

The One-sample t-test provides information about:

1. The means the individual aspects investigated.
2. The Standard deviation.

3.5.3 The Weighted Means

This statistical technique computes the weighted means for the responses of the teachers to the items of the questionnaire.

3.5.4 Correlations

The correlations give information about the relationship between the teachers' views and the students' performance.

3.6 Summary of the chapter:

This chapter presented the blueprint for the present study. It described:

1. The nature of the methodology adopted for the research.
2. The population and the samples.
3. The data collection tools.
4. The statistical techniques used for the treatment of data

All these aspects will be translated in practical terms in Chapter Four of this study.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis Results and Discussion

Chapter Four

Data Analysis Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of the data collected by the three tools:

1. The students' linguistic competence test,
2. The students' meta-linguistic awareness test, and
3. The teachers' questionnaire

The data is treated statistically in a very rigorous manner in order to arrive at results that are characterized by a considerable level of accuracy and is evidence-based. The statistical techniques used are:

1. Exploring data to provide a global picture of the data.
2. One-Sample t-test for the students' tests.
3. Calculating the weighted means of the teachers' response to the questionnaire.
4. The correlation between the different results obtained from the above mentioned statistical techniques.

The results are presented in the form of:

1. Frequency tables, pie charts, and histograms with normal curves for the exploration of data.
2. Tables for the t-tests , the weighted means and the correlations
3. Histograms to give a clear picture about:
 - (a) The normal distribution of data, and
 - (b) The mean scores.

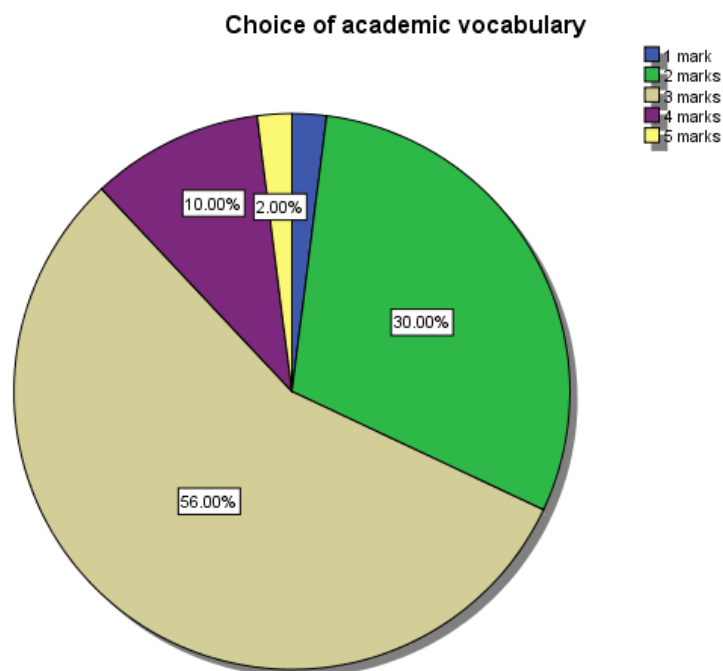
4.2 Analysis and Discussion of Data

4.2.1 Linguistic Competence

4.2.1.1 Exploring Data (1)

Table (4.1): Choice of Academic Vocabulary

Choice of academic vocabulary					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 mark	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	2 marks	15	30.0	30.0	32.0
	3 marks	28	56.0	56.0	88.0
	4 marks	5	10.0	10.0	98.0
	5 marks	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	



Pie chart (4.1): Choice of Academic Vocabulary

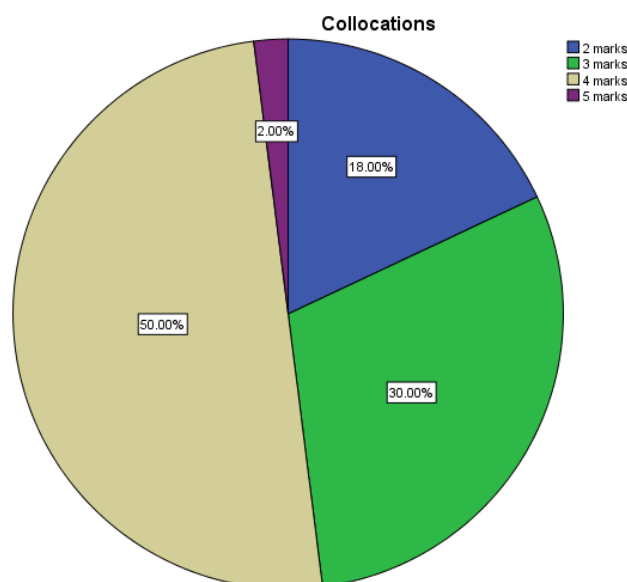
Table (4.1) and Pie chart (4.1) show the performance of the students in the first section of the test of linguistic competence "choice of academic vocabulary" This section tries to give an idea about the ability of the students to use the vocabulary appropriate to the genre of academic writing in terms of formality level. The table and the pie chart above reveal the following:

1. The majority of the students got 3 marks out of ten, which is equivalent to 58.0%.
2. Those who got 2 marks out of 10 amount to 30.0% of the subjects.
3. Those who got 4 marks out of 10 represent 10.0% of the subjects.
4. Only 1 student got 1 mark out of 10.
5. Only 1 student got 5 out of 10.

From the data above, it can be concluded that a vast majority of 88.0% of the subjects scored between 2 and 3 marks out of 10. This indicates a poor command of using the vocabulary appropriate to academic writing by the students.

Table (4.2): Collocations

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2 marks	9	18.0	18.0	18.0
	3 marks	15	30.0	30.0	48.0
	4 marks	25	50.0	50.0	98.0
	5 marks	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	



Pie Chart (4.2): Collocations

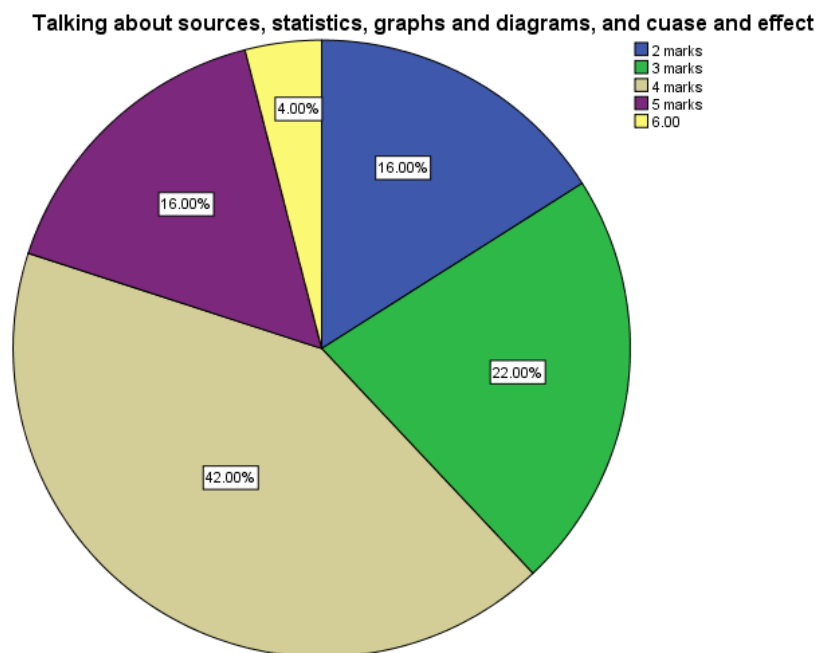
Table (4.2) and pie chart (4.2) show the performance of the students in section two of the linguistic competence test about "knowledge of collocations". The table and the pie chart show the following:

1. 50.0% of the subjects got 4 marks out of 10.
2. 30.0% of the subjects got 3 marks.
3. 18.0% of the subjects got 2 marks out of 10.
4. Only 1 student got out of 105 marks out of 10.

From the data above, it is clear that 80.0% of the subjects got 3 and 4 marks out of 10. This indicates a poor mastery of the knowledge of collocations by the students.

Table (4.3): Talking about Sources, Statistics, Graphs and Diagrams, and Cause and Effect

Talking about sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams, and cause and effect					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2 marks	8	16.0	16.0	16.0
	3 marks	11	22.0	22.0	38.0
	4 marks	21	42.0	42.0	80.0
	5 marks	8	16.0	16.0	96.0
	6.00	2	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	



Pie Chart (4.3): Talking about Sources, Statistics, Graphs and Diagrams, and Cause and Effect

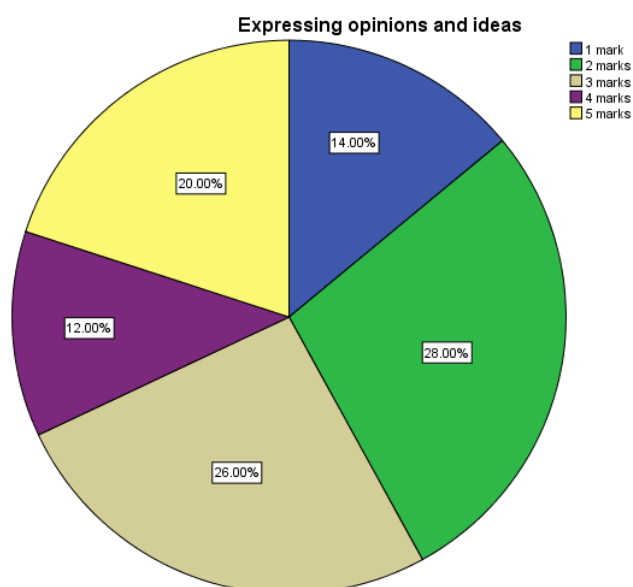
Table (4.3) and pie chart (4.3) above, show the performance of the subjects in section three of the linguistic competence test: "talking about sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams, and cause and effect". The table and the chart show the following:

1. 42.0% of the students got 4 marks out of 10.
2. 22.0% of the subjects got 3 marks out of 10.
3. 16.0% got 5 marks out of ten.
4. 16.0% got 2 marks out of 10.
5. 4.0% got 6 marks out of 10.

The data shows that a majority of 64.0% of the subjects got 3 and 4 marks out of 10. This indicates a weakness of the students in talking about sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams, and cause and effect.

Table (4.4): Expressing Opinions and Ideas

Expressing opinions and ideas					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 mark	7	14.0	14.0	14.0
	2 marks	14	28.0	28.0	42.0
	3 marks	13	26.0	26.0	68.0
	4 marks	6	12.0	12.0	80.0
	5 marks	10	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	



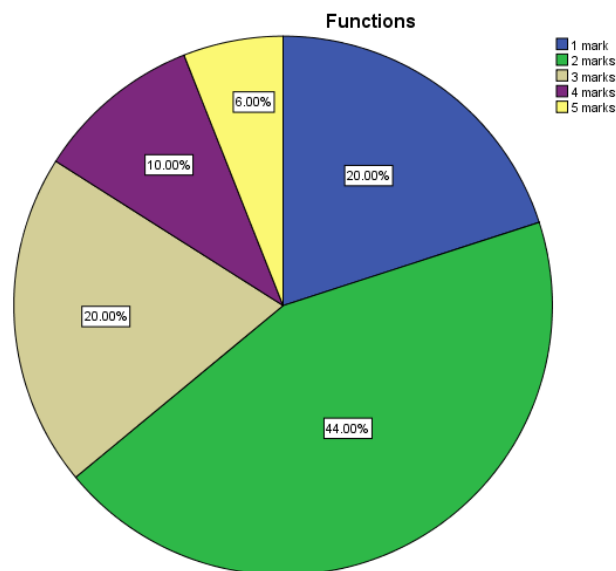
Pie Chart (4.4): Expressing Opinions and Ideas

Table (4.4) and pie chart (4.4) show the performance of the subjects in section four of the linguistic competence test: "expressing opinions and ideas." The table and the chart show the following:

1. 28.0% of the subjects got 2 marks out of 10.
2. 26.0% of the subjects got 3 marks out of 10.
3. 20.0% of the subjects got 5 marks out of 10.
4. 14.0% got 1 mark out of 10.

This indicates that a majority of 54.0% of the subjects scored 2 and 5 marks out of 10. This means that the students are not so competent in expressing opinions and ideas.

Functions					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 mark	10	20.0	20.0	20.0
	2 marks	22	44.0	44.0	64.0
	3 marks	10	20.0	20.0	84.0
	4 marks	5	10.0	10.0	94.0
	5 marks	3	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

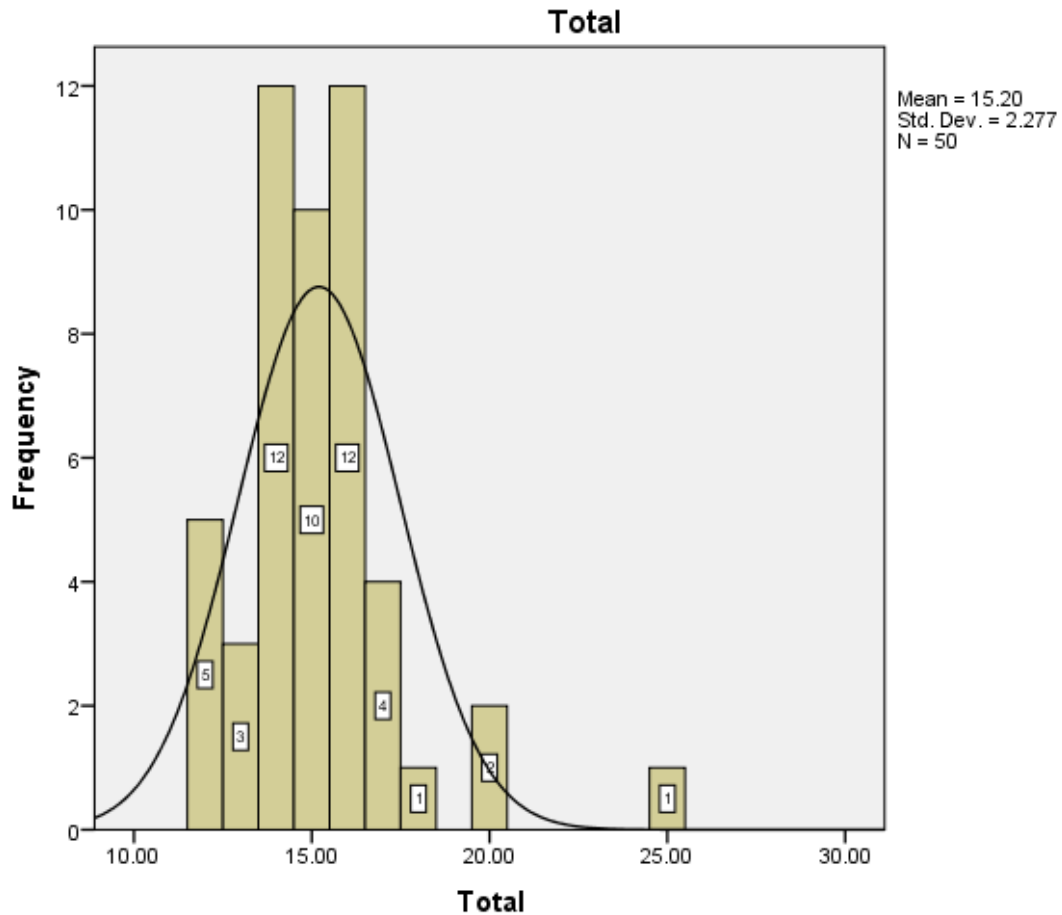


Pie Chart (4.5): Functions

Table (4.5) and pie chart (4.5) show the achievement of the subjects in section five of the linguistic competence test: "functions". The table and the chart show the following:

1. 44.0% of the subjects got 2 marks out of 10.
2. 20.0% of the subjects got 3 marks out of 10.
3. 20.0% of the subjects got 1 mark out of 10.
4. 10.0% of the subjects got 4 out of 10.
5. 6.0% of the subjects got 5 marks out of 10.

If the scores below the pass mark (5 marks) are added together, then there will be a majority of 94.0% of the subjects who are not able to use the language of functions properly. This indicates a serious gap in the linguistic competence of the students in this aspect.



Histogram (4.1): The Mean of the Total Score

Histogram (4.1) above shows the following:

1. The data is normally distributed:
 - (a) Skewness: The curve of normality is neither leaning to the left nor to the right.
 - (b) Kurtosis: The curve is neither too pointed nor too flat.
2. The mean score is 15.20

The mean score (15.20) is far less than the pass mark, which is 25 marks. This means that the performance of the students in the linguistic competence test is very weak.

4.2.1.2 Students' Test

This section presents the statistical results for the One-Sample t-test for the students' linguistic competence test.

The two assumptions of one-sample t-test are met:

- (1) The sample is more than 30. So, there is no need to run the normal distribution test.
- (2) The sample is a random sample.

Table (4.6): One-Sample T-Test: Statistics

Statistics							
		Choice of academic vocabulary	Collocations	Talking about sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams, and cause and effect	Expressing opinions and ideas	Functions	Total
N	Valid	50	50	50	50	50	50
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.8000	3.3600	3.7000	2.9600	2.3800	15.2000
Std. Deviation		.72843	.80204	1.05463	1.33951	1.10454	2.27677

The table above shows the following:

1. The mean for all of the sections of the test ranges between 2.3800 and 3.7000.
2. The standard deviation for all of the sections ranges between 0.72643 and 1.33951.

This means that:

1. The performance of the students in the individual sections is far below the pass mark (which is 5 marks).
2. The marks are not spread; they are close together.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that the performance of the students in the different aspects of linguistic competence is very poor. In addition, all the students are within the same area (i.e. the scores are not widely scattered.)

Table (4.7): Linguistic Competence: One-Sample T-Test

	One-Sample Test						
	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Choice of vocabulary in terms of the degree of formality.	.886	29		2.8000	.46667	-.6108	1.5442
Knowledge of collocations	-5.641	29	.000	3.3600	-.63333	-.8630	-.4037
Way of talking about sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams, and cause and effect.	-4.829	29	.000	3.7000	-.63333	-.9016	-.3651
Expressing opinions and ideas.	-6.113	29	.000	2.9600	-.83333	-1.1121	-.5545
Using the appropriate language of functions	-6.952	29	.000	2.3800	-1.00000	-1.2942	-.7058

The table above shows the following:

- (1) For all sections the Sig, value is 0.000. This value is less than 0.05. Accordingly, the mean score is not equal to 5.
- (2) The t-value is negative. This means that the mean score is less than 5.
- (3) All means are less than 5 (the pass mark)

From the points above, it can be concluded that the performance of the students in the linguistic competence test reveals that they are weak in all elements of this aspect:

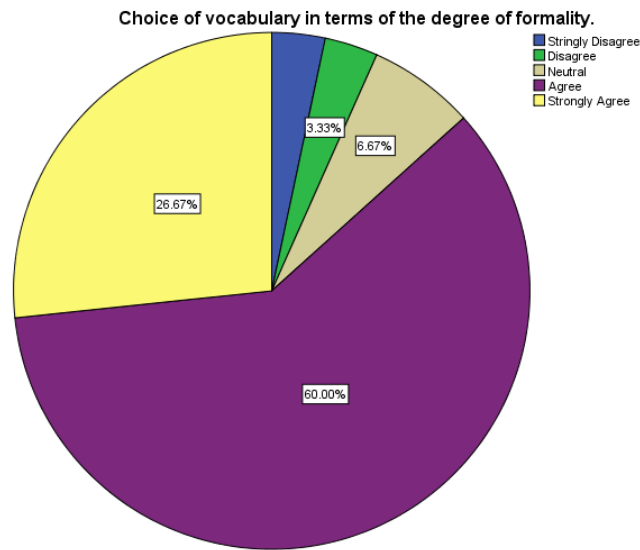
- (1) They are not competent enough in choice of vocabulary in terms of the degree of formality
- (2) They lack the necessary knowledge of collocations. They do not know which words go together in academic writing.
- (3) They do not know how to talk about sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams, and cause and effect.
- (4) They are weak in expressing opinions and ideas.
- (5) They are not competent in using the appropriate language of functions such as classification,

4.2.1.3 Teachers' Questionnaire

4.2.1.3.1 Exploring Data (2)

Table (4.8): Choice of Vocabulary in Terms of the Degree of Formality

Choice of vocabulary in terms of the degree of formality.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Disagree	1	3.3	3.3	6.7
	Neutral	2	6.7	6.7	13.3
	Agree	18	60.0	60.0	73.3
	Strongly Agree	8	26.7	26.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	



Pie Chart (4.6): Choice of Academic Vocabulary in Terms of the Degree of Formality

Table (4.8) and pie chart (4.6) above show the result of item one in the linguistic competence teachers' questionnaire. The table and the chart show the results of the teachers' responses to the first item in the questionnaire: "Choice of academic vocabulary in terms of the degree of formality". The results are as follows:

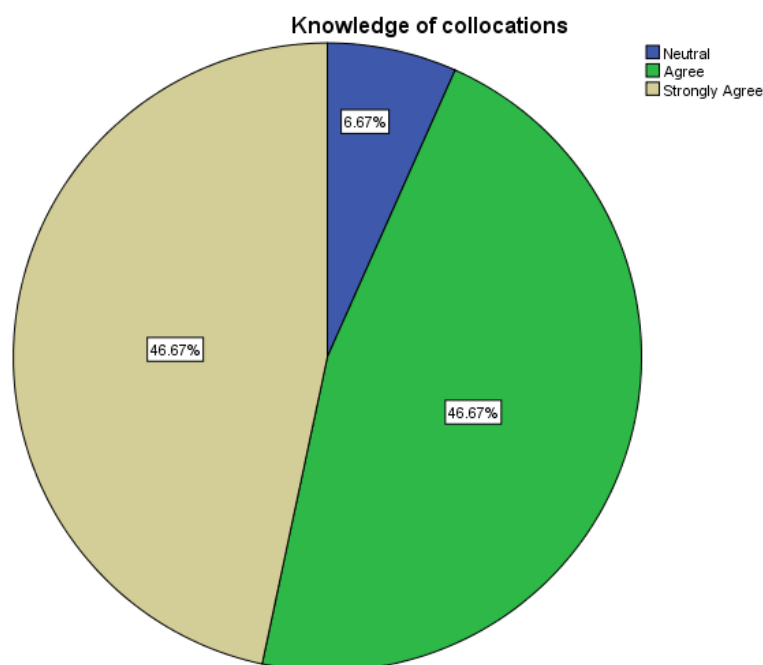
1. 60.0 of the sample agree that the students do not have sufficient linguistic competence to enable them to choose the appropriate vocabulary.
2. 26.7% of the sample strongly agrees that the students do not have sufficient linguistic competence to enable them to choose the appropriate vocabulary.
3. Those who are neutral represent 6.7%.
4. Those who disagree are 3.3% of the sample.
5. Those who strongly disagree are 3.3% of the sample.

The data indicates that a vast majority of 86.7% either strongly agree or disagree that the students lack the linguistic competence that enables

them to choose the vocabulary appropriate to the genre of academic writing.

Table (4.9): Knowledge of Collocations

Knowledge of collocations					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
	Agree	14	46.7	46.7	53.3
	Strongly Agree	14	46.7	46.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	



Pie Chart

(4.7): Knowledge of Collocations

Table (4.9) and pie chart (4.7) above show the results of the teachers' responses to item two of the linguistic competence questionnaire: "knowledge of collocations.

The table and the chart show that:

1. 46.7% of the respondents strongly agree that the students' knowledge of collocations is poor.
2. 46.7% of the respondents agree that the students' knowledge of collocations is poor.

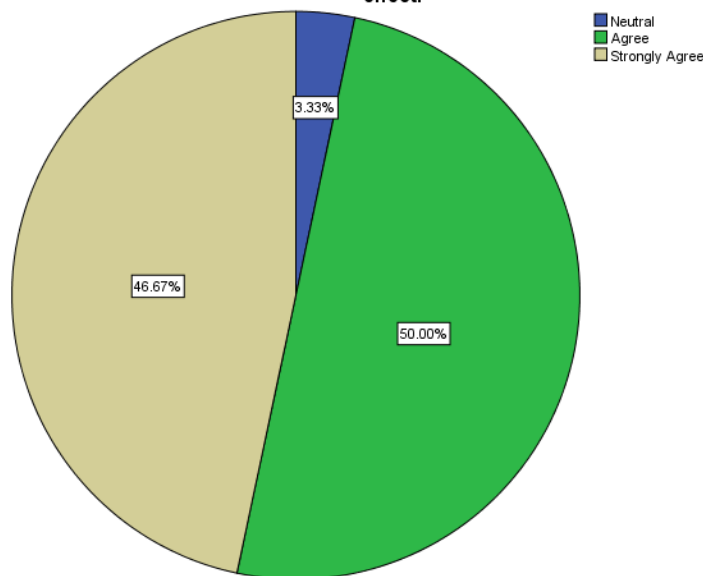
3. Those who are neutral are 6.7\$ of the sample.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that a vast majority of the teachers (92.0%) hold the opinion that the students' knowledge of collocations in academic writing is very weak.

Table (4.10): Way of Talking about Sources, Statistics, Graphs and Diagrams, and Cause and Effect

Way of talking about sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams, and cause and effect.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Agree	15	50.0	50.0	53.3
	Strongly Agree	14	46.7	46.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Way of talking about sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams, and cause and effect.



Pie Chart (4.8): Way of Talking about Sources, Statistics, Graphs and Diagrams, and Cause and Effect

Table (4.10) and pie chart (4.8) above show the results of the responses of the teachers to item three of the questionnaire: "way of talking about

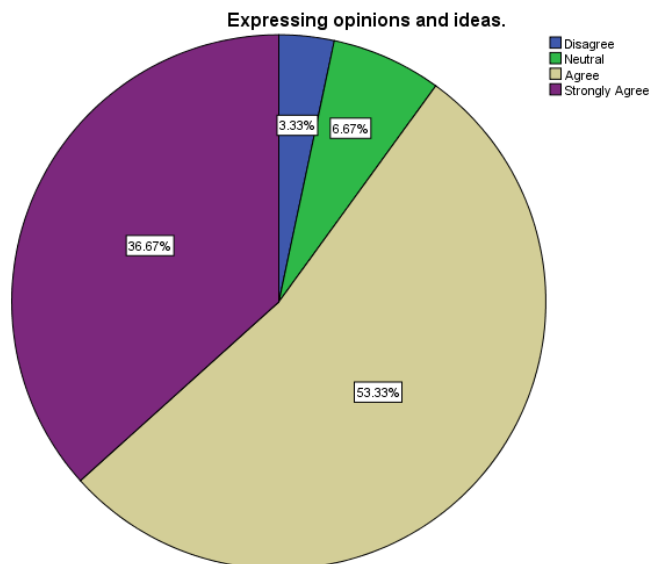
sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams. And cause and effect". The results are as follows:

1. 50.0% of the respondents agree that the students do not know how to talk about sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams, and cause and effect.
2. 46.7% of the respondents strongly agree that the students do not know how to talk about sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams, and cause and effect
3. 3.3% of the respondents are neutral.

This indicates that there is almost a unanimous agreement (with the percentage of 96.7%) among the teachers that the students do not know how to properly talk about sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams, and cause and effect in their academic writing.

Table (4.11): Expressing Opinions and Ideas

Expressing opinions and ideas.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Neutral	2	6.7	6.7	10.0
	Agree	16	53.3	53.3	63.3
	Strongly Agree	11	36.7	36.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	



Pie Chart (4.9): Expressing Opinions and Ideas

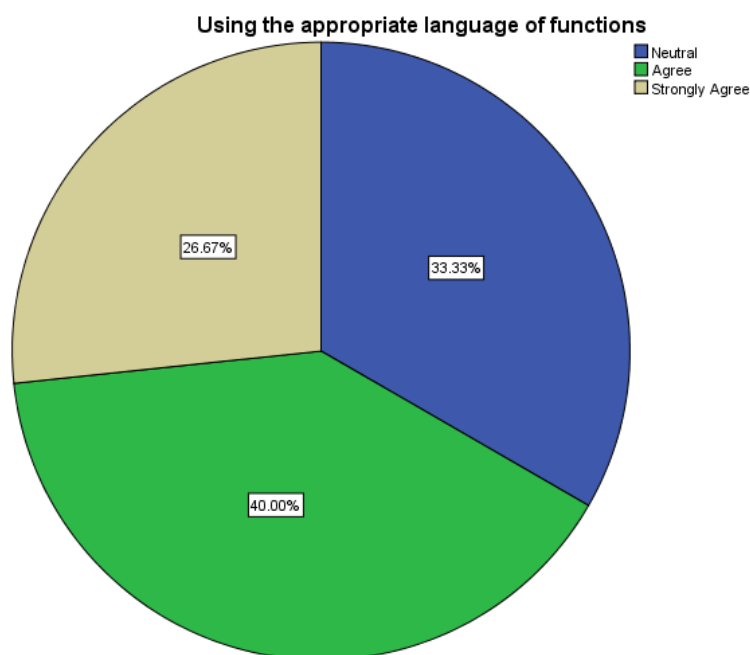
Table (4.11) and pie chart (4.9) above show the results of the responses of the teachers to item four of the questionnaire; 'expressing opinions and ideas'. The results are as follows:

1. 53.3% of the respondents agree that the students cannot properly express opinions and ideas.
2. 36.7%% of the respondents strongly agree that the students cannot properly express opinions and ideas.
3. Those who are neutral are 6.7% of the sample.
4. Those who disagree are 3.3% of the sample.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that 90.0% of the respondents believe that the students are weak in expressing opinions and ideas.

Table (4.12): Using the Appropriate Language of Functions

Using the appropriate language of functions					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	10	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Agree	12	40.0	40.0	73.3
	Strongly Agree	8	26.7	26.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

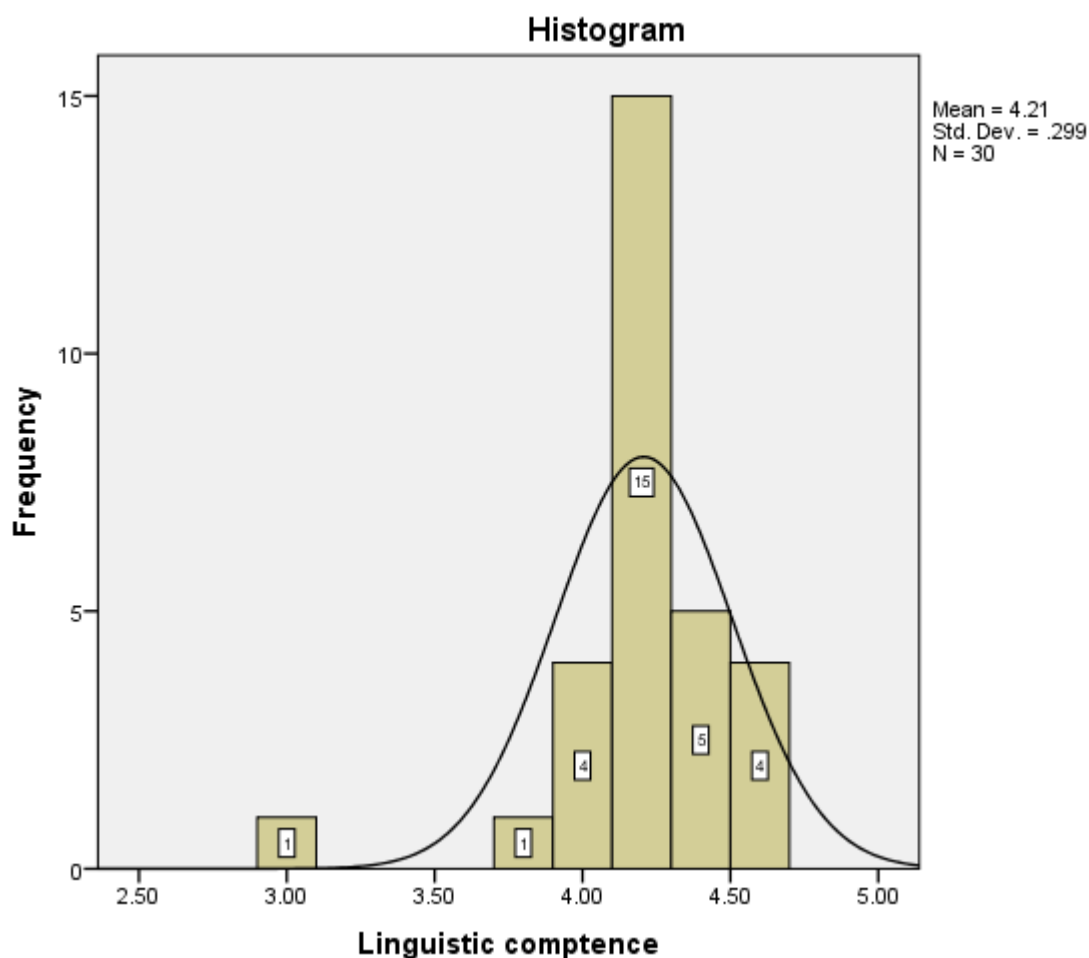


Pie Chart (4.10): Using the Appropriate Language of Functions

Table (4.12) and pie chart (4.10) above shows the results of the teachers' responses to item five of the questionnaire: "using the appropriate language of functions". The results are as follows:

1. 40.0% of the respondents agree that the students cannot use the appropriate language of functions.
2. 26.7% of the respondents strongly agree that the students cannot use the appropriate language of functions.
3. 33.3% are neutral.

The results indicate that a majority of 66.7% of the sample believe that the students are not able to use the language of functions (such as classification, comparison and contrast, etc.) appropriately.



Histogram (4.2): Linguistic Competence: Teachers' Responses to the Questionnaire

The Histogram above shows the following:

- The data are normally distributed. This is evident from the curve of normality:
 - Skewness: the curve does not lean to the left or to the right.
 - Kurtosis: The curve is not too pointed nor too flat.
- The overall mean is 4.21. This is equivalent to "Strongly Agree".
- The Standard Deviation is 0.299. This is a very low value. It indicates that the data are not widely spread. They are very close together. This means that there is considerable homogeneity in the data.

4.2.1.4 Computing the Weighted Means of the Linguistic Competence Teachers' Questionnaire

Table (4.13): Linguistic Competence: Weighted means of the Teachers' Questionnaire

Aspect			SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean	STD	Result
Choice of vocabulary in terms of the degree of formality.	Frequency		7	11	2	1	1	4.0333	.88992	SA
	Percent		23.3	36.7	26.7	3.3	3.3			
Knowledge of collocations	Frequency		13	15	2	0	0	4.4000	.62146	SA
	Percent		43.3	50.0	6.7	00	00			
Way of talking about sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams, and cause and effect.	Frequency		14	13	1	1	0	4.4333	.56832	SA
	Percent		46.7	46.7	3.3	3.3	00			
Expressing opinions and ideas.	Frequency		10	10	3	1	0	4.2333	.72793	SA
	Percent		33.3	33.3	10.0	3.3	00			
Using the appropriate language of functions	Frequency		9	12		9	0	3.9333	.78492	A
	Percent		30.0	40.0		30.0	00			
Total			30							

The table above shows the weighted means of the responses of the teachers about the assumption that the students face problems in academic writing.

From the table above, it is clear that there us a unanimous agreement among teachers that the students face problems in the four aspects covered by the questionnaire, These aspects are the same ones investigated in the students test.

For four of the aspects the weighted mean are as follows:

1. Choice of vocabulary in terms of the degree of formality: 4.0333
2. Knowledge of collocations: 4.4000
3. Way of talking about sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams, and cause and effect.: 4.4333
4. Expressing opinions and ideas: 4.2333

All these weighted means are equal to "Strongly Agree"

As for the fifth aspect "Using the appropriate language of functions", the weighted mean is 3.9333, which is equivalent to "Agree"

4.2.1.5 Correlation between the Teachers' Response and the Students' Performance

Table (4.14): Correlation between the Teachers' Response and the Students' Performance

Correlations			
		Teachers' responses	Students' ,performance
Teachers' responses	Pearson Correlation	1	.956*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.011
	N	5	5
Students' performance	Pearson Correlation	.956*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	
	N	5	5

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table above shows that the Sig, (2-tailed) = 0.011, which is less than 0.05. It is equal to $r = 0.956$. This means that there is a strong correlation between the teachers' response and the students' performance.

4.2.2 Result one

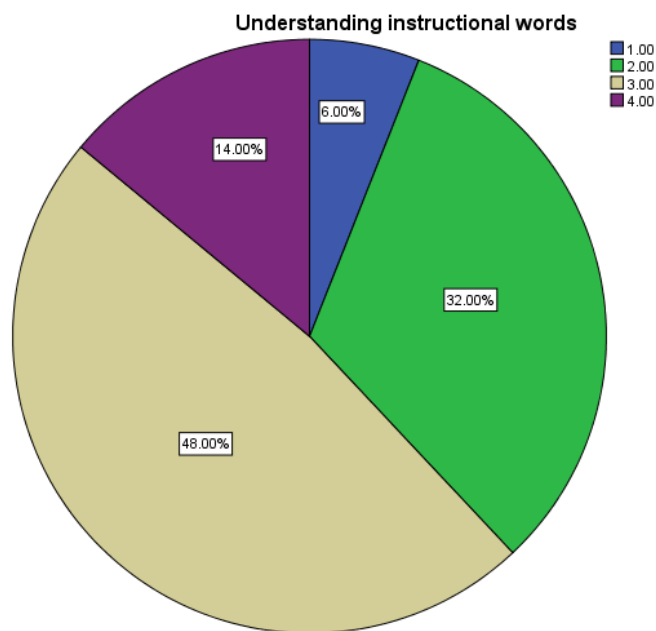
From the sections above, the following result can be drawn:

1. The overall performance of the students in the linguistic competence is below satisfactory. The mean score is 15.20, which far less than the pass mark (25 marks)
3. The performance of the students in the individual sections of the test is weak. The means ranges between 2.3800 and 3.7000. It is less than the pass mark (5 marks).
4. There is a unanimous agreement among the teachers that the students are weak in their linguistic competence.
5. The correlation between the teachers views and the students' performance is very strong

4.3 Meta-Linguistic Awareness

4.3.1 Exploring Data (3)

Table (4.15): Understanding instruction words					
Understanding instructional words					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	3	6.0	6.0	6.0
	2.00	16	32.0	32.0	38.0
	3.00	24	48.0	48.0	86.0
	4.00	7	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	



Pie Chart (4.11): Understanding Instruction Words

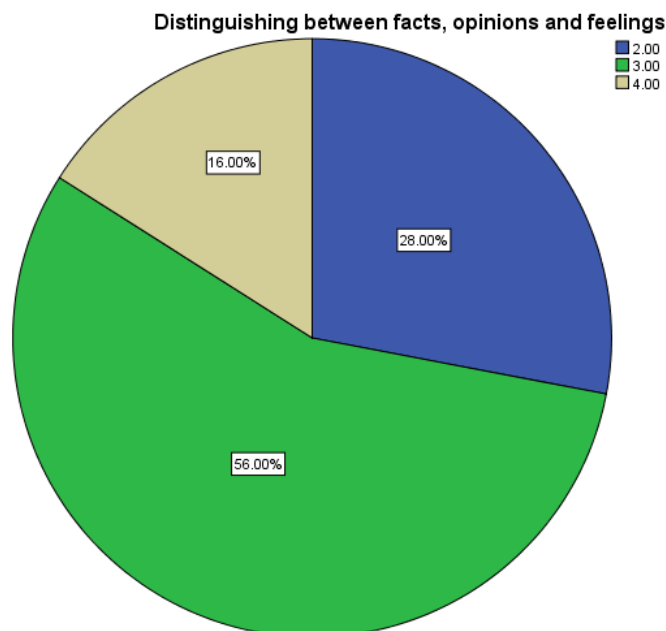
Table (4.15 and pie chart 4.11) above show the results of section one of the students' met-linguistic t-test: "understanding instruction words". The table and the chart show the following:

1. Those who got 3 out of 10 are 46.0% of the subjects.
2. Those who got 2 out of 10 are 32.0%.
3. Those who got 4 out of 10 are 14.0%
4. Those who got 1 mark are 6.0%

Accordingly, it can be concluded that a vast majority of 84.0% of the sample scored between 1 and 3 marks. This indicates that the students do not understand or misunderstand the instruction words that direct them to the required task.

Table (4.16): Distinguishing between Facts, Opinions and Feelings

Distinguishing between facts, opinions and feelings					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2.00	14	28.0	28.0	28.0
	3.00	28	56.0	56.0	84.0
	4.00	8	16.0	16.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	



Pie Chart (4.12): Distinguishing between Facts, Opinions and Feelings

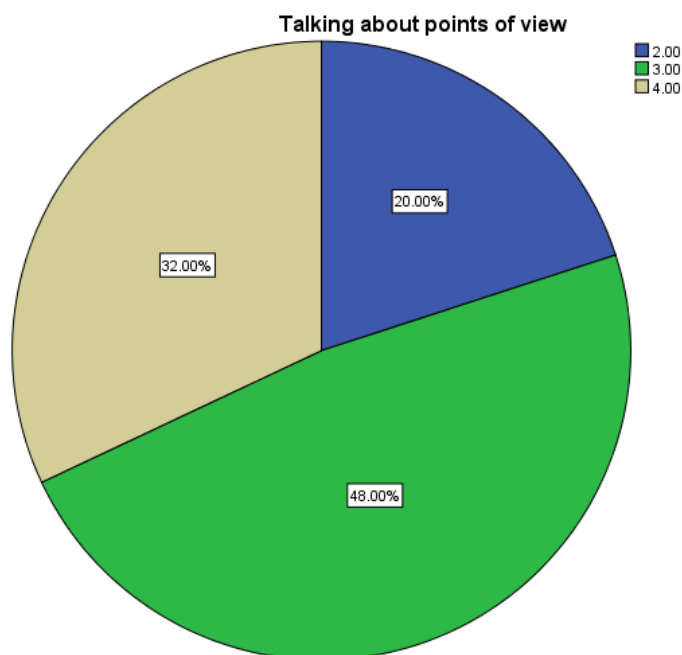
Table (4.16) and pie chart (412) above show the results of section two of the students' meta-linguistic awareness test: "distinguishing between facts, opinions and feelings". The results show the following:

1. 58.0% of the subjects scored 3 out of 10.
2. 28.9% of the subjects scored 2 out of 10.
3. 18.0% scored 4 out of 10.

The results show that 86.0% of the subjects scored 2 and 3 marks out of 10. This an indication of the students; inability to distinguish between facts, opinions and feelings.

Table (4.17): Talking about Points of View

Talking about points of view					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2.00	10	20.0	20.0	20.0
	3.00	24	48.0	48.0	68.0
	4.00	16	32.0	32.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	



Pie Chart (4.13): Talking about Points of View

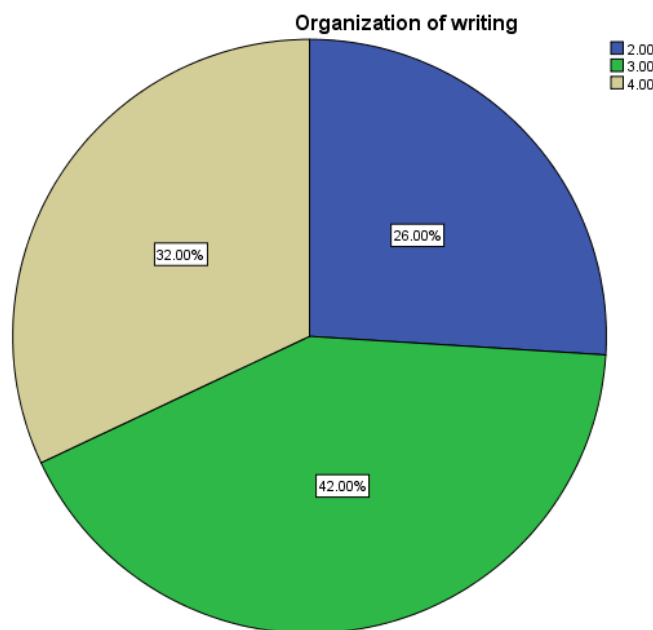
Table (4.17) and pie chart (4.13) show the results of section three of the students' meta-linguistic test: "talking about points of view". The results show the following:

1. 48.0% of the subjects got 3 out of 10.
2. 32.9% of the subjects got 4 marks out of 10.
3. 20.0% of the subjects got 2 marks out of 10.

It can be concluded that at least 68.0% of the sample face difficulties in talking about points of view.

Table (4.18): Organization of Writing

Organization of writing					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2.00	13	26.0	26.0	26.0
	3.00	21	42.0	42.0	68.0
	4.00	16	32.0	32.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	



Pie Chart (4.14): Organization of Writing

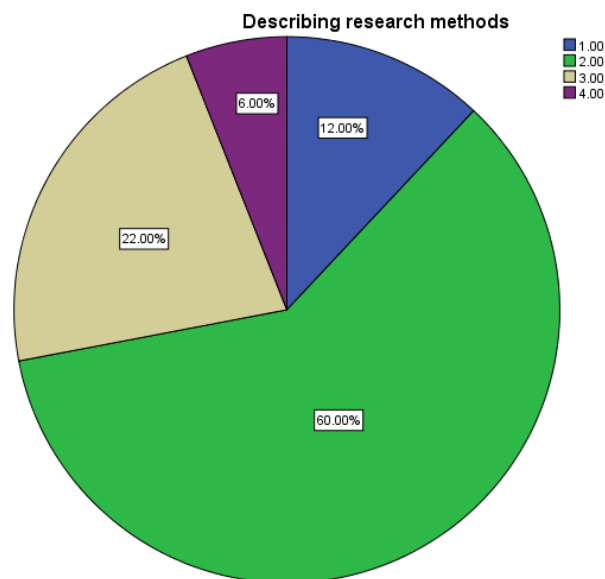
Table (4.18) and pie chart (4.14) show the results of section three of the students' meta-linguistic test: "organization of writing". The results show the following:

1. 42.0% of the subjects got 3 out of 10.
2. 32.0% of the subjects got 4 out of 10.
3. 26.0 of the subjects got 2 out of 10.

This indicates that virtually the entire sample faces difficulties in organizing their writing.

Table (4.19): Describing Research Methods

Describing research methods					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	6	12.0	12.0	12.0
	2.00	30	60.0	60.0	72.0
	3.00	11	22.0	22.0	94.0
	4.00	3	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

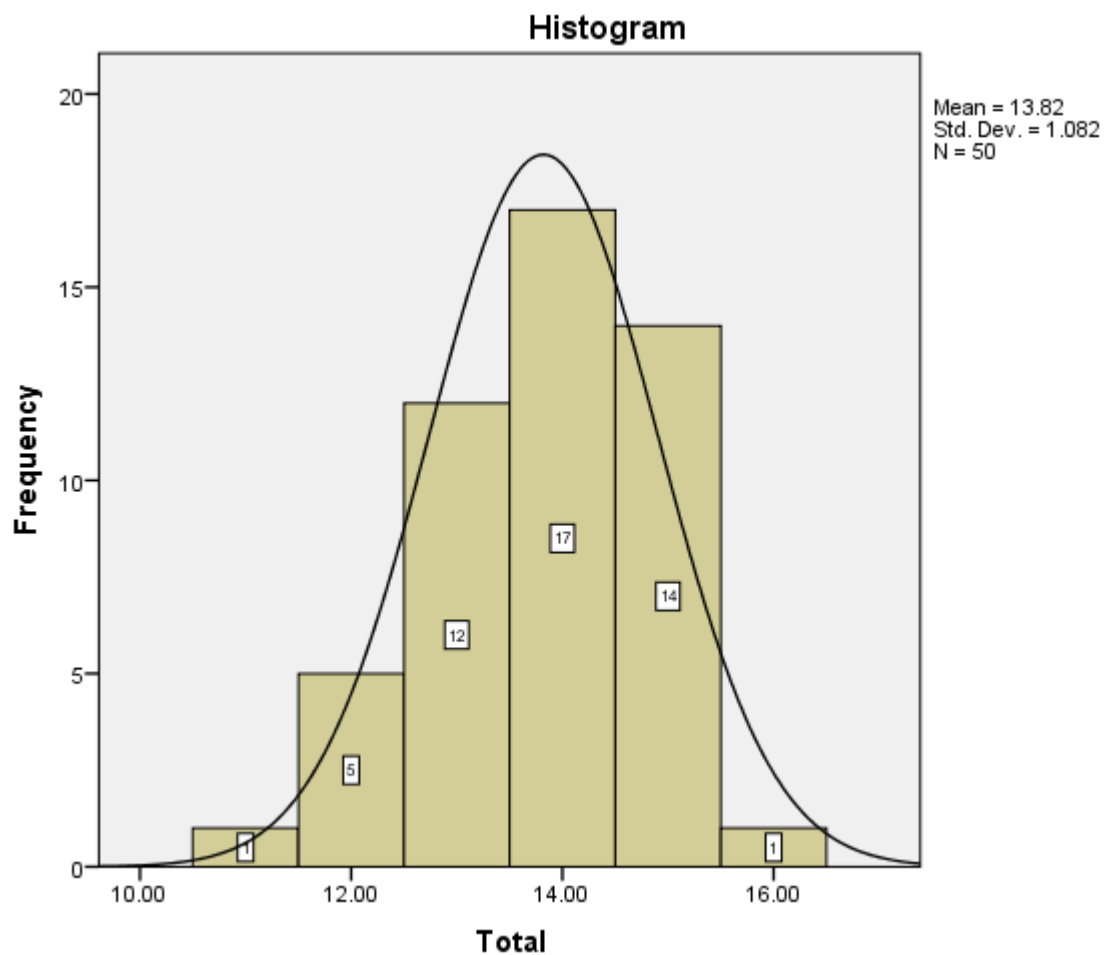


Pie Chart (4.15): Describing Research Methods

Table (4.19) and pie chart (4.15) above show the results of section five of the students' meta-linguistic test: "describing research methods". The results show the following:

1. 60.0% of the sample got 2 out of 10.
2. 22.0 % of the sample got 3 out of 10.
3. 12.0% of the sample got 1 mark out of 10.
4. 6.0% of the sample got 4 marks out of 10.

These results show that almost all of the sample encounters problems in describing the methodology they adopt for conducting their academics studies..



Histogram (4.3): Students' Meta-Linguistic Awareness

Histogram (4.3) above show the following:

1. The data is normally distributed: the normal curve is not leaning to the right or to the left; also it is not pointer or flat.
2. The mean of the overall totals is 13.82 , which is far below the pass mark (25 marks).
3. The Standard Deviation is 1.082. This indicates that the data are closely clustered around the mean (i.e. the data is not widely spread, which provides an indication of homogeneity.)

4.3.2 The Students' Test

The students' test is checked under the statistical technique "one-sample t-test'.

The results of the One-Sample t-test are displayed in the two tables below.

Table (20): Students' Meta-Linguistic Test: One-Sample T-Test

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Understanding instructional words	50	2.7000	.78895	.11157
Distinguishing between facts, opinions and feelings	50	2.8800	.65900	.09320
Talking about points of view	50	3.1200	.71827	.10158
Organization of writing	50	3.0600	.76692	.10846
Describing research methods	50	2.2200	.73651	.10416

The table above shows that the mean for all of the sections is below the pass mark (5 marks).

Table (4. 21): Students' Meta-linguistic Test: One-Sample Test (2)

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 5					
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Understanding instructional words	-20.614	49	.000	-2.30000	-2.5242	-2.0758
Distinguishing between facts, opinions and feelings	-22.747	49	.000	-2.12000	-2.3073	-1.9327
Talking about points of view	-18.508	49	.000	-1.88000	-2.0841	-1.6759
Organization of writing	-17.887	49	.000	-1.94000	-2.1580	-1.7220
Describing research methods	-26.690	49	.000	-2.78000	-2.9893	-2.5707

The table above shows that for all of the sections the Sig. value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. This confirms the result in Table (1) that the mean score is not equal to 5. This further supported by the negative t-values for all of the sections.

All the results above reveal that the students' meta-linguistic awareness is very low. In other words:

1. They have problems in understanding instruction words, This explains why the students are not able to properly answer the questions in their academic assignments.
2. They cannot distinguish between facts, opinions, and feelings. Accordingly, they cannot draw objective conclusions to support their thesis.

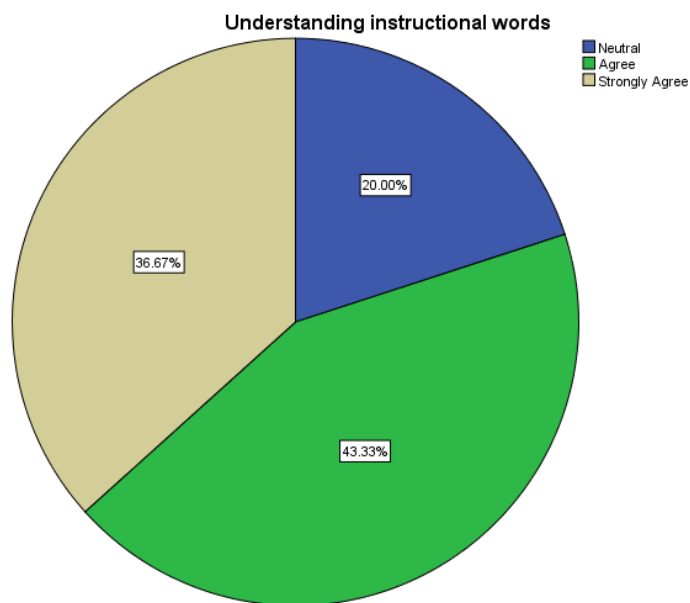
3. They are not able to talk about the different points of view. This can lead to confusion support their arguments and which ones cannot.
4. They are not able to organize their writing properly so that it is reader-friendly in such a way that facilitates the communication of the intended message.
5. They are not able to describe their research methodology. The cannot differentiate between the different research designs and consequently, they might go off the track and come to results that does not match the adopted methodology.

4.3.3 The Teachers' Questionnaire

4.3.3.1 Exploring Data (4)

Table (4.22): Understanding Instruction Words

Understanding instructional words					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	6	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Agree	13	43.3	43.3	63.3
	Strongly Agree	11	36.7	36.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	



Pie Chart (4.16): Understanding Instruction Words

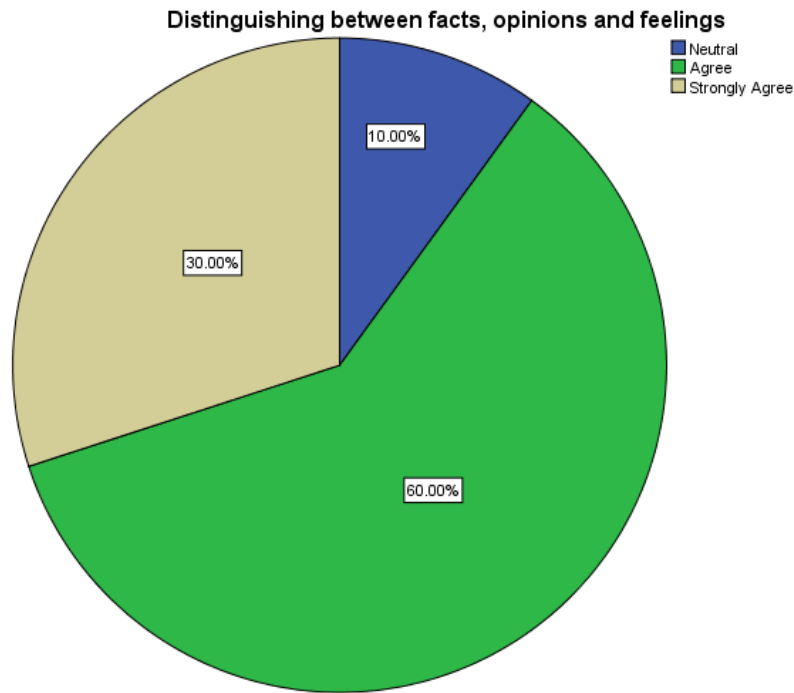
Table (4.22) and pie chart (4.16) show the results of item one of the meta-linguistic awareness teachers' questionnaires: "understanding instruction words". The results show that:

1. 43.3 % of the respondents agree that the students face problem in understanding the instruction words that guide them to the topic in question.
2. 36.7 % of the respondent strongly agrees that the students face problem in understanding the instruction words that guide them to the topic in question.
3. 20.0% of the respondents are neutral.

This indicates that a huge majority of 80.0% of the respondents believe that the students face problems in understanding the instruction words that direct them to the appropriate accomplishment of the task required by the tutors.

Table (4.23): Distinguishing between Facts, Opinions and Feelings

Distinguishing between facts, opinions and feelings					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	3	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Agree	18	60.0	60.0	70.0
	Strongly Agree	9	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	



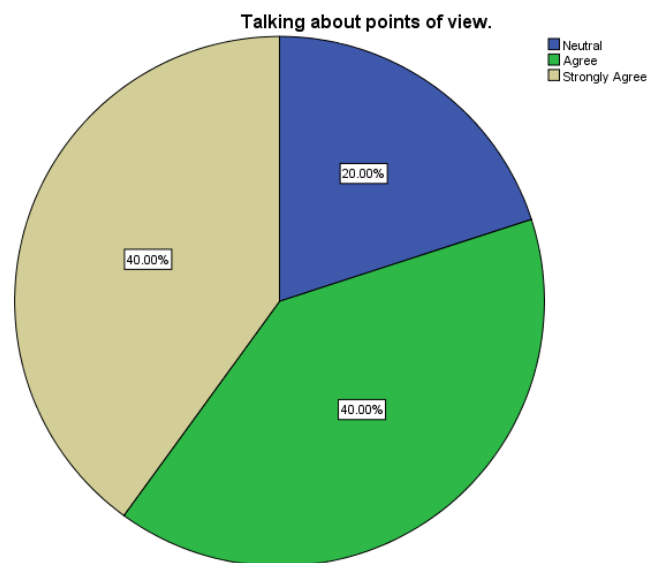
Pie Chart (4.17): Distinguishing between Facts, Opinions and Feelings

Table (4.23) and pie chart (4.17) above show the results of item two of the meta-linguistic awareness teachers' questionnaire: "distinguishing between facts, opinions and feelings". The results show the following:

1. 60.0% of the respondents agree that the students encounter problems in distinguishing between facts, opinions and feelings.
2. 30.0% of the respondents strongly agree that the students encounter problems in distinguishing between facts, opinions and feelings.
3. 10.0% of the respondents are neutral.

Accordingly, it can be deduced that a vast majority of 990% agree that the students face problems in differentiating between the three elements of facts, opinions and feelings.

Table (4.24):Talking about points of view					
Talking about points of view.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	6	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Agree	12	40.0	40.0	60.0
	Strongly Agree	12	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	



Pie Chart (4.18): Talking about Points of View

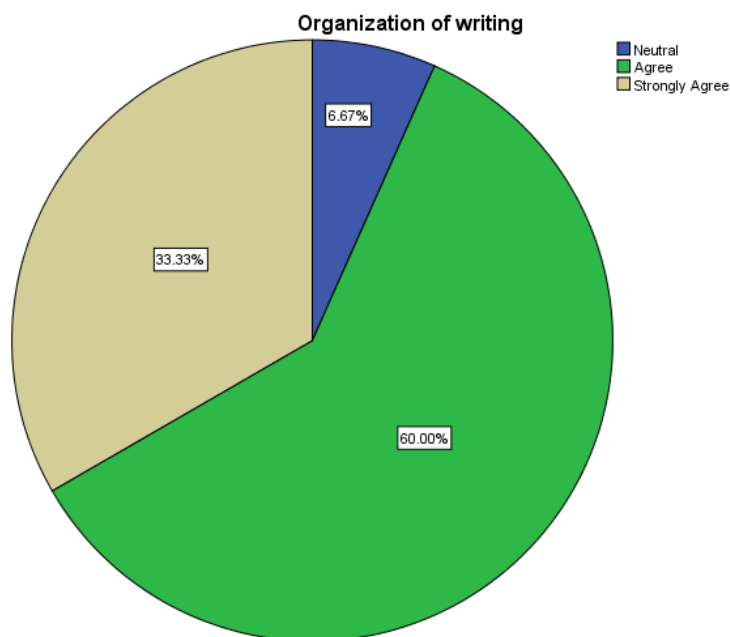
Table (4.24) and pie chart (4.18) above show the results of item three of the meta-linguistic awareness teachers' questionnaire: "talking about points of view". The results show the following:

1. 40.0% of the respondents strongly agree that the students cannot talk properly about points of view.
2. 40.0% of the respondents agree that the students cannot talk properly about points of view.
3. 20.0% of the respondents are neutral.

This indicates that a huge majority of the teachers (80.0% of the sample) believes that the students encounter problems in talking about the different points of view in the proper way.

Table (4.25): Organization of Writing

Organization of writing					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
	Agree	18	60.0	60.0	66.7
	Strongly Agree	10	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	



Pie Chart (4.19): Organization of Writing

Table (4.25) and pie chart (419) above show the results of item four of the meta-linguistic awareness teachers' questionnaire: "organization of writing". The results show the following:

1. 60.0% of the respondents agree that the students face difficulties in organizing their writing in accordance with the conventions of academic writing.

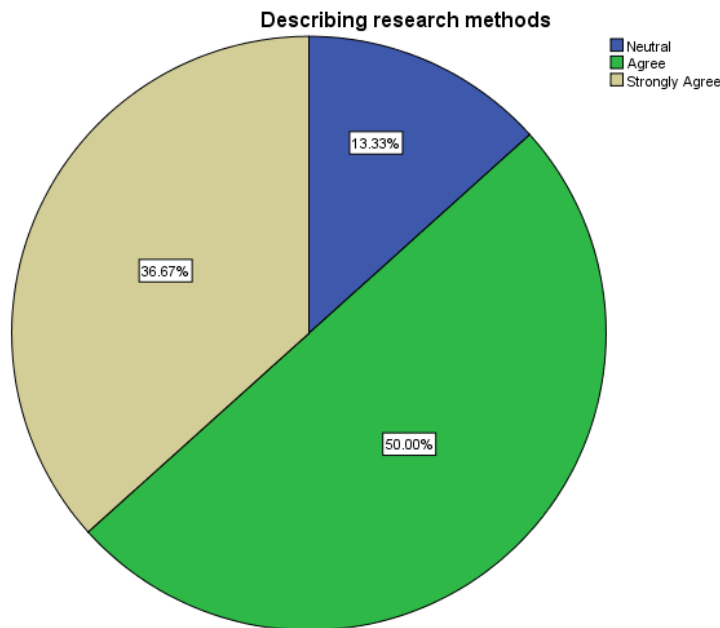
2. 33.3 % of the respondents strongly agree that the students face difficulties in organizing their writing in accordance with the conventions of academic writing.

3. 6.7% of the sample is neutral.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that a vast majority (93.3% of the sample) believe that the students face problems in organizing their writing according to the conventions of academic writing.

Table (4.26): Describing Research Methods

Describing research methods					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	4	13.3	13.3	13.3
	Agree	15	50.0	50.0	63.3
	Strongly Agree	11	36.7	36.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

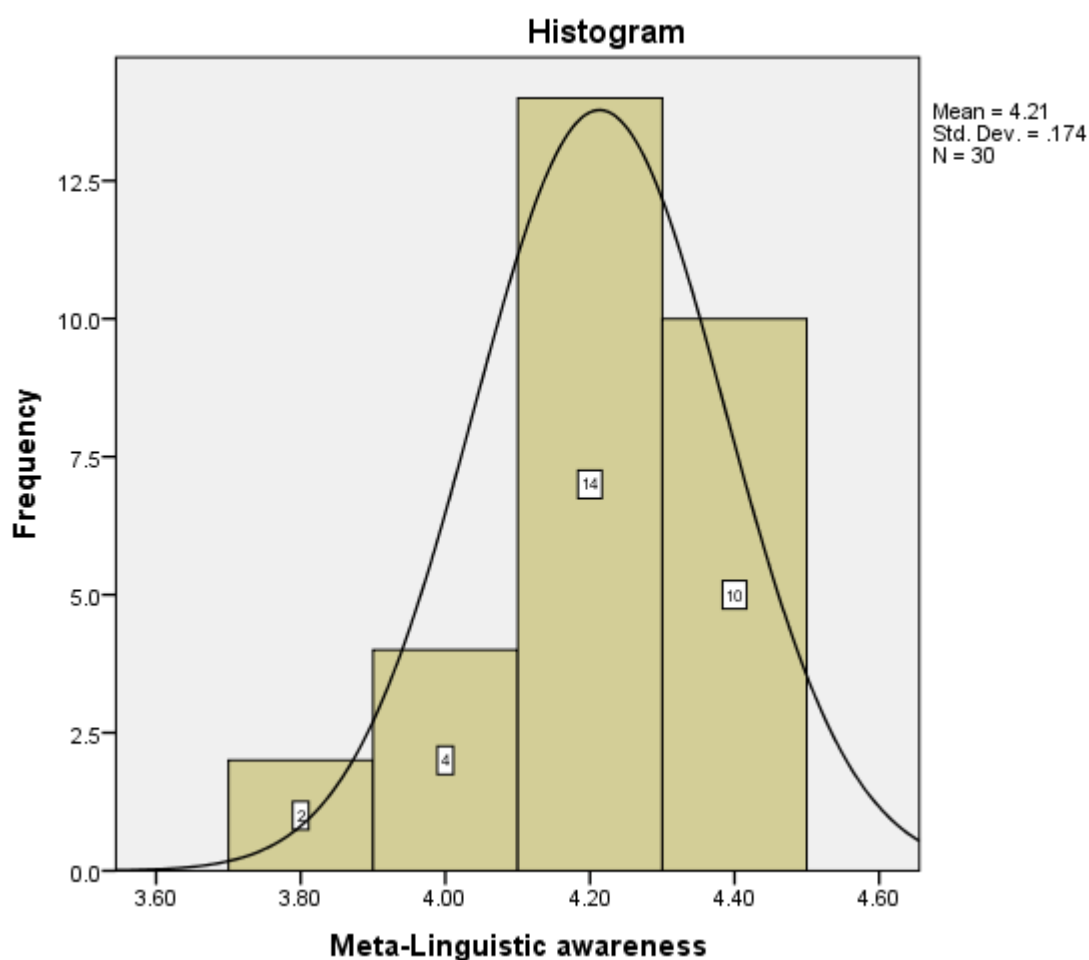


Pie Chart (4.20): Describing Research Methods

Table (4.26) and pie chart (4.20) above show the results of item five of the meta-linguistic awareness teachers' questionnaire: "describing research methods". The results show the following:

1. 50.0% of the respondents agree that the students cannot describe the methodology they adopt in the proper way.
2. 36.7% of the respondents strongly agree that the students cannot describe the methodology they adopt in the proper way.
3. 13.3% of the sample is neutral.

This indicates that a huge majority of the respondents (86.7% of the sample) believes that the students face problems in describing the methodology they claim to follow in the conduction of their stories.



Histogram (4.4): Teachers' Views about Meta-Linguistic Awareness

Histogram (4.4) above shows the following:

1. The data is normally distributed:
 - (a) Skewness: the normal curve is not leaning to the right or to the left.
 - (b) Kurtosis: the normal curve is not pointed; it is not flat.
2. The overall weighted mean is 4.21, which is equivalent to "Strongly Agree"
3. The Standard Deviation is 0.174, which indicates that all of the means are close to the weighted mean (i.e. the data is not scattered, which indicates homogeneity).

4.3.3.2 Computing the Weighted means of the Teachers' Responses to the Meta-Linguistic Awareness Questionnaire

Table (4.27): Meta-Linguistic Awareness: Weighted means of the Teachers' Questionnaire

Aspect			SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean	STD	Result
Understanding instructional words .	Frequency		11	13	6	0	0	4.1667	.74664	SA
	Percent		36.7	43.3	20.0	00	00			
Distinguishing between facts, opinions and feelings	Frequency		9	18	3	0	0	4.2000	.61026	SA
	Percent		30.0	60.0	10.0	00	00			
Talking about points of view..	Frequency		12	12	6	0	0	4.2000	.76112	SA
	Percent		40.0	40.0	20.0	00	00			
Organization of writing.	Frequency		10	18	2	0	0	4.2667	.58329	SA
	Percent		33.3	60.0	6.7	00	00			
Describing research methods	Frequency		11	15	4	0	0	4.2333	.67891	SA
	Percent		36.7	50.0	13.3	00	00			
Total	30									

The table above shows the weighted means of the responses of the teachers to the questionnaire. All of the weighted means are equal to "Strongly Agree" This means that the teachers unanimously agree that the students face problems that relate to meta-linguistic awareness.

4.3.3.3 Correlation between the Students' Performance and the Teachers' Views

Table (4.28): Correlation between the Students' Performance and the Teachers' Views

Correlations			
		Teachers' views	Students performance
Teachers' views	Pearson Correlation	1	.030
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.962
	N	5	5
Students performance	Pearson Correlation	.030	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.962	
	N	5	5

The table above shows that:

$$r = 0.030$$

This means that the correlation between the teachers' views and the students' performance is not so strong. This can be explained in view of the university teachers' high expectations from freshmen and their resistance to compromise on that issue.

4.3.4 Result Two

From the analysis and discussion above, the following results can be deduced:

1. The overall performance of the students in the meta- linguistic awareness is below satisfactory. The mean score is 13.82, which far less than the pass mark (25 marks)
2. The performance of the students in the individual sections of the test is weak. The means ranges between 2.2200 and 3.1200. It is less than the pass mark (5 marks).
3. There is a unanimous agreement among the teachers that the students are weak in their meta-linguistic awareness.
4. The correlation between the teachers' views and the students' performance is not so strong.

4.4 Summary

This chapter presented the analysis and discussion of data about:

Freshmen linguistic competence in academic writing.

1. Freshmen meta-linguistic awareness in academic writing.

The analysis and discussion yielded the following two results:

(a) Result one:

1. The overall performance of the students in the linguistic competence is below satisfactory. The mean score is 15.20, which far less than the pass mark (25 marks).
2. The performance of the students in the individual sections of the test is weak. The means ranges between 2.3800 and 3.7000. It is less than the pass mark (5 marks).
3. There is a unanimous agreement among the teachers that the students are weak in their linguistic competence.
4. The correlation between the teachers views and the students' performance is very strong

(b) Result two

1. The overall performance of the students in the meta- linguistic awareness is below satisfactory. The mean score is 13.82, which far less than the pass mark (25 marks)

2. The performance of the students in the individual sections of the test is weak. The means ranges between 2.2200 and 3.1200. It is less than the pass mark (5 marks).

3. There is a unanimous agreement among the teachers that the students are weak in their meta-linguistic awareness.

4. The correlation between the teachers' views and the students' performance is not so strong.

These results will be used in Chapter Five to provide answers o the research questions and to verify the hypotheses.

Chapter Five

**Conclusions, Recommendations and
Suggestions for Further Research**

Chapter Five

Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Research

5.1 Introduction

This chapter sums up this study by pulling all of the threads together in order to provide answers to the research questions and to verify the hypotheses of the study.

5.2 Answers to the Research Questions and Verification of Hypotheses

5.2.1 First Question and First Hypothesis

First Question

What are the linguistic difficulties which relate to academic writing that face freshmen college students in Sudanese English medium institutions at tertiary level?

First Hypothesis

Freshmen college students in Sudanese English medium institutions at tertiary level face linguistic difficulties in relation to academic writing. These difficulties are clear in:

- (a) Choice of academic vocabulary (parts of speech, phrasal verbs, quantifying expressions, words with several meanings, and metaphors and idioms)
- (b) Collocations
- (c) Ways of talking about sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams, and cause and effect.
- (d) Expressing opinions and ideas.
- (e) Functions.

Referring to result one in section **4.2.2** in Chapter Four which reads:

2. The overall performance of the students in the linguistic competence is below satisfactory. The mean score is 15.20, which far less than the pass mark (25 marks)

6. The performance of the students in the individual sections of the test is weak. The means ranges between 2.3800 and 3.7000. It is less than the pass mark (5 marks).

7. There is a unanimous agreement among the teachers that the students are weak in their linguistic competence.

8. The correlation between the teachers views and the students' performance is very strong

It is clear that:

1. The linguistic difficulties which relate to academic writing that face freshmen college students in Sudanese English medium institutions at tertiary level are:

(a) Their inability to choose the vocabulary appropriate to the genre of academic writing in terms of the degree of formality. The linguistic competence test showed that the students tend to use words that relate more to the general meaning. They do not use words from the Academic Word Lists (AWL).

(b) Their inability to use collocations pertinent to academic writing such as representative sample, influential role, significant increase, particular interest, etc.

(c) Their inability to talk about sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams, and cause and effect. Such as:

- This paper begins with a review of literature on.....
- The normal curve shows that the data is normally distributed.
- The Histogram above shows that there is a wide disparity between ...
- The new approach has major consequences on

(d) Their inability to express opinions and ideas. For example, they do not use structures such as:

- This model represents an analytical framework for
- It can be argued that ...
- It is not easy to accept the notion that

2. The statistical analysis shows that:

(a) The mean score for the total marks is 15.20, which far less than the pass mark (25 marks)

(b) The means in the individual sections range between 2.3800 and 3.7000, which is less than the pass mark (5 marks).

(c) There is a unanimous agreement among the teachers that the students are weak in their linguistic competence.

(d) The correlation between the teachers views and the students' performance is very strong

This means that freshmen college students in Sudanese English medium institutions at tertiary level face linguistic difficulties in relation to academic writing.

Accordingly, the first question is answered and the first hypothesis is verified.

5.2.2 Second Question and Second Hypothesis

Second Question.

To what extent are freshmen college students in Sudanese English medium institutions at tertiary level aware of the meta-linguistic?

Aspects of Academic Writing

Second Hypothesis

Freshmen college students in Sudanese English medium institutions at tertiary level face metalinguistic difficulties in relation to academic writing. These difficulties are clear in:

(f) Understanding instructional words.

- (g) Distinguishing between facts, opinions and feelings.
- (h) Talking about points of view.
- (i) Organization of writing.
- (j) Describing research methods

Referring to result tow in section 4.3.4 of Chapter Four which reads:

5. The overall performance of the students in the meta- linguistic awareness is below satisfactory. The mean score is 13.82, which far less than the pass mark (25 marks)

6. The performance of the students in the individual sections of the test is weak. The means ranges between 2.2200 and 3.1200. It is less than the pass mark (5 marks).

7. There is a unanimous agreement among the teachers that the students are weak in their meta-linguistic awareness.

8. The correlation between the teachers' views and the students' performance is not so strong.

In relation to meta-linguistic awareness, it is clear that:

1. The students' performance in the meta-linguistic test raveled that:

(a) The mean score for the total marks of the students is 13.82, which far below the pass mark (25 marks out of 50).

(b) The means of he individual sections range between 2.2200 and 3.1200, which far below the pass mark (5 marks out of 10).

2. There is a unanimous agreement among the teachers that the students are weak in their meta-linguistic awareness.

3. The correlation between the teachers' views and the students' performance is not so strong.

Accordingly it can be concluded that freshmen face difficulties in the five aspects of academic writing which have been investigated:

1. They either do not understand or they misunderstand the words. For example. They confuse the instruction words:

- explain, discuss, and explore.
- consider, describe, and illustrate.
- demonstrate and investigate

2. They cannot distinguish between facts, opinions, and feelings. For example:

- They do not know that if a statement can be proved to be true or false, then it is a fact. Nobody can agree or disagree with a fact.
- They do not know that an opinion is a statement that you can agree or disagree with it. Nobody can talk about an opinion as true or false.
- They do not know that a feeling is something personal. On body can agree or disagree with a feeling.

3. They cannot talk properly about points of view, For example:

- They cannot make the difference between subjective points of views (based on feelings and personal feelings) , objective points of view (based on facts) and rational points of views (based on reason 'logic' rather than emotions)
- They cannot make the difference between radical points of views (those which call for thorough and complete changes) and conservative points of view (those which are against great or sudden change)

4. They do not know how to organize their writing in accordance with the conventions of academic writing, For example:

- They do not know which part of the academic paper contains its main idea. Is it the introduction, the conclusion, or the abstract?
- They do not know which part of the academic paper give a summary of its content. Is it the introduction, the conclusion, or the abstract?

- They confuse the different types of paragraphs: the introductory paragraph, the body paragraph, the transitional paragraph, and the concluding paragraph.

- They mix up the normal order of the main parts of the academic paper.

5. They fail to describe the research methodology their following in the proper way. For example:

- They do not know that if they want to find out the impact of an intervention (program/treatment) on the performance of students, they are adopting an experimental design.

- They do not know that if they want to find out facts about a situation, a problem or a phenomenon, they are following the descriptive methodology.

- They do not know that if they want to find out the reasons of a problem or a phenomenon, the methodology they choose must be the analytical design.

- They confuse field, pilot, and case studies.

- They do not know which data collection tool (tests, Questionnaires, observations, interviews) to employ for the research design they adopt.

- They misuse the statistical techniques such as One-sample t-test, paired sample t-test, etc.

This supported by the students' performance in the meta-linguistic test and the teachers' questionnaire. The results of these two tools showed the following:

1. The mean score for the total marks of the students is 13.82, which far below the pass mark (25 marks out of 50); and the means of the individual sections range between 2.2200 and 3.1200, which far below the pass mark (5 marks out of 10).

4. There is a unanimous agreement among the teachers that the students are weak in their meta-linguistic awareness.

5. The correlation between the teachers' views and the students' performance is not so strong. This is due to the high expectations of the university teachers and the strict stance they adopt towards this issue.

Accordingly, the second question is answered and the second hypothesis is verified.

5.3 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made;

1. Both aspect of linguistic competence and meta-linguistic awareness should be taught through explicit instruction.

2. The two aspects should not be left for preliminary courses that deal with them within the framework of general English upgrading courses.

3. These two aspects should be taught by well experience university teachers who are well versed in research methods and methodologies.

4. Teaching of these aspects should be more task-based than lecture form.

5. The materials used for teaching these aspects should be too strong based on real and good models of academic writing.

6. Topics for academic writing must be closely related to immediate environment of the students and must deal with current and hot issues.

7. The students should be trained. The students' performance in the meta-linguistic test revealed that

a- The mean score for the total marks of the students is 13.82, which far below the pass mark (25 marks out of 50).

b-The means of he individual sections range between 2.2200 and 3.1200, which far below test. The students' performance in the meta-linguistic test revealed that:

(c) The mean score for the total marks of the students is 13.82, which far below the pass mark (25 marks out of 50).

(d) The means of the individual sections range between 2.2200 and 3.1200, which far below the pass mark (5 marks out of 10).

8- There is a unanimous agreement among the teachers that the students are weak in their meta-linguistic awareness.

9-The correlation between the teachers' views and the students' performance is not so strong.

(e) The pass mark (5 marks out of 10).

10- There is a unanimous agreement among the teachers that the students are weak in their meta-linguistic awareness.

11-The correlation between the teachers' views and the students' performance is not so strong.

12- The students should be trained to reflect critically on their own work and that of their peers.

13-The students should be trained on how to avoid plagiarism and copy-paste practice.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Throughout this study, the researcher felt that the following areas of academic writing need to be investigated:

1. The problems that encounter students in the mechanics of academic writing.
2. Adoption of the genre-based approach combined with the process approach to academic writing.
3. The importance of peer conferencing in developing academic writing skills.
4. Enhancing the students' skills in developing valid and reliable data collection tools.

5. The importance of developing the students' basic statistical skills.

5.5 Summary of the study.

This chapter concluded the by using the results obtained from the analysis and discussion of data in Chapter Four to provide answers to the two research questions and to verify the hypotheses.

It also offered some practical recommendations that can help enhancing the skills of the students in academic writing.

Moreover, this chapter suggested some topics that the researcher felt, during carrying out this study, that they need to be incest gated.

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Appendixes

Test Two: Metalinguistic Awareness

Time: 2 hours



Draw a circle round the letter of the most appropriate word/expression

Section one: Understanding instructional words

explain – explore – describe – investigate

Your tutor asks you to do the following assignments. Which rubric will s/he?

- (1) Your tutor asks you to write in detail about "*the case for and against using translation in teaching foreign languages*", showing the different ideas and opinions about that. Which rubric will s/he use?
 - (a) Explain the merits and demerits of using translation as a technique for teaching foreign languages.
 - (b) Discuss the different views about using translation as a technique for teaching foreign languages.
 - (c) Explore the potentialities of using translation as a technique for teaching foreign languages.

- (2) Your tutor asks you to think carefully about using songs in classes where some learners think that music is *haram* in order to make a decision about using them in your teaching. Which rubric will s/he use?
 - (a) Consider the feasibility of using songs in classes where some learners think it is not *halal* to listen to music.
 - (b) Describe the problem of using songs in classes where some learners think that religion does not allow listening to music.
 - (c) Illustrate the problem of using songs in classes where some learners think that religion does not allow listening to music.

- (3) Your tutor asks you to make the meaning of the "*communication process*" clearer by using examples, diagrams, etc. Which rubric will s/he use?
 - (a) Demonstrate how communication takes place between interlocutors (speakers and listeners).
 - (b) Investigate how communication takes place between interlocutors (speakers and listeners).
 - (c) Illustrate how communication takes place between interlocutors (speakers and listeners).

- (4) Your tutor asks you to show clearly the effect of using literature on improving cultural awareness ; giving proof or evidence of what you say. Which rubric will s/he use?
 - (a) Demonstrate the impact of using literature on improving cultural awareness of learners.
 - (b) Discuss the impact of using literature on improving cultural awareness of the learners.
 - (c) Describe the impact of using literature on improving cultural awareness.

- (5) Your tutor asks you to study, very carefully, the role of motivation in learning languages. Which rubric will s/he use?

- (a) Explain the role of motivation in learning languages.
 - (b) Explore the role of motivation in language learning.
 - (c) Examine the role of motivation in language learning.
- (6) Your tutor asks you to give an explanation of changes that took place in teaching methods over the years. Which rubric will s/he use?
- (a) Account for the changes that took place in teaching methods over the years.
 - (b) Illustrate the changes that took place in teaching methods over the years.
 - (c) Describe the changes that took place in teaching methods over the years.
- (7) Your tutor asks you to write an essay about the stages of child development in a way that makes it easy to understand. Which rubric will s/he use?
- (a) Investigate the four main stages of child development.
 - (b) Explore the four main stages of child development.
 - (c) Explain the four main stages of child development.
- (8) Your tutor asks you to survey the different aspects of English as an international language completely and carefully in order to find out more about it. Which rubric will s/he use?
- (a) Explore the different aspects of English as an international language.
 - (b) Demonstrate the different aspects of English as an international language.
 - (c) Account for the different aspects of English as an international language.
- (9) Your tutor asks you to write an essay about the mechanism of speech sounds production to show what it is like. Which rubric will s/he use?
- (a) Describe the mechanism of speech sounds production.
 - (b) Demonstrate the mechanism of speech sound production.
 - (c) Investigate the mechanism of speech sound production.
- (10) Your tutor asks you to find out information and facts about difficulties which students face in oral communication. Which rubric will s/he use?
- (a) Illustrate the difficulties which students encounter in oral communication.
 - (b) Demonstrate the difficulties which students encounter in oral communication.
 - (c) Investigate the difficulties which students encounter in oral communication.

Section two: Distinguishing between facts, opinions and feelings

- (1) If something is known to be true, especially when it can be proved., then it is -

(a) a fact (b) an opinion (c) an attitude
- (2) The view of someone about something is -----
(a) a fact (b) an opinion (c) an attitude
- (3) The way someone feels about something is -----
(a) a fact (b) an opinion (c) an attitude
- (4) If you agree or disagree with a statement , then it expresses -----
(a) a fact (b) an opinion (c) an attitude
- (5) If you accept a statement as it is, then it is -----
(a) a fact (b) an opinion (c) an attitude
- (6) If you can find out that a statement is either true or false, then it is -----
(a) a fact (b) an opinion (c) an attitude
- (7) "Mixed-ability classes are difficult to teach." This is -----
(a) a fact (b) an opinion (c) an attitude
- (8) "Differentiated teaching is an effective technique for Mixed-ability classes"
This is ---
(a) a fact (b) an opinion (c) an attitude
- (9) "I like teaching mixed-ability classes." This is -----
(a) a fact (b) an opinion (c) an attitude
- (10) Questionnaires can best be used to elicit information about:
(a) facts and opinions
(b) opinions and attitudes
(c) attitudes and facts

Section three: Talking about points of view.

- (1) When a point of view is based on personal feelings and opinions (rather than facts), then it is subjective.
(a) True (b) False (c) Not always

- (2) When a point of view is not influenced by personal feelings or opinions (considering only facts), then it is objective.
(a) Not always (b) True (c) False
- (3) When a point of view is in favour of thorough and complete change, then it is radical.
(a) True (b) Not always (c) False
- (4) When a point of view is against great or sudden change, then it is conservative.
(a) Not always (b) True (c) False
- (5) When a point of view is based on reason (logic) rather than emotions, then it is rational.
(a) True (b) False (c) Not always
- (6) "In my own point of view; instead of strengthening the social relations between people, social media have, in fact, considerably weakened those relations - not only between friends and relatives, but even between the members of the same and one family." This point of view is:
(a) subjective (b) objective (c) neutral
- (7) "The new English language series is just a complete mess. It has all the weaknesses of the previous one and none of its strengths. Moreover, it has added its own serious defects. In brief, it is just a disaster." This point of view is:
(a) subjective (b) objective (c) neutral
- (8) "Although great efforts have been exerted in writing the new English language series, it still manifests some drawbacks in the scope and sequence of vocabulary and structures in terms of selection, gradation and distribution over the units and lessons." This point of view is:
(a) subjective (b) objective (c) neutral
- (9) "The unprecedented widespread of IT and ITC has actually and factually necessitated complete and thorough changes in the content and methods of instruction." This point of view is:
(a) radical (b) conservative (c) neutral

(10) "It is an undisputed fact that the widespread of IT and ITC has made it imperative to make a paradigm shift in the content and methods of instruction. However, this shift need not be sudden and great in volume. It has to be gradual and it should be introduced in stages." This point of view is:

- (a) neutral (b) radical (c) conservative

Section four: Organization of writing

(1) The part of an academic paper which contains its main idea is the -----

- (a) introduction (b) conclusion (c) abstract

(2) The part of an academic paper which gives a summary of the paper is the -----

- (a) conclusion (b) introduction (c) abstract

(3) The part of an academic paper which represents its theoretical basis is -----

- (a) literature review (b) discussion of data (c) the methodology

(4) The part of an academic paper which deals with the information collected by the tools of the study is -----

- (a) literature review (b) discussion of data (c) the methodology

(5) The normal order of the parts of an academic paper is as follows:

- (a) Abstract, Introduction, Main body, Conclusion, References, Appendixes
(b) Introduction, Abstract, Main body, Conclusion, Appendixes, References.
(c) Abstract, Main body, Introduction, Conclusion, References, Appendixes.

(6) "This assignment will address the problem of the difficulties which students face in using idiomatic expressions." This sentences belongs to the -----

- (a) abstract (b) introduction (c) main body

(7) "This paper attempts to investigate the phenomenon of speech overlap in local Sudanese women communities" This sentence belongs to the -----

- (a) abstract (b) introduction (c) main body

(8) The paragraph which contains the thesis of the paper is ----- paragraph.

- (a) a concluding (b) an introductory (c) a transitional

(9) The paragraph which tells that the writer has finished discussing a point and is moving to discuss a new one is ---- paragraph.

- (a) a concluding (b) an introductory (c) a transitional

(10) A paragraph which deals with one main idea in a paper is ----- paragraph.

- (a) main body (b) a transitional (c) concluding

Section four: Organization of writing

(10) The part of an academic paper which contains its main idea is the -----

-

- (b) introduction (b) conclusion (c) abstract

(11) The part of an academic paper which gives a summary of the paper is the -----

- (b) conclusion (b) introduction (c) abstract

(12) The part of an academic paper which represents its theoretical basis is -

- (b) literature review (b) discussion of data (c) the methodology

(13) The part of an academic paper which deals with the information collected by the tools of the study is -----

- (b) literature review (b) discussion of data (c) the methodology

(14) The normal order of the parts of an academic paper is as follows:

- (d) Abstract, Introduction, Main body, Conclusion, References, Appendixes
(e) Introduction, Abstract, Main body, Conclusion, Appendixes, References.

(f) Abstract, Main body, Introduction, Conclusion, References, Appendixes.

(15) "This assignment will address the problem of the difficulties which students face in using idiomatic expressions." This sentence belongs to the ---

(b) abstract (b) introduction (c) main
body

(16) "This paper attempts to investigate the phenomenon of speech overlap in local Sudanese women communities" This sentence belongs to the -----

(b) abstract (b) introduction (c) main
body

(17) The paragraph which contains the thesis of the paper is -----
paragraph.

(a) a concluding (b) an introductory (c) a transitional

(18) The paragraph which tells that the writer has finished discussing a point and is moving to discuss a new one is ---- paragraph.

(a) a concluding (b) an introductory (c) a transitional

(19) A paragraph which deals with one main idea in a paper is -----
paragraph.

(b) main body (b) a transitional (c) concluding

Section five: Describing research methods

(1) If a researcher wants to find out the impact of an intervention (program/treatment) on the performance of students, then his/ her research will have to be -----

(a) descriptive (b) analytical (c) experimental

(2) If a researcher wants to find out facts about a situation, a problem or a phenomenon, then his/her research will have to be -----

(a) descriptive (b) analytical (c) experimental

Answer Key

Section one [10 marks]

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B	a	C	A	a	A	C	C	a	C

Section two [10 marks]

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	b	C	B	c	A	b	A	C	B

Section three [10 marks]

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	b	A	B	a	B	a	B	a	C

Section four [10 marks]

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
C	a	A	B	a	b	a	B	b	A

Section five [10 marks]

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
c	a	B	b	a	a	c	b	a	C

Tabulation of Data

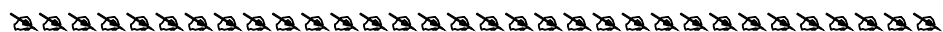
student	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S 5	Total
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student	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S 5	Total
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Total						

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear colleague

This questionnaire is a tool for collecting data for my research about the difficulties which face the students of first year of university in writing academic papers. I thank you very much for completing this questionnaire depending on your own experience.



Please tick the box which expresses your opinion.

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N= Neutral; DA = Disagree; SDA = Strongly Disagree

In academic writing, students face problems in the following aspects

No	Statement	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
1	choice of vocabulary in terms of the degree of formality.					
2	knowledge of collocations.					
3	way of talking about sources, statistics, graphs and diagrams, and cause and effect.					
4	expressing opinions and ideas.					
5	using the appropriate language of functions (classifying, comparing and contrasting, describing change, etc.)					
6	understanding instructional words (illustrate, investigate, account for, etc.)					
7	distinguishing between facts, opinions and feelings.					
8	talking about points of view.					
9	organization of writing.					
10	describing research methods					

Thank you very much.

Scale:

- (1) SA = 5
- (2) A = 4
- (3) N = 3
- (4) DA = 2
- (5) SDA = 1

Tabulation

Teacher	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7	Item 8	Item 9	Item 10
1										
2										
3										
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