



Sudan University of Science and Technology

College of Graduate Studies

College of Languages



**Investigating the Difficulties Encountered by EFL Students in
Using Punctuation Marks in Writing**

تقصي الصعوبات التي يواجهها طلاب اللغة الانجليزية لغه اجنبية في استخدام
علامات الترقيم في الكتابة

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

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2020

Quranic Verse

الاستهلال

قال تعالى :

(قَالَ رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي (25) وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي (26) وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِنْ لِسَانِي (27) يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي (28) وَاجْعَلْ لِي وَزِيرًا مِنْ أَهْلِي (29) هَارُونَ أَخِي (30) اشْدُدْ بِهِ أَزْرِي (31) وَأَشْرِكْهُ فِي أَمْرِي (32) كَيْ نُسَبِّحَكَ كَثِيرًا (33) وَنَذْكُرَكَ كَثِيرًا (34) إِنَّكَ كُنْتَ بِنَا بَصِيرًا (35))

صدق الله العظيم

سورة طه الايات (25-35)

(Lord explain to me my chest said, (25) pleased me my order (26) and the solution node of the tongue (27) Evghaoa Say (28) and make me a minister from my family (29) Aaron, my brother (30) stress by Azri (31) and involved him in my order (32) So that we praise you a lot (33) and we remember you a lot (34) that you have been very visionary (35))

Great truth of God

Surat Taha Al-Ayat (25-35)

DEDICATION

To my lovely Father who always support me to continue my achievements.

To my Mother's soul.

To my Dearest Wife who stands beside me exerting all her effort for encourage me to achieve my goals.

To my brothers, sisters and my colleagues whom help me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks firstly and lastly to God, who enabled me to achieve this study, then my thanks and gratitude to my thesis supervisor. Dr. Hillary Marino PitiaLaki for his constant support and guide to me throughout this study. I also would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. NajlaTahaBashri, Dr. Ibrahim Ahmed Abaker, Dr. AlfatihBalla and Dr.Mohammed Osman Alkordi, for verifying my research tool, a test. My thanks are extended to Librarians at the College of Languages and College of Education at Sudan University of Sciences and Technology. Finally, my thanks are due to my friends and colleagues, College of Graduate Studies, at Sudan University.

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the Difficulties Encountered by EFL students in Using Punctuation Marks in Writing. The study took place in Sudan University of Science and Technology, College of Education, This study adopted descriptive and analytical method. The researcher used a test which includes three different types of questions on using English punctuation marks in writing as tool for data collection to achieve this goal. The sample comprised (30) EFL students of first year at Sudan University, College of Education. The data were analyzed by using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS).The findings of this study showed the most frequently incorrect use of punctuation marks such as question mark, quotation mark, exclamation mark, apostrophe, and semi-colon.by university students can distort the meaning of written text. Also most of EFL students are unable to use punctuation marks correctly in writing. They are also unable to identify different types of punctuation marks particularly, (exclamation mark, question mark, quotation mark, comma, apostrophe and semi-colon). According to the above results, the researcher recommended that. Firstly, University students should be given more exercises, so as to be able to use punctuation marks in writing correctly. Secondly, teachers should guide students to use different types of punctuation marks in writing. Thirdly, teachers should raise students' awareness, regarding the use punctuation marks in writing. Finally, English language teachers at Sudan University, College of Education should use different techniques in teaching punctuation marks.

Abstract (Arabic Version)

المستخلص

هدفت الدراسة الي تقصي الصعوبات التي يواجهها طلاب اللغة الانجليزية لغة اجنبية في استخدام علامات الترقيم في الكتابة. اجريت الدراسة في جامعة السودان للعلوم والتكنولوجيا كلية التربية. اعتمدت هذه الدراسة المنهج الوصفي والتحليلي. استخدم الباحث اختباراً يتضمن ثلاثة انواع مختلفة من الاسئلة في استخدام علامات الترقيم الانجليزية في الكتابة كاداة لجمع البيانات لتحقيق هذا الهدف. اشتملت عينة الدراسة علي (ثلاثين) طالباً من طلاب اللغة الانجليزية لغة اجنبية في جامعة السودان كلية التربية. تم تحليل هذه البيانات عن طريق الحزمة الاحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية . اظهرت نتائج هذه الدراسة أن طلاب اللغة الانجليزية لغة اجنبية في جامعة السودان كلية التربية هم الاكثر استخداماً غير الصحيح لعلامات الترقيم في الكتابة علي سبيل المثال علامة التعجب والفاصلة وعلامة الاقتباس قد تفسد معني النص المكتوب. كما ان معظم طلاب اللغة الانجليزية لغة أجنبية لا يدركون استخدام علامات الترقيم في الكتابة. ولهذا السبب فإن طلاب اللغة الانجليزية لغة أجنبية في جامعة السودان غير قادرين علي تحديد أنواع مختلفة من علامات الترقيم خاصة الفاصلة وعلامة التعجب وعلامة الاستفهام وعلامة اقتباس وعلامة اقتباس أحادية فاصلة منقوطة. وفقاً للنتائج المذكورة اعلاه اوصي الباحث ذلك. اولاً يجب علي طلاب الجامعة منحهم المزيد من التمارين حتي يكونوا قادرين علي استخدام علامات الترقيم في الكتابة بشكل صحيح. ثانياً يجب علي الاساتذة توجيه الطلاب لأستخدام أنواع مختلفة من علامات الترقيم في الكتابة. ثالثاً يجب علي الاساتذة رفع وعي الطلاب بأهمية استخدام علامات الترقيم في الكتابة. اخيراً يجب ان يستخدم مدرسو اللغة الانجليزية في جامعة السودان كلية التربية اساليب وتقنيات مختلفة في تدريس علامات الترقيم في الكتابة.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.0 introduction

This study contains on introduction, statement of the study problem, significance of the study, objectives of the study, questions of the study, hypotheses of the study, methodology of the study and limits of the study.

1.1 Background

Writing is a complex process, even in its first language, however, everyday English becomes the most important to learn. In writing, punctuation marks is the process of using symbols (letters of the alphabet, punctuation marks and spaces) to communicate thoughts and ideas in readable form. In writing, punctuation marks is a mark, or sign, used in writing to divide texts into phrases and sentences and make the meaning clear. Punctuation marks are an important part of English grammar and writing. Also punctuation marks are important when we speak, we can pause or emphasis certain words and phrases to help people to understand what we are saying. In writing we use punctuation marks to show pauses and emphasis. Punctuation marks help the reader to understand what we mean. As an English teacher who has been teaching English for several years in different educational institutions, I have come to realize that students cannot use punctuation marks correctly. This can distort the meaning of a written text. This has prompted the researcher to investigate this problematic area.

1.2 Statement of the Study Problem

The researcher noticed that, writing in any language is considered as an important task, but it includes problems, difficulties, and strategies in structure. Making mistakes

is a natural phenomenon in writing, using punctuation marks is unavoidable, especially in the scope of teaching and learning. Therefore, this research tries to find out the difficulties that encounter the University students in using punctuation marks in writing.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study tries to investigate the difficulties encountered by university students in using punctuation marks in writing. Also this study helps teachers to find out the difficulties encountered by students in using punctuation marks in writing process.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are the following:

- 1- To identify whether the misuse of punctuation marks may distort the meaning of the written text.
- 2- To identify whether university students can use punctuation marks in writing correctly.
- 3- To explore whether students are able to identify different types of punctuation marks.

1.5 Questions of the Study

- 1- To what extent is the incorrect use of some punctuation marks can distort the meaning of the written text?
- 2- To what extent are university students capable of using punctuation marks in writing correctly?
- 3- To what extent are students able to identify different types of punctuation marks?

1.6 Hypotheses of the Study

The hypotheses of this study are:

- 1- The most frequently incorrect use of punctuation marks in writing e.g. (comma, full stop, quotation mark, exclamation mark and question mark), distort the meaning of the written text.
- 2- Most of the university students are not capable of using punctuation marks in writing correctly.
- 3- University Students are unable to identify different types of punctuation marks in writing.

1.7 Methodology of the Study

This study uses descriptive analytical method; the researcher adopts a test as a tool for data collection.

1.8 Limits of the Study

This research is limited to investigating difficulties encountered by university students in using punctuation marks. The study is conducted in the academic year 2019- 2020 at Sudan University of Science and Technology, College of Education.

Chapter Two

Literature Review and Previous Studies

2-0 Introduction:

This chapter constitutes the theoretical aspects related to investigating the difficulties encountered by EFL Students in understanding and using punctuation marks in writing by the scholars of this particular field of knowledge. It also presents a brief review of some previous studies which are conducted in the same field.

2-1 Definition of Punctuation Marks

A.S. Hornby (2010:1189) defined Punctuation marks as a sign or mark used in writing to divide sentences and phrases. For example, the colon is also used to stand for words ‘as follows’ it is often followed by a list. The semi-colon and the comma are often used to separate items in a list. For instance the observational science is divided into natural sciences and social sciences: natural sciences include chemistry, physics, and biology; the social sciences include economics, sociology, and anthropology.

According to Wadsworth (2004:322) as you write papers, you will want to be sure that you punctuate your sentences and paragraphs correctly. This means paying close attention to all types of punctuation marks. Punctuation marks help your reader follow your ideas clearly. Often in verbal communication, you use tone of voice or facial expressions or even hand signals to help you say what you mean, but in writing, you have to rely on punctuation marks.

Punctuation (formally sometimes called pointing) is the use of spacing,

Conventional signs and certain typographical devices assists to the understanding and correct reading of writer's text whether read silently or a loud.

According to, Oxford,(2010) punctuation is the practice action or system of inserting points or other small marks into texts in order to aid interpretation; division of text into sentences, clauses, by means such marks. Truss Lynne, (2003) stated that Punctuation is vital to disambiguate the meaning of sentences. For example "woman, without her man, is nothing" (emphasizing the importance of men to woman), and "Woman: without her, Man is nothing" (emphasizing the importance of women to men) have very different meanings; as do "eats, shoots, and leaves" (which means the subject eats first, then fires a weapon and then leaves the scene). And "eats shoots and leaves" (which means the subject consumes plant growths). R.R. Jordan (1980:80) has provided different types of punctuation marks and their main uses.

2-2 Types of Punctuation Marks and their Main Uses

2-2-1 Comma (,)

(ibid, 1980:80) together comma with the Full-stop it is the most commonly used punctuation mark. Basically it separates the sentence. It is used:

- To separate a non- defining relative clause from the rest of the sentence.
E.g. it is years since I read "Anna Karenina", which is my favourite novel.
- When a subordinate clause comes before the principle clause.
E.g. if you do not understand, please tell me.
- To separate phrases in apposition from the rest of the sentence.
E.g. Mrs. Thatcher, the prime Minister, said...
- To separate some non- defining adjectival phrases from the rest of the sentence.

E.g. The speaker, getting to his feet, began to...

- In many kinds of lists.

E.g. I shall need a book, some paper, a pencil, and a ruler.

- To separate a number of connectives from the rest of the sentence: too, however, nevertheless, though, of course, then, etc.

E.g. you can, however, do it if you wish.

- When some adverbs or adverbial expressions are placed within a sentence (instead of at the beginning or end of the sentence).

E.g. they tried, in spite of my advice, to climb the mountain.

Lee Brandon (1976:211) has clarified how a comma is used to separate and to set of

2-2-1-1 comma to separate:

- Use comma to separate main clauses joined by one of the coordinating conjunctions – for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so. The comma may be omitted if the clauses are brief and parallel.

We travelled many miles to see the game, but it was cancelled.

Mary left and I remained. [Brief and parallel clauses]

- Use a comma after introductory dependent clauses and long introductory phrases (generally, four or more words are considered long).

Before the arrival of the shipment, the boss had written a letter protesting the delay. [Two prepositional phrases].

If you do not hear from me, assume that I am lost.[introductory dependent clause, an adverbial modifier]. In winter we skate on the river.[short prepositional phrase, no comma]

- Use a comma to separate words, phrases, and clauses, in a series.

Red, white, and blue were her favourite colours.[words]

He ran down the street, across the park, and into the arms of his father.[

prepositional phrases]. However, when coordinating conjunctions connect all the elements in a series, the commas are omitted. He bought apples and pears and grapes.

- Do not use a comma to separate adjectives that are not coordinate. Try the following technique to determine whether the adjectives are coordinate: put and between the adjectives. If it fits naturally, the adjectives are coordinate; if it does not, they are not, and you do not need a comma.

She is a kind, beautiful person.

Kind and beautiful [natural, hence the comma]

I built a red brick wall.

Red and brick wall [not natural, no comma]

- Use a comma to separate sentence elements that might be misread.

Inside the dog scratched his fleas.

Inside, the dog scratched his fleas.

Without benefit of the comma, the reader might initially misunderstand the relationship among the first three words.

2-2-1-2 Comma to Set Off

Lee Brandon (1976:213) clarifies the use of commas to set off (enclose) adjectives in pairs that follow a noun.

The scouts, tired and hungry, marched back to camp.

- Use commas to set off nonessential (unnecessary for meaning of the sentence) words, phrases, and clauses.

My brother, a student at Ohio State University, is visiting me. [if you drop the phrase, the basic meaning of the sentence.]

- Use commas to set off parenthetical elements such as mild interjections (oh, well, yes, no and others), most conjunctive adverbs (however, otherwise, therefore, similarly, hence, on the other hand, and consequently, but not then, thus, soon, now, and also), quotation indicators, and special abbreviations (etc., i.e., e.g., and others).
- Use commas to set off nouns used as direct address.

Play it again, Sam.

Please tell us the answer, Jane, so we can discuss it.

- Use comma to separate the numbers in a date.

June 4, 1965, is a day I will remember.

- Do not use commas if the day of the month is not specified, or if the day is given before the month. Lee Brandon (1976: 213).

June 1965 was my favourite time.

One day I will never forget is 4 June 1965.

- Use commas to separate the city from the state. No comma is used between the state and the zip code.

Walnut, CA 91789

- Use comma after both city and the state when they are used together in a sentence.

Our family visited Anchorage, Alaska, last summer.

- Use a comma following the salutation of a friendly letter and the complimentary closing in any letter.

Dear Saul,

Sincerely,

- Use a comma in numbers to set off groups of three digits. However, omit the comma in dates, serial numbers, page numbers, years, and street numbers.

The total assets were \$2,000,000.

I look forward to the year 2050.

2-2-2 Full-stop (.)

R. R. Jordan(1980:79)said full-stop is used to end a sentence. The next sentence begins with a capital letter.

2-2-3colon(:)

This is a rather infrequent punctuation mark. It indicates a fairly close interdependence between the units that it separates.

- Basically, it indicates that what follows it is an explanation or amplification of what precedes it.

E.g. I have some news for you: John's father has arrived.

- It can be used to introduce a list of items, often preceded by "namely", "such as", "as follows", etc.

E.g. please send the items indicated below, namely:

(i) passport (ii) visa application (iii) correct fee

According to Lee Brandon(1976:227) the colon is a formal mark of punctuation used chiefly to introduce something that is to follow, such as a list, a quotation, or an exclamation.

- Use a colon after a main clause to introduce a formal list, an emphatic statement, or long restatement (appositive), an explanation, an emphatic statement, or a summary.

These cars are my favourites: Cadillac, Chevrolet, Toyota, Oldsmobile, and Pontiac.
[List]

He worked toward one objective: a degree. [Restatement or appositive].

Let me emphasize one point: I do not accept late papers.[Emphatic statement].

- (ibid,1976:228) use a colon to introduce a formal quotation or a formal question.

Shakespeare's Polonius said:" Neither a borrower nor a lender is." [Formal quotation]

The question is this: shall we surrender? [Formal question]

- Use a colon in the following conventional ways: to separate a title and subtitle, a chapter and verse in the Bible, and ours and minutes; and after the salutation in a formal business letter.

Title and Subtitle: Korea: A Country Divided

Chapter and Verse: Genesis 4:12

Hour and minutes: 8:25 p.m.

Salutation: Dear Ms. Chen

2-2-4 Semi-colon(;

According to R. R. Jordan (1980:79) semi-colon coordinates or joins two independent but related clauses or sentences.

E.g. the lecture was badly delivered; it went on far too long as well.

- It is used in lists to show sub-groupings.

E.g. the chief commodities are: butter, cheese, milk, eggs; lamb, beef, veal, pork; oats, barley, rye and wheat.

Normally a full- stop can be used instead of a semi- colon.

According to Lee Brandon(1976:219)**Semicolon** indicates a stronger division than the comma. It is used principally to separate independent clauses within a sentence.

- Use a semicolon to separate independent clauses not joined by a coordinating conjunction.

You must buy that car today; tomorrow will be too late.

- Use a semicolon between two independent clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb such as one of the HOTSHOT CAT words (however, otherwise, therefore, similarly, hence, on the other hand, then, consequently, accordingly, thus).

It was very late; therefore, I remained at the hotel.

- Use a semicolon to separate main clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction if one or both of the clauses contain distracting commas.

Byron, the famous English poet, was buried in Greece; and Shelley, who was his friend and fellow poet, was buried in Italy.

- Use a semicolon in a series between items that themselves contain commas.
He has lived in Covina, California; Reno, Nevada;
Tribbey, Oklahoma; and Bangor, Maine.

2-2-5 Hyphen (-)

According to Lee Brandon (1976:232) hyphen brings two or more words together into single compound words. Correct hyphenation, therefore, is essentially a spelling problem rather than one of the punctuation. Because the hyphen is not used with any degree of consistency, consult your dictionary for current usage.

- Use a hyphen to separate the parts of many compound nouns.
Brother-in-law go-between
- Use a hyphen between prefixes and proper names.
All-American mid-Atlantic
- Use a hyphen to join two or more words used as a single adjective modifier before a noun.
Bluish-gray eyes first-class service
- Use a hyphen with spelled-out compound numbers up to ninety-nine and with fractions.
Twenty-six two-thirds
- According to R. R. Jordan (1980:79) hyphen separates, in some cases, the prefix from the second part of the word. E.g. co-opt.
- It joins some compound words.
E.g. Self-control, twenty-one.

According to Linton (1975:165) hyphen is used mainly to make compound words and to make syllable division over a line. Here it is the compound use 'we' are principally concerned with, this begin the cause of most of the 'mess'. This simplest

plan is to give categories of typical usage. Broadly we might begin by dividing hyphens into two groups permanent and temporary.

2-2-5-1 The Permanent Hyphen

According to Linton Stone (1975:167) permanent hyphen used as a compound adjective before a noun,

E.g. a light –blue tie; a well –made suit.

- To avoid visual confusion:

Recover, re –cover, mis –spell.

Co –ordinate, co –operate, pre –eminent.

- After certain Latin prefixes:

Ex -president, non –smoker, sub –committee, vice –captain.

- To compound for a special occasion:

The tortoise –have contest; the archery –revolver group.

2-2-5-2 The Temporary Hyphen

(ibid, 1975:167) said there is no proper rule for making a compound of adjective + noun

To quote one writer on the subject:

If one be in doubt a particular word, the best thing to do is to refer to a dictionary.

Paul Allardyce: ‘stop’ or how to punctuate.

It should be noted that words of adjective + noun group follow three very definite stages.

- Two separate words: hot house plant.
- A hyphenated word: hot –house plant.
- One word: hothouse plant.

2-2-6 Apostrophe(’)

According to Lee Brandon (1976:231) clarify The apostrophe is used with nouns and indefinite pronouns to show possession; to show the omission of letters and figures in contractions; and to form the plurals of letters, numerals, and words referred to as words.

A possessive shows that something is owned by someone. Use an apostrophe and s to form the possessive of a noun, singular or plural, that does not end in s

Man’s coat women’s suits

- Use an apostrophe alone to form the possessive of a plural noun ending in - s.

Girls’ clothes the Browns’ house

- Use an apostrophe and s or the apostrophe alone to form the possessive of the singular nouns ending –s. Use the apostrophe and s only when you would pronounce the s.

James’ hat or (if you would pronounce the s) James’s hat

- Use an apostrophe and s to form the possessive of certain indefinite pronouns.

Everybody’s idea one’s meat another’s poison

- Use an apostrophe to indicate that letters or numerals have been omitted.

O’clock (short for of the clock) in the ‘90s (short for 1990s)

- Use an apostrophe with pronouns only when you are making a contraction. A contraction is a combination of two words. The apostrophe in a contraction indicates where a letter has been omitted.

It is = it's

She has = she's

You are = you're

If no letters have been left out, do not use an apostrophe.

According to R. R. Jordan (1980:80) apostrophe is most frequently used to indicate genitive (possessive) singular and plural.

E.g. the student's, the students'

2-2-7 Question Mark (?)

- It is used after a direct question.

E.g. what time is it?

- It is not used after an indirect question.

E.g. please tell me what time it is.

- place a question mark at the end of a direct question.

Example: will you go to the country tomorrow?

Do not use a question mark after an indirect (reported) question.

She asked me what caused the slide.

2-2-8 Dash (-)

According to R. R. Jordan (1980:80) clarify dash is used when a stronger break than the comma is needed. The dash is typed as two hyphens with no space before them (-).

- Use a dash to indicate a sudden change in sentence construction or an abrupt break in thought.

Here is the true reason –but maybe you don’t care.

- Use a dash after an introductory list. The words these, those, all, And occasionally such introduce the summarizing statement.

English, French, history –these are the subjects I like.

Dodgers, Giants, Yankees –such names bring back memories of exciting World Series games.

- Use a dash to set off material that interrupts the flow of an idea, sets off material for emphasis, or restates an idea as an appositive.

You are –I am certain –not serious. [Interrupting]

Our next question is –how much money did we raise? [Emphasis]

Dion plays the kazoo –an instrument with a buzz. [Restatement]

- Use a dash to indicate an unfinished statement or word or an interruption. Such interruptions usually occur in dialogue.

Susan said, “Shall we –“[no question mark]

“I only wanted –“Jason remarked. [No comma]

- Do not use a dash in places in which other marks of punctuation would be more appropriate.

Incorrect: Lupe found the store –and she shopped.

Correct: Lupe found the store, and she shopped.

Incorrect I think it is too early to go–

Correct I think it is too early to go.

It is used to indicate a break, often informally.

E.g. He received a prize- and a certificate as well.

2-2-9 Quotation Marks (‘ ’) or (“ ”)

According to R.R. Jordan (1980:80) quotation may be single or double they enclose the actual words of direct speech.

E.g. He said “why did you do that”

According to Lee Brandon (2005:223) quotation marks are used principally to set off direct quotations. A direct quotation consists of material taken from the written work or the direct speech of others; it is set off by double quotation marks. Single quotation marks are used to set off a quotation within a quotation.

Double quotation marks: he said “I don’t remember.”

Single quotation marks: he said, “I don’t remember if she said, ‘wait for me.’”

- Use double quotation marks to set off direct quotations.
Lavonne said, “Give me the book.”
- Use double quotation marks to set off titles of shorter pieces of writing such as magazine articles, essays, short stories, short poems, one-act plays, chapter in books, songs, and separate pieces of writing published as part of a larger work.

The book literature: structure, sound, and sense contains a deeply moving poem titled “On Wedlock Edge”

My favourite son is “Don’t Be Cruel.”

- Use double quotation marks to set off slang, technical terms, and special words.

There are many aristocrats, but Elvis is the only true “king.” [Special word]

The “platoon system” changed the game of football. [Technical term]

- Use double quotation marks in writing dialogue (conversation).
Write each speech unit as a separate paragraph and set it off with double quotation marks.

“Will you go with me?” he asked.

“Yes,” she replied. “Are you ready now?”

(ibid, 2005:224) Use single quotation marks to set off a quotation within a quotation.

Professor Baxter said, you should remember Shakespeare’s words,

‘Nothing will come of nothing.’

- Do not use quotation marks for the title on your own written work.
If you refer to that title in another piece of writing, however, you need the quotation marks.

2-2-10 Exclamation Mark (!)

According to J. Marquez and J. Donald Bowen (1983:4) Exclamation are expressions that are often used for special contexts only, such as when meeting someone or when leaving. They may not have a sentence form (examples 10 and 11), or they may be derived from statements; example: How stunning (she is)! Comes from she is stunning, and what terrible weather (we’re having)! Comes from we are having terrible weather.

J. J. Jordan (1980:80) clarifies exclamation is not often used. It is usually only used after real exclamations and sometimes after short commands.

E.g. Oh dear! Get out!

Lee Brandon (1976:209) clarifies the place of an exclamation point after a word or a group of words that expresses strong feeling.

Oh! What a night! Help! Gadzooks!

- Do not overwork the exclamation point. Do not use double exclamation points. Use the period or comma for mild exclamatory words, phrases, or sentences.

Oh, we can leave now.

2-2-11 Brackets []

According to J. J. Jordan (1980:80) brackets are used to clarify, or to avoid confusion.

E.g. He (Mr Brown) told him (Mr Jones) that he (Mr Green) had been accepted for the job.

- They are also used for cross –references and some periods of time, in more formal writing.

E.g. William Smith (1910- 1969) lived first in Manchester (see p. 70) and then---
Mackay, Collins (1976:80).

According to Lee Brandon (1976:228) Brackets are used within a quotation to set off editorial additions or corrections made by the person who is quoting.

Churchill said:

“It [the Yalta agreement] contained many mistakes.”

2-2-12 Parentheses ()

According to Wadsworth (2004:338) used parentheses to separate words, phrases, or sentences that interrupt the flow of thought.

E.g. those four boys (without doubt the guilty ones) damaged my lawn several times.

- If a whole sentence is inside the parentheses, the end punctuation is inside the last parentheses. If only part of a sentence is inside the parentheses, then the end punctuation is outside the last parentheses.

E.g. please send your application early (in triplicate).

- Use parentheses around letters or numbers indicating items in a series.

E.g. before I leave the house, I always (1) turn off the lights, (2) set

The alarm and (3) lock the door.

- Use parentheses around numbers that clarify words used as numbers.
We need to pack four (4) shirts, two (2) pairs of pants, and one (1) extra pair of shoes.
- If the material inside the parentheses is a question, whether or not it is a complete sentence, it requires a question mark inside the parentheses.

2-3 Capitalization

According to Wadsworth (2004:355) as you edit your sentences and paragraphs, you will want to be concerned with the mechanics of capitalization. Knowing the basic rules will make it easier for you as you write. Later on, if you are not sure about a certain word, you can look it up in the dictionary to determine whether or not it needs to be capitalized the rules for capitalization by first words, names, things, and places. There are four types of using capitalization:

2-3-1 people and cultures

According to McDougal (2001:228) said people's names and titles, the names of the languages they speak, and the names of the religions they practice are all proper nouns and should be capitalized.

- Capitalize people's names and initials.
E.g. Celia Cruz Eldrick "Tiger" Woods E.B White
Frederick W. Douglass Coretta Scott King E. M. Forster
- Capitalize titles and abbreviations of titles that are used before names or in direct address.
E.g. General Colin Powell Dr. Braselton
Secretary of State Madeleine Albright Mrs. Wilson
- Capitalize the abbreviations of some titles even when they follow names
E.g. Edward Jones, Sr. Deborah Young, C.E.O. Lewis Kent, Ph. D.
- Capitalize a title of royalty or nobility only when it precedes a person's name.
E.g. King Olaf V sir Paul McCartney Queen Margrethe

The beaded gown was worn by Princess Catherine.

(ibid,2001:229) said Capitalizing words indicating family relationships only when they are used as parts of names or in direct address.

E.g. Aunt Angela Cousin Steve Grandpa Leon

My father bought Uncle Roy's crystal bead collection

- In general, do not capitalize a title when it follows a person's name or is used without a proper name.

E.g. Juanita, my aunt, gave us her handmade quilts.

- Always capitalize the pronoun I
- Capitalize the names of ethnic groups, races, Languages, and nationalities, along with the adjectives formed from these names.

E.g. Kurds Native America French

Hispanic African American Navajo

Religious Terms

- Capitalize the names of religions, denominations or branches of religions, sacred days, sacred writings, and deities.

Religion Islam, Christianity, Buddhism.

Denominations branches Baptist, Protestant. Rosh Hashanah

Sacred writings Koran, Torah, Bible

Deities God, Yahweh, Allah. McDougal.(2001:229)

2-3-2 First Words and Titles

According to McDougal (2001:231) First words in sentences, most lines of poetry, quotations, and outline entries are capitalized. Greetings and closings in letters and important words in titles are capitalized.

- Capitalize the first word of every sentence.

E.g. the critics turned up their noses at the new movie.

- Capitalize the first word in every line of traditional poetry whether it begins a new sentence or not.
- Capitalize the first word of direct quotation when the quotation is a complete sentence and is not connected grammatically to the sentence in which it appears.

E.g. Ryan said, “Popular movies are ridiculous.”

- In divided quotation, do not capitalize the first word of the second part unless it starts a new sentence.

E.g. “It’s not true.” Said Syd, “that pop culture is worthless.”

Part of a letters

According to McDougal (2001:232) In a letter, capitalize the first word of the greeting, the word Sir or Madam, and the first word of the closing.

E.g. Dear Sir May 24. 2000 Yours truly

- Capitalize the first word, of each entry in an outline, as well as the letters that introduce major subsections.
- E.g. Fine arts European Artists Composers
- Capitalize the first word, the last word, and all other important words in a title.
- Do not capitalize articles, conjunctions, or prepositions of fewer than five letters.

E.g. Books Farewell to Manzanar, The Grapes of wrath

Play and musical Antigone, The Tragedy of Julius Caesar, Lion
King

Short stories “A Sound of Thunder” Sweet Potato Pie

Poems “Birches” “For the New Year, 1981” “The Sun”

Musical compositions “I Will Always Love You,” “Don’t Worry; Be Happy”

Movies Jaws, The Sound of Music, The Breakfast Club
Television shows
Saturday Night Live, Nightline, All My Children

Works of art Girl with Tear III, American Gothic, The Thinker

Magazines and newspapers News Story, Entertainment Weekly, Ski and Sea,
Lewistown Journal

Games: Word for Word, Brain Battle, Sink or Swim.

2-3-3 Places and Transportation

According to McDougal (2001:234) said The names of specific places, celestial bodies, landmarks, and vehicles are capitalized.

2-3-3-1 Geographical Names

In geographical names, capitalize each word except articles and prepositions.

E.g. Special terms Southern Hemisphere, North Pole

Continents Africa, Asia, North America

Bodies of Water Lake Erie, Atlantic Ocean, Nile River

Islands Galapagos Island, Hawaiian Island

Mountains Andes, Mount Everest, Rocky Mountains

Other Landforms English Channel, Painted Desert, Niagara Falls

World regions Balkans, Southeast Asia, Latin America

Countries and Nations El Salvador, Thailand, England

States Texas, California, Florida

Countries and townships Polk County, Ingham Township

Cities and Towns Tulsa, Salt Lake City, Boston

Roads and streets Pennsylvania Avenue, Rodeo Drive, Central Street

2-3-3-2 Regions and Directions

According to McDougal (2001:235) Capitalize the words north, south, east, and west when they name a particular region of the country or world or are parts of proper nouns.

E.g. Garage sales are popular on the West coast, where they lived.

- Do not capitalize compass directions or adjectives that indicate

Direction or a general location

E.g. They drove east out of Nevada City, and then turned north.

2-3-3-3 Bodies of the Universe

- Capitalize the names of planets and other specific objects in the universe.

Hale-Bopp Comet Venus Milky Way Galaxy

- Do not capitalize sun and moon. Capitalize earth only when it refers to our planet or when it is used with other capitalized terms. Never capitalize earth when it is preceded by the article the or when it refers to land forms carved by water.

2-3-3-4 Buildings, Bridges, and Other Landmarks

- Capitalize the names of specific buildings, bridges, monuments, and other landmarks.

Vietnam Memorial Golden Gate Bridge

World Trade Centre Space Needle

2-3-3-5 Planes, Trains, and Other Vehicles

- Capitalize the names of specific airplanes, trains, ships, cars, and spacecraft.

E.g. Airplanes Enola Gay, Spirit of St. Louis

Trains Southwest Chief, City of New Orleans

Ships USS John F. Kennedy, Pinta

Cars Malibu, Civic

Spacecraft Columbia, Mars Pathfinder.

2-3-4 Organizations and Other Subjects

(ibid, 2001:237) said Capitalize the names of organizations, historical events and documents, and months, days, and holidays.

- Capitalize all important words in the names of businesses, governmental agencies, institutions, and other organizations.

Adams High School Ralph's Foreign Car Repair, Inc

Library of Congress Guggenheim Museum

Federal Reserve System Oberlin College

- Do not capitalize words such as school, company, church, college, and hospital when they are not used as parts of proper names.

2-3-4-1 Abbreviations of Organization Names

- Capitalize acronyms and abbreviations of the names of organizations and institutions.

UNICEF (United Nations International Children Emergency Fund)

FTC (Federal Trade Commission)

ADA (American Dental Association)

PTA (Parent Teacher Association)

USC (University of Southern California)

2-3-4-2 Historical Events, Periods, and Documents

-Capitalize the names of historical events, periods, and documents.

Events Boston Tea Party, Revolutionary War, Gulf War

Periods Great Depression, Sixties, Information Age

Documents Mayflower Compact, Americans with Disabilities Act

2-3-4-3 Time Abbreviations and Calendar Items

According to McDougal (2001:238) said Capitalize the abbreviations B.C., A.D., B.C.E., A.M., and P.M.

- In typeset material, time abbreviations are usually shown in small capital letters.

E.g. the workshop begins at 8:00 A.M. and ends at 4:30 P.M.

McDougal, (2001:238).

- Capitalize the names of months, days, and holidays but not the names of seasons.

October Wednesday Labor Day

Winter Monday Thanksgiving

Every February we celebrate Chinese New Year with a parade

2-3-4-4 Special Events, Awards, and Brand Names

- Capitalize the names of special events and awards.

World Series National Medal of Arts

Boston Marathon Emmy Awards

- Capitalize the brand names of products but not common nouns that follow brand names.

Good Stuff spinach playpen Toys pacifiers

- Capitalize the titles of specific courses and courses that are followed by a number. Do not capitalize the general names of school subjects except languages.

Business Machines101 Intermediate Word Processing

Algebra Japanese

- Capitalize the names of school years only when they refer to a specific group or event, or when they are used in direct address.

The Freshman Bake Sale in held every spring.

Every fall, the juniors hold their toy drive.

You'd better start preparing, sophomores.

2-4 Punctuation and Capitalization with Dialogue

According to McDougal (2001:268) in dialogue, punctuate a speaker's words with a comma, a question mark, or an exclamation point. Put end punctuation marks inside the closing quotation marks.

E.g. "Early sailors believed giant squid were sea monsters, "Our guide explained.

"Believe it or not, some may be 75 feet long!" said the guide.

- Place a comma after explanatory words, such as she said and he asked, that appear at the beginning of a sentence.

Place a period, question mark, or exclamation point inside the quotation marks at the end of the sentence.

E.g. Tyrell asked, "Just how big is a giant Squid?"

- Enclose both parts of a divided quotation in quotation marks.

Do not capitalize the first word of the second part unless it begins a new sentence.

E.g. “I wonder, “said Rebecca,” whether the giant squid is dangerous to Humans”

(ibid, 2001: 269) said start a new paragraph with a set of quotation marks to show a change in speakers.

E.g. “Don’t be afraid, “said Rebecca.”Although the giant squid is large, it doesn’t usually come into contact with human.”

- Use single quotation marks to enclose a quotation within a quotation

“the guidebook says that Herman Melville called the giant squid “ a vast mass,””
said Tyrell.

Colons and semicolons at the close of a quotation should be placed outside the quotation marks.

E.g. Rebecca said, “I’m staying on land “; however, she soon joined us in the boat.

2-2-12 Part Two: Previous Studies

This section presents four previous studies that have been conducted in relevant area as the present study. The researcher found that, some researches were written on punctuation marks.

The first study

Salih (2019) conducted a study entitled: investigating the difficulties that face the students in performing effective writing which relates to punctuation marks and the study hypothesizes that students have difficulty in using punctuation marks in achieving skills. The study aims to evaluate writing skills of the students with the aim of finding out problems facing the students in the course of learning second language especially in using the punctuation marks correctly. To achieve this goal, the

researcher uses the qualitative analytical descriptive approach by analyzing statistically through SPSS both the test and the questionnaire were used for collecting data which is applied on the Sudan University of Science and Technology, College of Languages, English Department. The results have revealed that, the students' usage of these marks is shaking and that the majority of the students confuse the punctuation marks. In addition, many students can not differentiate between the marks especially the exclamation marks, the colon and the semi-colon. Finally, the researcher recommends that students should pay more attention to this important element of writing skills. The teachers should encourage the students to eliminate the difficulty of punctuation marks.

The second study

Omer(2019) conducted a study entitled: Investigating the problems of using punctuation marks particularly the comma, semi-colon, colon and full-stop writing encountered by students at secondary school level. The data were collected through questionnaire and test. The test for the students and questionnaire for teachers chosen randomly. To analyze the data, the researcher uses the SPSS programme. The researcher uses descriptive analytical method. The findings revealed that comma, semi-colon and colon are the most difficult for the students to perceive and use. Also the results proved that students face difficulties in differentiating between using comma and semi-colon. The study shows that the reasons for the above problems refer to the syllabus itself and ways that are taught are not effective and syllabus doesn't cover or provide enough exercises on punctuation marks. The study also proved that many teachers don't give enough attention in teaching punctuation marks in particular the comma, semi-colon, colon and full-stop. The study found that activities on punctuation marks are not enough to enable them EFL students to practice these activities in classroom. It also found out that most of the visual aids are not available

for teachers when teaching punctuation marks. Furthermore, it proves that most of the teachers do not develop their methods of teaching writing skills due to the lack of training workshops. Finally this study recommends that students should improve their skills and knowledge in punctuation marks specifically comma, semi-colon, colon and full-stop with more practice. It also recommends to strengthening the curriculum, giving them a lot of adaptations and practice to increase their knowledge of punctuation marks. Moreover, teachers should develop themselves because the knowledge becomes available in all media such as internet, satellite and mobile web services.

The third study

Fadl-Emoula (2012) conducted a study entitled: investigating problems Facing students in writing with reference to punctuation marks, by students of third years in the Islamic institute of translation, Department of languages, the samples chosen in the study were (26) students out of (33) who were enrolled in the Department of English Faculty of languages. In order to carry out the study, one test was used as elicitation technique for data collection. The test has shown that students were unable to utilize punctuation marks satisfactorily and correctly. The research suggested a number of recommendations among which are following. The teaching and learning of punctuation mechanic should be stress of the course books prior to university by giving punctuation rules and uses as far as possible. Punctuation marks should be recognized as control element in language teaching process from the beginning stage. Teachers should give more emphasis to the teaching punctuation marks. Through giving students more practice in the uses of the punctuation marks.

The Fourth Study

Mohammed (2010). Conducted study entitled: investigate punctuation errors made by Sudanese secondary school students. The researcher hypothesizes that students have difficulty in using punctuation marks effectively in their writing. To achieve this goal the researcher used a writing test that includes five different types of questions examining the uses of English punctuation marks for collecting data. The test is administrated to sixty third year students at Abdel Muniem Hassona secondary school- Khartoum locality participated in a questionnaire to investigate the teaching of punctuation marks and their attitudes towards them.

The findings of this study showed that the majority of the students confuse the use of some punctuation marks such as the colon, semi-colon, exclamation marks and the comma, due to the poor and inadequate punctuation marks activities presented in the textbooks, in addition to the lack of authentic materials in teaching the punctuation marks in spine series and the little emphasis given to the teaching of the punctuation marks.

The researcher recommends that more attention should be paid to this very important element in writing. Teachers should also put more emphasis on teaching those problematic punctuation marks through providing more examples and exercises that further reinforce the uses of the English punctuation marks.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3-0 Introduction

This chapter attempts to provide full description of the study methodology. Moreover, this study was conducted to identify an Investigating the Difficulties Encountered by English students as a Foreign Language in Using Punctuation Marks in Writing. To achieve this objective, one research tool was used a test.

3-1 Methodology of the study

This study investigates the difficulties Encountered by English students as a foreign language in using punctuation marks in writing. It targets University students. The researcher used a test to collect data. The researcher uses the descriptive analytical method.

3-2 Population

The population of this study is university students, at Sudan University of Science and Technology, college of Education. The researcher has collected data used a test distributed to students.

3-3 The Sample

The sample of the study is first year students at Sudan University of Science and Technology, College of Education. It consists of 30 students

3-4 Study Instrument

In this study, only one tool is used for data collection. Design a test contains three questions arranged to investigate the difficulties Encountered by students of English language as a foreign language in using punctuation marks in writing among University students.

3-5 Procedures

Thirty copies of the test are distributed randomly for English University students to collect data. The test consists of three questions.

Question one contains fourteen items; students are required to punctuate the paragraph using given punctuation marks. Question two; students are required to insert suitable punctuation marks within the sentences. Question three, students are required to match list (A) with list (B), to clarify types of punctuation marks.

3-6 Validity of the Tool

In order to ensure the validity of the tool, the researcher has concentrated and chosen English students of Sudan University of science and technology, college of Education.

Validity and Reliability

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Q1	2.9333	1.17248	30
Q2	3.4000	1.63158	30
Q3	2.2000	1.66919	30

The above table shows the descriptive statistics of the validity analysis for question 1, 2 and 3 of the students' test. The mean values range from 2 to 3 while the standard deviation values range from 1.17248 to 1.66919. The mean value gives indication about the performance of the students in the test; the values are below the average result in each of the three questions.

Validity of the Test: Correlations

		Q1	Q2	Q3
Q1	Pearson Correlation	1	-.076	-.134
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.691	.481
	N	30	30	30
Q2	Pearson Correlation	-.076	1	.236
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.691	.	.210
	N	30	30	30
Q3	Pearson Correlation	-.134	.236	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.481	.210	.
	N	30	30	30

The correlation table shows the validity of the test through the significant relation between the three questions. As it is shown in the table, there is a significant relationship between the first question (Q1) and the second question (Q2) as the p-value (.691) approaches 1. The same relationship is between (Q3) and (Q2). The test is valid which means students difficulties in using punctuation can be seen in all of the three questions with the same degree.

Reliability Analysis:

	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
1. Q1	2.9333	1.1725	30.0
2. Q2	3.4000	1.6316	30.0
3. Q3	2.2000	1.6692	30.0

Reliability Coefficients	3 items
Alpha = .0965	Standardized item alpha = .0255

The reliability analysis shows the consistency of students' performance in the test. As it is shown in the table above the value of Alpha Cronbach is .0965(9.65%) which means there is no significant consistency in students' performance.

3-7 Reliability of the Test

Reliability of study was conducted to measure the reliability level of the test questions. By using the statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 30, an analysis of items reliability was determined through reliability test. In order to achieve reliability the researcher consults some experts of English language (Dr. NajlaTaha Bashri at the Sudan University, Dr. Ibrahim Ahmed Abaker at Bhari University, Dr. Mohammed Osman Alkordi and Dr. Alfatih Balla at the Sudan University to judge the questions of the test after had been designed by the researcher to achieve the aims of the study.

3-8The Test

The test contents of three questions. The purpose of the first questions the most frequently incorrect use of punctuation marks in writing (comma, full-stop, quotation mark, exclamation mark, and question mark) distort the meaning of a text.

The second question to find out if the university students are not capable of using punctuation marks in writing effectively. The third question is to identify different types of punctuation marks in writing. The purpose behind using these options was to facilitate the process of obtaining data from the respondents.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis, Results and Discussion

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher presents the data analysis that's done on the students' test. The frequency and percentage are calculated along with descriptive statistics analysis to show how students respond to the three questions in punctuating, inserting punctuation marks in a sentence and identifying the types of punctuation marks by matching the sentences and the purpose of using the punctuation marks.

Table (4-1): frequency and percentage 1st question

Marks	Frequency	Percentage
1.00	4	13.3%
2.00	6	20.0%
3.00	10	33.3%
4.00	9	30.0%
6.00	1	3.3%
Total	30	100.0%

The table (4-1) above shows the calculated frequency and percentage of students' obtained marks on the first question. As it is shown in the table, students' marks range between (1) to (6) and the mark (3) is the most frequent with its percentage (33.3%). Out of the (30) students, only 1 student gets 6 which is less than half of the full mark (14). The distribution of the results is as follow: (4) students get 1 mark with percentage (13.3%), (6) of them get (2) mark with percentage (20%), 10 students get (3) mark with percentage (33.3%), 9 students get (4) marks with percentage (30%) and 1 student gets the highest mark with percentage (3.3%).

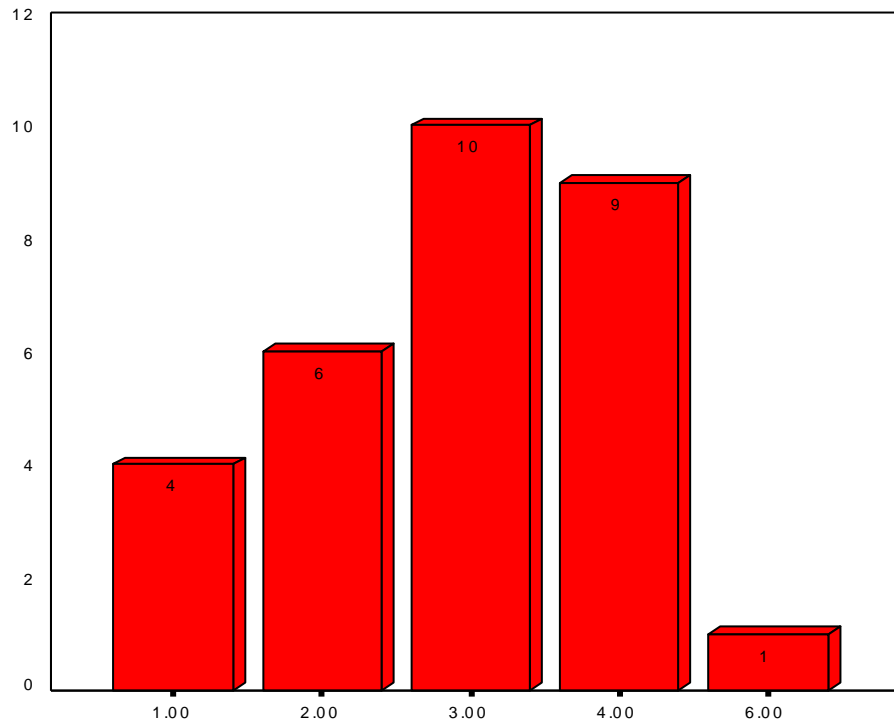


Figure (4-1): shows the frequency of students' mark in the first question

Table (4-2): frequency and percentage 2nd question

Marks	Frequency	Percentage
.00	1	3.3%
1.00	3	10.0%
2.00	3	10.0%
3.00	10	33.3%
4.00	6	20.0%
5.00	5	16.7%
7.00	2	6.7%
Total	30	100.0%

The above table (4-2) represents the result of the students in the second question of the test. From the table we can see clearly that students obtained marks range from (0) to (7). The mark (3) is the most frequent one with its percentage (33.3%) while only (2) students get the highest mark (7) with percentage (6.7%). The distribution of the results is as follow: (1) student gets 0 mark with percentage (3.3%), (3) of them get (1) mark with percentage (10%), (3) of them get (2) mark with percentage (10%), 10 students get (3) mark with percentage (33.3%), 6 students get (4) marks with percentage (20%), 5 students get (5) marks with percentage (16.7%) and 2 students get the highest mark with percentage (6.7%).

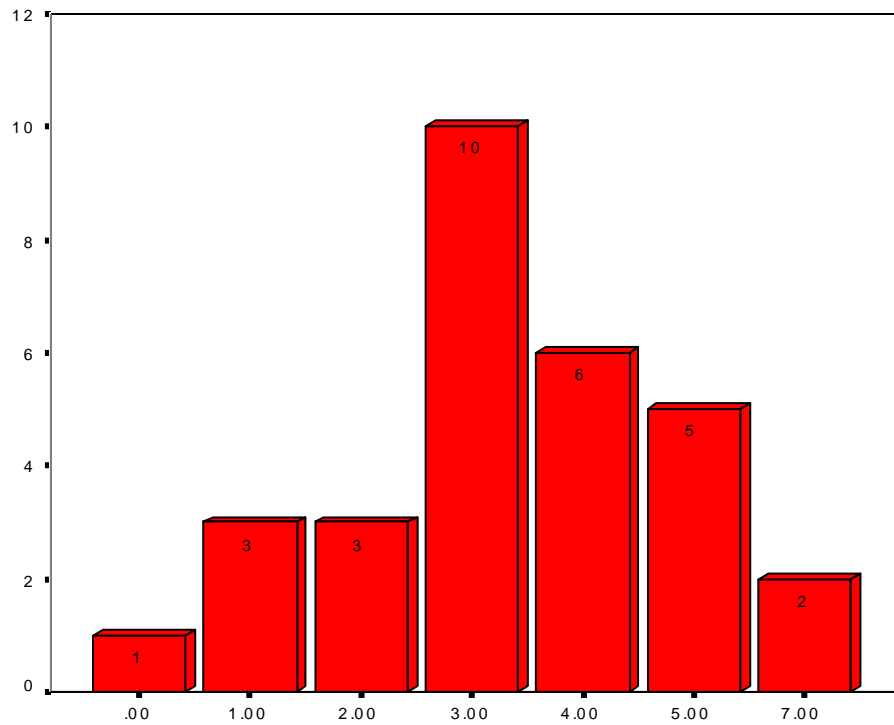


Figure (4-2): shows the frequency of students' mark in the second question

Table (4-3): frequency and percentage 3rd question

Marks	Frequency	Percentage
.00	6	20.0%
1.00	5	16.7%
2.00	7	23.3%
3.00	4	13.3%
4.00	6	20.0%
5.00	1	3.3%
6.00	1	3.3%
Total	30	100.0%

Table (4-3) above represents the results of the students in the third question of the test. As it can be seen in the table, students' marks range from (0) to (6) with the highest mark (6) obtained only by 1 student. The most frequent mark is (2) with its percentage (23.3%). The distribution of the results is as follow: (6) students get 0 mark with percentage (20%), (5) of them get (1) mark with percentage (16.7%), (7) of them get (2) mark with percentage (23.3%), 4 of them get (3) mark with percentage (13.3%), 6 students get (4) marks with percentage (20%), 5 students get (1) mark with percentage (3.3%) and 1 student gets the highest mark with percentage (3.3%).

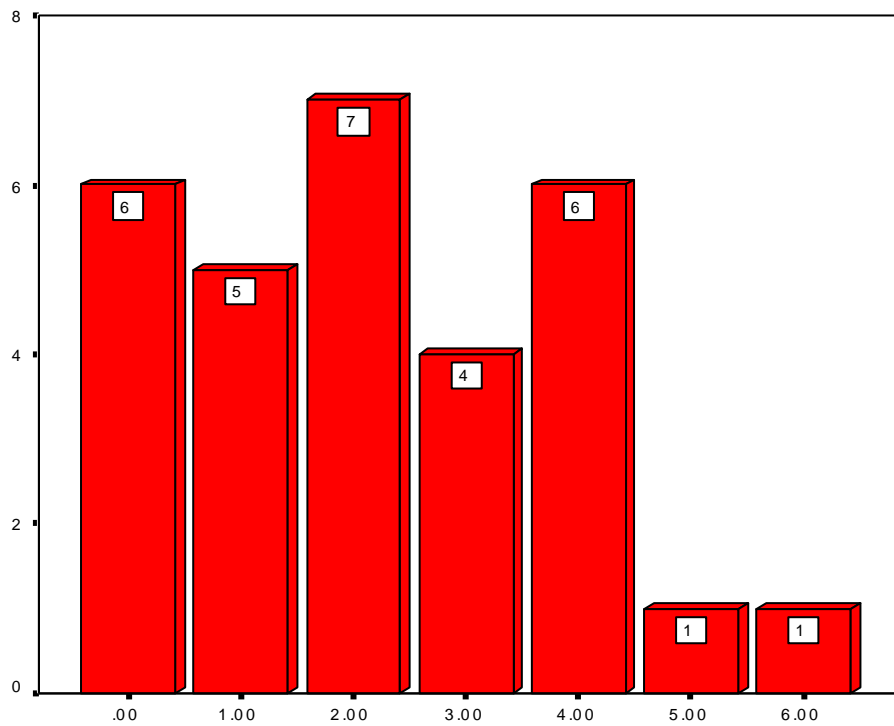


Figure (4-3): shows the frequency of students' mark in the third question

Descriptive analysis:

In this section of analysis descriptive measures (mean, mode and standard deviation) give a clue on how the general performance of the students is. The statistics show the most frequent values and the average of the students' marks.

Table (4-4): descriptive statistical analysis of the test

	Q1	Q2	Q3
N	30	30	30
Mean	2.9333	3.4000	2.2000
Mode	3.00	3.00	2.00
Std. Deviation	1.17248	1.63158	1.66919

The table (4-4) shows the descriptive statistics (mean, mode and the standard deviation) of the whole test. The number of the participants is represented with (N) is 30 which means that all the students have taken the test. The value of the (Mean) in the first question is (2.9333) which means students' mark range between 2.9 and less than 3. The value of the (mean) in the second question is (3.4000) that is 3.4 and less than 4. The value of the (mean) in the third question is (2.2000) which means 2.2 and less than 3. It is noticed that the last question is the least among the three in term of performance. The mode which means the most frequent value is 3 in the whole test, this gives an indication that students get 3 mark the most in the three questions of the test. It is a clear result of the poor performance of the students in using punctuation marks.

Detailed analysis

Table (4-5): question (1) distribution of punctuation marks

Punctuation marks	Frequency	Percentage of correct	Percentage of incorrect
Comma	19	31.6%	68.4%
Hyphen	3	10%	90%
Full stop	10	33.3%	66.7
Question mark	0	0%	100%
Quotation	16	8%	92%
Colon	0	0%	100%
Exclamation mark	22	73.3%	26.7%
Apostrophe	10	33.3%	66.7
Dash	2	6.6%	93.4%

The above table (4-5) shows the frequency and percentage of each punctuation mark in the first question, the percentage is calculated according to the total possible correct answer.

As it is clearly seen in the table, the percentages of correct answers are less than that of the incorrect answers except for exclamation mark (73.3%). This is an indication of the great difficulty the students find when dealing with punctuation marks.

Looking at the table frequency and percentage, out of 60 possible uses of comma, students get 19 correct uses with associated percentage (31.6%), 3 correct uses of hyphen out of 30 with percentage (10%), 10 correct uses of full stop out of 30 with percentage (33.3%), 0 correct uses of question mark out of possible 30 with percentage 0% and the same for colon. Students succeed to use quotation 16 correct times out of 180 possible uses with percentage (8%). The highest frequency of correct answers is

in using exclamation mark (22) with percentage (73.3%) while the fewest use is for dash (2) with percentage (6.6%).

Based on the result of the frequency and percentage table and the detailed analysis on the first question, the researcher can confirm that the hypothesis one’s claim “*The most frequently incorrect use of punctuation marks in writing e.g. (comma, full stop, quotation mark, exclamation mark and question mark) distort the meaning of written text*” is accepted.

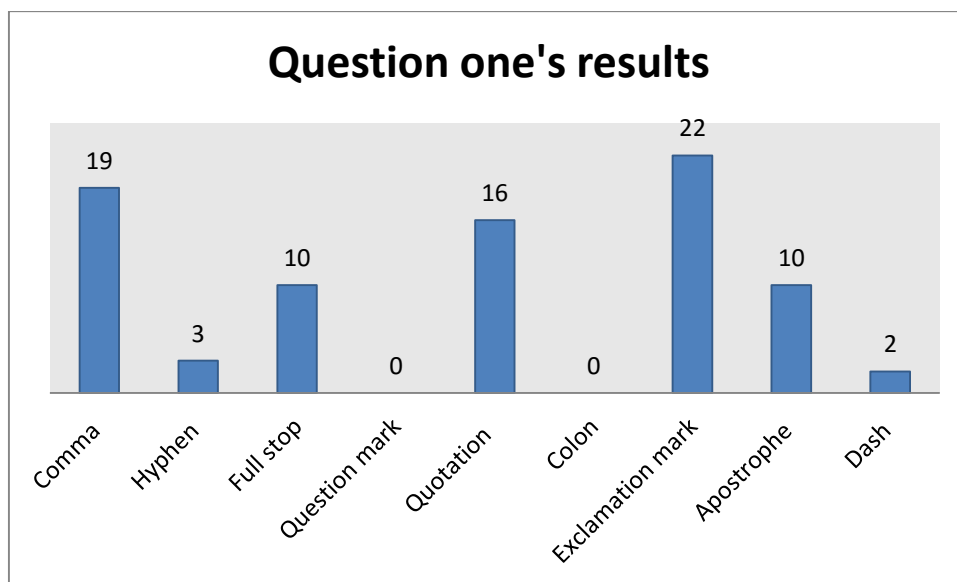


Figure (4-4): shows the frequency of punctuation marks types

Table (4-6): question (2) distribution of punctuation marks

Punctuation marks	Frequency	Percentage of correct	Percentage of incorrect
Comma	20	22%	78%
Hyphen	13	21.6%	78.4%
Question mark	12	40%	60%
Quotation	4	6.6%	93.4%
Colon	1	3.3%	96.7%
Exclamation mark	22	36.6%	53.4%
Apostrophe	12	40%	60%
Dash	4	13.3%	86.7%
Brackets	0	0%	100%
Semi-colon	0	0%	100%

The above table shows the frequency and percentage of each punctuation mark in the second question, the percentage is calculated according to the total possible correct answer.

As it is shown in the table, the percentage of the correct answers is less than the percentage of incorrect answers in using (comma, hyphen, question mark, quotation, colon, exclamation mark, apostrophe and dash) while no one of the students use brackets and semi-colon with percentage (0%) for each.

The highest percentage of the correct answers represents both question mark and apostrophe with value (40%) which means that students have fewer problems in figuring out where to put question marks and apostrophes. Their most serious problem is in using brackets and semi-colon as they get 0 mark with 0%.

Based on the result of the frequency and percentage table and the detailed analysis on the second question, the researcher can confirm that the hypothesis two's claim "*Most of university students are capable of using punctuation mark in writing correctly*" is accepted.

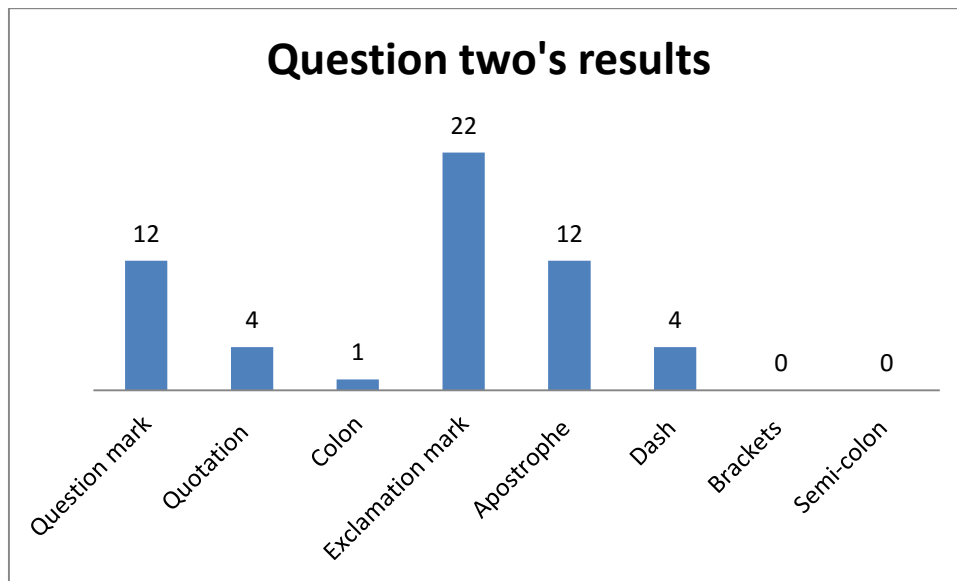


Figure (4-5): shows the punctuation marks distribution in the third question

Table (4-7): Types of punctuation marks

Purpose of punctuation marks	Frequency	Percentage of correct	Percentage of incorrect
Comma to separate	10	33.3%	65.7%
The permanent hyphen	5	16.6%	83.7%
Apostrophe mark	7	23.3%	76.7%
Dash mark	6	20%	80%
Double quotation mark	6	20%	80%
Exclamation mark	13	43.3%	56.7%
Semi-colon mark	6	20%	80%
Colon	8	26.6%	73.4%

In analyzing how the students perform in identifying the different types of punctuation mark, the frequency and percentage of their answers are calculated in the above table. The percentages of students' correct answers are less than their percentage of incorrect answers. The greatest percentage is (43.3%) for exclamation mark while the smallest percentage is 20% for dash mark, double quotation mark and semi-colon.

The result of the table is an indication of the students' inability to identify the correct different types of punctuation marks in writing. It is clear that students get a grip on familiar punctuation marks such as comma for separate and exclamation mark as they obvious from the sentence's general meaning.

According to the result of the frequency and percentage table and the detailed analysis on the third question, the researcher can confirm that the hypothesis three's claim "*University students are unable to identify different types of punctuation marks*" is accepted.

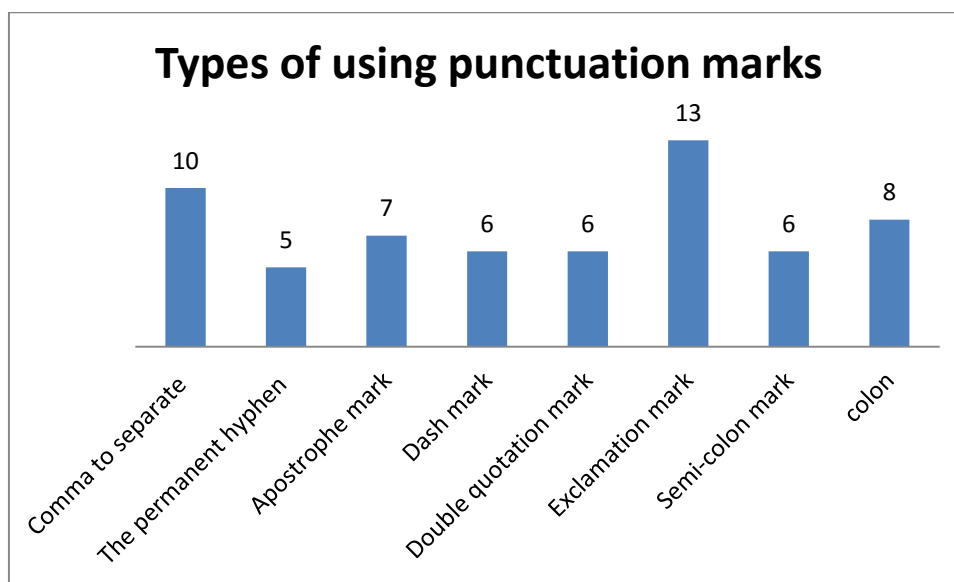


Figure (4-6): *shows the frequency of punctuation marks types*

4.2 Summary of the result:

Based on the obtained results of the frequency and percentage tables and descriptive statistics analysis, the researchers can notice that the students get fewer marks that range between 0 and 7 which is below the average result. This is an indication of their poor knowledge about punctuation marks in general. The researcher also notices that the students are familiar with particular types of punctuation marks such as (exclamation marks, comma and apostrophe) as they get higher marks on them.

The three hypotheses of the study are confirmed based on the obtained results from frequency tables, descriptive analysis and detailed analysis of each table. These previous results show that students encounter serious difficulties in using punctuation marks in writing.

Chapter Five

Main Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Studies

5-0 Introduction

This chapter involves the main findings that are to be gained from the analysis of the student's test, in addition to conclusion for the results. Moreover some recommendations will make out of the findings. Finally, suggestions for further studies will be provided.

5-1 Main Findings of the study

This study attempted to investigate the most important scope of writing, using punctuation marks.

The study contained five chapters. The subject of the study was first year students in Sudan University of Science and Technology at College of Education. EFL Students. To investigate the problem of the study, the researcher used three hypotheses. The following are the main findings

- 1- EFL Students at Sudan University, College of Education, the most frequently incorrect use of punctuation marks in writing e.g. (comma, full-stop, quotation mark, exclamation mark and question mark). Will distort the meaning of the written text.
- 2- Most of University students do not well knowing of using punctuation marks in writing effectively.
- 3- EFL students at Sudan University, College of Education are unable to identify different types of punctuation marks in writing.

5-2 The Conclusions

According to the results of data analysis, the study reveals in first hypothesis, the most frequently incorrect use of punctuation marks in writing. The result a proved that, EFL students are misuses of using punctuation marks. The second hypothesis, which states that University students do not well knowing of using punctuation marks in writing effectively. The result clarifies student's weakness of unknowing using punctuation marks in writing. Finally, the last hypothesis represents the result of the students explained; University students are unable to identify different types of punctuation marks.

5-3 Recommendations

The study results clear up that university students are failed in using punctuation marks. The researcher recommendations the following

1. University students should be given more exercises in using punctuation marks in writing.
2. Teachers should guide students to use punctuation marks in different types of writing.
3. Teachers should raise students, awareness the importance of using punctuation marks in writing.
4. English language teachers at university should use different techniques in teaching different types of punctuation marks.

5-4 Suggestions for Further Studies

The researcher suggests the following

1. Comparative studies should be conducted to find out the difference between English and Arabic punctuation marks.

2. To conduct further studies about misuses of punctuation marks in writing distort the meaning of text.

5-5 Summary of Study Results

The table (4-1), the frequency and percentage of the first question, the distribution of the results is showed that only one student gets the highest mark with percentage (3.3%). This result expressed the student's misuses of punctuation marks in writing. The table (4-2) represents the results of the students in the second question of the test. The distribution of the results showed that one student gets zero mark with percentage (3.3%) and two students gets the highest mark with percentage (6.7%). This result reveals university students at Sudan University of science and technology, College of Education unknowing of using punctuation marks in writing sentences.

The table (4-3) represents the results of the students in the third question of the test. Also only one student gets the highest mark with percentage (3.3%), it is clear result of the poor performance of the students to identify different types of punctuation marks.

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