

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

REPOBLC OF SUDAN
MINISTRY OF HIGHER IDUCATION
AND SCIENTIFIC RESIRCH
UNIVERSITY OF SHENDI
FACULTY OF POSTGADUATE STUDIE

**THE MATIC INQUIRIES INTO CONCERNS ABOUT THE WRITING SKILLS
QUALITIES AND STANDARS**

(A case Study of the Fourth Year Students –Faculty of Arts – shendi university)

PhD Degree In English Applied linguistics

BY:

Hassan Mergani M.Aidarooos

Supervisor:

Dr . Ibrahim Mohamed ALFAKI

2012

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قال تعالى:

(وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ

الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنْ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفُسَادَ فِي

الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ).

قال تعالى:

(تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ

عُلُوقاً فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فُسَاداً وَ الْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ).

صدق الله العظيم

القصص 77 & 83

DEDICATION

*-Thrice to the soul of
my mother.*

-And to my father.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all my thanks are due to the Almighty, Allah, who gifted me chance and granted me efforts and patience to complete this study. My most thanks and gratitude is to the knowledgeable scholar, my supervisor, Dr. Ibrahim

M. Al Faki, for being very honorable, patient and honest in offering his wide knowledge to me and for devoting his time and effort to assist and guide me. To whom I supplicate Allah to make him always the first and foremost and give him good health, strength and long life to continue offering his knowledge and assistance to others.

I thank the members of my family especially my wife Sarra and my children for their continuous encouragement and supports and for preparing the best environment for me to work and study. I appreciate their patience and support.

I would not forget to thank the Vice Chancellor of Shendi University, Professor, Yahya, who supported me a lot in my study.

I thank all those who have shown good will through their cooperation and moral support. I am also deeply indebted to, my brothers, Dr. Mohammed AL Ameen Osman and Dr. Nadir Sir Alkhatim and Dr. Babiker Abdalmaarroof who helped me in arranging for the tests to be carried out, assessed and proofread. I also thank the staff of English language and many others whom I could not mention here, but their direct or indirect support had already contributed in pushing on the process of this study. I supplicate Allah to reward them all.

CONTENTS

N	Subject	Page
a	Dedication	i
b	Acknowledgments	ii

c	Contents	iii
d	Abstract	iv
e	Abstract (Arabic version)	viii
1	Chapter one(Introduction)	
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Statement of the problem	2
1.3	Questions of the study	3
1.4	Study hypotheses	3
1.5	Aims of the study	3
1.6	Significance of the study	4
1.7	Methods of the study	4
1.8	Limits of the study	4
2	Chapter two(Literature Review)	
2.1	Introduction	5
2.2	What is writing?	5
2.3	Academic writing	6
2.4	Types of writing	7
2.5	The audience	14
2.6	Mechanics	16
2.7	Teaching writing	24
2.8	Writing process	29
2.9	The paragraph	36
N	Subject	Page
2.10	The Essay	40
2..11	Previous Studies	41
3	Chapter three (Methodology)	

3.1	Introduction	58
3.2	Method	58
3.3	Population	58
3.4	Sample	58
2.5	Data gathering tools	66
3.6	Validity of the questionnaire	68
3.7	Reliability of the questionnaire	69
3.8	Questionnaire application	70
4	Chapter four (Data Analyses)	
4.1	Introduction	71
4.2	The tests	72
4.2.1	Test one (writing composition)	72
4.2.2	Test two (writing essay)	85
4.2.3	Test three (writing paragraph)	98
4.2.4	Test four (mechanics)	105
4.3	The questionnaire	109
4.4	Testing the hypotheses	130
4.4.1	Testing hypothesis No.1	130
4.4.2	Testing hypothesis No.2	130
4.4.3	Testing hypothesis No.3	131
N	Subject	Page
4.4.4	Testing hypothesis No.4	131
4.4.5	Testing hypothesis No.5	131
5	Chapter five (Conclusion and Recommendations)	

5.1	Summary	133
5.2	Findings	133
5.3	Recommendations	135
5.4	References	137
	Appendices	144

ABSTRACT

In this study the researcher takes the students of the fourth year (7th&8th semesters) of the Faculty of Arts who study English as a second language at the University of Shendi as a sample to carry out this study.

The study attempts to investigate and identify the problems facing them in writing skills, to identify the actual reasons behind these problems, and to suggest suitable remedial procedures. In addition to the students, the study questioned the staff members of English language at the University of Shendi about the same problems. Four tests were given to **81** students of the fourth year where as a questionnaire was given to **10** and highly qualified, experienced teachers of English language at the university.

The tests results were analyzed by using (SPSS). The results revealed by the tests and the questionnaire affirm the hypotheses of the study that the students were very weak in writing skills; they failed to follow the steps and the criteria required to write a paragraph, to write a composition, to write an essay and to punctuate a piece of writing.

Considering the findings of the study, and in order to participate in solving the students' weakness in writing skills, the researcher recommends and suggests the following main areas of concerns:

- Motivating students and raise their awareness of writing skills.
- Reviewing the curriculum to include enough writing skills courses.
- Training teachers to raise their teaching skills.
- More writing activities should be given to students.

خلاصة

في هذه الدراسة قام الباحث بأخذ طلاب السنة الرابعة بكلية الآداب قسم اللغة الانجليزية

بجامعة شندي كعينة للتعرف والتحقق من الصعوبات التي تواجههم في مهارات الكتابة في اللغة الانجليزية. وكذلك معرفة الأسباب الحقيقية وراء هذه الصعوبات و اقتراح حلول مناسبة.

قام الباحث بإعطاء أربعة امتحانات لعدد 81 طالبا من الطلاب المعنيين بالدراسة و هم كل طلاب الفصل الدراسي السابع و الثامن بالكلية و كذلك استبانته لعدد 10 أساتذة هم أساتذة قسم اللغة الانجليزية بالجامعة.

تم تحليل البيانات الخاصة بأداء الطلاب في الامتحانات وكذلك استبيانات الأساتذة بواسطة نظام (SPSS) الإحصائي.

أثبتت النتائج المستخلصة من الامتحانات الخاصة بالطلاب والاستبيانات الخاصة بالأساتذة ضعف الطلاب الشديد في مهارات الكتابة في اللغة الانجليزية وذلك لفشلهم في تتبع الخطوات و الشروط اللازمة لكتابة الفقرة و كتابة المقال و كتابة موضوع الإنشاء ووضع علامات الترقيم و بالتالي تكون هذه النتائج إثباتا لصحة فرضيات هذه الدراسة.

و بناءً على النتائج المستخلصة من الدراسة و مساهمة من الباحث في حل مشكلة ضعف الطلاب في مهارات الكتابة كانت محاور توصياته على النحو التالي:-

- رفع الوعي لدى الطلاب بأهمية مهارات الكتابة
- المراجعة الدورية لمناهج ومقررات اللغة الانجليزية و تضمينها مقررات كافية عن مهارات الكتابة
- تدريب الأساتذة و رفع مقدراتهم في تدريس مهارات الكتابة
- إعطاء الطلاب التدريبات الكافية لرفع مقدراتهم في مهارات الكتابة

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher presents what has been tackled by many writers and authors about writing skills. It has been arranged through many concepts regarding writing skills. The first part of this chapter begins with a comprehensive definition of writing, states the importance of writing and what relevant to it like the types of writing, the audience, mechanics, teaching writing, writing process, writing a paragraph, writing an essay, cohesion and coherence. The second part of this chapter presents many local and international studies related to writing skills.

2.2 Definition of writing

Writing is the translation of thoughts into visible symbols on papers. It is an essential communicative method that is necessary in personal and public relationships and almost in every profession. Writing is a skill that can be learnt for all purposes of life: high schools, college students, business writers, or just for improving writing communication. It is a skill of organised, logical and sensible information in coherent sequence.

Writing is the process by which thoughts are translated into words and words are fashioned into sentences and paragraphs, poems and compositions. Writing is a way to explore material, a way to discover insights into subjects. Many of the most important processes in writing take place, invisibly and very privately, inside the writer's mind. (Gebhardt & Rodrigues: w y: 14)

Writing is a progressive activity. When someone first writes something, they have already been thinking about what they are going to say and how they are going to say it. Then after they have finished writing they read over what they have written and make changes and corrections. Therefore, writing is never a one-step action; it is a process that has several steps.

We can define writing as the symbolic representation of language through the use of graphic signs. Unlike speech, it is a system that is not simply acquired, but has to be learned through sustained conscious effort. Not all languages have a written form and, even among people whose language has a well-established writing system, there are large numbers of individuals who cannot use the system.(Yule 2006:212)

Although writing is the last skill to be learnt and an output of many pre-processes that should have been taught and learnt, it could be easily developed and understood if it is given considerable efforts and time. Foster (2005: xi) clarified this saying, “Writing good English must be one of the most difficult jobs in the world. The tracking of a developing language that is rich, diverse and constantly evolving in use and meaning is an easy task”

2.3 Types of writing

Like other skills of English language, there are several types of writing. These types of writing are usually determined by the purposes of the writers as well as by their audience. Is this writing for academic, business, educational, economical, technical, entertainment, or for advertisement purposes?

Academic writing covers the wide range of specific writing tasks that you are required to write during the course of your academic studies: papers, reports, literature reviews, projects, case studies, dissertations, theses, research papers, and articles.(Mennens and Wilkinson 2002:2)

2.3.1 Scientific article

Organised and well structured writing is not only required from those who study English language, but also required from other students of other sciences. It is almost required from all students at all levels of their studies.

Almost all science students have to write a thesis or dissertation at some point during their careers. For undergraduate and master students, assessment of the thesis is a component of the final mark; in the case of doctoral students the degree almost entirely depends on it. The skill of thesis writing lies in the clear organization of data, resources. (Holtom & Elizabeth 1999: v)

The structure of a scientific thesis or dissertation has three parts: the beginning, the middle, and the end.

A. The Beginning:

The Page

Abstract

Dedication

Acknowledgment

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Appendices

List of Abbreviations

Introduction (including a literature review)

B. The middle:

Materials and methods/Experimental Techniques

Results

C. The End:

Discussion

References (also known as 'Bibliography')

Appendices

Published Papers

2.3.2 Expository writing (*Informational*)

The main purpose of expository writing is to inform or to explain. It is used to share knowledge and convey messages, or ideas. The writer produces a thesis statements and supports it with relevant evidence to provide the reader with knowledge that answers the “who, what, where, when, why, or how” of a subject”. This type of writing focuses on presenting information rather than persuading the reader.

This type of writing focuses on presenting information, not to persuade but to inform the reader. There should be a minimum of bias. Though the writer is not presenting an argument, the paper still must have a goal: the effective sharing of information. (Treacher et al 2000: 12)

The basic form of an expository essay consists of the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. This type of writing is used to present and organize information through explaining, comparing and contrasting.

The introduction identifies the topic and gives some information about it to interest the reader. The body, usually several paragraphs long, develops the topic stated in the introduction. The conclusion gives a brief summary of the main ideas, reemphasizes an important point, or restates the topic. (Winterowd & Patricia 1985: 105)

2.3.3 Narrative writing

A narrative writing is a meaningful sequences of events told in words. These sequences involve chronological ordering of true or emarginated events.

The main goal of narrative writing is to narrate a sequence of events and scenes with sensory details and appropriate strategies to develop plot and character. The writer presents an action or a series of actions in such a way that the reader has a sense of being present at that time and place. Narrative writing describes what

happened but also may describe how it happened and why it happened. (Cathcart et al 2003:3)

Narrative writing is a storytelling of events by using the same techniques that are used in dramatic work. Writers use and follow conventions like characterization, plot and themes.

Narrative writing is telling a story in order to establish an idea or assert an opinion. It follows the conventions of good storytelling such as characterization, plot, and theme, and it is often used as a means to get you to write about yourself. Narrative writing is sometimes called reflective writing (Wagner2002:71)

2.3.4 Persuasive writing

The main purpose of persuasive writing is to persuade: the writer defends a position about a topic and supports it with evidences to provide the reader a convincing argument about the topic. Support is given to each claim to convince the reader of the validity of the writer's position on the topic. Persuasive writing moves the reader to take an action or to form or change an opinion. It requires thinking skills such as analysis and evaluation. Persuasive writing's functions are to state and support a position, opinion or issue; or to defend or urge.

The most successful persuasive compositions provide the reader with convincing evidence. Clear and persuasive support is shared through a confident authoritative voice, giving the reader the impression that the writer is truly knowledgeable about the topic. The writer knows the topic, creates a convincing thesis, and appeals to the reader's interest in the introduction (Cathcart et al 2003:42)

In persuasive writing, writers plan to bring the readers to agree with their viewpoint by supporting them with convincing evidences. Writers' goal is to make their readers accept and adopt specific ideas and actions.

Persuasive writing is writing that attempts to convince readers to think or to act in a certain way. When you write persuasively, your goal is to convince readers to accept your ideas or opinions. Your purpose may also be to urge readers to adopt a specific course of action. (Winterowd & Patricia 1985: 176)

2.3.5 Reflective writing

In reflective writing, writers reflect and describe real or imaginative events, scenes, thoughts, feelings or their memories. They reflect their notice on events and situations other than merely describe them. They add personal reflection and reveal meanings of their experiences.

The main goal of reflective writing is to allow a writer to explore and discover meaning in his or her own experiences; often an ordinary thing that is seen, done, read, overheard or experienced will, upon reflection, trigger a comment on life. Writers are provided the opportunity to consider feelings, concerns, or reactions to important issues. Anything that is a part of your life provides the starting point for a reflective essay. (Cathcart et al 2003:51)

2.3.6 Writing a research paper

Research paper is a fundamental requirement for the students of all academic levels. For the same reason, the academic field has been giving importance to the evaluating of research papers submitted by the students. For writing a good research paper, writers should follow certain logical steps.

The first step for the writer of a research paper is to select a topic that is interesting to him as well as to the audience. The writer must avoid topics that have a very narrow range of source materials.

A research paper is actually an extended essay that presents your research findings to an audience. Unlike reports of information that you may have done previously in school, a research paper

usually takes a position on the subject you have researched and argues for a particular view or interpretation. As with the writing process, the research process has general stages that may or may not occur in a set sequence. (Cathcart et al 2003:70)

Writing a research paper requires the same steps and techniques used in other types of writing, but the only difference is that the research paper requires different and several resources of information.

The research, or term, paper is a long, formal essay presenting specific information drawn from several sources. Writing a research paper involves the same skills used in writing expository essay but also requires using library resources and identifying those sources in footnotes and in a bibliography. (Winterowd & Patricia 1985: 138)

2.3.6.1 The structure of a research paper

A research paper normally has 8 sections that should be followed in a fixed sequence. But these may vary according the nature of the research done.

A. Title

It must precisely describe the research's contents

B. Abstract

A brief overview of the research

C. Introduction

Includes the purpose of the research

States the hypothesis

Gives any necessary background information

Provides a review of literature review

D. Methods and materials

Provides a description of material, equipment and methods used in the research

E. Results

States the results of the research (Visual materials are included here).

F. Discussion

Evaluation and interpretation

Was the hypothesis supported? If so, how? If not, why not? Relevant results are cited in support.

G. Conclusion

Conclusions to be drawn from the results

Conclusions about the hypothesis

Recommendations

Additional research proposed

H. References

Includes references to any works cited in the review of literature.

Use the documentation style required according to the specific field.

2.3.7 Free writing

Free writing is the generation of ideas and information freely from mind. In this type of writing writers should not stop as well as they should not judge what they write. They don't reread, care of their ideas or stop to edit: grammar, punctuation and spelling. They only write what comes to their minds.

Freewriting helps you practice fluency (writing quickly and easily). When you freewrite, you don't need to worry about accuracy (having correct grammar and spelling). Don't check your dictionary when you freewrite. Don't stop if you make a mistake. Just keep writing. (Rumisek 2005: 4)

2.4 The audience and purpose

Audiences are the people who read what is written by writers. Effective writers should understand how their readers react to what they write. So before starting writing on paper, the skilled writer should consider two things:

1. The purpose of their writing

What is the function of this piece of writing? Is it a persuasive writing and the writer wants to convince the reader with a certain idea? Is it an explanation of something, which needs to be clear and detailed? Is it an invitation, application for a job or is it for entertainment? The purpose of the writing influences writers to organize choice appropriate style and language. So a strong and effective writing should have a valid purpose which guides the writer what to say and how to say it.

In college, the general purpose is usually specified by the assignment: to explain, report, analyze, urge, interpret, reflect, and so on. Most papers will include secondary purposes as well; for example, an effective argument paper may also need explaining, defining, describing, and narrating to help advance the argument. If you know why you are writing, your writing is bound to be clearer than if you don't. (Fulwiler 2002: 4)

2. To whom they are writing

The second thing concerns the audience. Is he a one person, a group of colleagues, a friend, a boss, schools, university students and what they know about the topic? So thinking about the reader helps the writer to select what to say and how to present it.

“The audience is an essential concept for all writers. Writers choose their subjects and their methods of presenting material according to who will read the finished product” (Reid 1988: 2)

Good writing does not happen magically; it is the result of a process you can learn and use. Although the process appears to have a beginning, middle, and an end, your actual process varies according to your purpose, your audience, and the writing assignment or task. (Cathcart et al 2003:20)

The language used and the information included in writing are affected by the audience. So when writers identify their audience, it will be the first step to select the language and the information they use.

A writer's audiences are the people who read what you have written. To be an effective writer and speaker, you must understand how your audience is likely to react to what you say and how you say it. Knowing who you are communicating with is fundamental to the success of any message. You need to tailor your writing style to suit the audience's needs interests and goals (Rozakis, 2003: 187)

There are five qualities writers should be aware of before they begin to start writing. They should ask themselves about their audience, readers' background about the topic, readers' needs and how they use it and why.

You must always identify the audience for whom you are writing. To write to and for your audience, you must get to know them. In order to identify your audience, there are five questions you must answer:

- 1- Who will be reading your document?*
 - 2- What prior knowledge do these readers have about the subject?*
 - 3- What do these readers need to know?*
 - 4- Why will these readers read your document?*
 - 5- How will these readers use the information you provide?*
- (Viades 2002:77)*

2.5 Mechanics

Written language is something different from a spoken language. Speakers have a lot of choices to use to enhance the meaning of their messages. They can use non verbal language like gestures, facial expressions, stresses, pitches and body language. But writers have the choice to compensate this by using capitalization and punctuation to indicate pauses, questions and to express feelings.

“Capitalization and punctuation system which characterize written English poses a major challenge to Arab learners of English. Classical Arabic did not have punctuation” (Elnoor: 2003:153)

2.5.1 Capitalization

In English written language, many words are capitalized. Capitalization helps the writers and readers to identify sentences and names of thing when they are mentioned in particular manner.

The following words are capitalized

1. Proper names, e.g.

Hassan, Ali, November, London, Shendi, Red Sea, etc

2. Beginning of sentences, e.g.

Punctuation marks are useful in writing.

3. Names of cities, states, countries, continents, seas, oceans, e.g.

Shendi, Qatar, Sudan, Africa, Red Sea, the Atlantic respectively

4. Names of avenues, streets, roads and routes, e.g.

Alneel Avenue, Africa Street

5. Names of mountains, parks, planets and buildings, e.g.

Jabal Marra, Mugran Family Park, Moon, World Trade Tower

6. Names of months, days, special events and holidays, e.g.

June, Monday.

7. Names of departments, branches of governments, political parties, companies and organizations, e.g.

He is the **H**ead of the **E**nglish **D**epartment.

She works for the **M**inistry of **H**igh **E**ducation.

They are members of the **D**emocratic **P**arty.

Toyota **C**ompany benefit was very high the last year.

Amnesty **I**nternational seeks week country faults.

8. Words that refer to God, Religions, and sacred books, e.g.

Ramadan is an important month in the **M**uslim faith.

The **Q**uran, the **B**ible and the **O**ld **T**estament are holy books.

9. Word in a complete line of poetry, e.g.

The sea is hungry dog.

Giants and grey

He rolls on the beach all day.

With his clashing teeth and

Shaggy jaws.

10. Titles that precede, or take the place of a person's names, e.g.

The **P**resident will address the nation on Friday.

11. Words that show family relationship when they precede a person's name or when they are used in place of someone's name, e.g.

Have you ever seen London, **U**ncle?

Aunt Fatima went to Khartoum yesterday.

12. Abbreviation for a person's name or title, e.g.

Dr. Ali is a good dentist.

*I met **M**r. John yesterday in the market.*

13. Names of nationalities, races, languages and the proper adjectives formed from these nouns, e.g.

A **G**erman teacher joined Shendi University.

My supervisor speaks **English, French and Arabic.**

14. Abbreviations A.D, B.C... A.M and P.M.... but not that for measurements, (kg, and cm)

15. Pronoun I and the interjection O, e.g.

What can **I** do for you?

Oh, **I** am so sorry about that!

2.5.2 Punctuation

Punctuation marks are used to make a written discourse easy for a reader to understand. In speech or spoken language, speakers can make pauses or gestures between words and phrases, and raise or lower the voice to help the listener to understand their meaning, but in writing these functions are done by punctuation marks, e.g.

My son sister Fatima and I went to the zoo.

How many persons went to the zoo?

If you use three commas, four persons went.

(Son, sister, Fatima, I).

If you use two commas, three persons went.

(Son sister, Fatima, I)

Or

Two persons went if the baby sister's name is Fatima.

Also the sentence, (woman without her man is nothing) is ambiguous or might reflect more than one meaning if not punctuated to the reader. If it is punctuated by men it will be like this:

Woman without her man, is nothing.

And if it is punctuated by women it will be like this:

Woman without her, man is nothing.

So the comma and its position in the sentence totally change the whole meaning.

Punctuation marks are like roads signs that writers use to guide readers through their writing. The marks show readers when to pause or stop. They also connect ideas and clarify items of interest. Like drivers who must learn to read and follow road signs, writers use punctuation to avoid confusion and to make their writing flow more smoothly. (Ross & Murry: 1985: 606)

People would not be able to communicate ideas; moreover they could not understand each other if they don't use punctuation marks in their writing.

1. The full stop (.)

Full stop means completely stop and it is used to end declarative and imperative sentences. It is also used to end abbreviations.

“Use periods to end complete sentences that are statements, commands and request, or mild exclamations.”(Eggenschwiler& Emily 2001:87)

1. At the end of a statement sentences, e.g.

He needs your help.

I go to school every day.

2. At the end of command sentences, e.g.

Help him.

Go to school now.

3. After abbreviations, e.g.

M.A. = Master of Arts.

U.N. = United Nations. Mr., Mrs., a.m., Sept. But if abbreviations are written in capital letters periods are omitted e.g.

FBI, CIA

4. After contracted words, e.g.

Nov. = November

Adj. = Adjective

But the full stop is omitted if the contraction includes the final letter of the word, e.g.

Dr, Ltd, etc

Full stops are not used at the end of phrases or dependent clauses.

5. Full stop is used when the question is used as a courtesy, e.g.

Would you please lend me your book.

2. The colon (:)

The colon is used

1. To separate two sentences when the second one explains, expands, or summarizes the meaning of the first one, e.g.

Finally she told us what was in the box: a live snake.

There is something I want to say: I love you all.

2. To introduce a speech or quoted material, e.g.

I told them: "Don't open the door"

Shakespeare said: "neither a borrower nor a lender be"

3. To introduce a list, e.g.

He offered me the choice of any one of these presents: a TV, a computer, a set of armchairs, or a refrigerator.

3. The semi-colon (;)

It is used for a longer pause than that shown by a comma and when the writer does not want to break the line of thought.

It is used

1. To separate co-ordinate sentences when a conjunction is not used e.g.

Your visit pleased my children; it delighted me

I never exercise; that is why I am slight overweight.

2. With words like therefore, however, nevertheless, besides, also, otherwise and so, e.g.

You have done the work well; therefore I will pay you well.

You should exercise; otherwise you will get to fat.

4. The comma (,)

Comma is the most used punctuation mark in writing. It tells readers where a pause is needed.

“Commas are useful for indicating pauses or brief breaks within your ideas. They add pacing to your sentences and make them clear.” (Eggenchwiler & Emily 2001:93)

Commas are used:

1. To record a list of things, e.g.

At the party we had cakes, coca cola, chocolates, and biscuit.

Notice that the comma is usually put before **and** but, some writer disagree with that.

2. To mark off direct speech, e.g.

“Tell me, I said, “How you know all that”

Ali replied, “I heard in the radio.”

3. To mark off sentences or clauses where a pause is needed in reading, e.g.

Although it was raining, we played the match.

If you go there, you will meet him.

4. To mark off words used in addressing persons, e.g.

Hassan, I hope you and Ahmed can come to visit me.

I would be very glad, Ali, if you would do this for me.

5. To mark off words or phrases like however, therefore, of course, for instance, e.g.

You know of course, the way to Khartoum.

6. In descriptive titles such as:

Ibrahim Alfaki, PhD

King Abdullah, the king of Saudia.

7. To separate adjectives preceding a noun, e.g.

He bought a small, red, speedy car.

“The comma separates words, phrases, or clauses within sentences”. (Winterowd & Patricia 1985: 577)

5. The question mark (?)

A question mark is used after a direct question, but not after an indirect one.

“Obviously, the role of the question mark is to end a question” (Eggenschwiler & Emily 2001:89)

Direct, I asked to him, “Where are you going.”

Indirect, I asked him where he was going.

“When a question is being reported rather than directly asked, it ends with a period rather than a question mark.” (Eggenschwiler & Emily 2001:90)

6. The exclamation mark (!)

The exclamation mark is used after an interjection, an exclamatory sentence or an expression of great feeling and emotion, e.g.

Hello! I didn't expect to see you.

What a nice weather it is!

Help! I am falling.

“An exclamation point is particularly useful if you're writing dialogue because it shows the feeling behind a statement.” (Eggenschwiler & Emily 2001:91)

7. The quotation mark (“”)

Quotation marks are used to enclose direct speech, e.g.

He said, “I shall visit you this evening”.

They shouted, “What are you doing here.”

Single quotation marks are used within double quotation marks to show a quotation within a quotation

“Quotation marks are used to indicate the beginning and end of a quote. They tell the reader when you've used written material from other sources or direct speech.” (Eggenschwiler & Emily 2001:112)

8. The apostrophe (')

The apostrophe is used to

1. Show omission, e.g.

Can't *cannot*

Isn't *is not*

I'll *I will*

O'clock *of the clock*

2. The possessive case, e.g.

My neighbor's house

He is the headmaster of the boy's school, (singular, one boy), but He is the headmaster of the boys' school, (plural, for a lot of boys).

Use an apostrophe with s to show who something belongs to.

This is Michael's room.

This is my Dad's desk.

Are you Kathleen's mom?

This dog's tail is very long.

The teacher collects everyone's books at the end of the class.

Jack is going to his friend's house for lunch. (Sargeant 2007:142)

9. The parentheses ()

Parentheses are used across the writing process to indicate comments, additional information or more explanation.

E.g. some of the players (Ali, Taha and Ahmed for example) insisted that the match be postponed.

“Parentheses are used to enclose incidental information, such as a passing comment, a minor example or addition, or a brief explanation” (Eggenschwiler& Emily 2001:110)

So punctuation marks do the following four functions:

1. To separate

2. To link

3. To enclose

4. To show omission

“In general, punctuation works in four ways: to separate, to link, to enclose, and to show omission.” (Winterowd & Patricia 1985: 572)

2.6 Teaching writing

English is the language of sciences, mass media, newspapers, radio and television, English is also the language of official institutions, sports, transportation, local and central governments and of education. It is also the language of politics, medicine large commerce and industrial organisations. So, a good command of English is the passport to knowledge and the whole world.

Accordingly the successful user of English skills is a successful, integrated member of that language community. But although the four skills of English language should be taken together and integrated when teaching and learning, teachers often give less attention to writing and put it at the bottom of their priorities. Writing is time- consuming and one of the most difficult subjects on the syllabus. Moreover, students do not respond as teachers want them to do. Writing should be practiced in the classroom everyday and the kinds of writing should students do depend on the age, interests and levels of the students.

“There is no better way for students to grasp the essential value of writing as a form of communication than for them to produce the kind of practical writing that many people do in their every – day life.” (Raimes 1980: 83)

Learning to write in an L2 is fundamentally different from learning to write in an L1. N S writers already have highly developed (native) language proficiency in English, whereas most N N S s must dedicate years to learning it as a second language- in most cases as adults.(Hinkel 2004: 6)

Writing can be enjoyable and more satisfying activity for teachers and students, but how students and learners are encouraged to write and enjoy writing?

Teachers should consider their own feeling about writing in English because this will affect how they teach writing in English in the classroom. Students from the beginning should be motivated by their teachers that they create an appropriate environment for teaching as well as in learning writing.

The following criteria are of great value for teachers as well as for students when teaching and learning writing skill:

2.6.1 Rising the students' motivation and the awareness of the writing skill

Motivation is the rising of a person's interest to do something. Motivation is an essential factor in teaching and learning process in general and in learning writing in particular. As writing is claimed to be the most difficult and problematic skill, learners of writing should be motivated by raising their positive attitude towards it.

It is well known that negative attitudes towards the foreign language and group, which often comes from stereotypes and superficial contact with the target culture, can impede the learning of that language. Conversely, positive attitudes towards the foreign language and group increase language learning success.(Elyildirim & Sally (2006) English Teaching Forum, volume 44, no 4, p 3)

Learners of English language writing could be motivated by using several methods. They could be motivated by the idea that English is an international language. It is the language of technology, language of sports, language of business and it is required in any job application.

There are several factors that combine in a profile of successful L2 learners. Obviously, the motivation to learn is important. Many learners have an instrumental motivation. That is, they want to learn the L2 in order to achieve some other goals, such as completing school graduation requirement or being able to read scientific publications, but not really for any social purposes. In contrast, those learners with an integrative motivation want to learn the L2 for social purposes, in order to take part in the social life of a community using that language and to become an accepted member of that community” (Yule 2006:167)

2.6.2 Understanding of the purposes and values of writing

Organised and well structured writing is not only required from those who study English language, but also required from other students of other sciences. Writing is something important for every one who can write at any time of his life.

At the university level, disciplinary knowledge and understanding are largely exhibited and valued through the medium of writing. Students can begin to understand the significance of writing by becoming aware that writing takes particular conventional forms in different contexts. How can both subject lecturers and writing specialists help students understand the issues related to academic writing, which include taking a stance, developing an argument, addressing a specific audience, and choosing the appropriate writing style? How can we help students in the often-difficult process of writing itself? (Swann et al 2005:19)

2.6.3 Preparing effective and meaningful writing activities

Giving activities to students is very important stage in teaching writing process. Teachers should regularly evaluate their students’ ability as well as their teaching and learning process by giving them regular activities.

“Teachers need effective and efficient ways to help students improve their writing and build their vocabulary”(Johari (2008) Building Vocabulary and Improving

Writing While Developing a Tourist Brochure, English Teaching Forum, volume 46, No 2, p38)

Ideally, there should be a programme to develop writing skills which works all the way through the educational system. Such a programme would list the main types of writing which it felt students should be able to master by the end of their education, and would offer guidelines to teachers on ways of achieving success with each of these. It is fairly easy to draft the main points which would need to be included in such a programme, but too little is known about exactly how human beings learn to write effectively to be able to relate these points to a satisfactory learning theory.” (Pincas et al 2003: 16)

2.6.4 Understanding the feedback to learners about their work

Teaching and learning are interrelated and integrated that they cannot be separated from each other. The feedback shown by the students about their writing is so important for teachers to assess and identify the progress of the learning process. It helps the teachers and the students to realize where they are and what are needed next as well as creating better teaching environment.

“The feedback which the learner gets on her or his piece of writing plays a very important role, both in motivating further learning, and in ensuring that the learner’s texts gradually come nearer and nearer to written fluency.”(Hamp & Lyons1987:143)

Assessment has both a teaching and testing function and its teaching role is most clearly realized in teacher feedback. Teachers are now very conscious of the potential feedback has for helping to create a supportive teaching environment, for conveying and modeling ideas about good writing, for developing the ways students talk about writing, and for mediating the relationship between students’ wider cultural and social worlds and their growing familiarity with new literacy practices. (Hyland 2006:208)

The advantage of immediate feedback is that it helps the student to identify and think about their errors and correct them by themselves. This will help students to be critical thinkers other than to be passive ones.

Immediate feedback is possible with regard to written as well as oral work, for this is exactly what the teacher provides as he moves round the class supervising his pupils' work in the written stages of the lesson.it is always best to avoid seas of red ink over the page... an alternative is to put single code letters in the margin (a simple and self-evident code is essential: T—tense mistake; P—preposition mistake—vocabulary (word) mistake; etc.).

This procedure has the advantage of much reducing the red ink, and forcing the student to think out the error himself and provide his own corrected version.”

(Pincas et al 2003: 140)

2.7 Writing process

The writing process includes three stages: the prewriting stage, the writing stage and the post writing stage.

“The writing process guides students from the initial stage of understanding an essay, through reading and note-making, to the organization of an essay and the final stage of proof-reading.” (Bailey 2006: vii)

Writing is not just putting words together in papers to form sentences, paragraphs and essays, but writing is done through several steps (thinking about it, doing it and doing it again.

When we write, unlike when we talk, we are engaged in an activity which is usually at the same time both private and public. It is private because the act of composition is by its nature solitary, but it is public in that most writing is intended for an audience, often one which is extremely difficult to define. (Pincas et al 2003: 116)

2.7.1 Prewriting

The prewriting stage is an essential step in the writing process in which the writer generates ideas and gathers information to write about. He needs to think and ask himself what he knows about this topic and why he would like to write about it.

The most important part of prewriting is discovering ideas for writing. The best methods of discovering ideas vary for each individual. Albert Einstein, for example, said that some of his best ideas occurred to him while he was shaving in the morning. Agatha Christie, a famous mystery writer, often discovered ideas for writing while eating apples in the bathtub. (Winterowd & Patricia 1985: 3

Prewriting is the most important part because in this stage writers think and gather ideas for writing. So before they begin taking their pen, they decide and plan what to write about and for whom and what type of language they can use.

Prewriting is the stage of gathering ideas and gathering information to write about – a crucial step in preparing to write. Try to think before you write. Close your eyes and fold your hands. If you are writing with a pencil, think about the words – the thinking pencil – if you are writing with a word processor, think about the words – the thinking keyboard. (Gebhardt & Rodrigues: 12).

2.7.1.1 Prewriting methods

Since writing is something of different types, different purposes, different readers and different styles of language it is also something carried out and done through different methods.

Whatever the details that you may include in your writing may be, they are largely determined by your purpose. If for example, your purpose is to provide information, the kind of details you would be looking for should be specific facts, statistics, examples,

and quotations. There are many different techniques for gathering information for your writing some of which you may be acquainted with. In any case, you may use a combination of several different methods while you gather information for a particular writing assignment, or you may decide to use only one technique. (Viades 2002:78)

1. Brainstorming

It is simply means writing down any concepts or ideas that come into the writer's mind and they are relevant to the topic he is going to write about. Concepts and ideas in this stage are usually written randomly.

Brainstorming is a way of gathering ideas about a topic. Think of a storm: thousands of drops of rain, all coming down together. Now, imagine thousands of ideas 'raining' down onto your paper! When you brainstorm, write down every idea that comes to you. Don't worry now about whether the ideas are good or silly, useful or not. You can decide that later. (Rumisek 2005: 6)

In brainstorming, writers only write down all ideas that come to their minds without judging them whether they are good or bad, relevant or irrelevant.

When you brainstorm, you concentrate on a particular subject or topic and write down every idea, word, and phrase that comes to mind. At the top of a blank piece of paper, write the subject or topic that you are going to begin with, and list under it whatever ideas come to mind. Work as quickly as possible, jotting down every idea that occurs to you. Keep doing this until you run out of ideas. As you are doing this, do not stop to judge, or evaluate, the ideas that you are listing; your purpose is simply to write down all the ideas you can think of. If you started with a subject, you must decide which of the items on your list might be usable topics for writing, and circle them. These circled topics may help you to think of other ideas you want to add to your list. (Viades 2002:79)

2. Clustering

It is an invention strategy that writers use to generate ideas for an essay. It is a preferred technique for writers because it allows them to generate and organize ideas in a visual context.

Clustering is a prewriting method in which you brainstorm on a subject and write your ideas in cluster or group. As ideas begin to flow, the word cluster expands. One word or phrase leads to another. Related ideas begin to form branches that show connections in writer's mind. (W.Ross&P.Y.Murry:1985: 7)

2.7.2 Writing

Writing is the stage in which writers transform their ideas into words and put them on papers. As they write they may discover new ideas or better ways to express their thoughts. They should keep going in writing not worrying about small mistakes because it is not the end product.

For some people this is a distinct stage that comes after they have organized their ideas in some fashion; for others, the movement from prewriting to writing is less clear. Some people start with introduction and work straight through to the conclusion, while others start with the thesis or the body and then go back to write an introduction an a conclusion. However you go about it, the result is a first draft that can be shared. (Cathcart etal 2003: 20)

Although writing is the stage in which writers put their ideas on papers, they might come across new ideas or they discover better way for writing.

Writing is the stage of transforming ideas into words on paper. As you write you may discover new ideas or better ways to express your thoughts. For this reason rewriting may be necessary. The second phase of the activity is the writing itself (Hedge1988:23)

2.7.3 Postwriting

It is the pre-publishing stage in which a good writer asks some friends to proofread and give feedback on his writing. What is working well? What parts are unclear and need more details? A friend or a response partner can help the writer to see his work more clearly and can offer him what he needs to do for revision for example clarifying language, correcting punctuations, grammar and spelling mistakes.

“Post writing is the stage for revising and proof reading, for clarifying language and correcting mistakes, for sharing and responding”.(Winterowd & Patricia1985: 2)

Although the writing process has identifiable stages, it is not always straight forward, orderly process. Some stages may be repeated; others may be skipped and then worked on at later point. For example, sometimes you may begin writing and then realized your need to use a prewriting technique to gather more information. (Winterowd & Patricia1985: 2

2.7.4 Revising

Revising is the stage during which writers make what they think they are necessary changes for their writing. Revision may involve addition; deletion; amendments; or reorganization somewhere throughout their work.

“If what you write doesn’t sound like someone could speak it, write it again so it does. If it doesn’t sound like a spoken thing, it will probably never be heard. Or if it’s heard, it will soon be forgotten.”(Tredinnick 2006: 22)

The beauty of revising is that you already have your material in front of you. You are no longer writing from scratch, you are simply refining and polishing. Take your time. Sit back and read your paper from beginning to end. Go through your checklist and allow yourself to take the time to perfect your paper. You can break your paper into manageable pieces during this revision process. Look at each paragraph and study each page. While this

task may seem time consuming and needlessly slow at first, remember that revising, like writing, is a process. The more time you take revising your thoughts, the less you will have to edit. By thinking of the revision process as a puzzle you are completing, you will enjoy the challenge of putting all the final pieces into place. (Stark -2003:79)

Revising is not a onetime process; writers need to reread their final draft many times to achieve a perfect writing.

Revising requires several rereadings of the first draft. You must first consider each sentence in relation to the paragraph and to the writing as a whole. For any composition, you will need to judge how effectively each paragraph contributes to the total work. Ask yourself if the main idea is adequately developed or supported. Is the development or support clear and logical? Next, look closely at each sentence and make whatever changes you consider necessary. (Viades 2002:81)

2.7.5 Proofreading

Proofreading is the final stage in writing in which writers revise their work for errors in grammar, spelling and mechanics. Proofreading can be done by the writers themselves or they may ask other persons to proofread for them.

Proof reading is the final stage in the writing process, means checking a piece of writing for errors in spelling, grammar and mechanics. Beside proof reading your own writing, you may want to ask another person to proof read your writing because someone else catches errors that you miss. (Winterowd & Patricia1985: 19)

The ideal and the optimum ways of proofreading are to be done together by the writers and those who help them to proofread.

Helper and writer look at the draft together and consider what improvements might be necessary in any of the four editing levels: (1) meaning, (2) order, (3) spelling, (4) punctuation. Meaning is the most important indicator of the need for improvement; punctuation is the least important one. After offering some words of praise for the writer's efforts, the helper marks any problem areas the writer may have missed. The writer can then make additional suggestions for changes. They discuss the best corrections to make and modify the text accordingly. (Adeline, (2007), English Teaching Forum volume 45, No 4, p20)

2.8-The sentence

A sentence is a group of words that expresses a complete thought, e.g.

1. *I came On Monday.*
2. *The striped cat ran away.*
3. *Ali and his son are in the kitchen.*

A group of words that does not express a complete thought is called a sentence fragment e.g.

1. *On Monday*
2. *The striped cat.*
3. *Ali and his son*

2.8.1Types of sentences according to use

Sentences are divided into four types.

1-The declarative sentence makes a statement and ends with a period e.g.

Ali is the most intelligent boy in the class.

2-The interrogative sentence *asks* a question and ends with a question mark

e.g.

Who is the most intelligent boy in the class?

3-The imperative sentence *gives* an order or makes a request e.g.

Please give me my book

4- The exclamatory sentence *expresses* surprise or strong feeling and end with an exclamation point e.g.

Ali is the most intelligent boy in the class!

What a nice car!

2.8.2 Type of sentences according to form

1-The simple sentence is a sentence that expresses one thought e.g.

Ahmed reads a book every week

2-The compound sentence is a sentence that expresses two or more thoughts of equal value e.g.

Ali reads a book, and I watch television

3-The complex sentence is a sentence that expresses one independent and one or more dependent thoughts e.g.

She became queen, when her father died, because she was the eldest child

2.8.3 The parts of the sentence

To express a complete thought, a sentence must have two parts: a *subject* and a *predicate*

The subject of the sentence is the person, place, or idea that the sentence is about.

The predicate *says* something about the subject e.g.

Subject	Predicate
Ali	is a famous man

2.8.4 Sentence patterns

Effective writers use a variety of sentences patterns in their writing to interest their readers and present ideas in the best possible way.

1. S-V (subject-verb)

Subject	Verb
Ali	slept
I	wrote
He	is sleeping

2. S-V-C (C=Complement)

A complement is a word or a group of words that complete the statement begun by the subject and verb e.g.

Subject	verb	complement
He	is	rich
Nelson	was	a sailor
Who	are	you

3. S-V-DO (D O = direct object) e.g.

Subject	verb	DO
He	did	the work
Do you	knew	the answer
The boy	can dress	himself

4. S-V-IO-DO (I O = indirect object) e.g.

Subject	verb	IO	DO
I	gave	him	a lesson
He	told	me	a lie
He	did	me	a service

5. S-V-O-C e.g.

Subject & verb	Object	Complement
I put	the shoes	In your cupboard
He sent	the letter	By registered post
Pot	Your coat	on

2.9 The paragraph

A paragraph is a group of related sentences about one topic. A paragraph should contain a topic sentences, development, unity, concluding sentence and coherence.

“A paragraph is a group of sentences about a single topic. Together, the sentences of a paragraph explain the writer main idea (most important idea) about the topic.” (Rumisek 2005: 11)

“A paragraph is a series of sentences that develop one idea”

(Reid: 1988: 8)

2.9.1 The Structure of the Paragraph

An effective, meaningful and well structured paragraph should contain a topic sentence, adequate development, unity and coherence.

2.9.2 Elements of a Paragraph

A paragraph should contain some structure and particular elements, which are listed below in relative order

1. **A Topic sentence** (motivates the reader to want to read more).
2. **The First main point** (proves backs up or explains the topic sentence).
3. **The Second main point** (usually provides a reason for the first point made).
4. **The Third main point** (can help prove the topic sentence or back up the first or second main point of the paragraph).

5. **The Conclusion** (sums up the main points or ideas and it usually completes the topic).

1. The topic sentences

The topic sentence conveys the main idea of the paragraph and it is usually the first and the most general sentence in it. But it can be the second when the first is used as kind of introduction.

The topic sentence is the most important sentence in the paragraph. It is the most general sentence that introduces the topic.

There is normally only one idea in each paragraph and this is expressed in a topic sentence. The other sentences support and expand on the idea in the topic sentence in different ways. The last sentence can often be important too, as it can be used to summarize the gist of the paragraph. (Treacher et al 2000: 7)

A simple statement of fact cannot be used as a topic sentence because in a fact there is no controlling idea that can be developed. The sentence (I like football better than tennis) is a weak topic sentence because it is a simple statement of opinion.

“A successful topic sentence usually contains an opinion that will be proved or supported in the paragraph, or a statement of intent that the writer will explain in detail in the paragraph.” (Reid: 1988: 11)

2. Supporting sentences

After choosing a topic and writing a topic sentence, writers should develop and support their main idea by giving details and more information about it.

“These are sentences that talk about or explain the topic sentence. They are more detailed ideas that follow the topic sentence”. (Rumisek 2005: 12)

A paragraph could be developed with many methods e.g. by using examples, illustrations, facts, statistics, evidences, comparison, contrast, evaluation, reasons or description.

3. The concluding sentences

It may be found as the last sentence of a paragraph. It can finish a paragraph by repeating the main idea or just giving a final comment about it.

The final sentence of a paragraph is called the concluding sentence. It sums up the main points or restates the main idea in a different way. A sentence that sums up the paragraph reminds the reader of what the writer's main idea and supporting points were.

A sentence that restates the main idea should give the same information in a slightly different way, perhaps by using different words or by using different word order. A concluding sentence should not introduce a new point. (Rumisek 2005: 11)

4. Unity and coherence

A coherent paragraph is an easy and an understandable paragraph to the reader through reasonable connections between ideas. All details or example used for developing the topic sentence should be arranged in a logical order and related to the controlling idea.

“To be coherent a paragraph must satisfy two criteria: first, relevance – every idea must relate to the topic. Second, effective order – ideas must be arranged in a way that clarifies their logic or their importance.” (Kane 2000: 95)

“When a paragraph includes a sequence of sentences that are all related to the topic sentence it is unified. A paragraph that has a continuous line of thought that passes from sentence to sentence is coherent.”(O'Donnell & Judith1993:4)

Unity in a paragraph means that the entire paragraph is centered and concerned with a single idea.

Paragraph unity involves two related but distinct concepts: coherence and follow. Coherence means that the ideas fit together. Follow means that the sentences link up so that readers are not conscious of gaps. Follow is a matter of styles and exists in specific words and grammatical patterns tying one sentence to

another. Coherence belongs to the substructure of the paragraph, to relationships of thoughts, feeling, and perception. Both are necessary if a paragraph is to be truly unified. (Kane 2000: 95)

“Unity in writing is the connection of all ideas to a single topic. In an essay, all ideas should relate to the thesis statement, and the supporting ideas in a main body paragraph should relate to the topic sentence.”(Rumisek 2005: 78)

Unity is singleness of purpose; it means that everything in the document is essentially about one idea.

*Writing is coherent when the relationship among ideas is clear to the reader. Coherent writing moves logically and consistently from point to point. Each idea should relate clearly to the other ideas, with one idea flowing smoothly to the next. Many elements contribute to smooth and coherent writing, but the major components are (1) a logical sequence of ideas and (2) clear **transitional expressions** between ideas. (Viades 2002:85)*

Coherence is an output of many factors that combine together to make every piece of writing meaningful and clear. Coherence in writing is more difficult than that in speech. Writers have no choices of nonverbal signs like that in spoken language to inform them that their messages are clear or not.

*To achieve unity, the writer must select one **topic** and then treat it with singleness of purpose, without digressing into unrelated or loosely related paths. The logical sequence provided by a good **outline** is essential to achieving unity. An outline enables the writer to lay out the most direct route from **introduction** to **conclusion**. After you have completed your outline check it to see that each part relates to your subject. (Viades 2002:83)*

5. Checklist for revising a paragraph

No	Steps	Yes	No
1	The paragraph has a topic sentence		
2	The topic sentence is developed with descriptive details		
3	Each detail in the developing sentences relates clearly to the topic sentence (unified paragraph)		
4	The paragraph has a concluding sentence that repeats the idea from the topic sentence		
5	The entire paragraph is logically organized and understandable (coherent)		

2.10 The essay

An essay is a group of paragraphs about one topic. An essay should be of at least three paragraphs, the introduction, the body and the conclusion. The numbers of the paragraphs in one essay depend on the length of the topic.

“An essay is a group of paragraphs written about a single topic and a central main idea. It must have at least three paragraphs, but a five- paragraph essay is a common length for academic writing” (Rumisek 2005: 56)

But what are the differences and the similarities between the terms (*essay and composition*)?

It is useful at the outset to distinguish between the term composition and essay. The writing of a composition is a task which involves the student in manipulating words in grammatically correct sentences and in linking those sentences to form a piece of continuous writing which successfully communicates the writer's thoughts and ideas on a certain topic.....Essay writing on the other hand, involves far more

than the production of grammatically correct sentences: it demands creativity and originality, since it is generally intended not only to inform but also to entertain.(Heaton 1975: 127)

2.10.1 The structure of an essay

A complete and well organized essay consists of an introduction, body and a conclusion.

An essay is a group of related paragraphs about one main idea.

***The introduction** states the main idea.*

***The body** paragraphs contain the subordinate ideas that support the main idea.*

***The conclusion** restates the main idea and indicates the end. Despite the fact that the classic the five-paragraphs essay is a form rarely if ever used by professional writers, it is usually given to students to help them organize and develop their ideas in writing.(Idrees & Hago 2006: 138)*

1. The introduction

It is the introductory paragraph of an essay. It gives a general idea about the topic. It also contains a thesis sentence which gives and explains the main idea. The introduction should be organized in a way that it gives the reader a background about the topic as well as catching his interest.

In the introduction to an article you present your topic in general, then narrow the focus on the topic and make a clear thesis statement. Your thesis statement expresses the central idea of your paper. Everything you write flows from this and depends on it. The thesis statement needs to be clear, and concisely and precisely stated. (Treacher et al 2000: 9)

The introduction is usually the first paragraph of a topic. It should introduce the reader to what is going to be written or discussed in the main body and leads him from general to specific.

“The introduction is usually the first paragraph of a composition. The purpose of the introductory paragraph is to present the basic idea that will be discussed as well as to interest the reader” (Winterowd & Patricia1985: 110)

2. The thesis statement

It is the author’s important idea about the topic that should be discussed and explained with supporting ideas.

“The thesis statement is the sentence that tells the main idea of the whole essay. It can be compared to a topic sentence, which gives the main idea of a paragraph. It usually comes at or near the end of the introductory paragraph.” (Rumisek 2005: 58)

The introduction does more than tell the reader what the subject of the paper or article is, though obviously it must do that. It must also capture the reader’s attention at the beginning, or they will never continue to the end. A good introduction gets the reader wanting more (Treacher et al 2000: 9)

3. The main body

The body is one or more paragraphs that explain and support the theses statement and usually written between the introduction and the conclusion. It is the main part of the paper which provides the reader with the detailed information and illustrations. Each paragraph of the main body should discuss one idea of the theses.

The purpose of the body is to develop the topic stated in the introduction by presenting information and illustrations about it. The body paragraphs should follow a logical organisation, should include a sufficient number of illustrations, and should be unified. (Winterowd & Patricia1985: 111)

4. The conclusion

Conclusion is the last paragraph of an essay. It reviews the summary and restates the thesis and the supporting ideas. It also gives comments about what was written and leads or persuades a reader of a certain action.

It is often very hard to construct a concluding paragraph for your essay. After all, at this point you have probably said everything you want to say. Your main aim should be to keep the reader interested to the end. If in doubt, keep the conclusion brief. While it can be a good idea to suggest a new approach to the question, this shouldn't seem as though it's a whole argument you forgot to put in earlier. (Bell 1995: 31)

5. Unity and coherence

Since an essay should be organized into an introduction, a body, and a conclusion, it is of great importance that these three main parts should work together to express the topic clearly. Writers have to review the text for ideas that are irrelevant to the topic sentence. Coherence means that ideas are arranged in a clear and logical way that the reader can easily follow and understand the main points.

“Unity in writing is the connection of all ideas to a single topic. In an essay, all ideas should relate to the thesis statement, and the supporting ideas in a main body paragraph should relate to the topic sentence” (Rumisek 2005: 78)

6. Cohesion

Cohesion is the use of linking words to join words, phrases and sentences so that a text could be clear and understandable for the reader.

*Cohesion means linking phrases together so that the whole text is clear and readable. It is achieved by several methods, such as the use of conjunctions
Another is the linking of phrases and sentences with words like he, they*

and that which refer back to something mentioned before
Jane Austen wrote six major novels in her short life. They deal
with
domestic drama in middle-class families
Examples of reference words and phrases
Pronouns: he/she/it/they
possessive pronouns: his/her/hers/their/theirs
objective pronouns: her/him/them
demonstrative pronouns: this/that/these/those
other phrases: the former/the latter/the first/the second” (Bailey
2006:55)

7. Checklist for revising an essay

A- Outline

- 1- The essay is clearly organized – introduction, body and conclusion.
- 2- The contents of the essay related to the title; they are all relevant
- 3- The essay is unified.

B – Introduction

- 1- The introductory paragraph includes a topic sentence and presents interesting information about the topic.
- 2- The topic sentence is developed with descriptive details (illustrations).
- 3- The introductory paragraph has a concluding sentence

C – The body

- 1- Each body paragraph has a clear topic sentence related to the main idea of the essay.
- 2- Each paragraph in the body presents new information about the topic.
- 3- Each body paragraph includes sufficient illustrations about the topic.

D - Conclusion

- 1- The concluding paragraph has a topic sentence.
- 2- The conclusion refers to the main idea of the essay by restating it in a new way.

“After you have revised your essay, before you turn in your final, complete draft, be sure to proofread your essay for grammar and sentence structure errors.”
(: Reid: 198882)

2.11 Previous studies

Study No (1)

Hassan Atieh Dawood Hamad, PhD, 2006, “The manifestation of cohesion and coherence in the written English in Palestinian senior university students.”

University of Sudan of science and technology, faculty of Languages

The main objective of his study is to explore difficulties relevant to cohesion and coherence in English writing.

The researcher used the descriptive approach to measure the standards of the students of English writing at AlQuds University in Palestine by conducting a test of 30 students as a sample.

The researcher has come to the findings that the students are weak to produce cohesive and coherent texts.

The researcher recommends the following:

Teachers should devote more time, efforts and attention to the writing skill to improve students’ writing.

Teachers should be tolerant to their students’ mistakes and slow progress during the teaching process to motivate them.

Teachers should be devoted to their career, and be keen to improve their teaching expertise through attending workshops and reading the most up to date references on methodology.

Universities should reconsider students’ standards of admission to the department of English to ensure best quality graduation.

Study No (2)

Manahil Mukhtar Mohammed, PhD, 2010, “An investigation into coherence and cohesion in Sudanese EFL learners’ writing.” *University of Sudan of science and technology- faculty of languages*

The main objective of his study is the investigation into coherence and cohesion in Sudanese EFL learners’ writing in Sudanese universities.

The researcher used the descriptive and analytical method to analyze a sample of 100 students at the third and fourth year’s level. The data analysed has shown that there is a weakness in Sudanese students’ written work due to their ignorance of cohesion and coherence.

The researcher recommends that teachers need to pay attention to the questions of coherence and cohesion when teaching and designing syllabus.

Study No (3)

Eltag Abdelwadoud Karadawi, PhD, 1994, “Deficiency of English composition writing in the Sudanese final (third) year of high secondary school analysis and corrective actions” *University of Khartoum*

The main objective of his study is to investigate deficiency of English composition writing in the Sudanese final (third) year of high secondary schools. The study sample was a questionnaire for 100 students and 20 teachers as well as for 5 expert teachers.

The results of the research indicate that the final year students of HSS do not possess the basics of English that help them write acceptable composition. The HSS students make grave spelling, semantic, lexical, and in structural mistakes.

The researcher recommends that the graded long- term composition is not to be worked out in vacuum. Also it is advisable to bring composition research very close to the class room.

Study No (4)

Abdalla Mohamed Arabi, M.A. 2004, *“The correlation between Lexical Competence and EFL Writing Quality” Sudan university of science and technology*

The purpose of his research is to investigate the correlation between lexical competence of some Sudanese university students and their writing quality in English. This study has endeavored to shed some light on the impact of vocabulary richness on the writing standard of the university students. The research data was obtained from two sources: vocabulary competence test and writing competence test, both of which have been conducted among the students of the English department at the faculty of Education, University of ElFashir. It has been statistically analyzed by using SPSS program, version 10.5.

The results have shown that although the overall performance of the students on both tests was found to be poor, lexically competence students have written excellent essays. The results have also indicated that learning only single words would not improve the students' writing proficiency; rather other aspects of the language have to be present. Likewise, the findings did confirm the research hypotheses.

Study No (5)

Ramzi Eltayeb Nour Eldaim, MA, 2008, *“Problems of teaching writing skills in secondary level with reference to spine (4) & (5)” University of Sudan of science and technology, faculty of Education* The main objective of his study is the investigation of the problems of teaching writing skills in secondary schools level with reference to spine (4) & (5). The case study conducted in Khartoum state at Jabal Awlia locality secondary schools.

The study sample was a questionnaire for 30 teachers. The researcher comes to the result that teaching writing is more complicated and there are no enough

writing activities in spine (4) & (5) moreover there is no enough time for teaching these activities.

In the end the researcher recommends that teachers need regular training for better writing teaching and they should use different ways for teaching writing as well as modern instruments like computer, discs and videos.

Study No (6)

ElBeshary Ahmed ElBeshary, MA, 2010, “Analysis of punctuation errors made by Sudanese EFL learners”. *University of Sudan of science and technology, faculty of Education* The main objective of his study is to investigate students’ punctuation errors and difficulties in using punctuation marks effectively in writing skill.

The researcher used a writing test for a sample of 60 students and a questionnaire for 30 English language teachers.

The findings show that the majority of the students confuse the use of some punctuation marks due to poor and inadequate punctuation marks activities and the lack of materials for teaching punctuation marks.

In the end the researcher recommends that more attention should be paid to these important elements in writing. Also teaches have to put more emphasis on teaching those problematic punctuation marks by providing more exercises and examples.

Study No (7) Abdelrahman M. Ahmed, MA, 2008, “Problematic Areas in writing skill” *“University of Sudan of science and technology, faculty of Education*

The main objective of his study is to investigate the problematic areas in writing skills and their causes in secondary schools level at White Nile State.

The study sample was a questionnaire for 30 teachers and a test of the same number for students. The researcher comes to the result that students’ mother

tongue interferes their writing in English and there are no enough writing exercises.

The researcher recommends that students should be provided with suitable learning materials. Spelling should be given more time and also teachers should provide more focusing on punctuation marks.

Study No (8)

Rasha Mohammed Bashir , MA, 2005, “Problems and Difficulties Facing students in secondary schools in writing composition” University of Juba ,Faculty of Education

The aim of this study is to investigate the Problems and Difficulties Facing students in secondary schools in writing composition.

The samples of the study were a hundred students of second year from four schools. The students were asked to write composition to check their performance of writing. The samples also include a questionnaire given to twenty teachers to identify the causes and reasons of these problems and difficulties.

The researcher came to the findings that the problems and difficulties are attributed to the teaching and learning methods and techniques used in the classroom.

The researcher, according to the results, recommends the following:

Trainees who teach English language have to attend lessons with well trained and experienced teachers.

Seminars on teaching writing can be held in summer holidays. -

Schools libraries should be enriched with books of teaching methods.

Extensive exercises on grammar lessons should be given to students.

Teachers have to extend the activities in the books.

Study No (9)

Sumia Yahia Salim, MA, 2008, *“English writing Problems faced by Sudanese pupils”* University of Sudan of science and technology, faculty of Education The main objective of her study is to investigate the problems of writing skills facing the students of AlFaroog secondary school for girls and the reasons behind these problems.

The study sample was a questionnaire for 39 and a test for 27 students. The researcher comes to the result that English teachers need more training and courses to improve their teaching writing. Also more periods are needed for teaching writing skills.

The researcher recommends that teachers should use different techniques for teaching writing. Teachers should be given training on teaching writing methods. More activities are needed for the students.

Study No (10)

Alfred Gasim Yacoub Labi, MA, 2005, *“Investigating difficulties facing the Sudanese secondary schools students in writing in English as a foreign language”* University of Sudan of science and technology, faculty of Education The main objective of his study is to investigate difficulties facing the Sudanese secondary schools students in writing in English.

The study sample was a questionnaire for 75 teachers and a test for 90 students. The researcher comes to the result that the teaching program contributed a great deal in overcoming the students' difficulties as well as in improving the students' performance.

In the end the researcher recommends that teachers of English language should be given training courses on methods of teaching and their views should be taken into consideration when designing the schools syllabus. Also students should be provided with suitable learning materials.

Study No (11)

Mohammed Mohammed Zein, MA, 2006, “Investigating EFL learners’ paragraph writing”. University of Khartoum

The main objective of his study is to investigate paragraph writing ability among Sudanese EFL learners.

The researcher used the descriptive approach to measure the standards of the students of English writing at Khartoum University, Faculty of Arts, by giving them 2 tests.

The researcher’s findings have shown low grasp of paragraph writing abilities, inadequate development of the topic sentence and lack of unity and wrong use of cohesive devices.

The researcher recommends the following:

- Students should be given scramble sentences and be asked to arrange them into a paragraph.
- Teachers should ask students to write short paragraphs about themselves.
- Teachers should provide students with deferent techniques for developing paragraphs e.g. by listening, describing and comparison.

Study No (12)

Mohamed Younis Mohamed, MA, 1999, “An awareness of paragraph writing among Sudanese university students” University of Khartoum

The main objective of his study is to investigate the awareness of paragraph writing among Sudanese university students.

The researcher conducted a test for a sample of 50 students from the preliminary year at the faculty of medicine at the University of Khartoum. The result shows that there are deficiencies in the subjects’ command of techniques of writing paragraph and deficiencies of using cohesive devices and the principles of paragraph structuring.

The researcher recommends that there should be a concentration on perfecting writing a simple paragraph, use of written exercises that require the students to connect pairs of core sentences by linking devices as well as the concentration on theoretical and practical principles of composition writing.

Study No (13)

Mohammad al-Mubarak Mohammad, MA, 2010, Evaluation of the Paragraph Writing Ability Among Sudanese Learners of English as a Foreign Language. *University of Sudan of science and technology, faculty of Education* The research is an attempt to probe the ability of the Sudanese learners of EFL to write a good paragraph, taking the students of the second semester at the College of Education at the SUST as a case of study.

The students' ability is probed through a test on how to write a paragraph for which 45 students of English were randomly chosen, out of the total of 70 students of English. The test results were analyzed by using the technology of the (SPSS).

The students' performances affirm the hypotheses of the study that the tested students lack the ability of writing a good paragraph.

The following are the main recommendations of the researcher:

Start learning ELT at an early age of e.g. six years or even before. Encourage learners to use only the English language while in class. As for writing, more emphasis should be given to writing individual sentences through which the learners may build simple paragraphs.

Study No (14) - an international study.

Baba Primrose Tshotsho, PhD, 2006, An Investigation into English Second Language Academic Writing Strategies for Black Students at the Eastern Cape Technikon *faculty of arts, University of the Western Cape.*

The aim of this study is to identify the kinds of strategies that English Second Language (ESL) students use to cope with English language writing tasks. This study explores errors in written cohesion and coherence in relation to L2 writing strategies used by black students at the Eastern Cape Technikon. The study focuses on errors in the form of cohesive devices of referring expressions using topic development used by students. It investigates the L2 writing process adopted by competent and non-competent black students in the process of producing coherent academic texts by comparing strategies that the two groups of students adopt.

The findings show that competent students do not have problems with themes, conjunctive cohesion reference chains, lexical cohesion, and cohesive characterization and register analysis since they do a lot of reading.

On the other hand, not-so-competent students have serious problems with all the aspects mentioned above. In their essays themes cannot be clearly identified. They also do not use cohesive conjunctions and if they do, use them incorrectly.

Considering the findings, a comprehensive model of ESL writing strategies for black students will have to tackle the following specific areas of concern: training of teachers, encouraging the culture of reading, reviewing the curriculum to include academic writing strategies (some of which are suggested below), and providing resources, especially in rural schools.

Study No (15) - an international study.

Alasdair Archibald, "*Targeting L2 Writing Proficiencies: Instruction and Areas of Change in Students. Writing over Time*" *University of Southampton published in International Journal of English Studies.*

This study looks at the effects of the focus of teaching on student writing. Fifty students on an eight-week pre-session programme were asked to write a 250-word assignment at the start and the end of their courses.

The purpose of this study is to discover if the targeting of those features which are perceived the students' weak points in the teaching of writing has an effect on the way in which students' writing improves.

In order to achieve this general aim, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. When scored using a multiple-trait rating scale, does student writing show evidence of different levels of proficiency across the traits scored?
2. At the end of a period of study, does the change in scores on individual traits, relative to scores at the start of the course, reflect a general change or one that shows greater movement in some traits?
3. Can the change in scores on individual traits be related to the focus of instruction in writing over the course of study?

The participants consisted of 16 females and 34 males from 21 different countries.

The results show that there was a statistically significant difference between the initial and final tasks.

Study No (16) - an international study.

Louisa Buckingham, "*Development of English Academic Writing Competence by Turkish Scholars*" Sabanci University, Istanbul, Turkey, published in International Journal of Doctoral Studies Volume 3, 2008.

This study investigates how a group of 13 Turkish scholars from the humanities faculty of a prominent Turkish university perceive the development of their discipline-specific second language writing skills. Personal interviews were used to elicit data and excerpts from the interviews have been recorded in this paper.

The acquisition strategies identified in the data reveal that the acquisition of scholarly writing expertise was an extended process of exploration of genre

conventions, with a strong component of largely self-directed analysis of linguistic and organizational norms.

The study considers how these strategies can be incorporated into a field study or portfolio-based academic writing program, with a view to training junior researchers to recognize the rhetorical, organizational, and linguistic characteristics of scholarly writing from their own discipline, and to monitor the development of their own writing competence.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Teaching and learning English at tertiary level cannot be separated from teaching and learning English at other levels. Courses and syllabuses at universities are based on what the students had been taught in their pre tertiary levels. So if one discusses the problem of the students' falling standard in English as a whole and the problem of the writing skills in particular from a pedagogical views only (there are some other political, economical, social, geographical reasons), one should discuss it as complete interrelated problem.

Students of English, as a foreign language, face many difficulties in writing process as well as the writing product which is one of the most problematic skills. Writing is an output of several pre- processes of teaching and learning other aspects of language like spelling, syntax and vocabulary; that is to say, writing as a product is essentially based on these aspects. So if this base (input) is strong, the product (output) will be strong. The students may feel a big shift and a big gap in their learning progress, when they first enter the tertiary level. "Writing is clearly a complex process, and competent writing is frequently accepted as being the last language skill to be acquired (for native speakers of the language as well as for foreign / second language learners)".(Liz Hamp – Lyons Ben Heasley 1987: 2).

The role of writing is much more important in communicating messages, views and ideas. So writing as a productive skill; it reflects what the students know about their language. In an Arabic- speaking society, like the case of Sudan, the learners face problems in mastering writing skill in English. The Arabic letters are different from the English ones in shape and direction of writing. Arabic is written from right to left whereas English is written from left to right. English language is written in Roman script. In other words, the

graphic representation and the direction of writing in Arabic are entirely different from those of English. Also the difference between the two languages in sentence structure e.g. (subjects and verbs) causes a big problem for the students of English language. These difficulties persist at the schooling stage and even up to the university level.

1.2 Statement of the problem

This study has been conducted because there is a growing concern about the falling standards of writing skills among the students of English as a foreign language. The staff- members in the Department of English Language at Shendi University have often expressed their concern about the students' achievement and their level of English.

The background of the students about English is unknown to the teachers whether it is rich or poor, so the Faculty deals with them as students who had been taught English in basic level and secondary level schools. The standard of the students in English is influenced by some other factors other than that in the University. This study attempts to investigate and identify the actual reasons and causes behind students' problems in writing skills that face the students who study English at the University of Shendi.

1.3 Study questions

1. Are there enough courses of writing skills at the university?
2. Is the background of the students about writing rich enough to help them understand and study writing skills?
3. Do tutors give due attention to the teaching of writing skills?
4. Are writing skill activities given to students enough?

1.4 Study hypotheses

The following hypotheses are probable answers to the study questions.

1. There are not enough courses of writing skills at the university.
2. The background of the students about writing is poor.
3. Tutors do not give due attention to the teaching of writing skills.
4. Writing skill activities given to students are not enough.

1.5 Aims of the study

This study attempts to investigate and identify the actual reasons and causes behind the problems facing the students of English language in the area of writing skills. The study will attempt to examine and answer the study questions and verify the hypotheses and eventually recommend ways of remedial work.

1.6 Significance of the study

The study is of great value to the following:

- 1- English language teachers.
- 2- Planners and designers of English language syllabus.
- 3- Learners of English as a foreign language.
- 4- Researchers in the area of English language teaching.

1.7 Methods of the study

The researcher adopts the descriptive analytical method. Two tools will be used for data collection: a questionnaire for English teaching staff at the university and tests for the students of English language. The SPSS will be used for data analysis.

1.8 Limits of the study

The study is limited to the fourth year students enrolled in the fourth year (7th& 8th semesters) of the academic year 2011 – 2012 of English as a second language who study at Shendi University, Faculty of Arts. The study is limited to the writing skills only.

3.1 Introduction

This study endeavors to investigate and identify the actual reasons and causes of writing skills problems facing the fourth year students (7th & 8th semesters) of English as second language at the University of Shendi. The researcher ought to have an on field survey including the students as well as the teachers of the Department of English language at the Faculty of Arts. The study tools are 4 tests for the students and a questionnaire for the teachers to achieve these objectives.

3.2 Method of the Study

The researcher applied in this research the descriptive analytical method. Two tools were used for data collection, a questionnaire for the teachers and 4 tests for the students. The (SPSS) programme was used for data analysis.

3.3 Population of the Study

The study populations were the students and the teaching staff of English as a second language, at tertiary level.

3.4 Samples of the study

3.4.1 Teachers

The sample includes the Staff of the Department of English language at the University of Shendi, Faculty of Arts.

Table No (1) shows teachers' numbers and the distribution of their sex.

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	8	80%
Female	2	20%
Total	10	100%

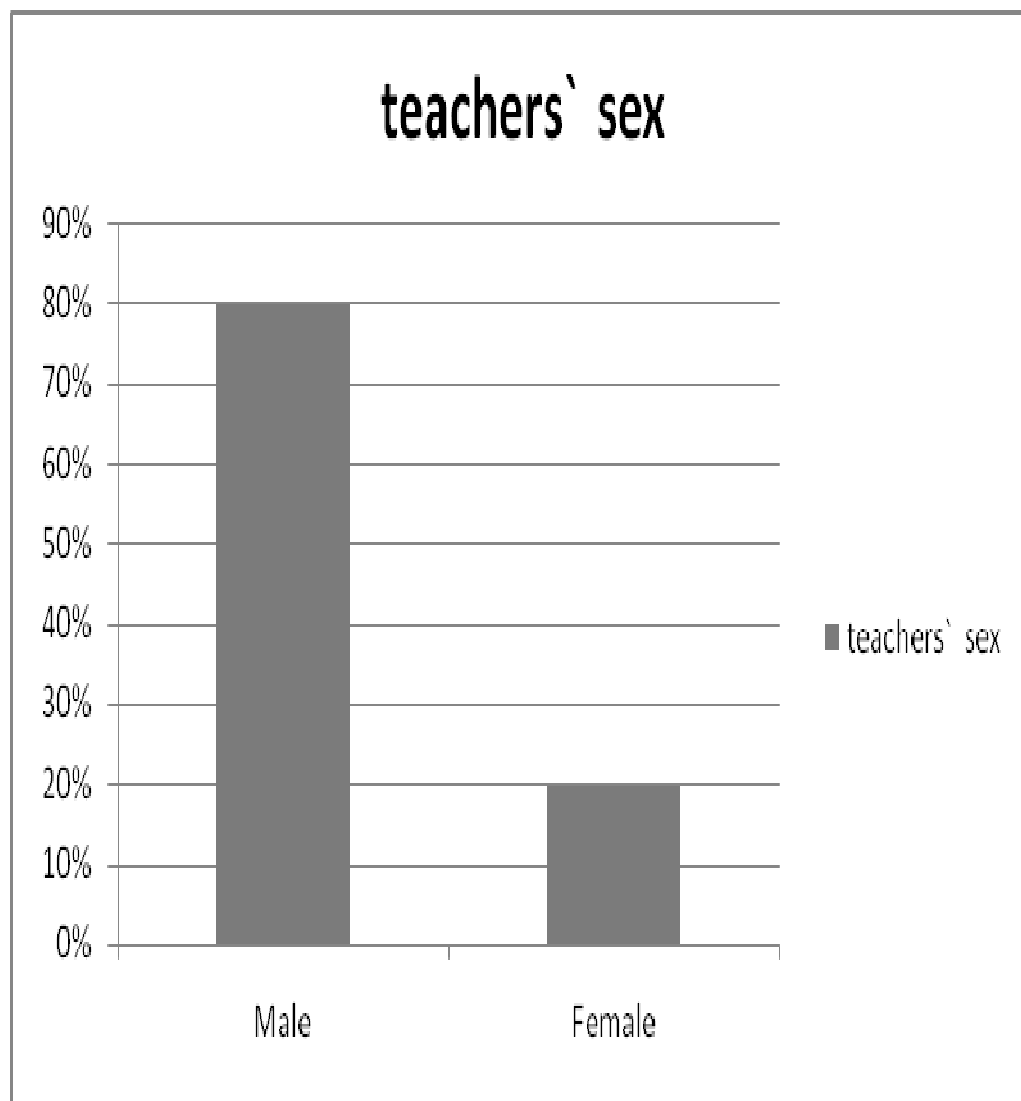


Figure No (1) shows teachers' numbers and the distribution of their sex.

Table No (2) shows teachers' academic titles.

Titles	Frequency	Percentage
Associate Prof.	2	20%
Assistant Prof.	2	20%
Lecturer	5	50%
Teaching Assist.	1	10%
Total	10	100%

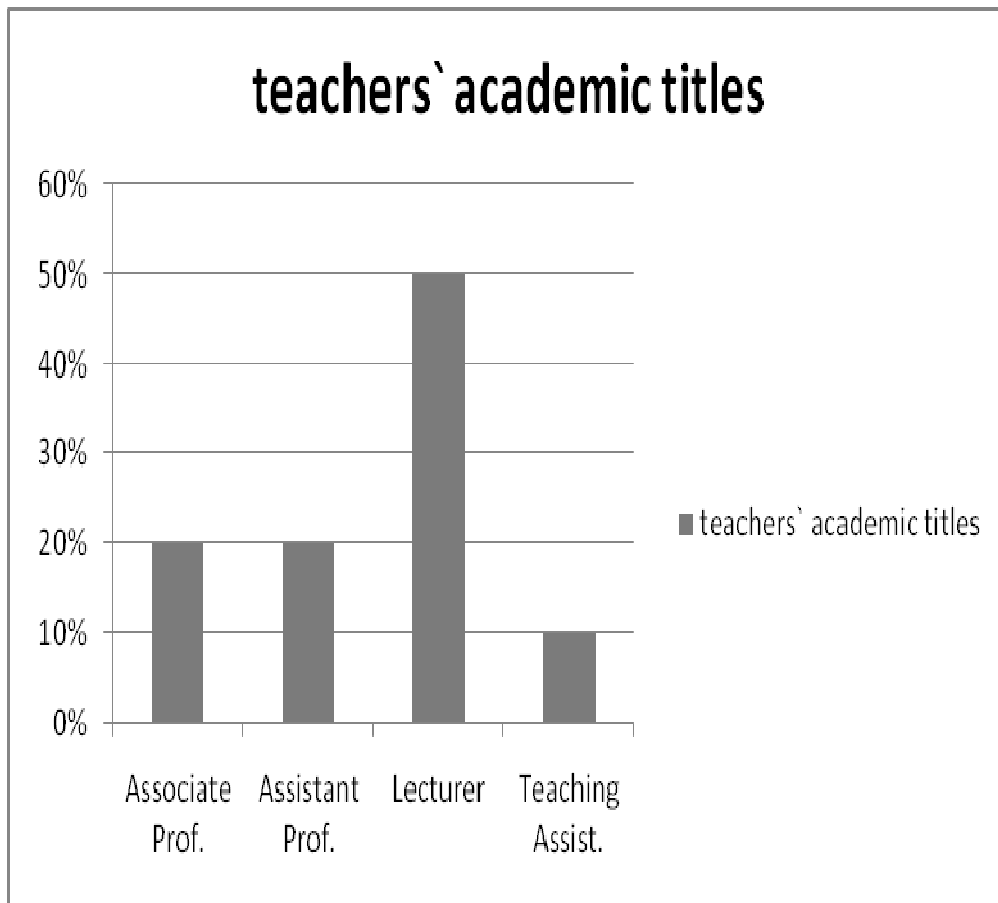


Figure No (2) shows teachers' academic titles.

Table No (3) shows teachers' years of experiences.

Years	Frequency	Percentage
1-----10	3	20%
11-----20	2	20%
21-----30	3	50%
30-----more	2	10%
Total	10	100%

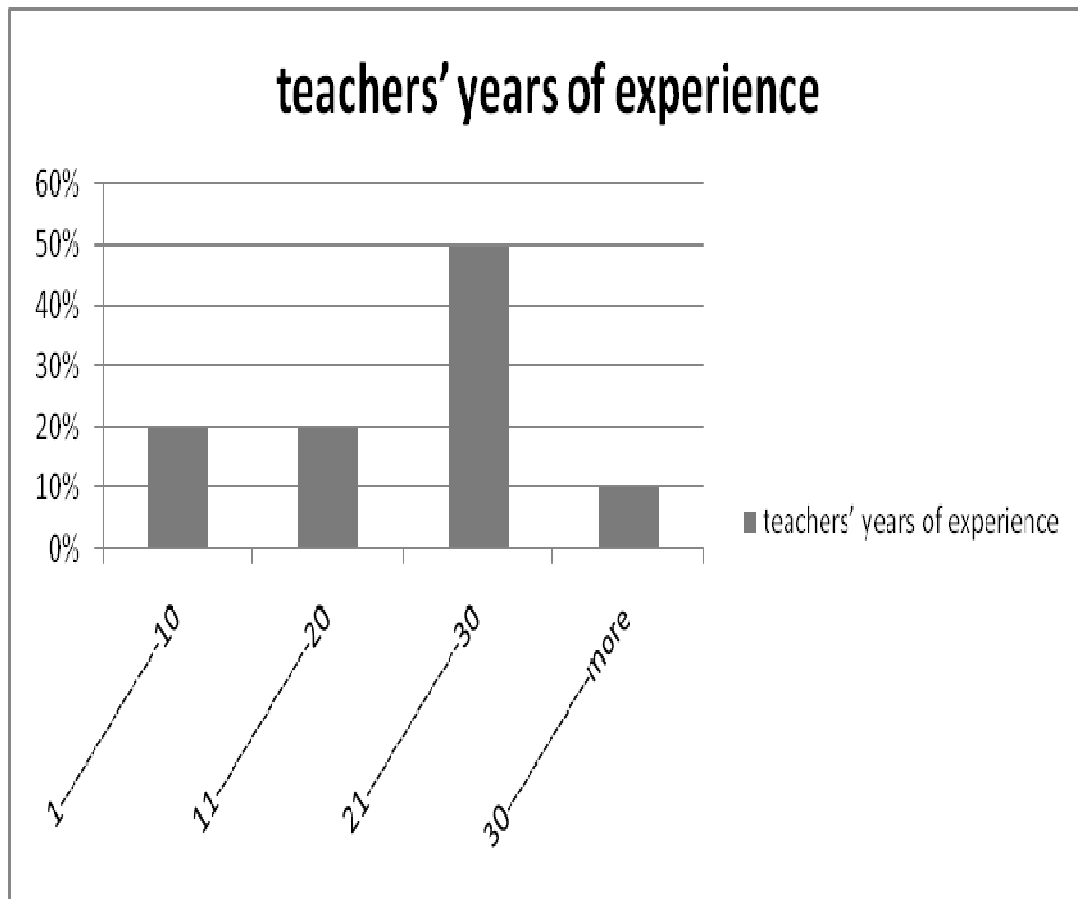


Figure No (3) shows teachers' years of experience.

3.4.2 Students

The sample of this study were **81** students enrolled in the fourth year(7th& 8th semesters) of the academic year 2011 – 2012 of English as a second language who study at Shendi University, Faculty of Arts.

Table No. (4) Shows the number of the students sample and the distribution of their classes

Class	Frequency	Percentage
Seven	44	54.3
Eight	37	45.7
Total	81	100%

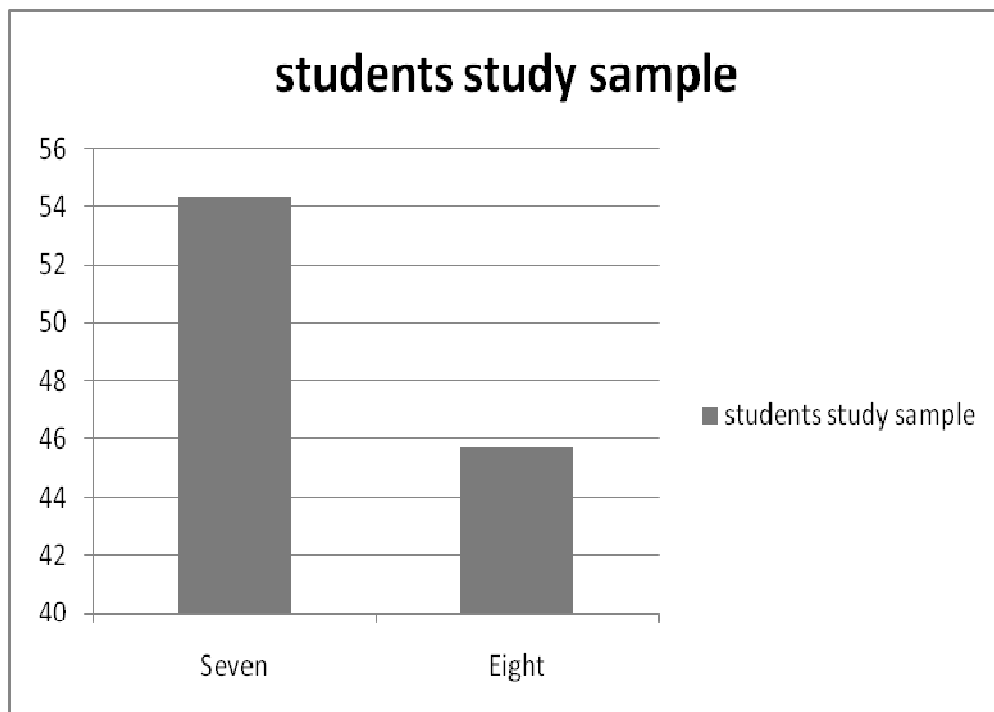


Figure No (4) shows the number of the students sample and the distribution of their classes

Table No (5) shows the Students' sex (semester seven)

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	17	38.63
Female	27	61.36
Total	44	100%

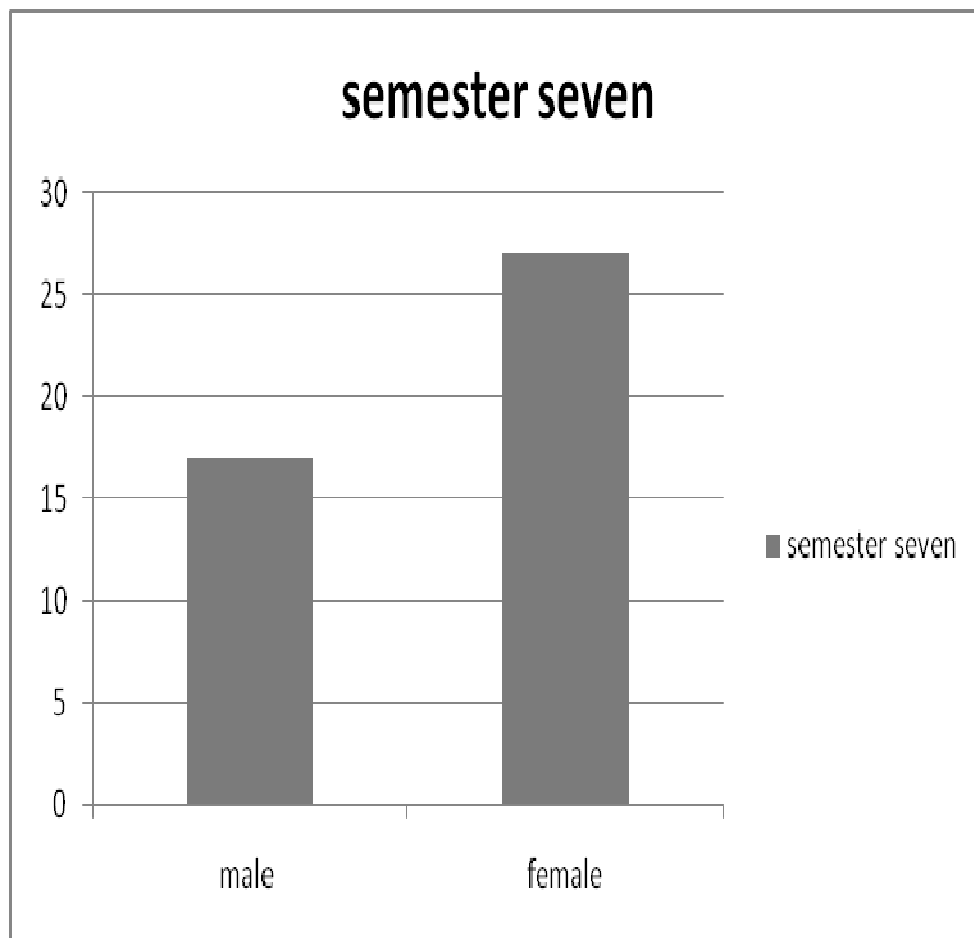


Figure No (5) shows the Students' sex (semester seven)

Table No: (6) Shows the student's sex (semester eight)

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	23	62.16
Female	14	37.83
Total	37	100%

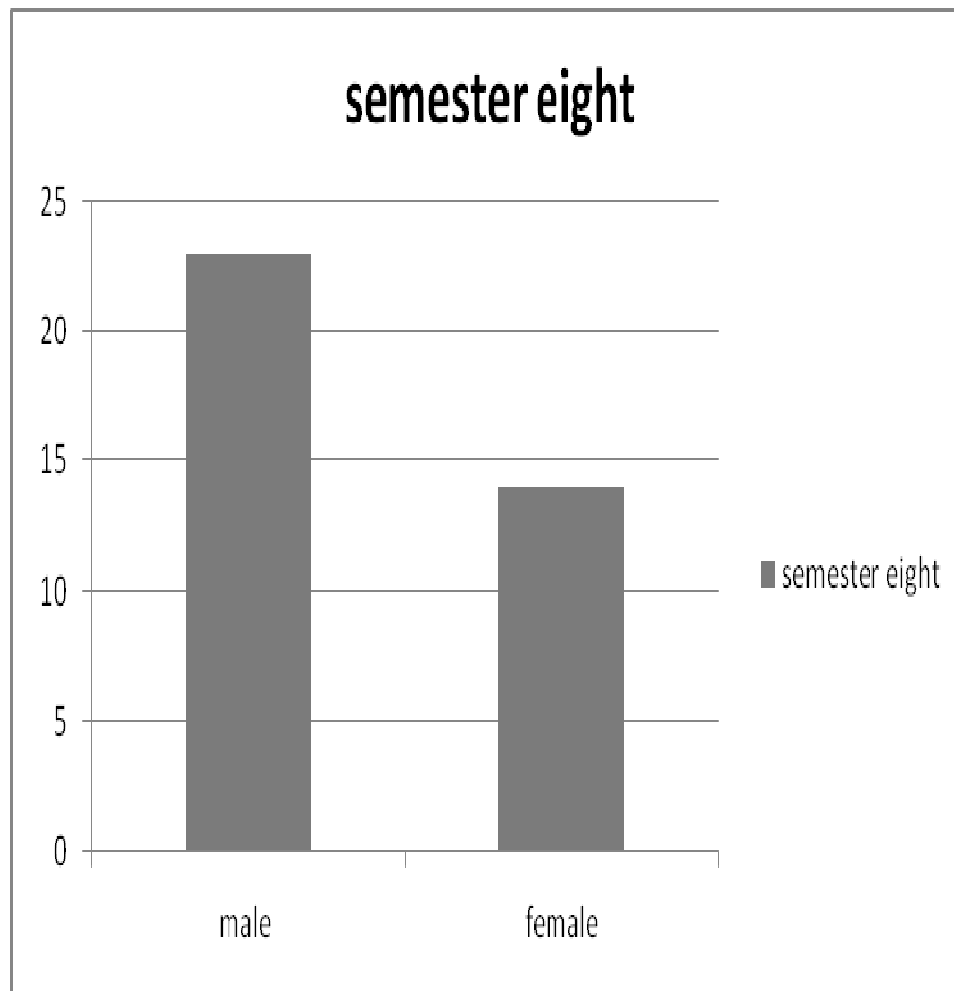


Figure No: (6) Shows the student's sex (semester eight)

Table No. (7) Shows the Students' sex (semester seven& eight)

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	40	49.38
Female	41	50.61
Total	81	100%

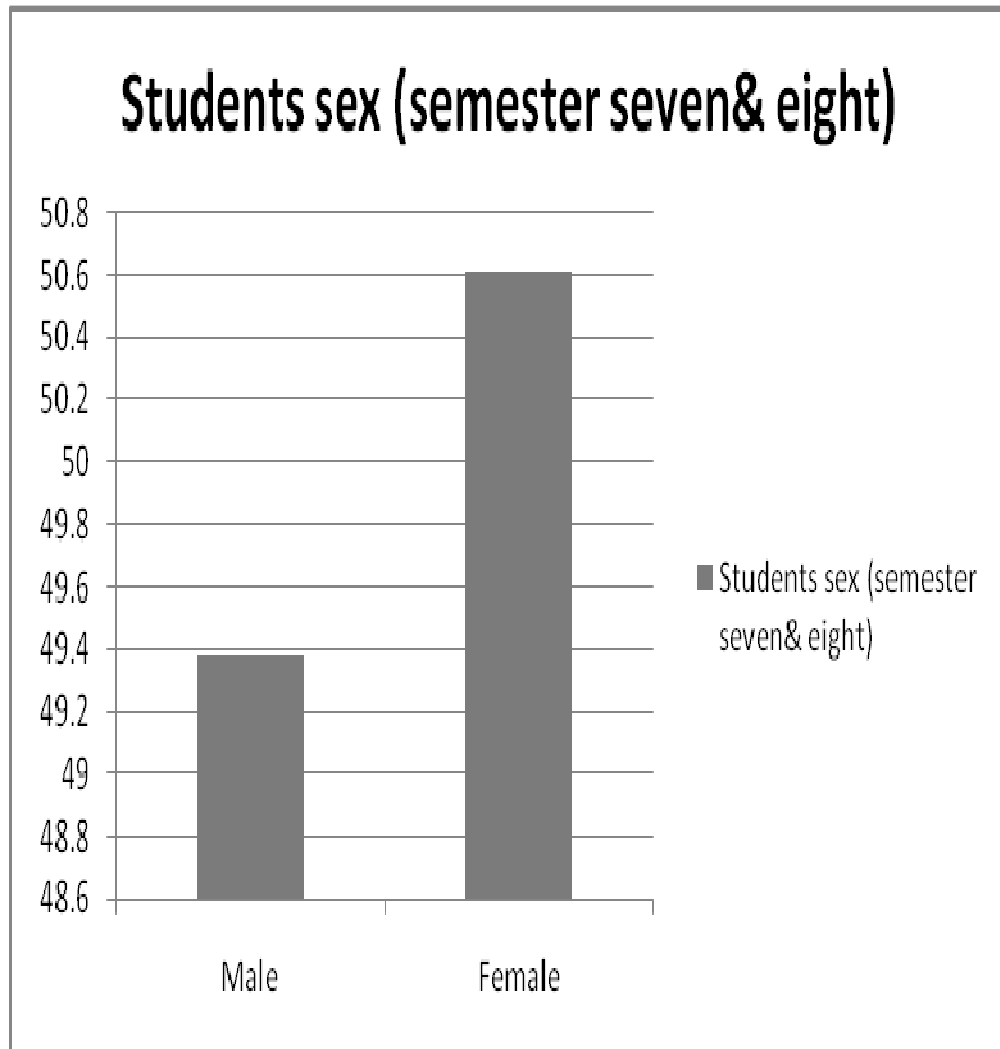


Figure No. (7) shows the Students' sex (semester seven& eight)

3.5 The Study Tools

After the researcher familiarized himself with the previous studies about writing and writing process relevant to this research, he benefited a great deal from the previous studies to formulate the tests and the questionnaire and design their questions.

3.5.1 The tests

Students were given **4** tests on writing skills to examine their standards and abilities; they were asked to write a paragraph, a composition, an essay and to punctuate a paragraph. The tests were invigilated by the researcher himself and the students were given enough time to answer these questions.

3.5.1.1 Test one (writing a composition)

Write in not less than 250 words on the following:

Every generation of people is different in many important ways; show how your generation is different from your parents' generation, use reasons and examples to explain your answer?

3.5.1.2 Test two (writing an essay)

Write an essay about co education

3.5.1.3 Test three (writing a paragraph)

Write a paragraph about your family?

3.5.1.4 Test four (punctuation & capitalization)

Punctuate the following paragraph?

Findings analysis and interpretation

The performances of the students on test one (*writing a composition*), test two (*writing an essay*), and test three (*writing paragraph*) were measured according to the following scales:

1- Yes, for good performance

2- Fair, for average performance

3- No, for none

While the performances of the students on test four (*mechanics*) were measured according to the following scales:

1- A = very good.

2- B = good.

3- C, = pass.

4- F = failure.

All the tests given to students were conducted as a part of their prescribed courses work at the university. The students seriously dealt with the tests as a part of the semester syllabi not as a study conducted on them. So the results of the tests were true and authentic. Then the researcher has designed 4 checklists for the four tests to make the analysis and marking accurate and scientific. The checklists were scaled - steps required for the writing the 4 tests. The students' performances and scores were filled in the checklists with the assistance of well-experienced staff members of the English Department at Shendi University.

3.5.2 The questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of **20** statements formulated in a way that they present a set of phrases and clauses relevant to the study subject being tested. Then the teachers were asked to answer each statement of the questionnaire by choosing one answer of the given three choices below each statement.

The questionnaire statements were designed and graded as following:

Statements 1, 2, 3,4 and 5 covered the hypothesis No 1.

Statements 6,7,8,9 and 10 covered the hypothesis No 2.

Statements 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 covered the hypothesis No 3.

Statements 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 covered the hypothesis No 4.

3.5.2.1 Validity of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire in its initial form has been presented to the supervisor who gave his opinion by adding, excluding or amending some of the statements of the questionnaire. He recommended that the statements ought to cover and express the hypotheses of the study and measure them properly.

To verify the validity of the study, the researcher after that presented the questionnaire to a committee of five experienced teachers in the Department of English Language at the University of Shendi, faculty of Arts. They were asked to approve and reassure the validity and to what extents the questionnaire statements and phrases were clear and appropriate to the study. They all gave their valuable contribution by adding, excluding or amending some of the statements of the questionnaire. So the questionnaire validity was of a high stability and an internal consistency.

3.5.2.2 Reliability of the Questionnaire

After the verification of the validity of the questionnaire and by using the split - half method, the questionnaire was distributed to **10** teachers of English language in secondary schools, five males and five females. Then, the researcher manually as well as with the computer, calculated the correlation between the five males and the five females to figure out the consistency and the stability of it. The result is that the correlation between the two halves is **.87**

Table No (8) shows the mathematic steps used in calculating the reliability of the questionnaire

Samples	Male(x)	Female (y)	xy	x ²	y ²
1	43	45	1935	1879	2025
2	45	47	2115	2025	2209
3	52	50	2600	2704	2500
4	43	40	1720	1849	1600
5	37	40	1480	1369	1600
Σ	220	222	9850	9826	9934

$$r = \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

Figure No (8) shows the equation used in measuring the reliability (consistency) of the questionnaire

3.5.2.3 Questionnaire Application

Subsequent to the validity and the consistency of the questionnaire, it was applied to **10** teachers of the Department of English Language at Shendi University.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the questionnaire given to the teachers and the tests given to the fourth year students (7th & 8th semesters), at the College of Arts, Shendi University

Students were given **4** tests on writing skills to examine and measure their standards and abilities as well as to figure out the difficult and problematic areas they face in writing skills. On the other hand, the teachers of the English Department at the University were given a questionnaire to benefit from their knowledge and experience in the light of their linguistic ability. The performances of the students on the **4** tests and the answers of the teachers were measured and analysed according to the scales and the checklists mentioned in chapter three. The analysis of the data was shown in tables as well as in visible figures. Data are displayed in tables by using the percentage method and frequencies as well. Every step of the tests and every statement of the questionnaire were analysed individually by displaying the percentage of their answers and the frequencies of the samples. Below every table and figure, an interpretation is written to describe the students' performance as well as the answers of the teachers in a brief summary through a written discourse. In the end a through discussion is done for the whole chapter.

4.2 The Tests

4.2.1 Test one (writing composition)

Table No (1) shows the number of the students sat for this test and the distribution of their classes.

Class	Frequency	Percent
Seven	41	62.1
Eight	25	37.9
Total	66	100.0

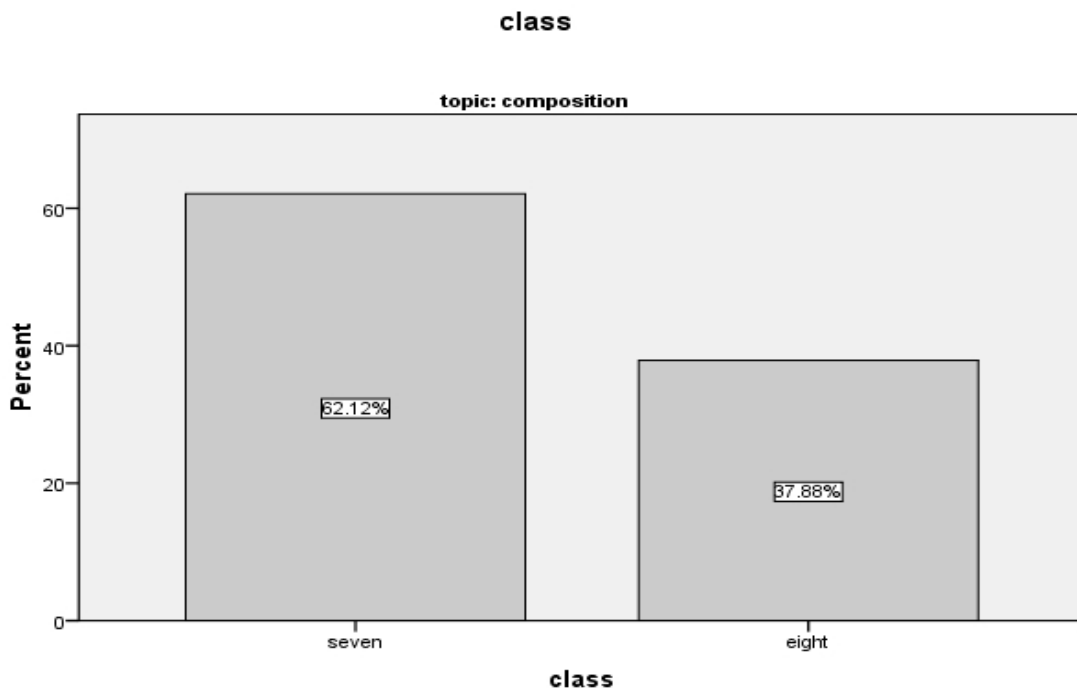


Figure No (1) shows the number of the students sat for this test and the distribution of their classes.

According to data presented in table and figure (1) **66** students sat the composition test, **41** students from class seven & **25** students from class eight and they all form **81.5%** of the whole study sample.

Table No (2) shows the number of the students sat for this test and the distribution of their sex.

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	27	40.9
Female	39	59.1
Total	66	100.0

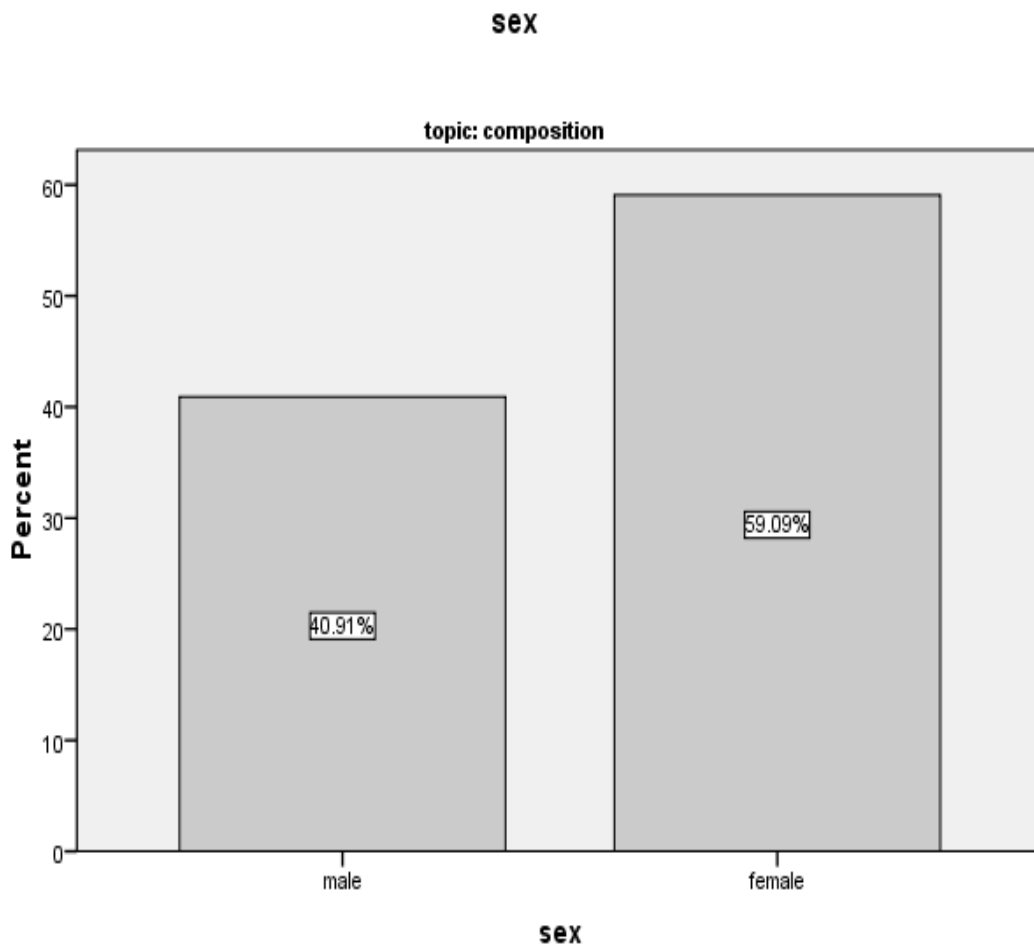


Figure No (2) shows the number of the students sat for this test and the distribution of their sex.

According to data presented in table and figure (2) **66** students sat for the essay test, **27** males and **39** females and they all form **81.5%** of the whole study sample.

A - Outline of the composition

A1- The composition is clearly organized (*introduction, body and conclusion*)

Table No (3) shows the performance of the students regarding A1.

A 1	Frequency	Percent
Yes	16	24.2
Fair	30	45.5
No	20	30.3
Total	66	100.0

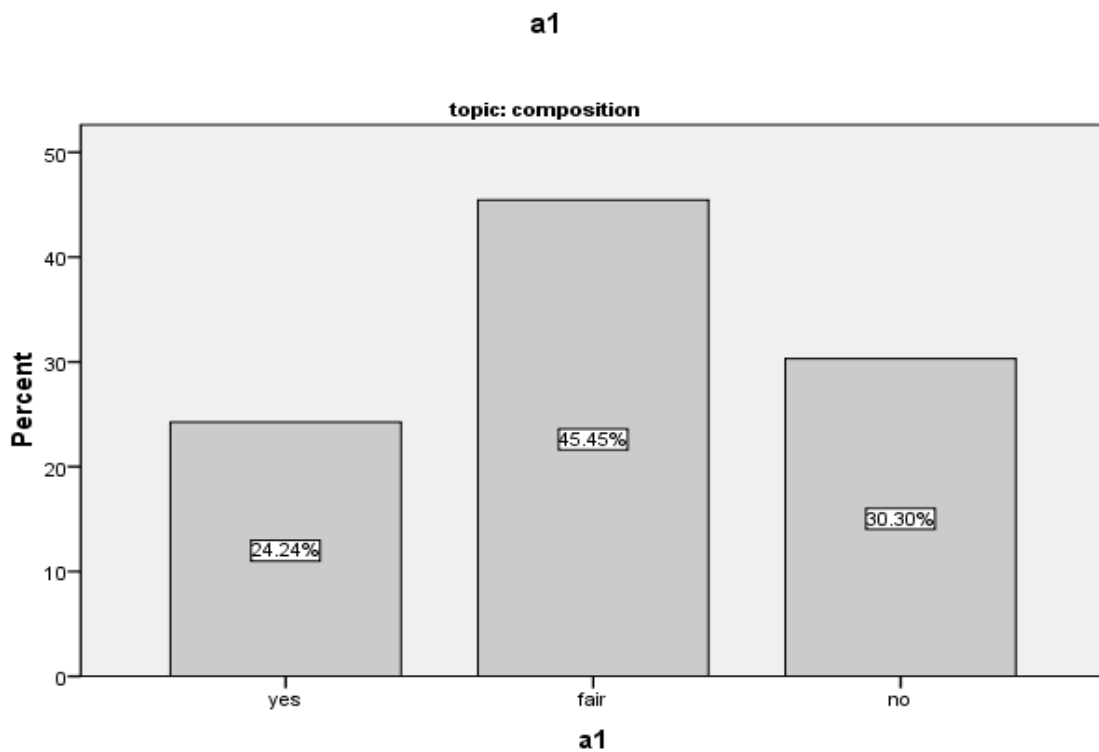


Figure No (3) shows the performance of the students regarding A1.

According to table and figure (3), most of the students' scores are between (**Fair** & **No**) their frequencies are (**30** & **20**) and they form (**30.3%** & **45.5%**) respectively. So, most of their works were not clearly or not organised in (*introduction, body and conclusion*)

A 2- The contents of the composition are related to the title; they are all relevant.

Table No (4) Shows the performance of the students regarding A2.

A 2	Frequency	Percent
Yes	16	24.2
Fair	42	63.6
No	8	12.1
Total	66	100.0

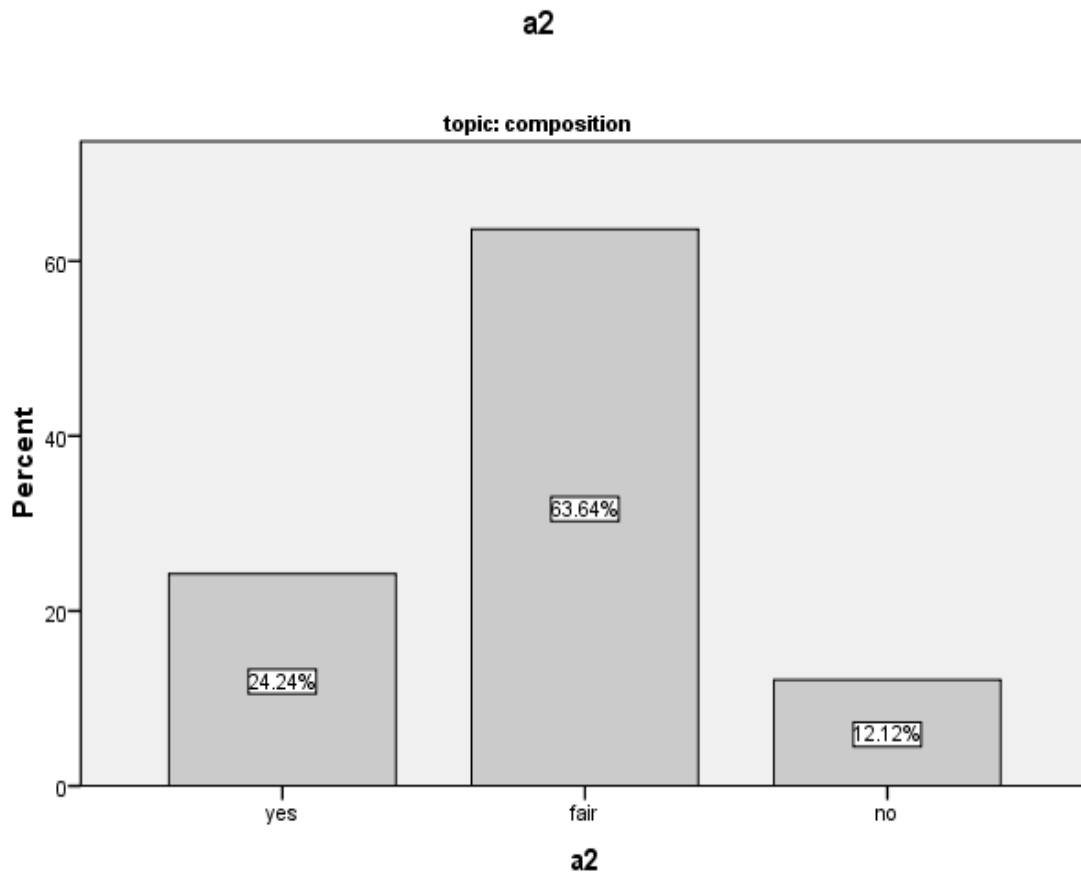


Figure No (4) shows the performance of the students regarding A2.

According to data in table and figure (4), most of the students' scores are **(Fair)** its frequency is **(42)** and it forms **(63.6%)**. So that most of the contents of their written works were not clearly related to the title.

A 3 - The composition is unified.

Table No. (5) Shows the performance of the students regarding A3

A 3	Frequency	Percent
Yes	9	13.6
Fair	34	51.5
No	23	34.8
Total	66	100.0

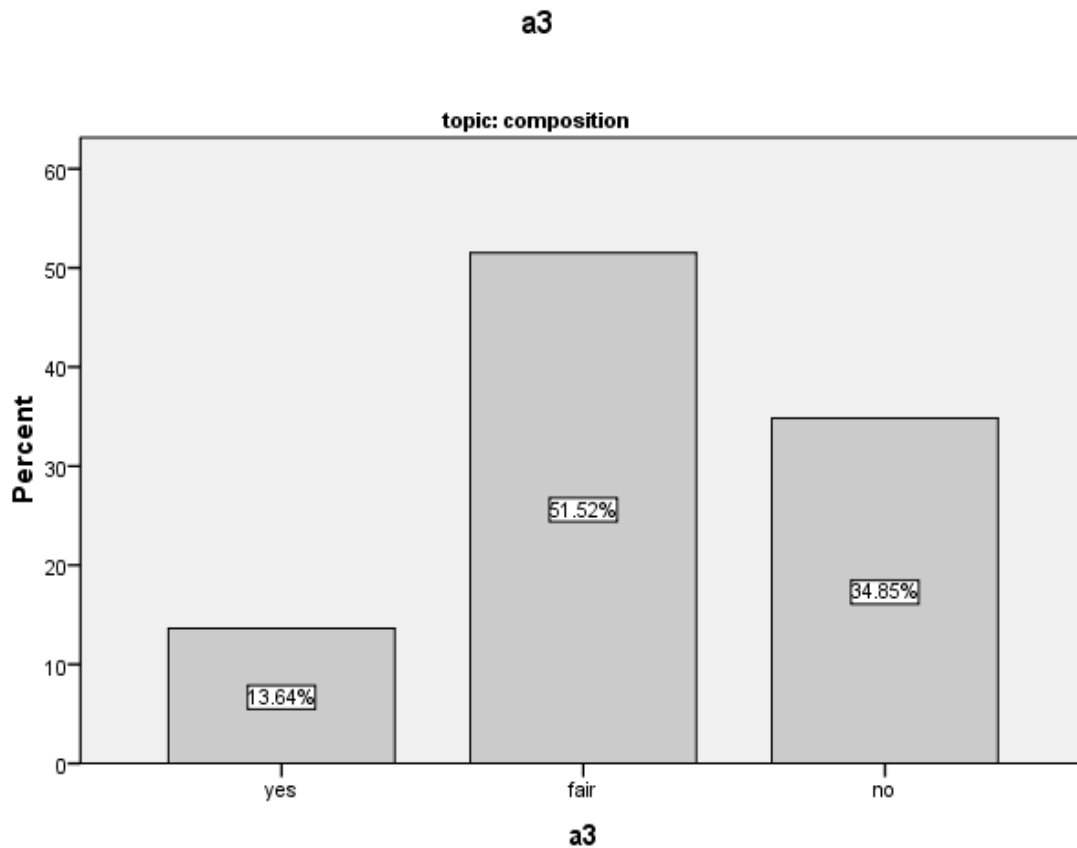


Figure No (5) shows the performance of the students regarding A3.

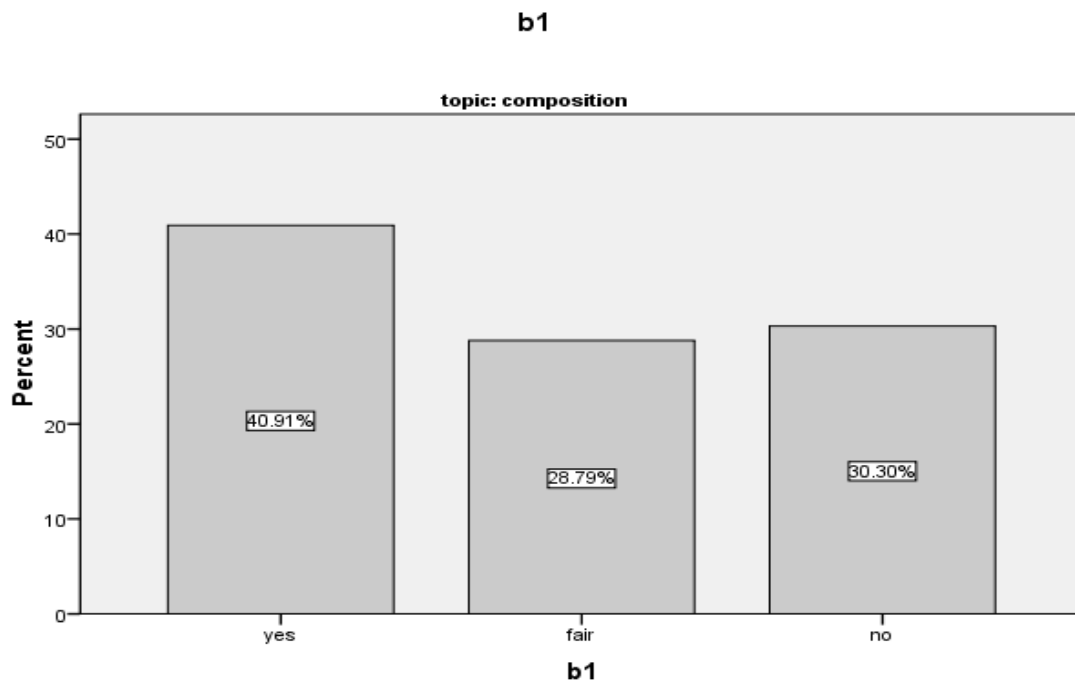
According to table and figure (5), most of the students scores are between (**Fair** & **No**) their frequencies are (**34** & **23**) and they form (**51.5%** & **34.8%**). So, their compositions were not clearly unified.

B – Introduction of the composition

B 1 - The introductory paragraph includes a topic sentence and presents interesting information about the topic.

*Table No. (6) Shows the performance of the students regarding **B1***

B1	Frequency	Percent
Yes	27	40.9
Fair	19	28.8
No	20	30.3
Total	66	100.0



*Figure No (6) shows the performance of the students regarding **B1**.*

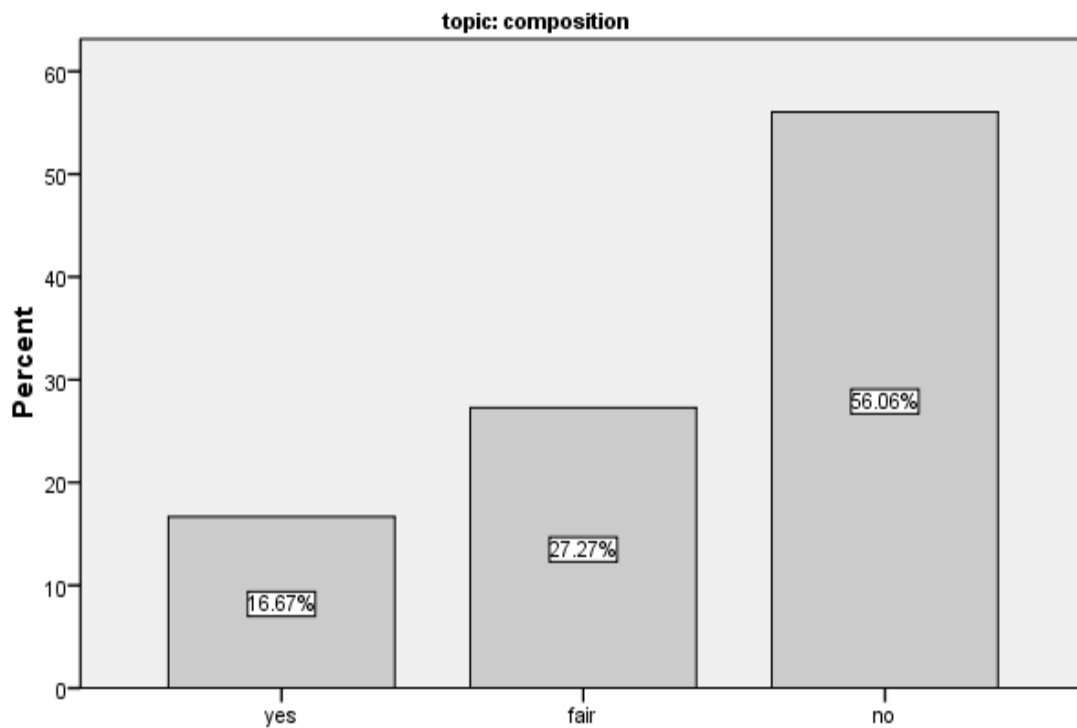
According to table and figure (6), it is clear that **27 (40.9%)** of the students' scores are (**Yes**) and their introductory paragraphs include topic sentences, while the other **39 (59.1%)** students' scores are (**Fair & No**). So their introductory paragraphs do not include topic sentences.

B2- The topic sentence is developed with descriptive details (illustrations).

*Table No. (7) Shows the performance of the students regarding **B2**.*

B2	Frequency	Percent
Yes	11	16.7
Fair	18	27.3
No	37	56.1
Total	66	100.0

b2



b2

*Figure No (7) shows the performance of the students regarding **B2**.*

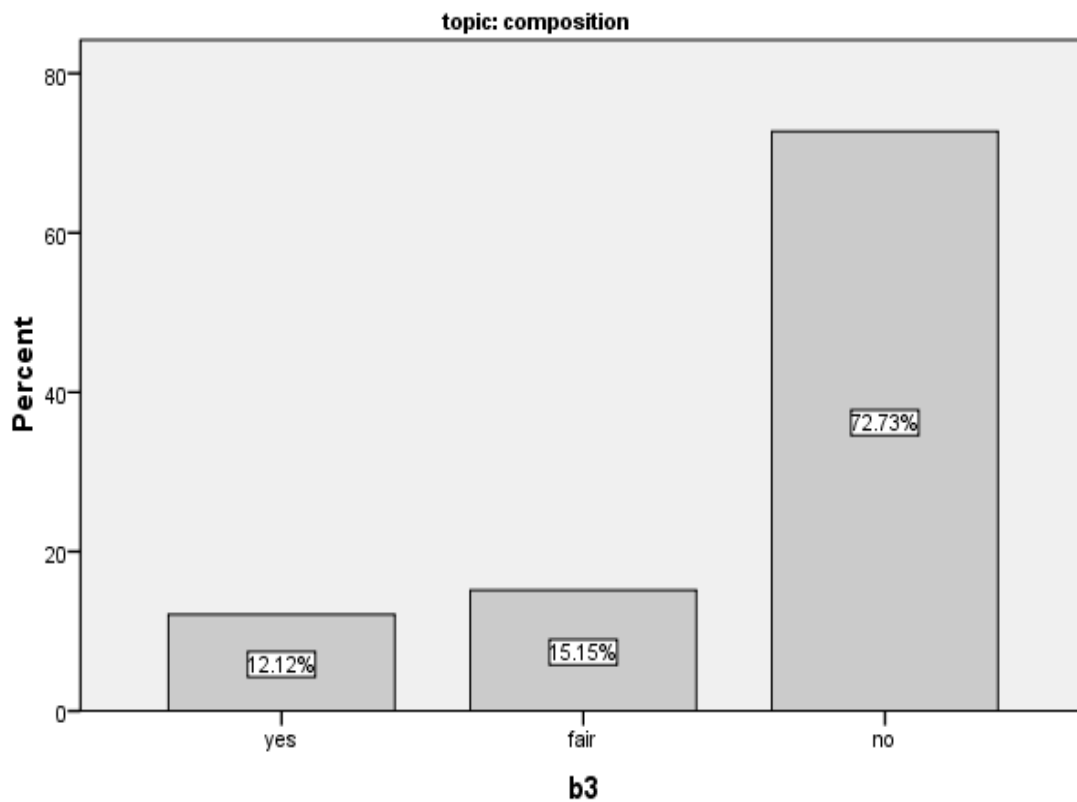
According to table and figure (7), **37** of the students' scores are (**No**) and they form (**56.1%**), so that most of their introductions' topic sentences are not developed with descriptive details and illustrations.

B 3 - The introductory paragraph has a concluding sentence.

*Table No. (8) Shows the performance of the students regarding **B3**.*

B3	Frequency	Percent
Yes	8	12.1
Fair	10	15.2
No	48	72.7
Total	66	100.0

b3



*Figure No (8) shows the performance of the students regarding **B3**.*

According to table and figure (8), **48** of the students' scores are (**No**) and they form (**72.7%**) of the sample, so most of their introductory paragraphs have no concluding sentences.

C - The body of the composition

C 1- Each body paragraph has a clear topic sentence related to the main idea of the composition.

Table No. (9) Shows the performance of the students regarding C1.

C1	Frequency	Percent
Yes	6	9.1
Fair	32	48.5
No	28	42.4
Total	66	100.0

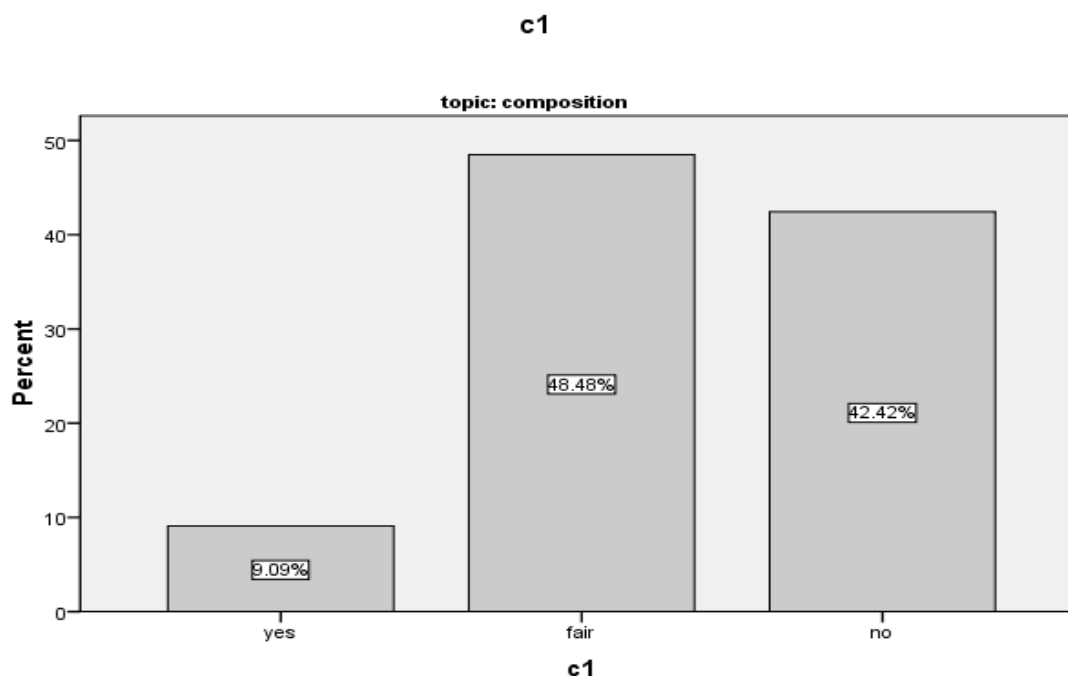


Figure No. (9) Shows the performance of the students regarding C1.

According to table and figure (9), most of the students' scores are (**Nair & No**) their frequencies are (**32 & 28**) and they form (**48.5% & 42.4%**). So, most of their body paragraphs have no and have no clear topic sentences related to the main idea of the composition.

C 2- Each paragraph in the body presents new information about the topic.

Table No. (10) Shows the performance of the students regarding C2.

C2	Frequency	Percent
Yes	8	12.1
Fair	23	34.8
No	35	53.3
Total	66	100.0

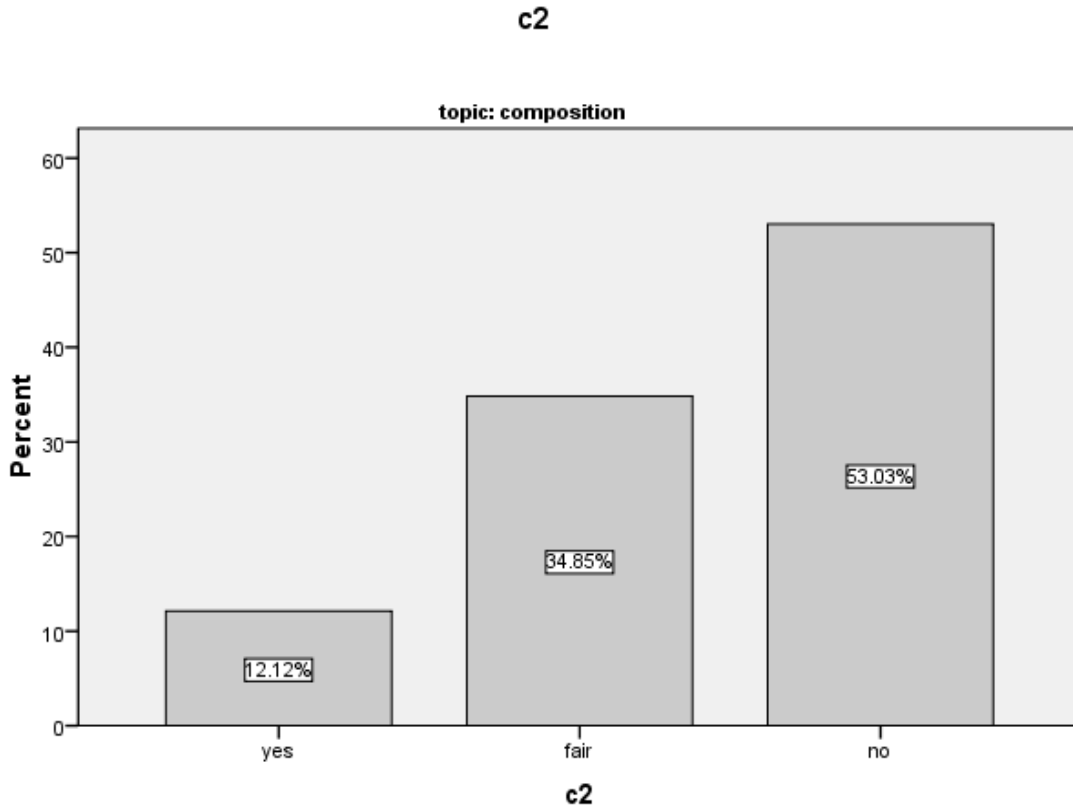


Figure No (10) shows the performance of the students regarding C2.

According to table and figure (10), most of the students' scores are (**Fair & No**) their frequencies are (**23 & 35**) and they form (**34.8% & 53.3%**). So, most of their paragraphs in the body do not or do not clearly present new information about the topic.

C 3 - Each body paragraph includes sufficient illustrations about the topic.
Table No. (11) Shows the performance of the students regarding C3.

C3	Frequency	Percent
Yes	7	10.6
Fair	16	24.2
No	43	65.2
Total	66	100.0

c3

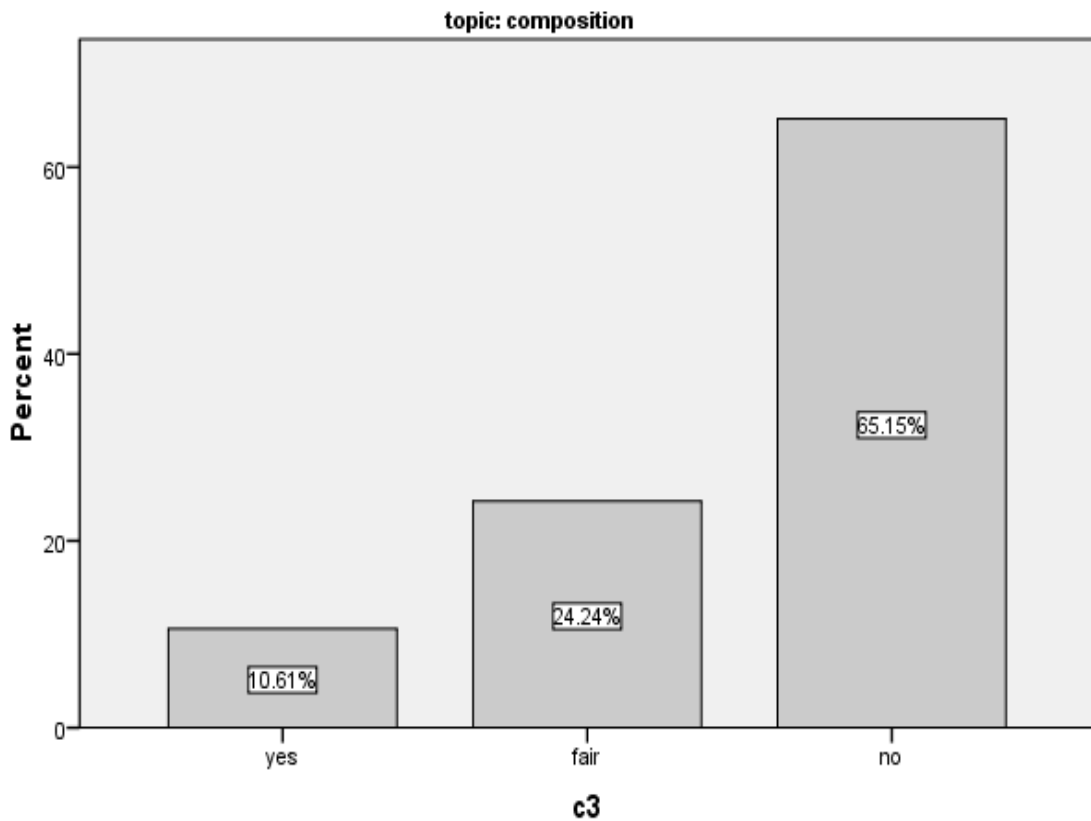


Figure No (11) shows the performance of the students regarding C3.

According to table and figure (11), most of the students' scores are (**Fair & No**) their frequencies are (**16 & 43**) and they form (**24.2% & 65.2%**). So, that most of their paragraphs in the body do not include sufficient illustrations about the topic.

D – The Conclusion of the composition

D 1 - The concluding paragraph has a topic sentence.

Table No. (12) Shows the performance of the students regarding D1.

D1	Frequency	Percent
Yes	9	13.6
Fair	22	33.3
No	35	53.0
Total	66	100.0

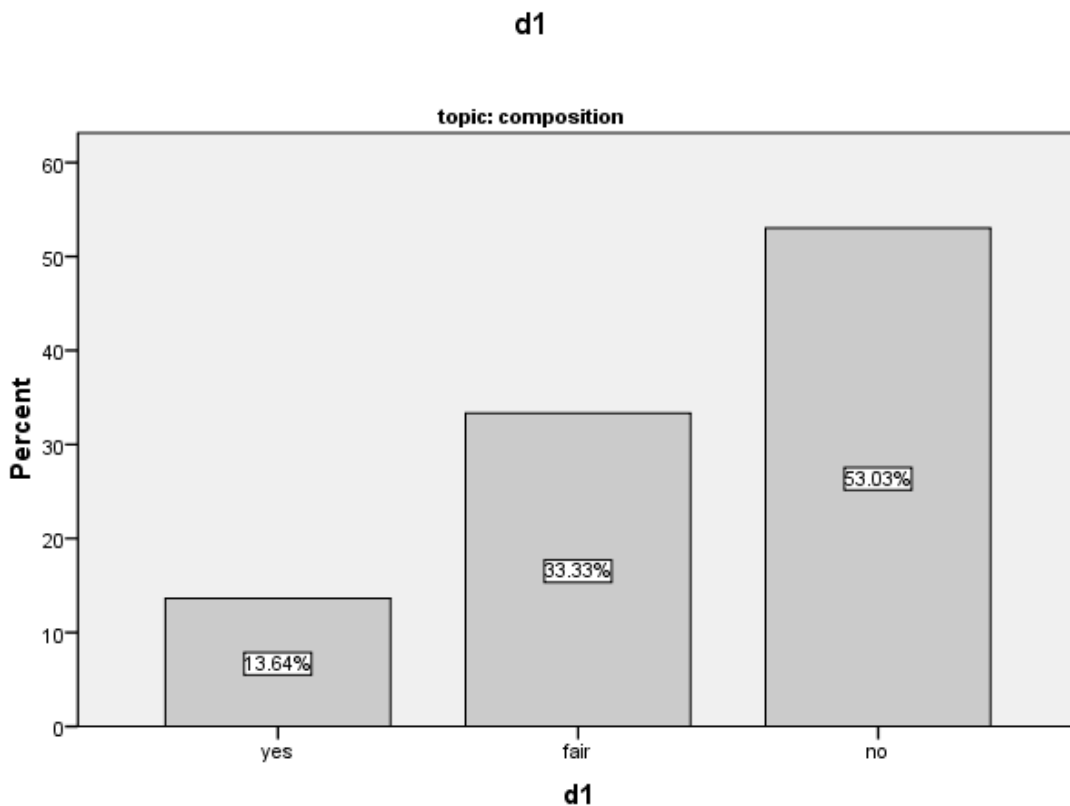


Figure No (12) shows the performance of the students regarding D1.

According to table and figure (12), most of the students' scores are (**Fair & No**) their frequencies are (**22 & 35**) and they form (**33.3% & 53.0%**). So that most of their concluding paragraphs have no, or have no clear topic sentences.

D 2 - The conclusion refers to the main idea of the composition by restating it in a new way.

Table No. (13) Shows the performance of the students regarding D2.

D2	Frequency	Percent
Yes	4	6.1
Fair	20	30.3
No	42	63.6
Total	66	100.0

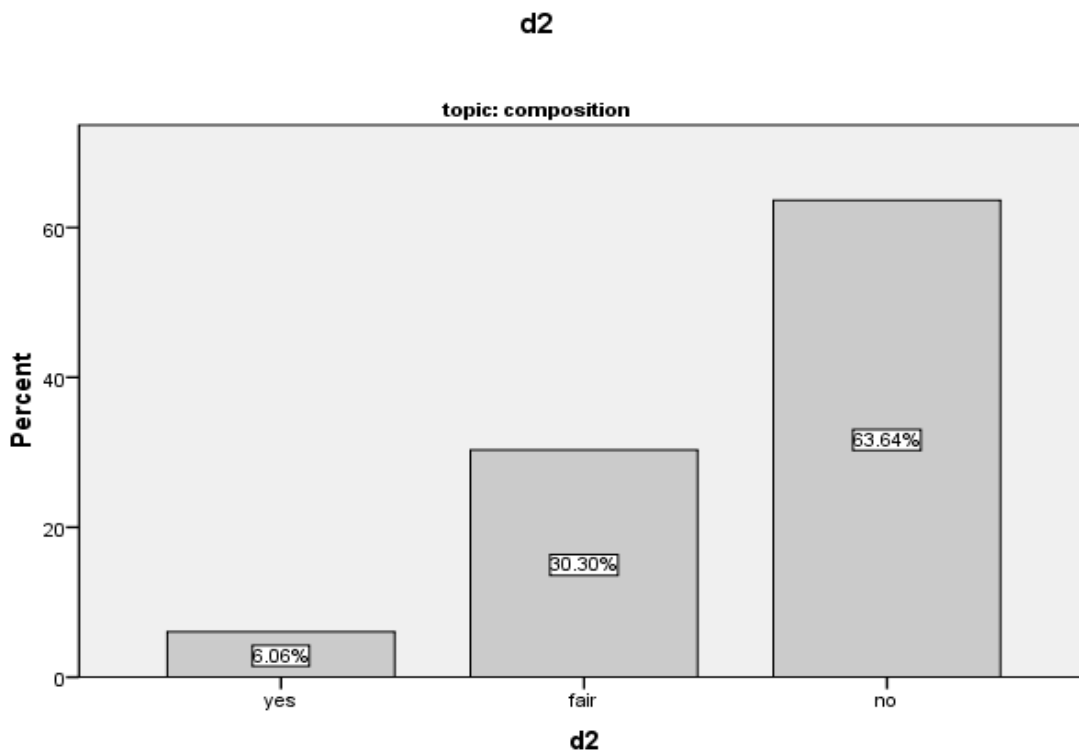


Figure No (13) shows the performance of the students regarding D2.

According to table and figure (13), most of the students' scores are (**Fair & No**) their frequencies are (**20 & 42**) and they form (**30.3% & 63.6%**). So, that most of their conclusions do not refer, or do not refer clearly to the main idea of the composition.

4.2.2 Test two (writing an essay)

Table No (14) shows the number of the students sat for this test and the distribution of their classes.

Class	Frequency	Percent
Seven	42	54.5
Eight	35	45.5
Total	77	100.0

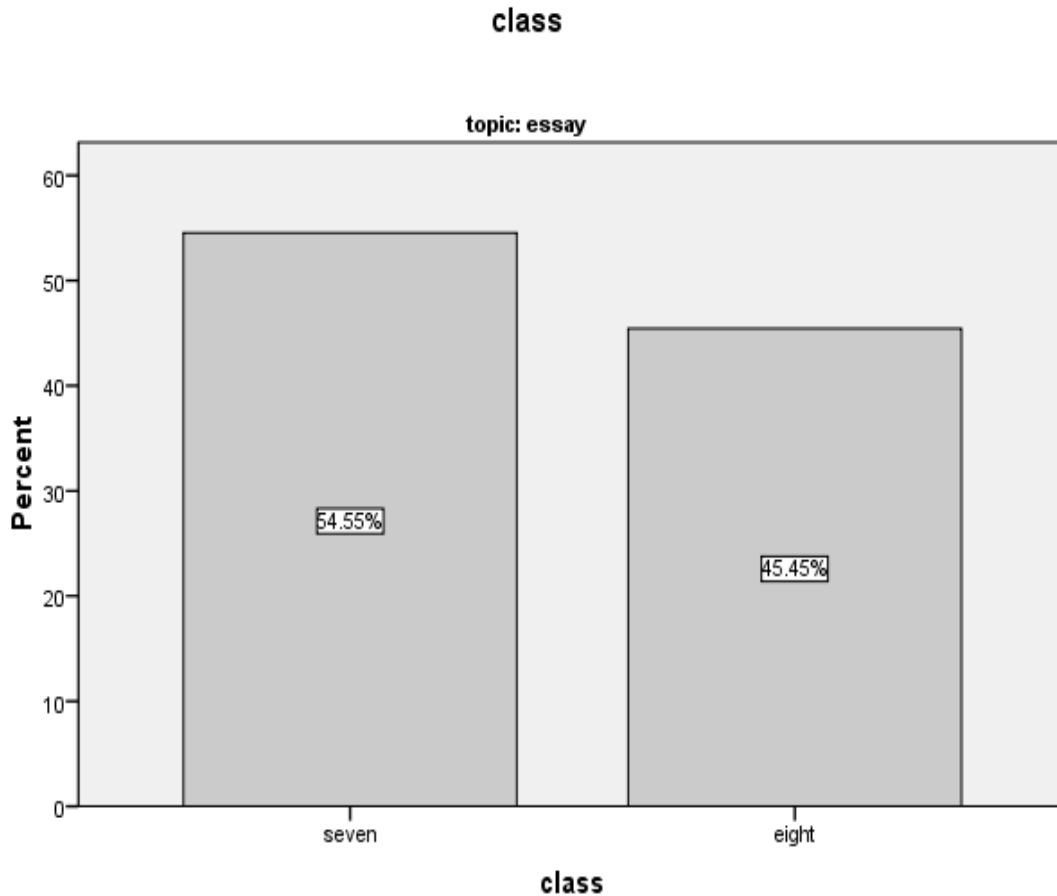


Figure No (14) shows the distribution of the students' classes.

According to data presented in table and figure (14), it is clear that **77** students sat for the essay test, **42** from class seven and **35** from class eight and they all form **95%** of the whole study sample.

Table No. (15) Shows the number of the students sat for this test and the distribution of their sex.

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	38	49.4
Female	39	50.6
Total	77	100.0

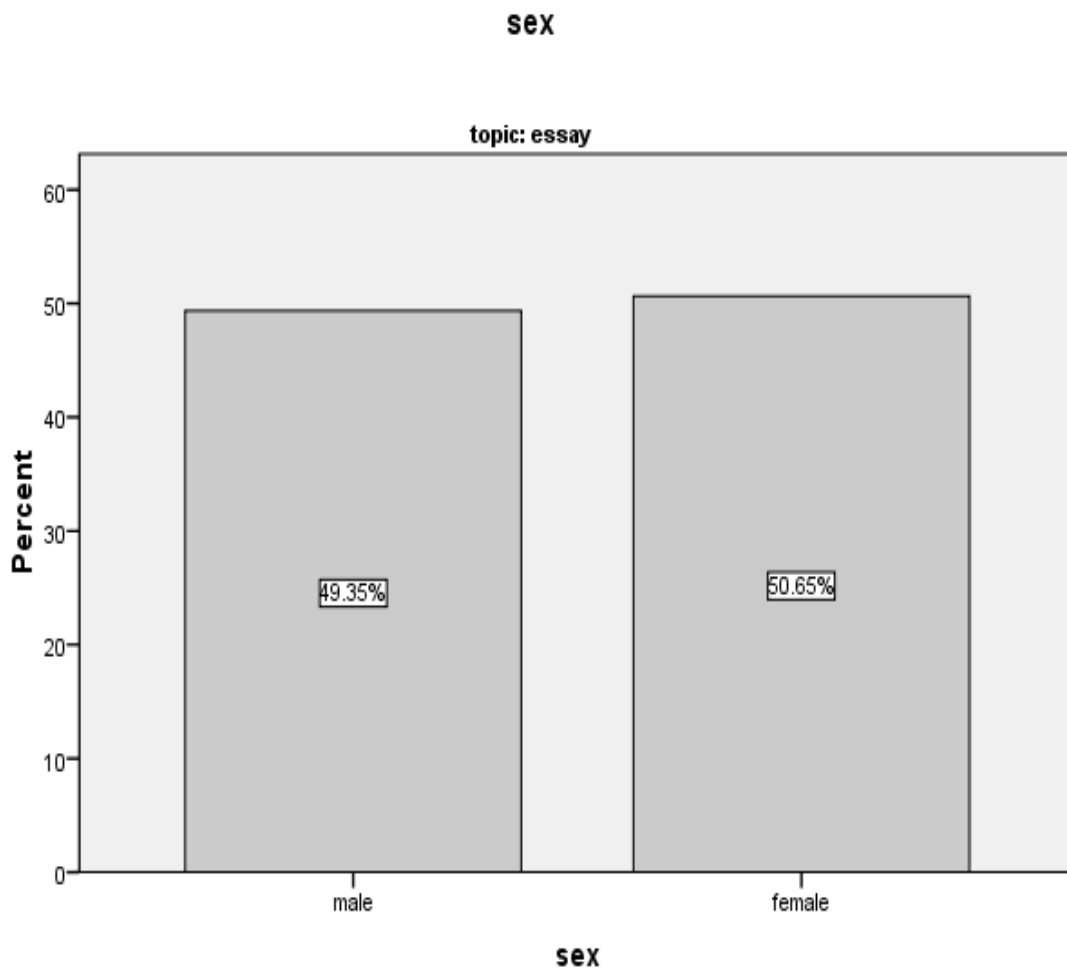


Figure No (15) shows the number of the students sat for this test and the distribution of their sex.

According to data presented in table and figure (15) **77** students sat for the essay test, **38** males and **39** females and they all form **95%** of the whole study sample.

A - Outline of the essay

A1- The essay is clearly organized – *introduction, body and conclusion.*

Table No. (16) Shows the performance of the students regarding A1.

A1	Frequency	Percent
Yes	3	3.9
Fair	32	41.6
No	42	54.5
Total	77	100.0

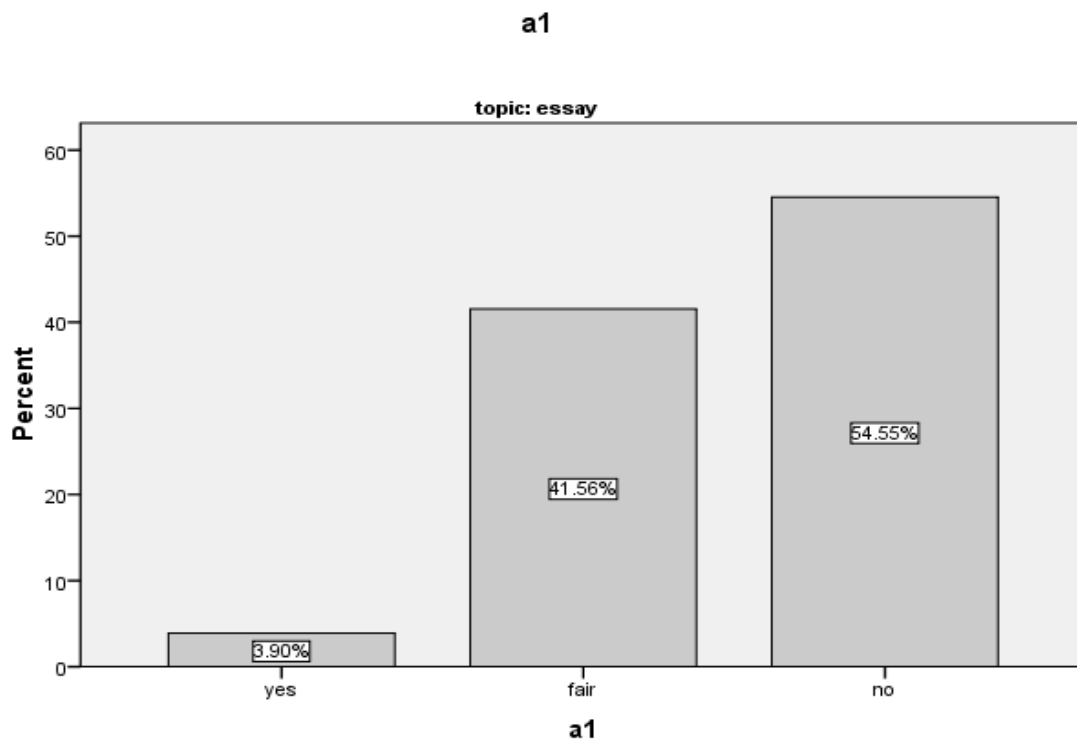


Figure No (16) shows the performance of the students regarding A1.

According to table and figure (16), it is clear that most of the students' scores are between (**Fair & No**) their frequencies are (**32 & 42**) and they form (**41.6% & 54.5%**). So that almost all their written works were not or not clearly organised in (*introduction, body and conclusion*)

A 2- The contents of the essay are related to the title; they are all relevant.

Table No. (17) Shows the performance of the students regarding A2.

A2	Frequency	Percent
Yes	11	14.3
Fair	59	76.6
No	7	9.1
Total	77	100.0

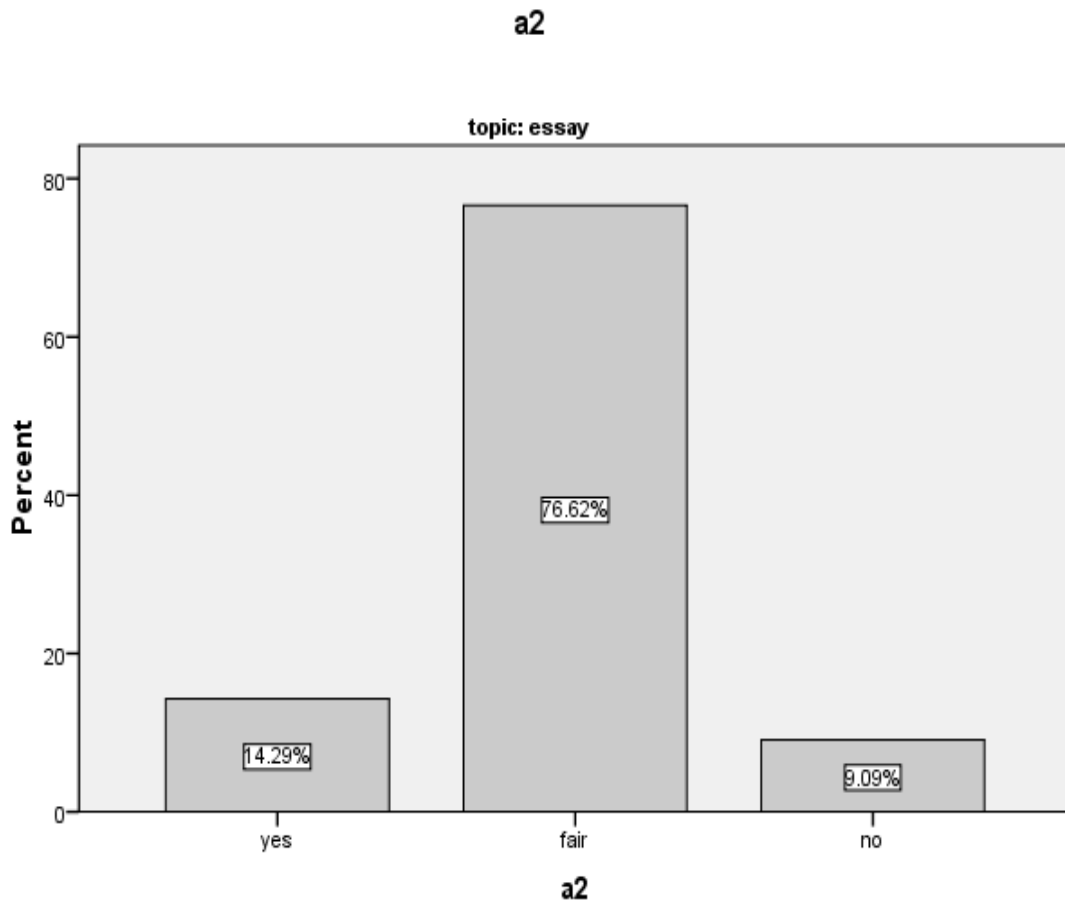


Figure No (17) shows the performance of the students regarding A2.

According to data presented in table and figure (17), it is clear that **48** of the students' scores are (**Fair**) and they form (**76.6%**) of the sample, so that most of the contents of their written work were not clearly relevant to the title.

A 3 - The essay is unified

Table No. (18) Shows the performance of the students regarding A3.

A3	Frequency	Percent
Yes	5	6.5
Fair	37	48.1
No	35	45.5
Total	77	100.0

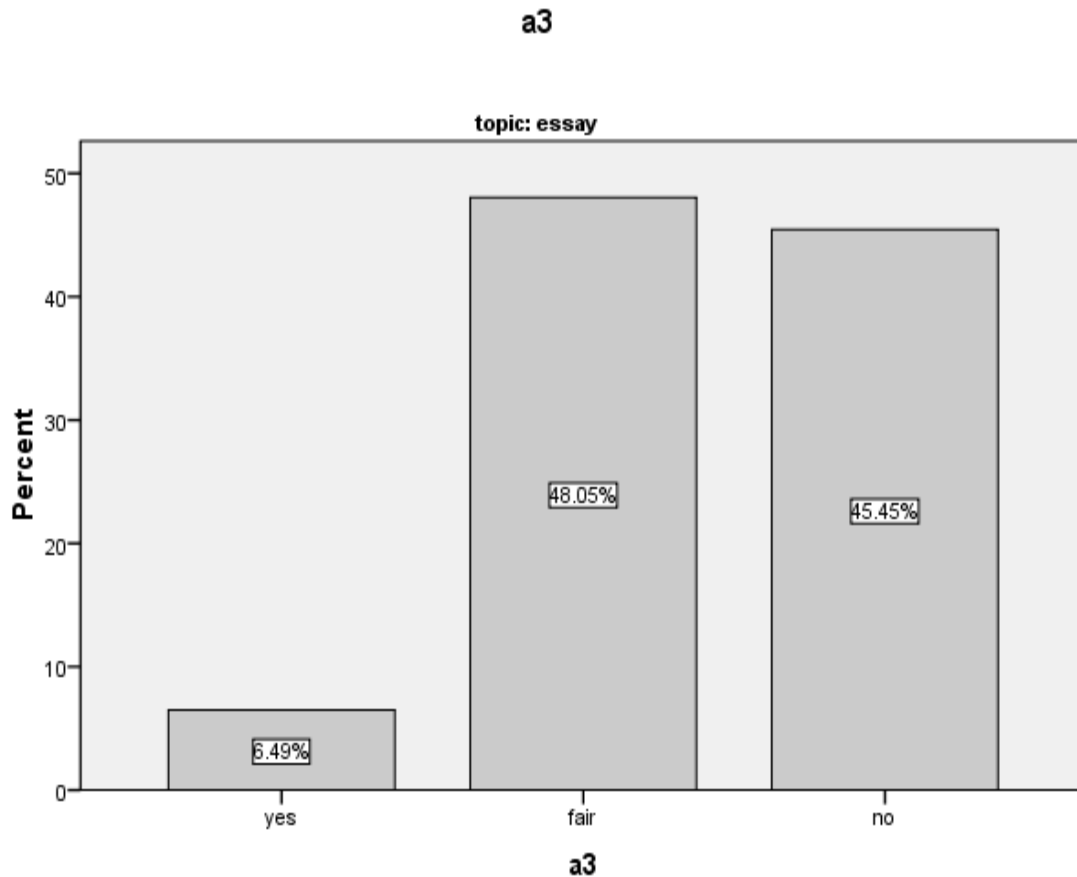


Figure No (18) shows the performance of the students regarding A3.

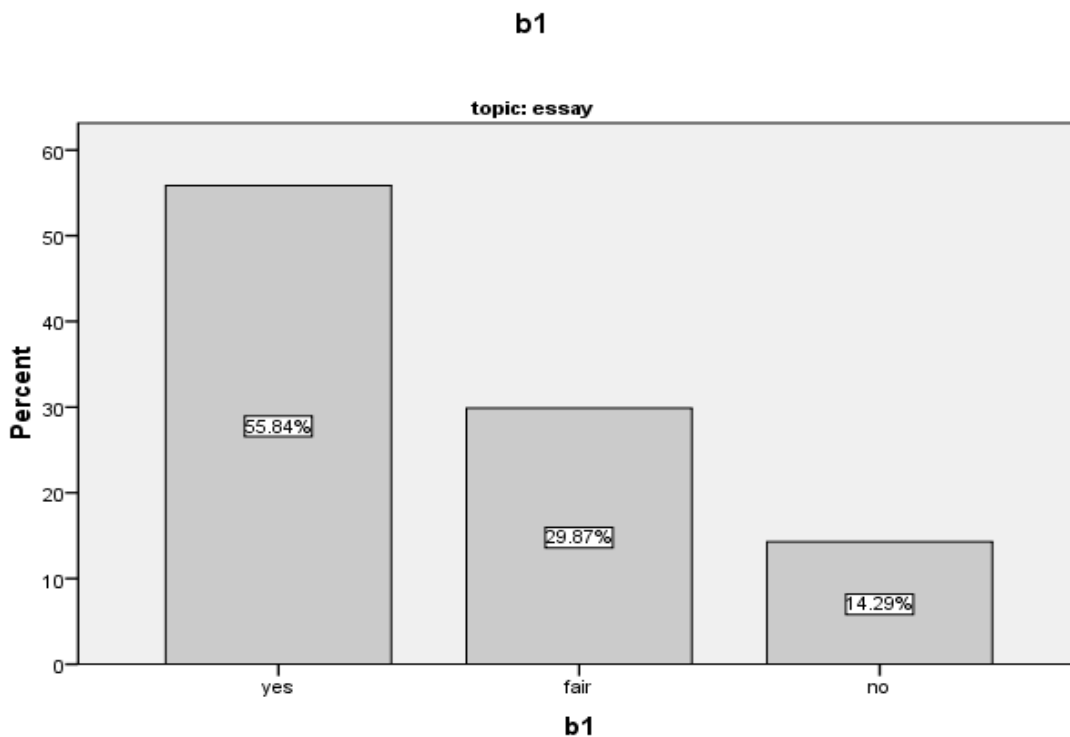
According to table and figure (18), most of the students scores are between (**Fair & No**) and their frequencies are (**37 & 35**) and they form (**48.1% & 45.5%**) of the students so that most of their essays were not, or were not clearly unified.

B – Introduction of the essay

B 1 - The introductory paragraph includes a topic sentence and presents interesting information about the topic.

*Table No. (19) Shows the performance of the students regarding **B1**.*

B1	Frequency	Percent
Yes	43	55.8
Fair	23	29.9
No	11	14.3
Total	77	100.0



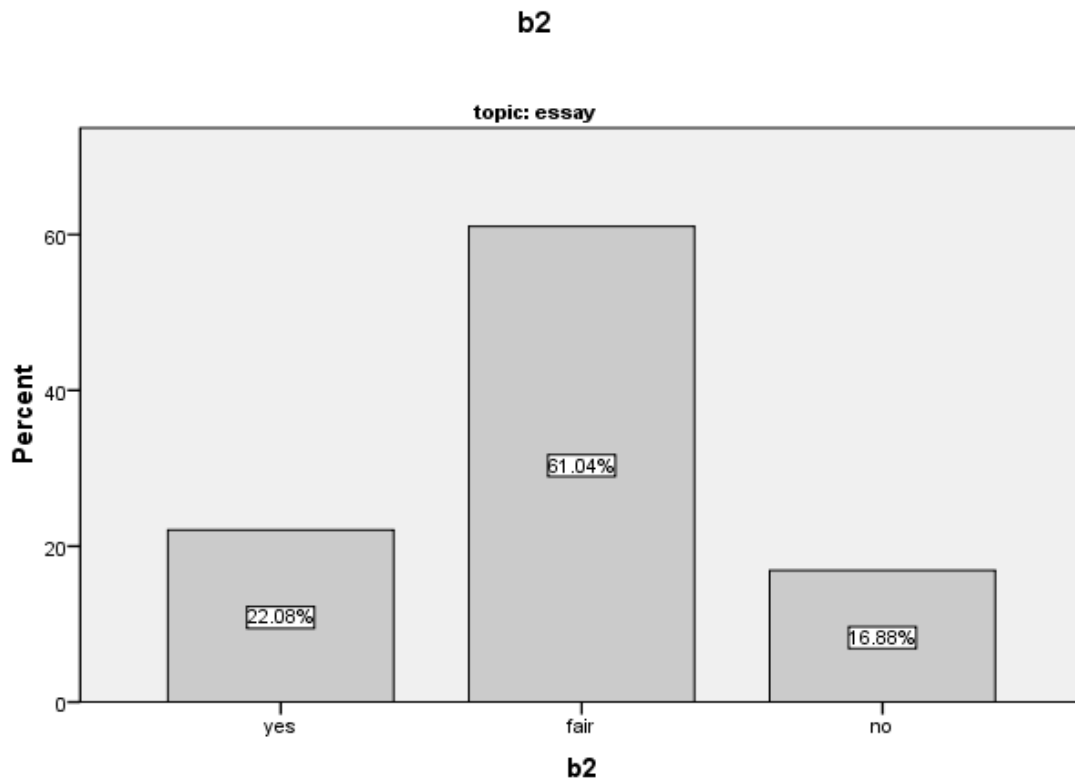
*Figure No (19) shows the performance of the students regarding **B1**.*

According to table and figure (19), most of the students' scores are (**Yes & Fair**), their frequencies are (**43 & 23**) and they form (**55.8% & 29.9%**). So that most of their introductory paragraphs include or include but not clearly topic sentences that interest the readers.

B2- The topic sentence is developed with descriptive details (illustrations).

*Table No. (20) Shows the performance of the students regarding **B2**.*

B2	Frequency	Percent
Yes	17	22.1
Fair	47	61.0
No	13	16.9
Total	77	100.0



*Figure No (20) shows the performance of the students regarding **B2**.*

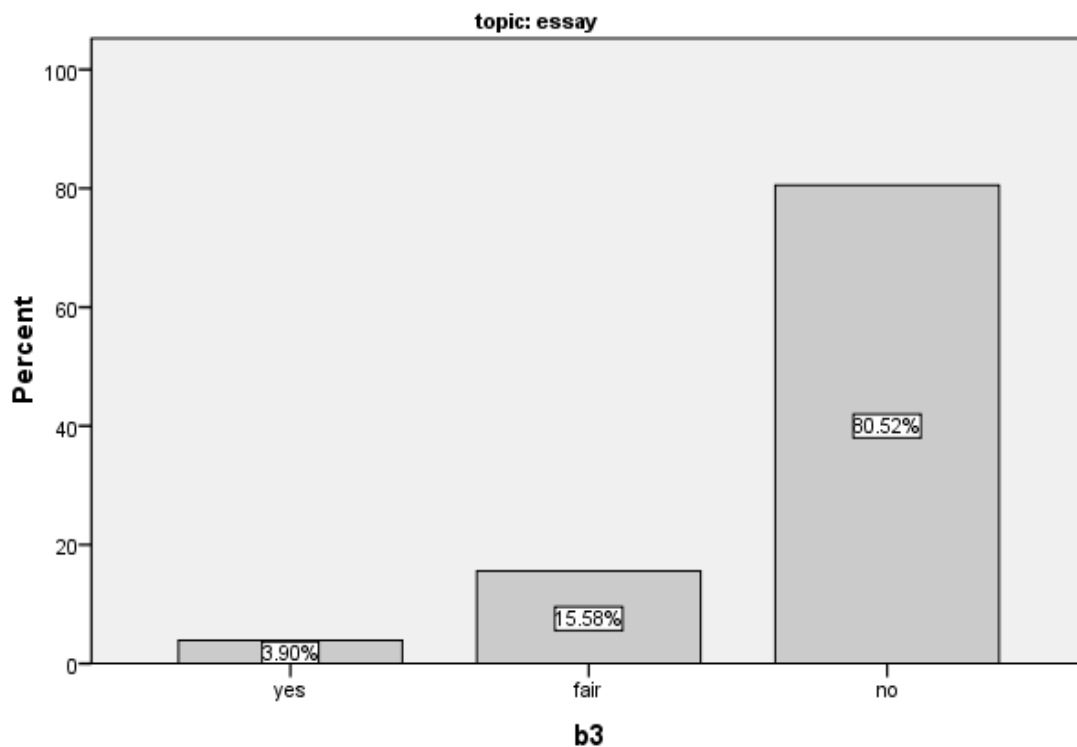
According to data presented in table and figure (20), it is clear that **47** of the students' scores are (**Fair**) and they form (**61.0%**) of the sample, so that most of their introductions' topic sentences are not clearly developed with descriptive details or illustrations.

B 3 - The introductory paragraph has a concluding sentence.

*Table No. (21) Shows the performance of the students regarding **B3**.*

B3	Frequency	Percent
Yes	3	3.9
Fair	12	15.6
No	62	80.5
Total	77	100.0

b3



*Figure No (21) shows the performance of the students regarding **B3**.*

According to data presented in table and figure (21), **62** of the students' scores are (**No**) and they form (**80.5%**) of the sample, so that most of their introductory paragraphs have no concluding sentences.

C – The body of the essay

C 1- Each body paragraph has a clear topic sentence related to the main idea of the essay.

Table No. (22) Shows the performance of the students regarding C1.

C1	Frequency	Percent
Yes	4	5.2
Fair	46	59.7
No	27	35.1
Total	77	100.0

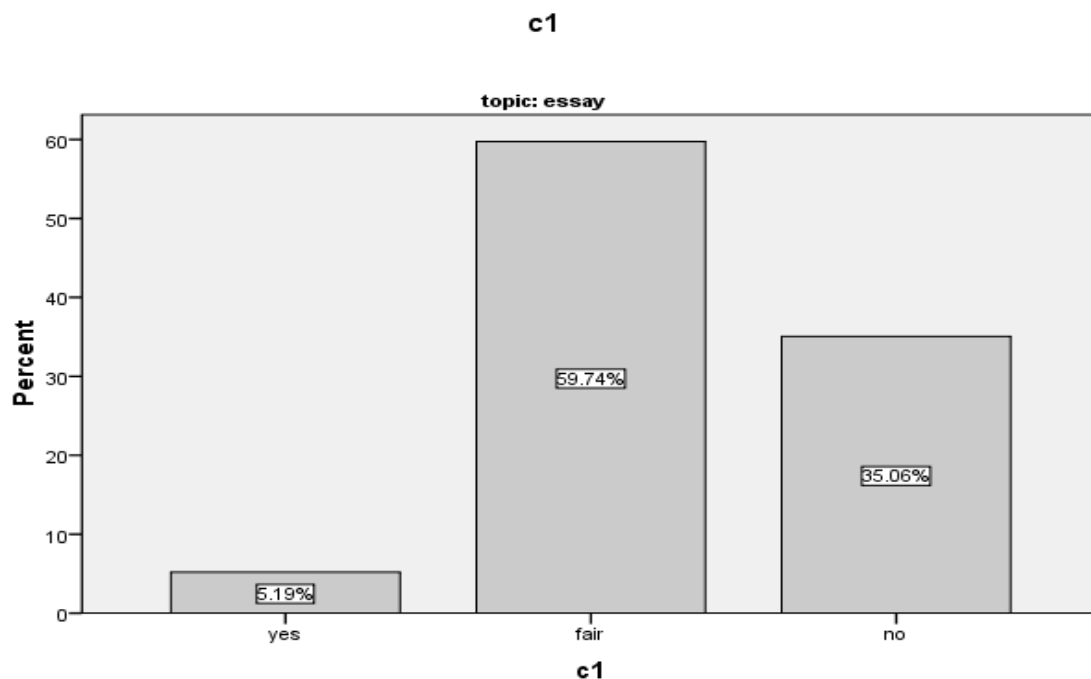


Figure No (22) shows the performance of the students regarding C1.

According to table and figure (22), most of the students' scores are (**Fair & No**), their frequencies are (**46 & 27**) and they form (**59.7% & 35.1%**) of the students so that most of their body paragraphs have no or have no clear topic sentences related to the main idea of the essay.

C 2- Each paragraph in the body presents new information about the topic.

Table No. (23) Shows the performance of the students regarding C2.

C2	Frequency	Percent
Yes	3	3.9
Fair	49	63.6
No	25	32.5
Total	77	100.0

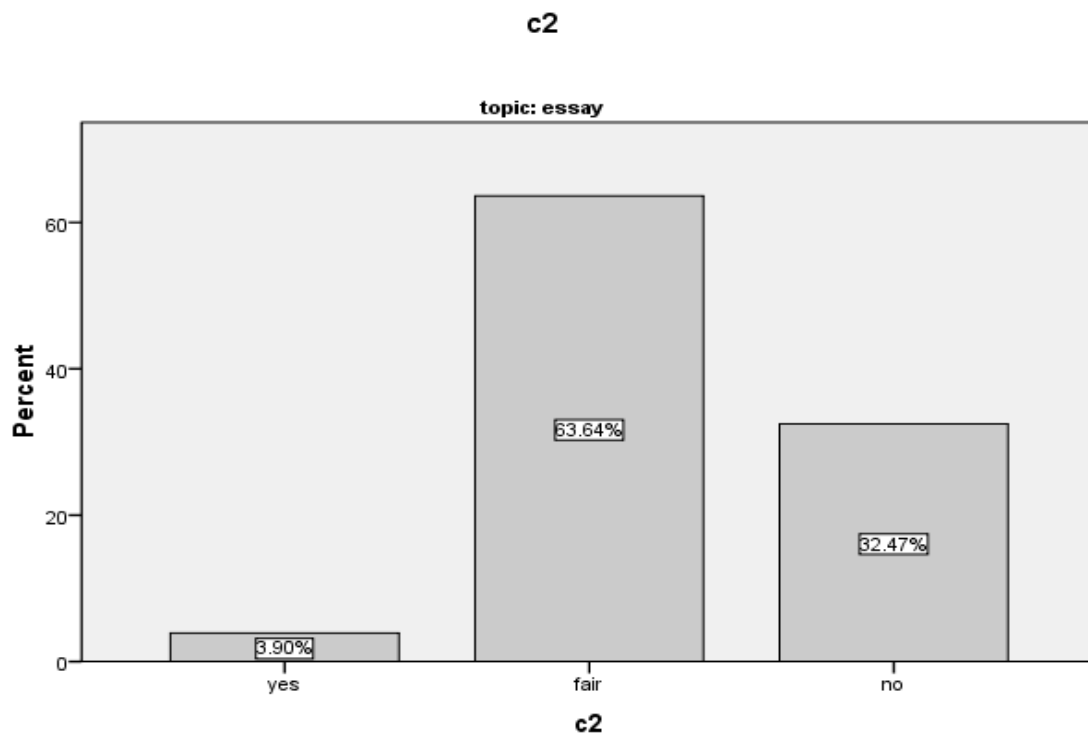


Figure No (23) shows the performance of the students regarding C2.

According to table and figure (23), most of the students' scores are (**Fair & No**), their frequencies are (**49 & 25**) and they form (**63.6% & 32.5%**) of the students, so that most of their paragraphs in the body do not, or do not clearly present new information about the topic.

C 3 - Each body paragraph includes sufficient illustrations about the topic.

Table No. (24) Shows the performance of the students regarding C3.

C3	Frequency	Percent
Yes	1	1.3
Fair	34	44.2
No	42	54.5
Total	77	100.0

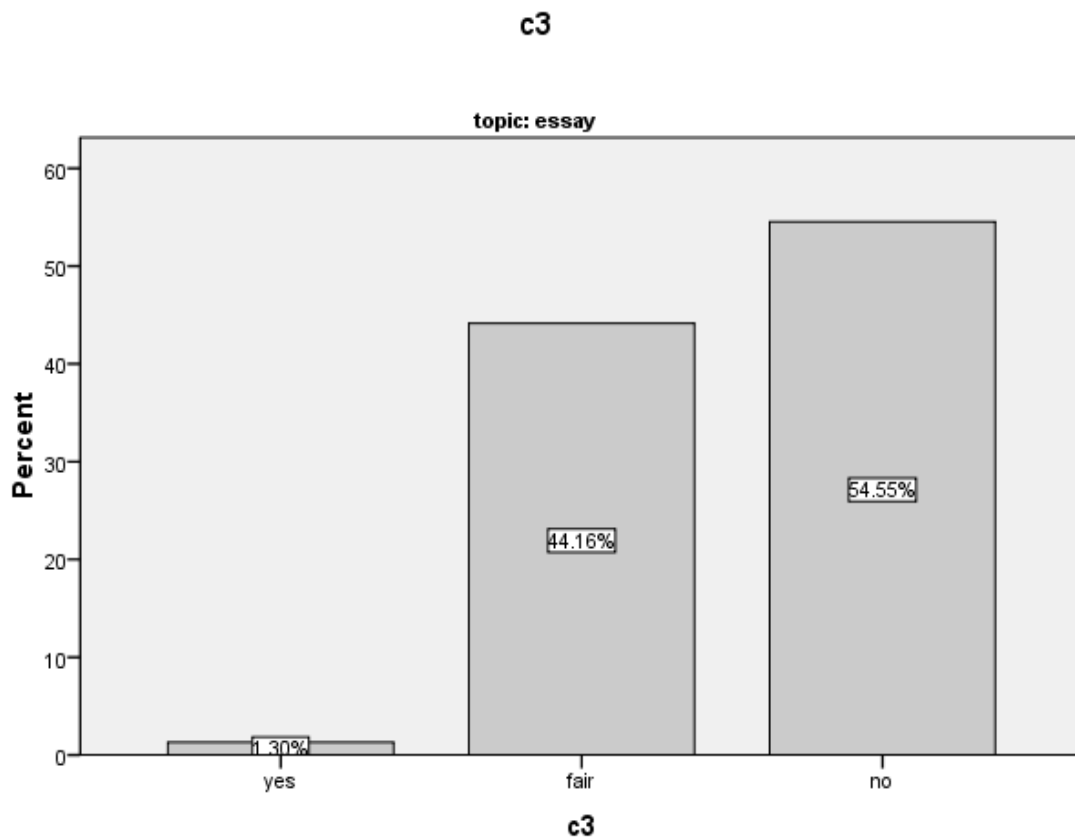


Figure No (24) shows the performance of the students regarding C3.

According to table and figure (24), most of the students' scores are (**Fair & No**), their frequencies are (**34 & 42**) and they form (**44.2% & 54.5%**) of the students, so that most of their paragraphs in the body do not include or not clearly include sufficient illustrations about the topic.

D – The Conclusion of the essay

D 1 - The concluding paragraph has a topic sentence.

Table No (25) shows the performance of the students regarding D1.

D1	Frequency	Percent
Yes	6	7.8
Fair	10	13.0
No	61	79.2
	77	100.0

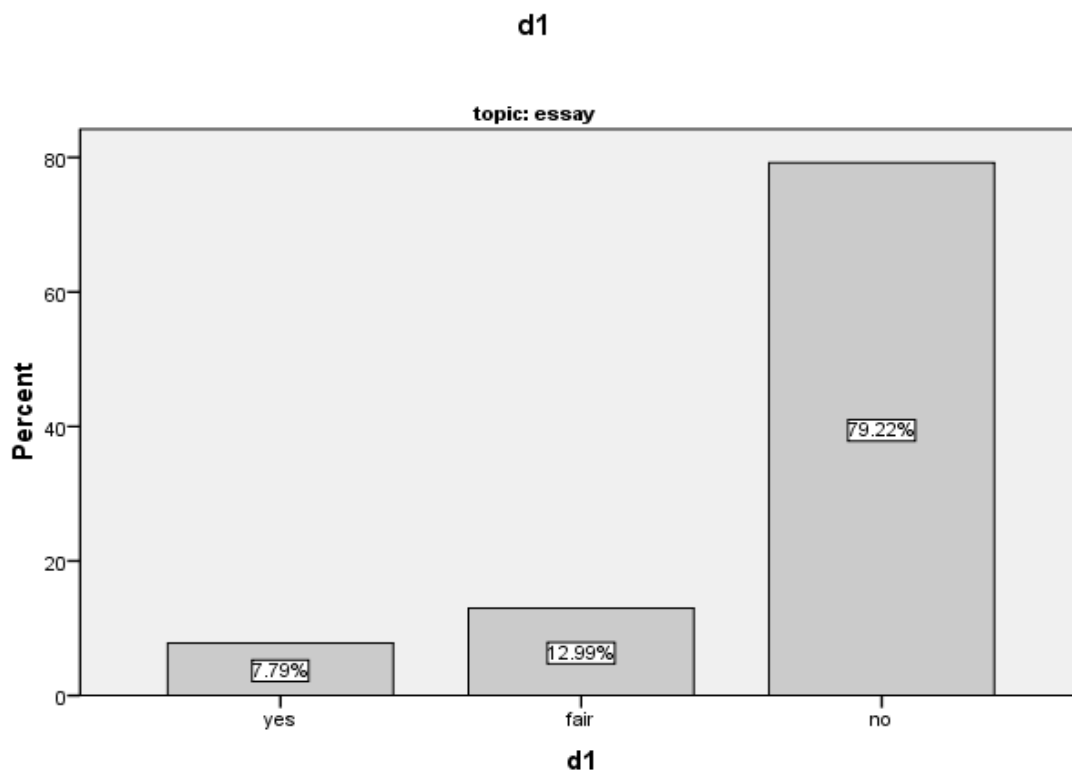


Figure No (25) shows the performance of the students regarding D1.

According to table and figure (25), **61** of the students' scores are (**No**) and they form (**79.2%**) of the sample, so that most of their concluding paragraphs of the essay have no topic sentences.

D 2 - The conclusion refers to the main idea of the essay by restating it in a new way.

Table No. (26) Shows the performance of the students regarding D2.

D2	Frequency	Percent
Yes	6	7.8
Fair	8	10.4
No	63	81.8
Total	77	100.0

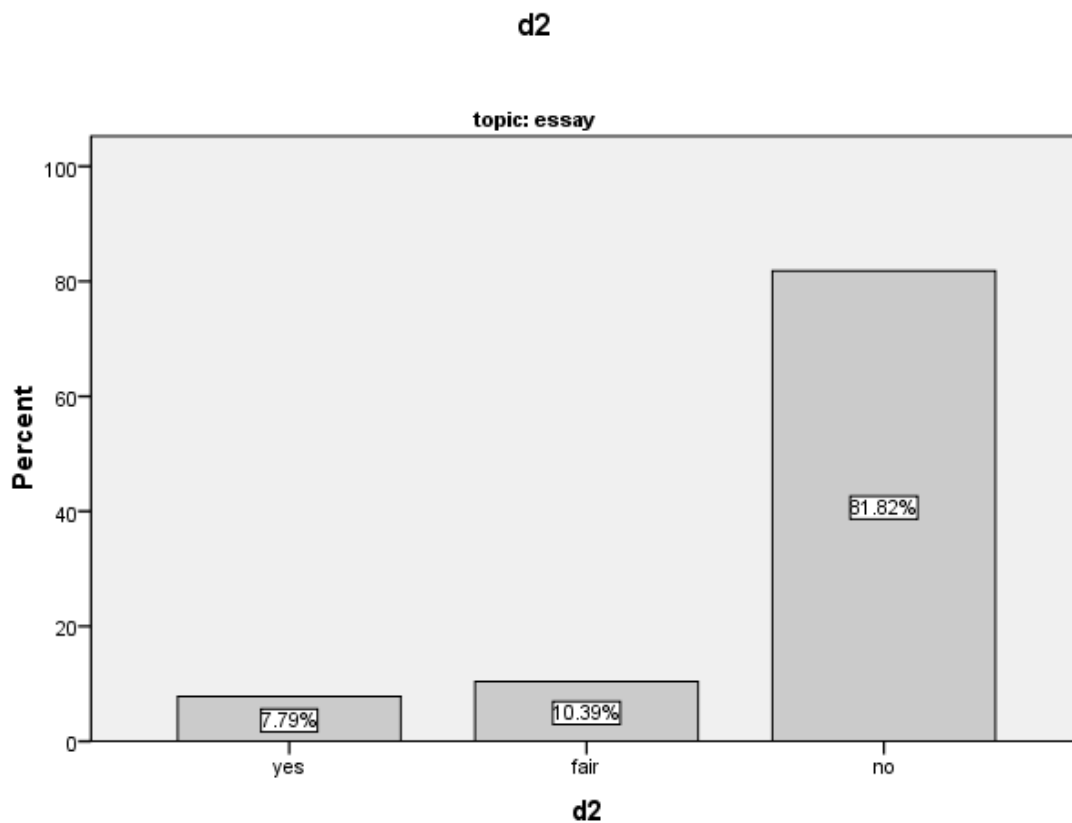


Figure No (26) shows the performance of the students regarding d2.

According to data presented in table and figure (26), **63** of the students' scores are (**No**) and they form (**81.8%**) of the sample, so that most of their conclusions do not refer to the main idea of the essay by restating it in a new way.

4.2.3 Test three (writing a paragraph)

Table No. (27) Shows the number of the students sat for this test and the distribution of their classes.

Class	Frequency	Percent
Seven	39	54.9
Eight	32	45.1
Total	71	100.0

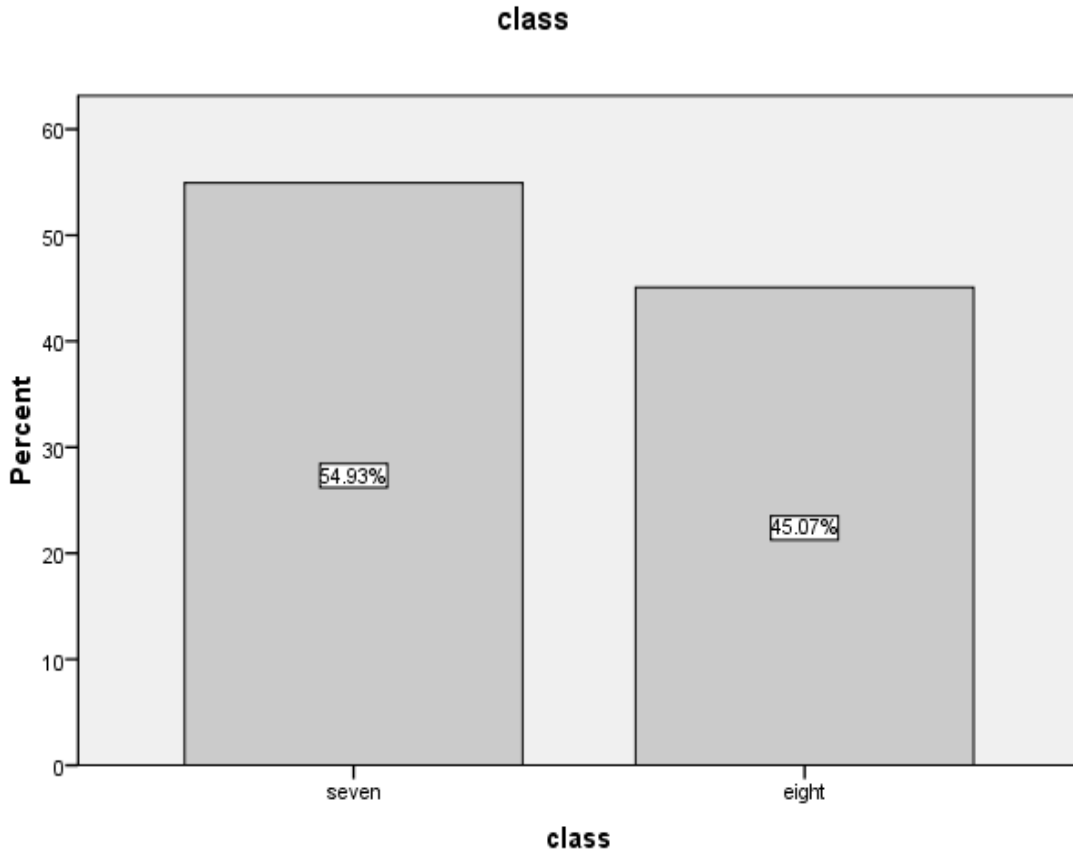


Figure No (27) shows the distribution of the students' classes.

According to data presented in table and figure (27), it is clear that **71** students sat for writing paragraph test, **39** from class seven & **32** from class eight and they all form **88%** of the whole study sample.

Table No. (28) Shows the number of the students sat for this test and the distribution of their sex.

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	36	50.7
Female	35	49.3
Total	71	100.0

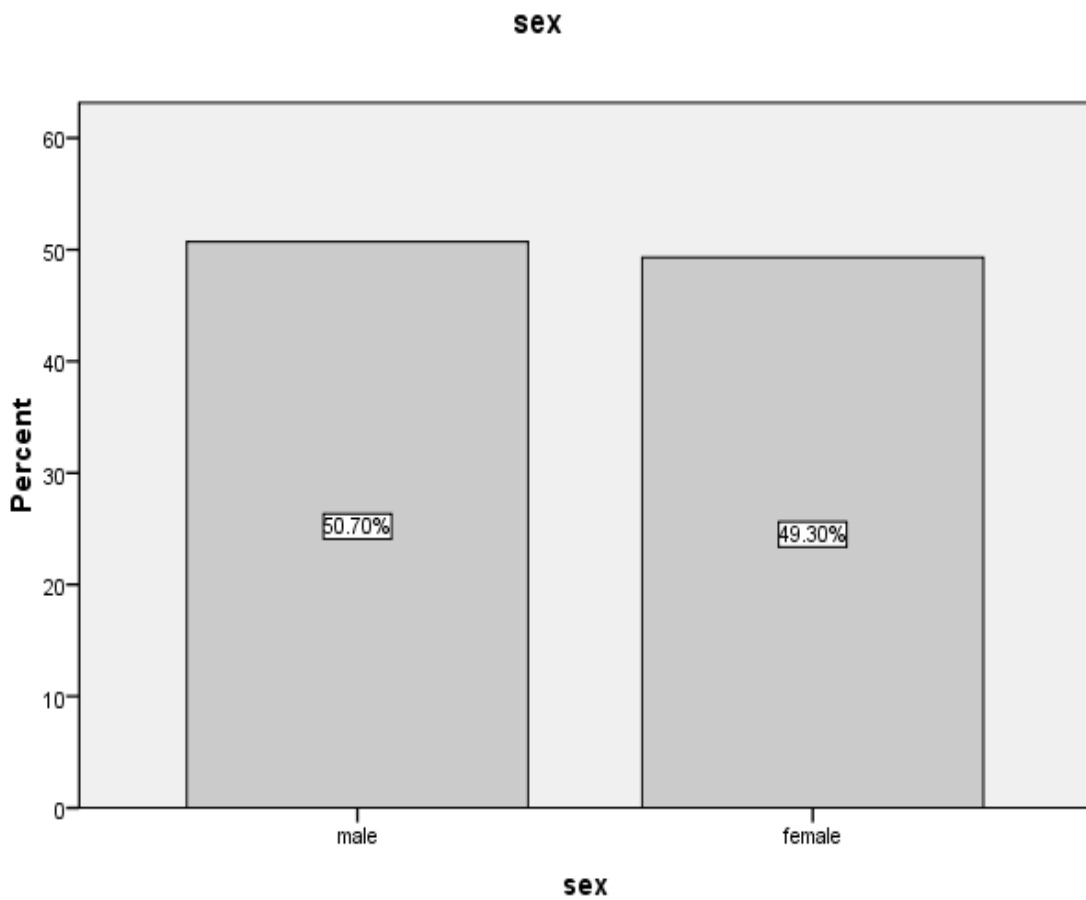


Figure No. (28) Shows the number of the students sat for this test and the distribution of their sex.

According to data presented in table and figure (28) **71** students sat for the paragraph test, **36** males and **35** females and they all form **88%** of the whole study sample.

P 1 - The paragraph has a topic sentence.

Table No. (29) Shows the performance of the students regarding P1.

P1	Frequency	Percent
Yes	38	53.5
Fair	21	29.6
No	12	16.9
Total	71	100.0

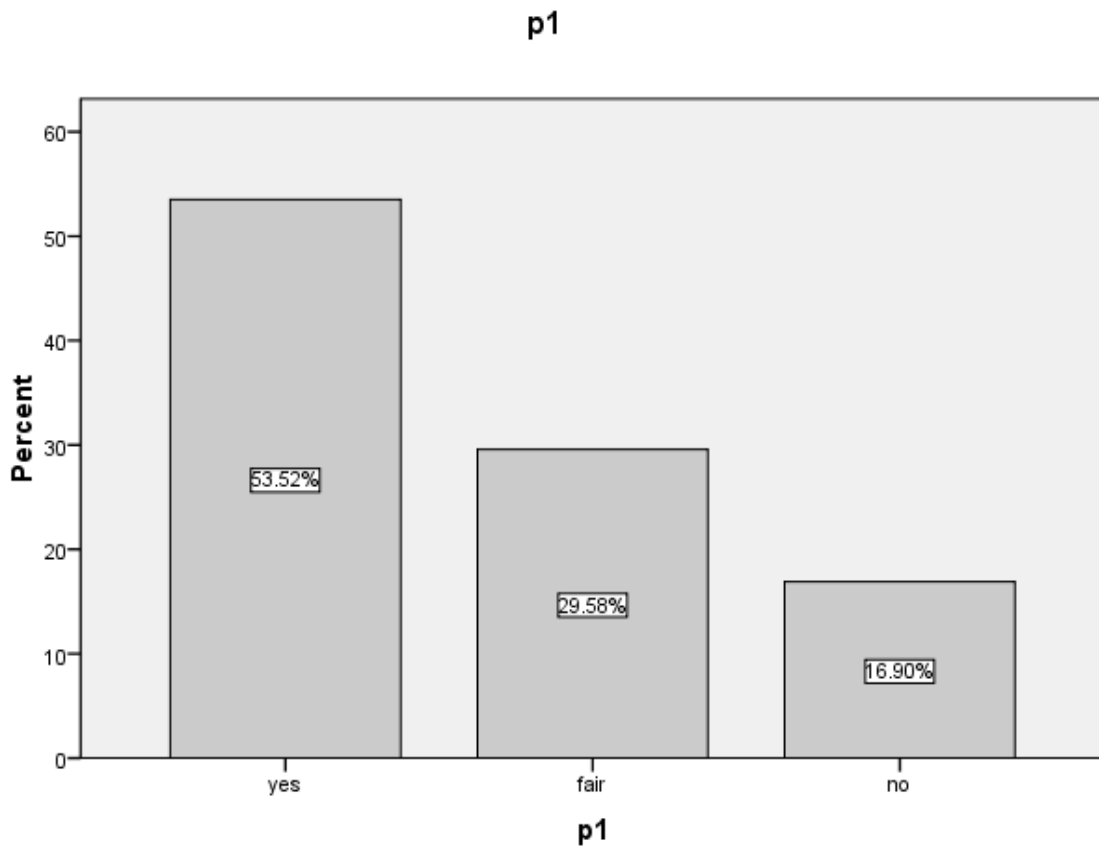


Figure No (29) shows the performance of the students regarding P1.

According to data presented in table and figure (29), only **38** of the students' scores are (**Yes**) and they form (**53.5%**) of the sample, so only about half of the students their paragraphs have topic sentences.

B 2 - The topic sentence is developed with descriptive details.

Table No. (30) Shows the performance of the students regarding P2.

P2	Frequency	Percent
Yes	56	78.9
Fair	13	18.3
No	2	2.8
Total	71	100.0

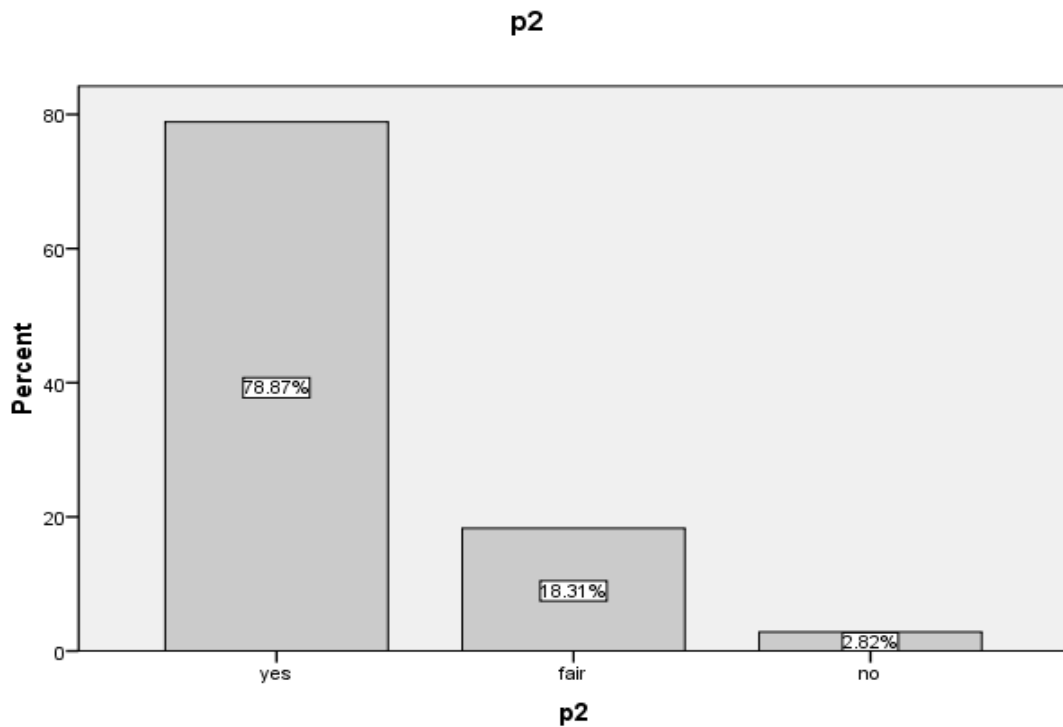


Figure No (30) shows the performance of the students regarding P2.

According to data presented in table and figure (30), **56** of the students' scores are (**Yes**) and they form (**78.9%**) of the sample, so that the majority of them illustrated the topic sentences of their paragraphs with developing sentences.

P 3 - Each detail in the developing sentences relates clearly to the topic sentence (unified paragraph)

Table No. (31) Shows the performance of the students regarding P3.

P3	Frequency	Percent
Yes	34	47.9
Fair	32	45.1
No	5	7.0
Total	71	100.0

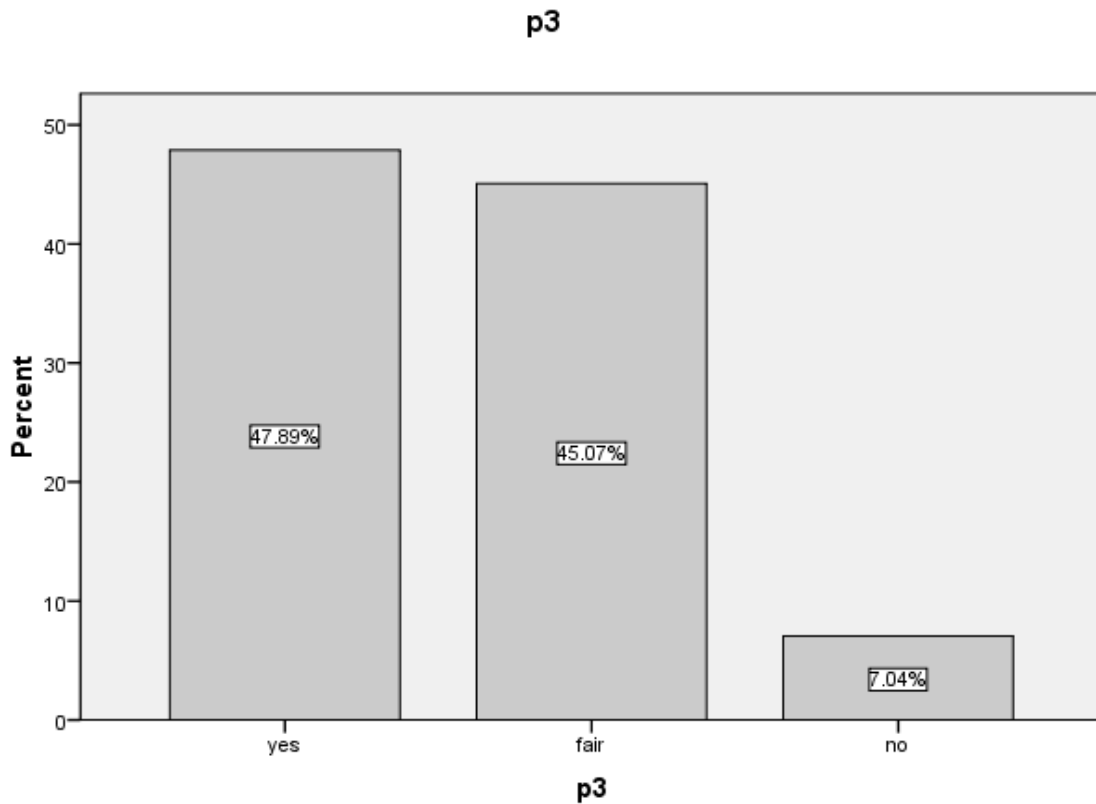


Figure No (31) shows the performance of the students regarding P3.

According to data presented in table and figure (31), it is clear that most of the students' scores are (**Yes & Fair**), their frequencies are (**34 & 32**) and they form (**47.9% & 45.1%**), so that only about half of them wrote unified paragraphs.

B 4 - The paragraph has a concluding sentence that repeats the idea from the topic sentence.

Table No. (32) Shows the performance of the students regarding P4.

P4	Frequency	Percent
Yes	8	11.3
Fair	11	15.5
No	52	73.2
Total	71	100.0

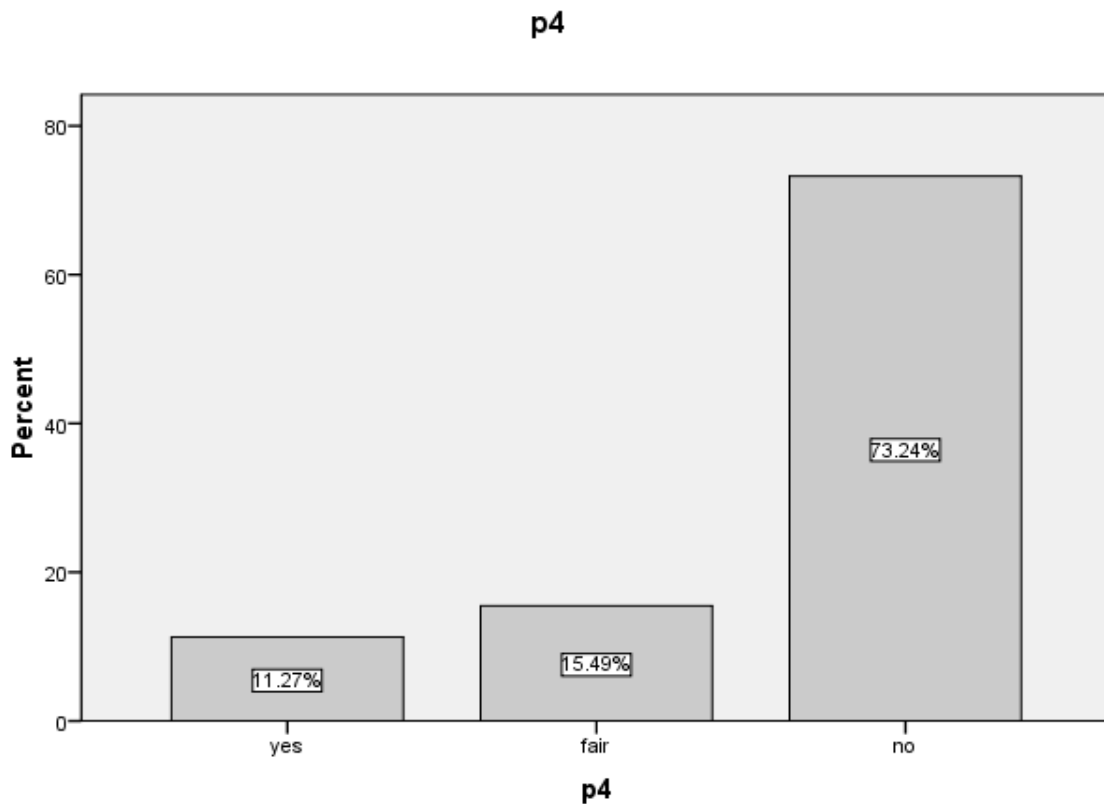


Figure No (32) shows the performance of the students regarding P4.

According to data presented in table and figure (32), **52** of the students' scores are (**No**) and they form (**73.2%**) of the sample, so that most of them their paragraphs have no concluding sentences that repeat the idea from the topic sentences.

P 5 - The entire paragraph is logically organizes and understandable (coherent)

Table No. (33) Shows the performance of the students regarding P5.

P5	Frequency	Percent
Yes	3	4.2
Fair	42	59.2
No	26	36.6
Total	71	100.0

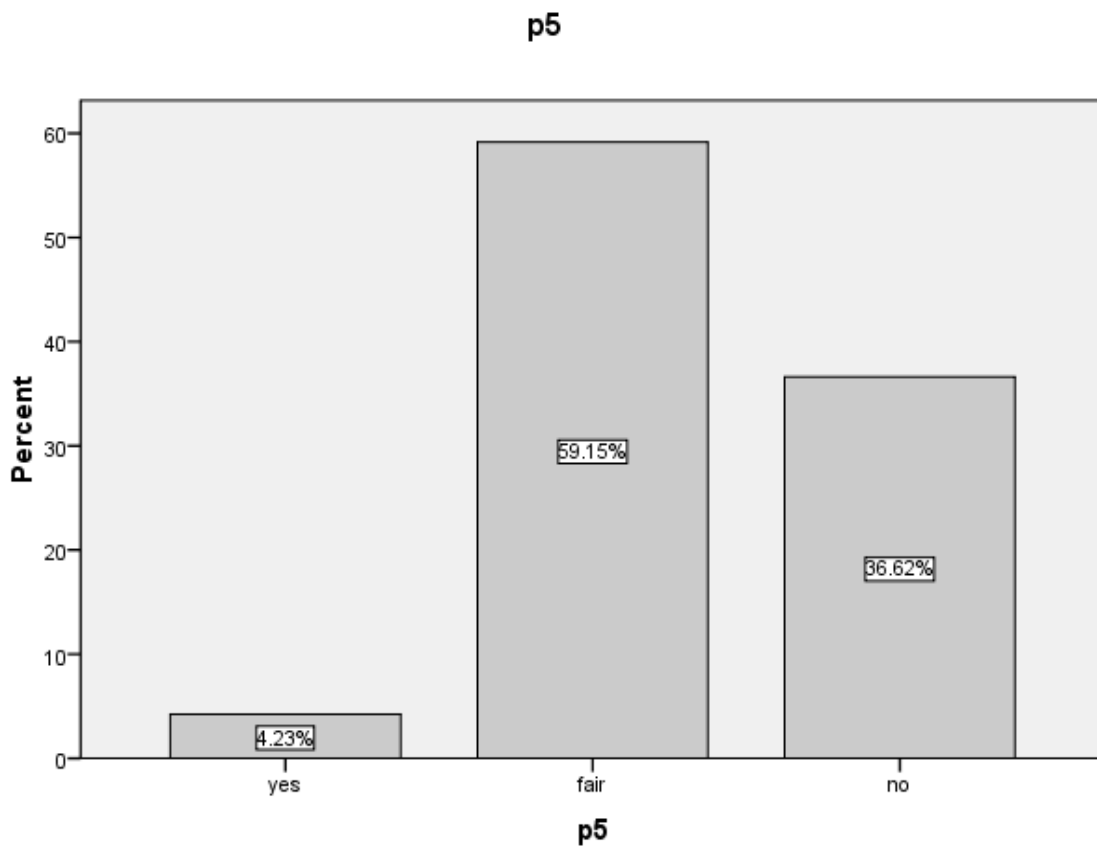


Figure No (33) shows the performance of the students regarding P5.

According to table and figure (33), most of the students' scores are (**Fair & No**), their frequencies are (**42 & 26**) and they form (**59.2% & 36.6%**) of the students, so that most of their paragraphs are not, or are not clearly coherent.

4.2.4 Test four (mechanics- punctuation& capitalization)

Table No. (34) Shows the number of the students sat for this test and the distribution of their classes.

Class	Frequency	Percent
Seven	39	54.9
Eight	32	45.1
Total	71	100.0

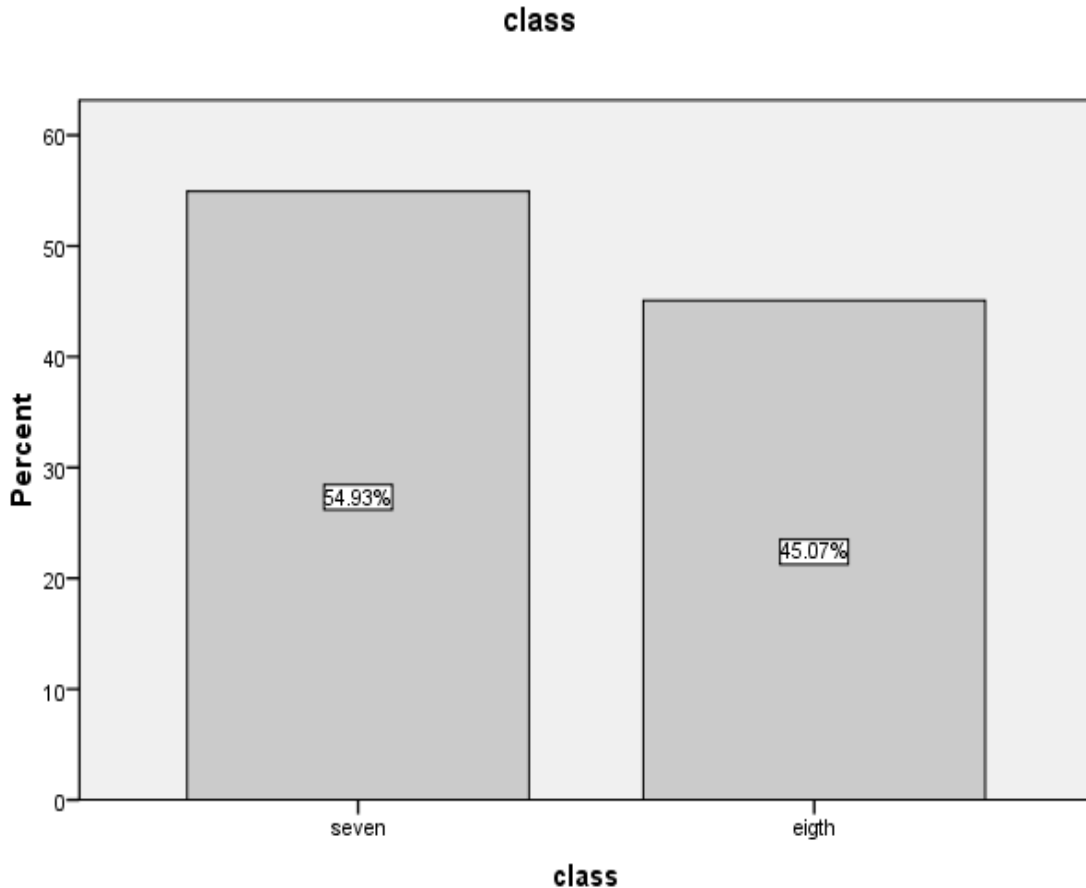


Figure No (34) shows the distribution of the students' classes.

According to data presented in table and figure (34), it is clear that **71** students sat for the paragraph punctuation test, **39** from class seven & **32** from class eight and they all form **88%** of the whole study sample.

Table No. (35) Shows the number of the students sat for this test and the distribution of their sex.

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	36	50.7
Female	35	49.3
Total	71	100.0

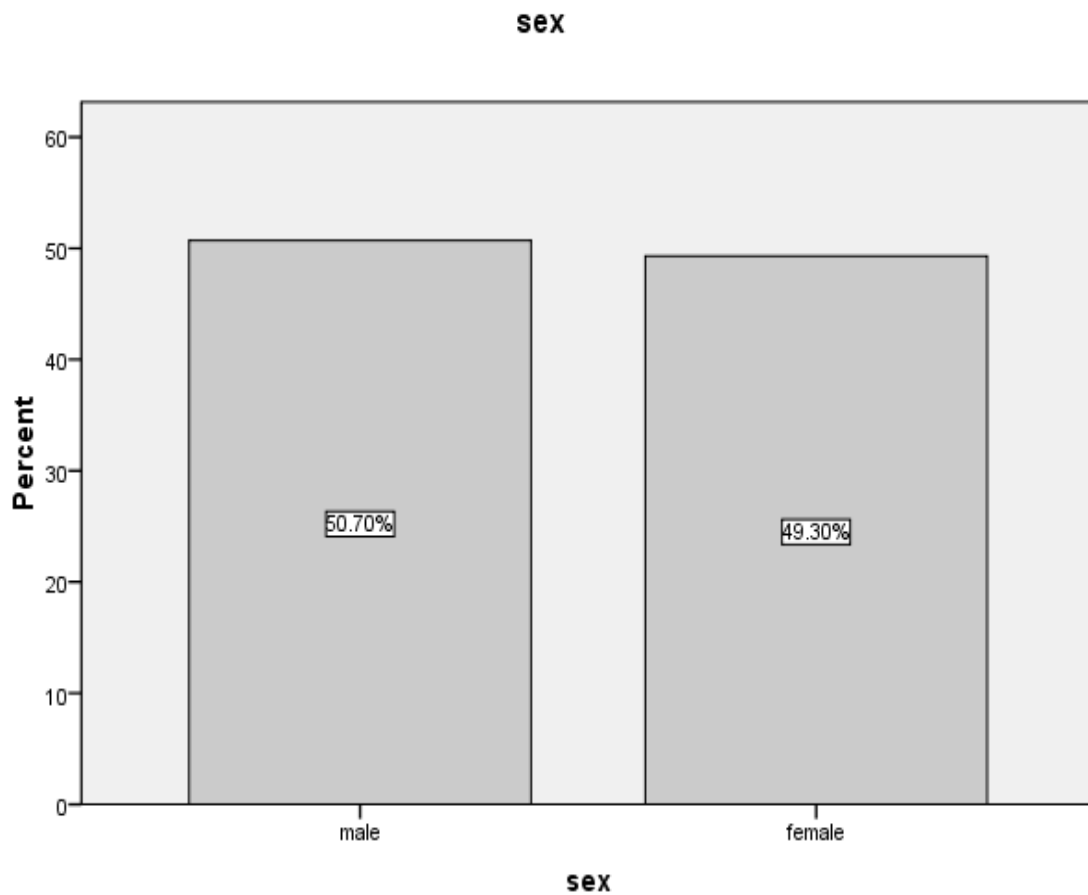


Figure No. (35) Shows the number of the students sat for this test and the distribution of their sex.

According to data presented in table and figure (35) **71** students sat for the mechanics test, **36** males and **35** females and they all form **88%** of the whole study sample.

1 – Capitalization

Table No. (36) Shows the performance of the students regarding capitalization.

Cap	Frequency	Percent
A	15	21.1
B	13	18.3
C	10	14.1
F	33	46.5
Total	71	100.0

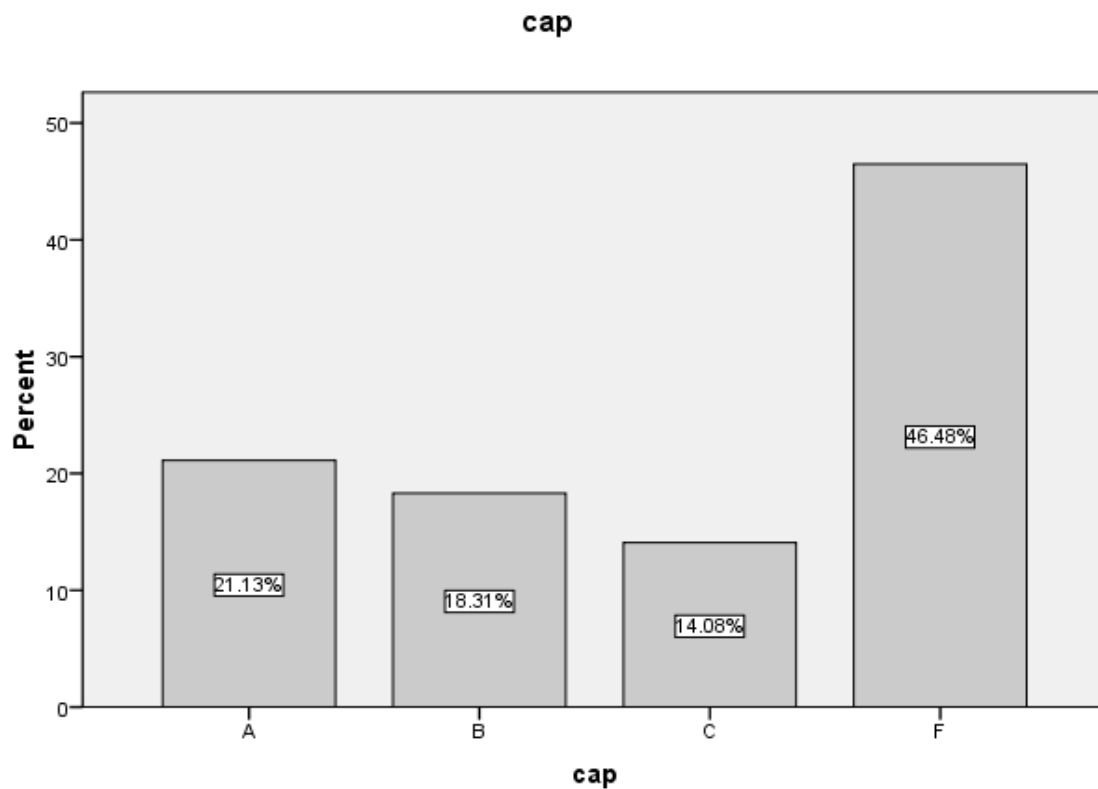


Figure No (36) shows the performance of the students regarding capitalization.

According to data presented in table and figure (36), it is clear that only **15** students get (A), **13** students get (B), **10** students get (C) but **33** of them get (F) and they form (**46.5%**) of the sample, so that most of the students failed to capitalize the paragraph.

2 – Punctuation

Table No (37) Shows the performance of the students regarding punctuation.

Pun	Frequency	Percent
A	0	0.0
B	5	7.0
C	52	73.2
F	14	19.7
Total	71	100.0

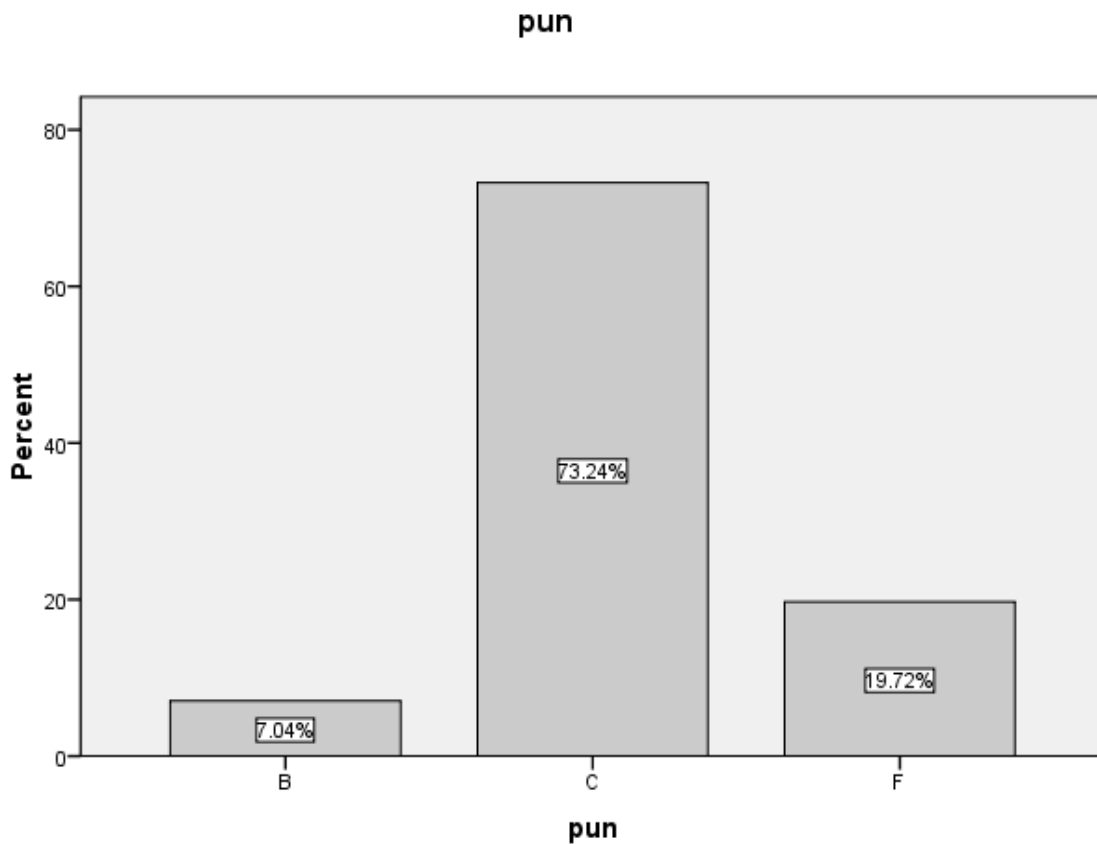


Figure No (37) shows the performance of the students regarding punctuation.

According to table and figure (37), it is clear that none of the students scored (A), only 5 students scored (B), 52 students scored (C) and 14 of them scored (F), so that most of the students (46.5%) hardly passed the capitalization test.

4.3 The questionnaire

The questionnaire is designed to gather data required for the research. It consists of four main domains, *the curriculum, the students, the teachers and the activities*. Each of the four domains consists of five statements expresses one of the study hypotheses.

The researcher would present the findings and their interpretation in the light of the following hypotheses: -

1. *There are not enough courses of writing skills at the university.*
2. *The background of the students about writing is poor.*
3. *Tutors do not give due attention to the teaching of writing skills*
4. *Writing skills activities given to students are not enough.*

Statement (1)

The curriculum at the university contains enough writing skill courses.

Table (38) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (1)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	0	%0	9	%90	1	%10

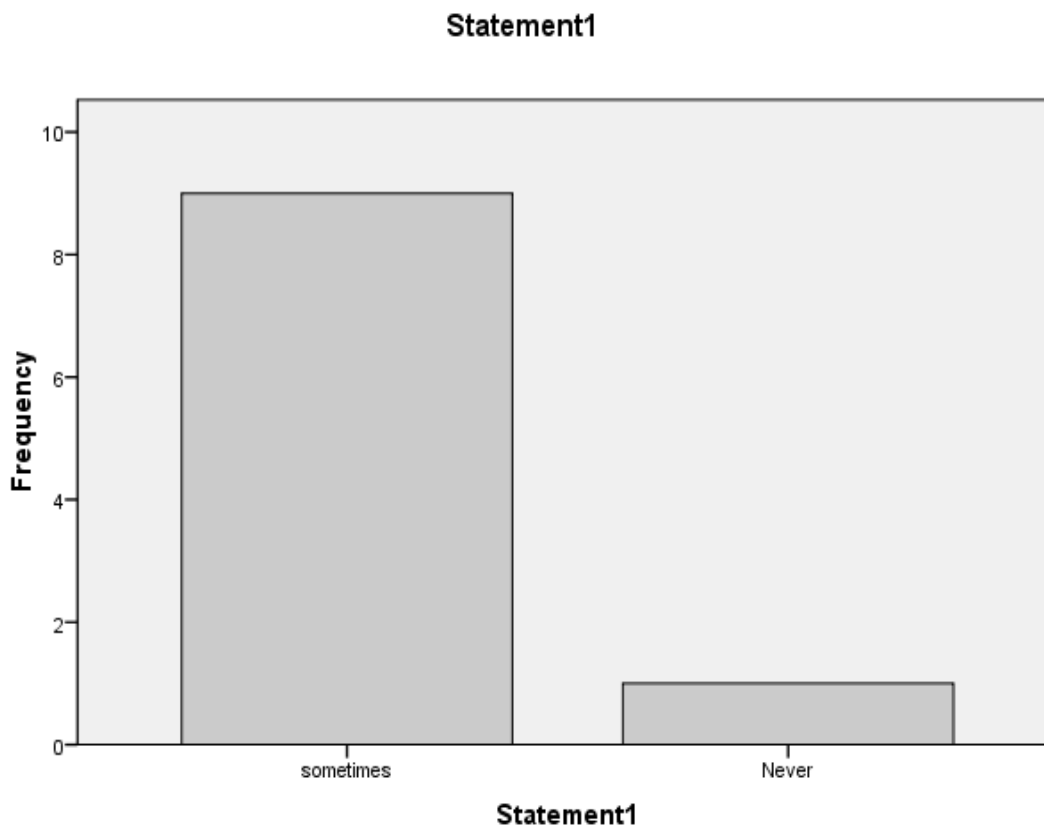


Figure (38) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (1)

1-Based on the data presented in table (38) about statement No.1, it is clear that almost all the samples responses are limited in (**sometimes**). Its frequency is (**9**) which forms **90%** of the samples. So the writing skill courses at the university are not quite enough.

Statement (2)

There are enough text books and references of writing skills in the faculty library.

Table (39) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (2)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
2	0	%0	9	%90	1	%10

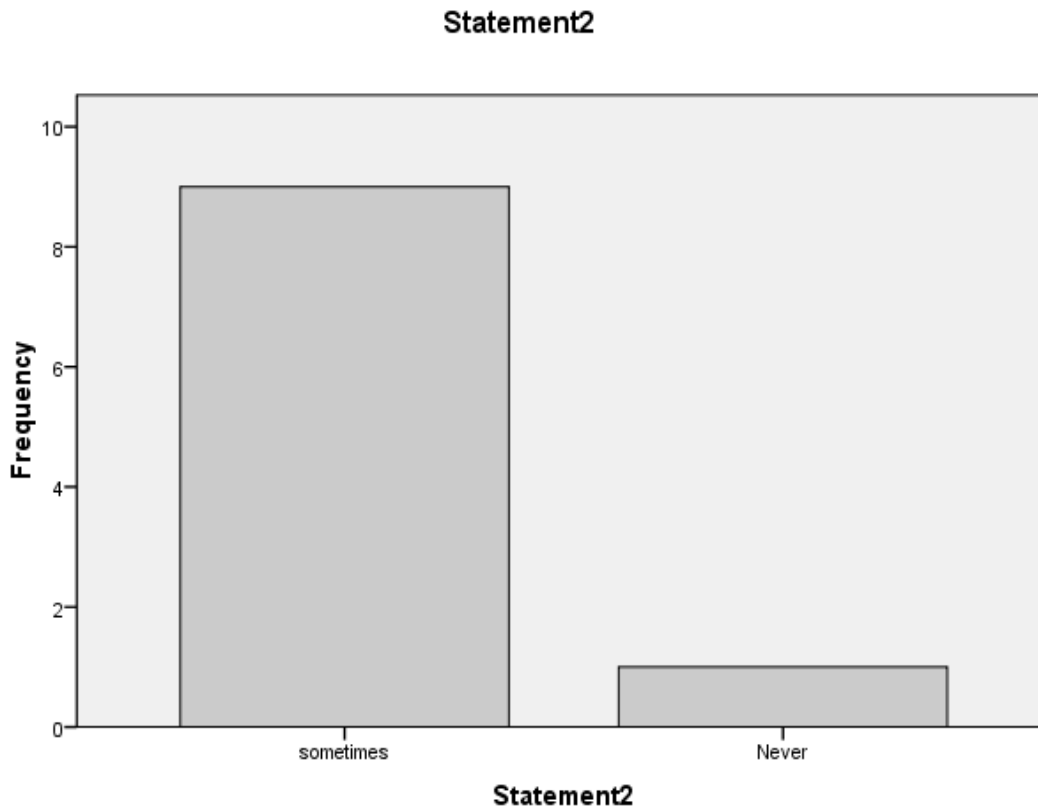


Figure (39) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (2)

2-Based on the data presented in table (39) about statement No.2, it is clear that almost all the samples responses are limited in (**sometimes**). Its frequency is (**9**) which forms **90%** of the samples. Accordingly the text books and references of writing skill are not enough.

Statement (3)

English language curriculum in the faculty is graded from simple to complex and from easy to difficult.

Table (40) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (3)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
3	6	%60	2	%20	2	%20

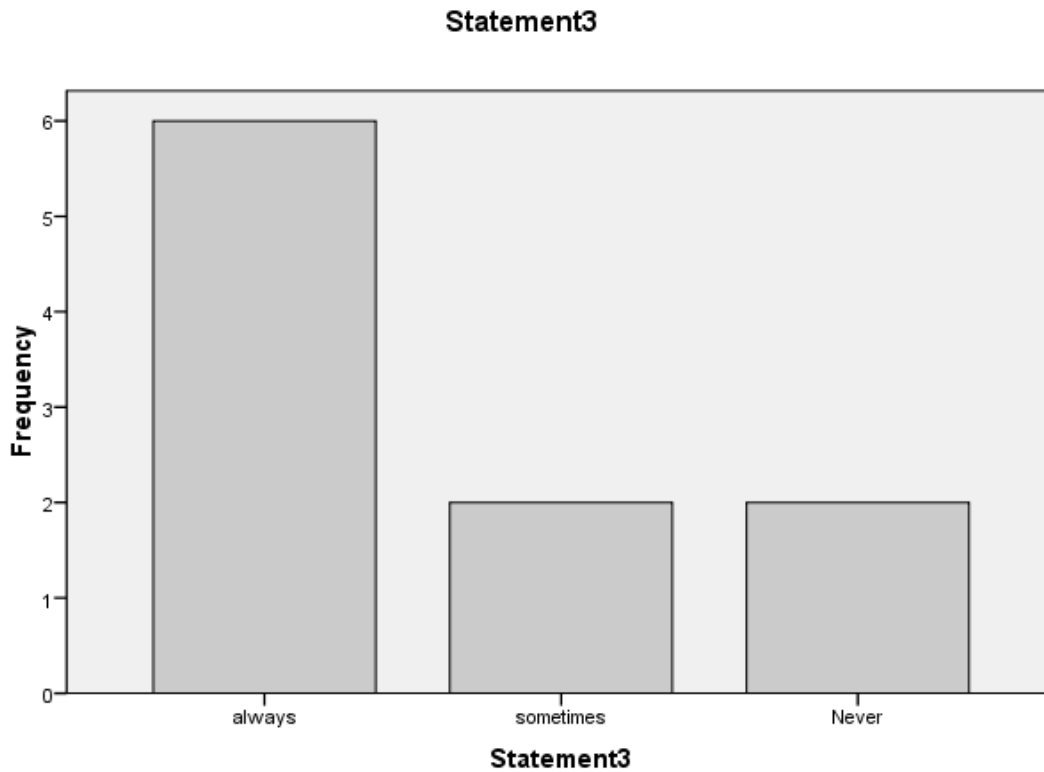


Figure (40) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (3)

3- Based on the data presented in table (40) about statement No.3, it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in (**always**). Its frequency is (**6**) which forms **60%** of the samples. This finding is due to the fact that the curriculum at the university is graded from simple to complex and from easy to difficult.

Statement (4)

English language curriculum in the faculty is revised periodically.

Table (41) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (4)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
4	0	%0	7	%70	3	%30

Statement4

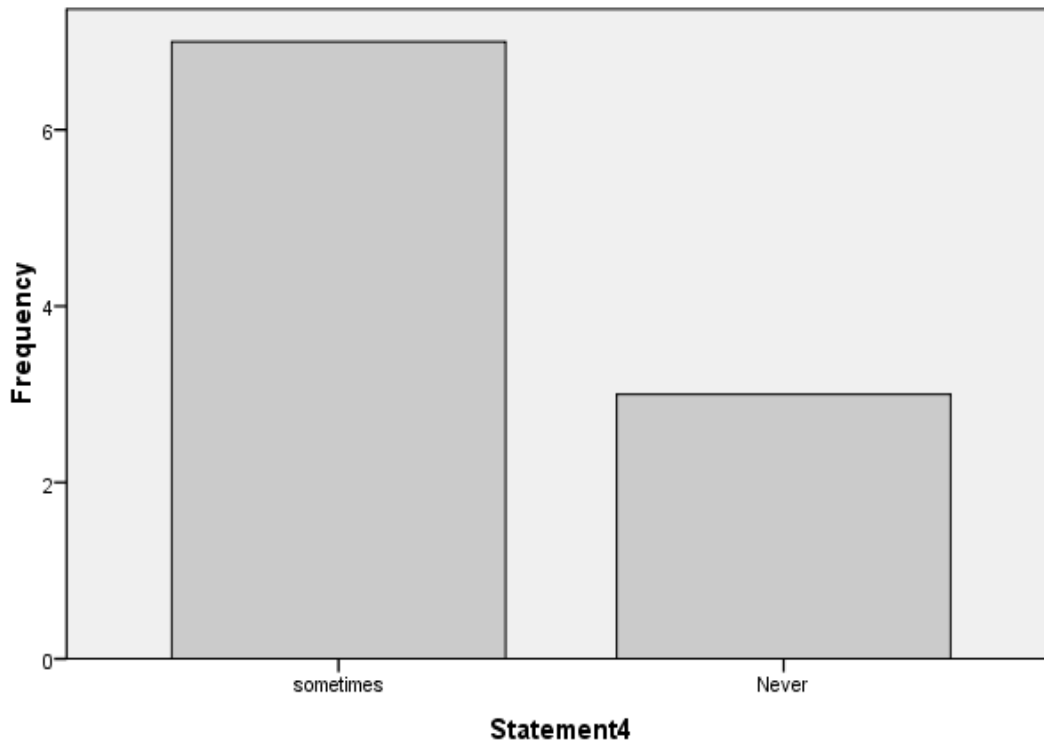


Figure (41) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (4)

4- Based on the data presented in table (41) about statement No.4, it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in (**Sometime**). Its frequency is (7) which forms **70%** of the samples. This finding is due to the fact that the curriculum at the university is not revised periodically but sometimes.

Statement (5)

Writing is the most difficult skill in English language.

Table (42) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (5)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
5	3	%30	7	%70	0	%0

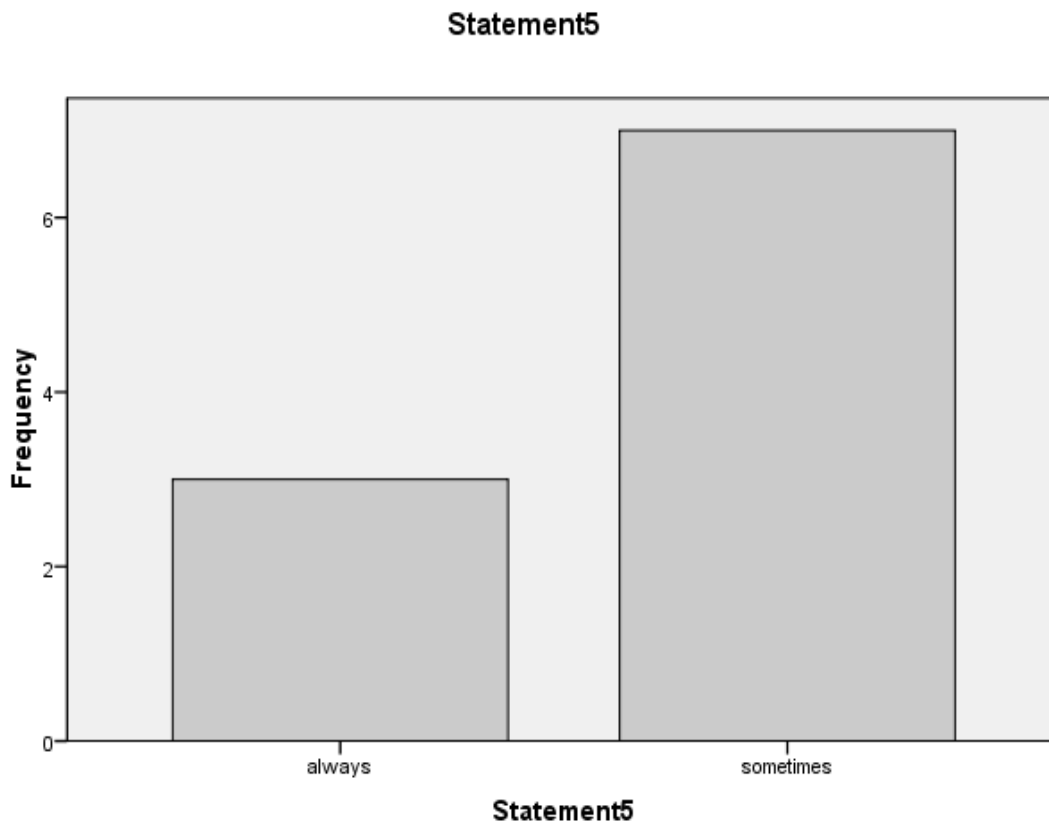


Figure (42) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (5)

5- Based on the data presented in table (42) about statement No.5, it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in (**sometime**). Its frequency is (7) which forms **70%** of the samples. This finding is due to the fact that writing to some extend is the most difficult skill in English language.

Statement (6)

Students are interested in learning writing skills.

Table (43) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (6)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
6	1	%10	4	%40	5	%50

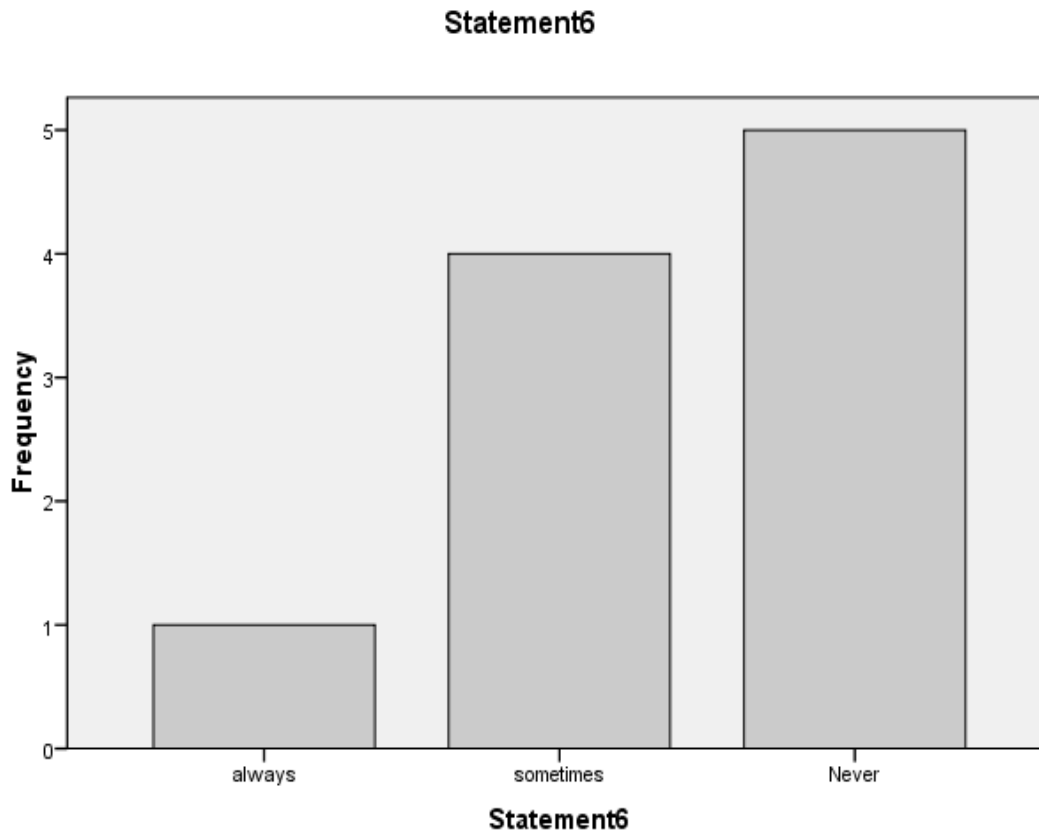


Figure (43) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (6)

6-Based on the data presented in table (43) about statement No.6, it is clear that half of the samples responses are limited in (**never**). Its frequency is (**5**) and that constitute **50%** of the samples. The students are not interested in learning writing skills.

Statement (7)

Students' schooling background of writing skills is poor.

Table (44) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (7)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
7	9	%90	1	%10	0	%0

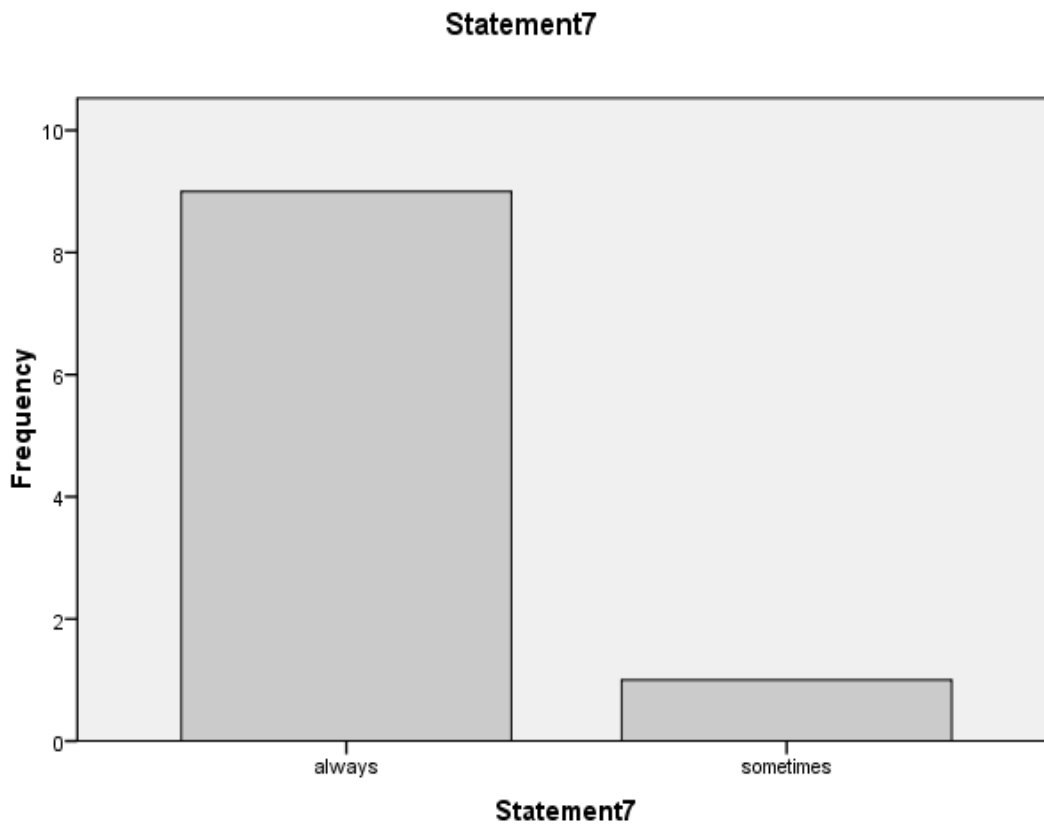


Figure (44) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (7)

7- Based on the data presented in table (44) about statement No.7, it is clear that almost the samples responses are limited in (**always**). Its frequency is (**9**) which forms **90%** of the samples. So that students' background of writing skill is very weak.

Statement (8)

Students apply their writing skills activities.

Table (45) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (8)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
8	0	%0	7	%70	3	%30

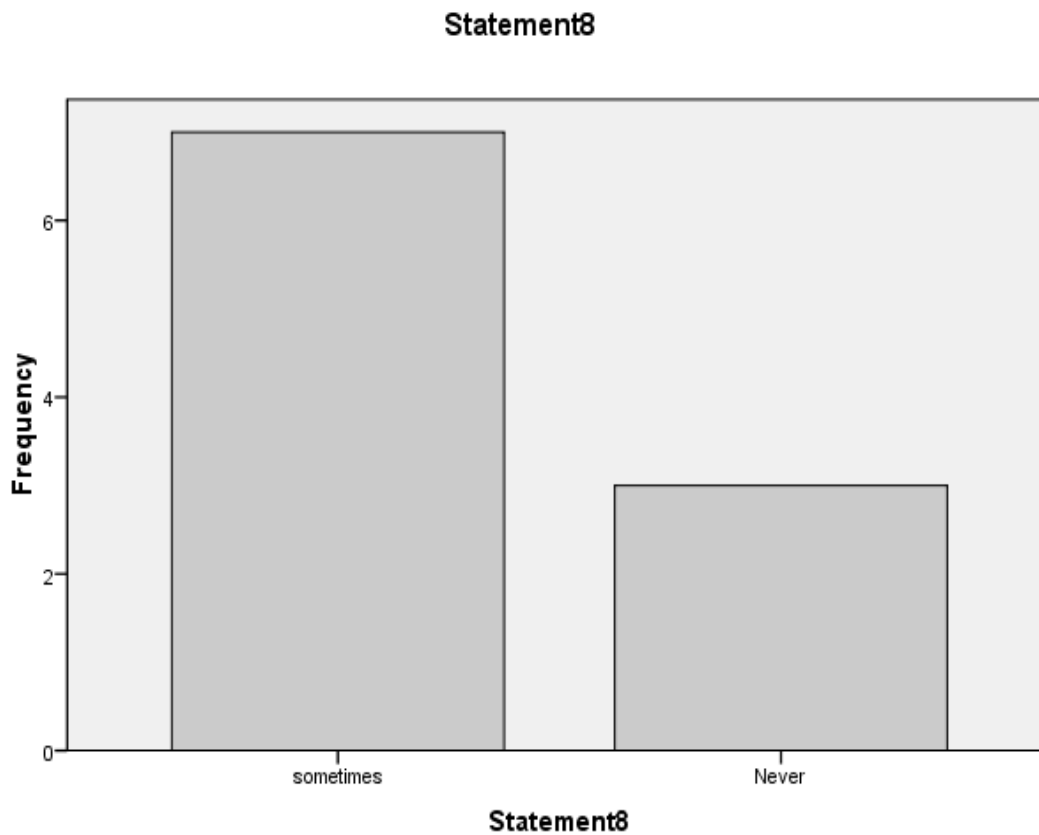


Figure (45) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (8)

8- Based on the data presented in table (45) about statement No.8, it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in (**sometime**). Its frequency is (7) which forms **70%** of the samples. So that students only sometimes apply their writing skill activities.

Statement (9)

Students think learning writing skill is difficult.

Table (46) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (9)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
9	7	%70	3	%30	0	%0

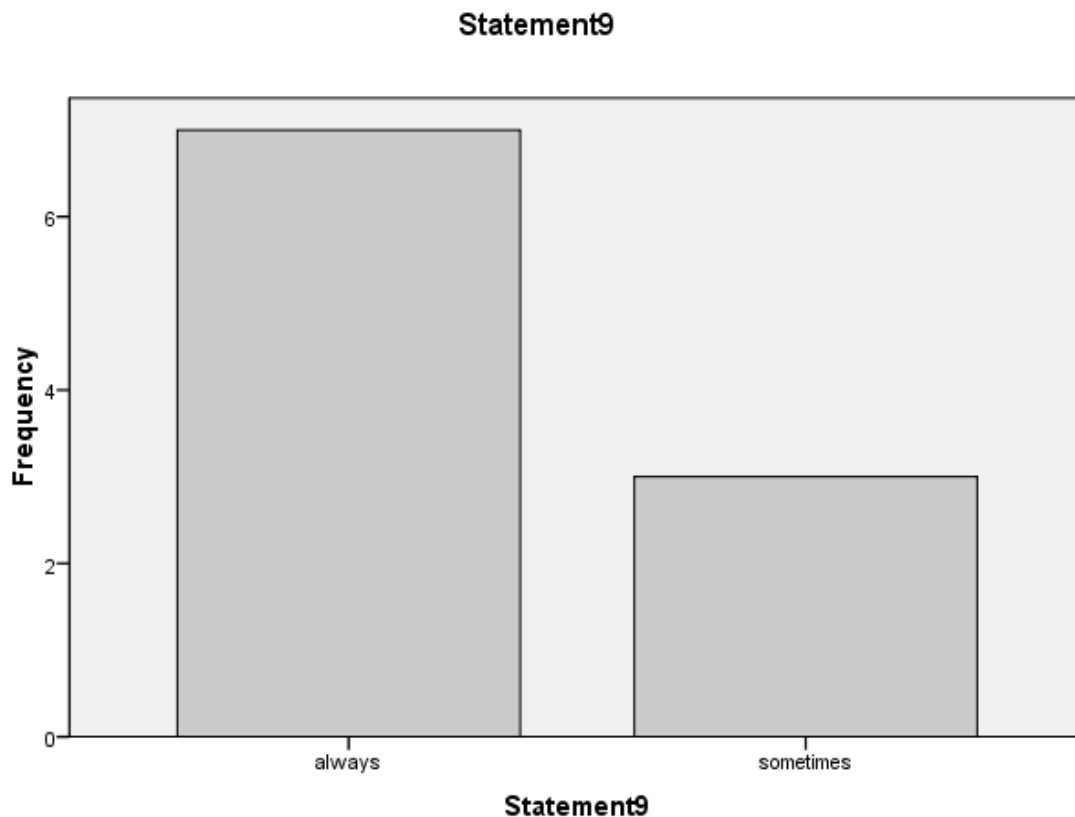


Figure (46) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (9)

9-Based on the data presented in table (46) about statement No.9, it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in (**always**). Its frequency is (7) which forms **70%** of the samples. This finding is due to the fact that students think learning writing skill is difficult.

Statement (10)

Students' mother tongue influences their writing in English.

Table (47) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (10)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
10	6	%60	4	%40	0	%0

Statement10

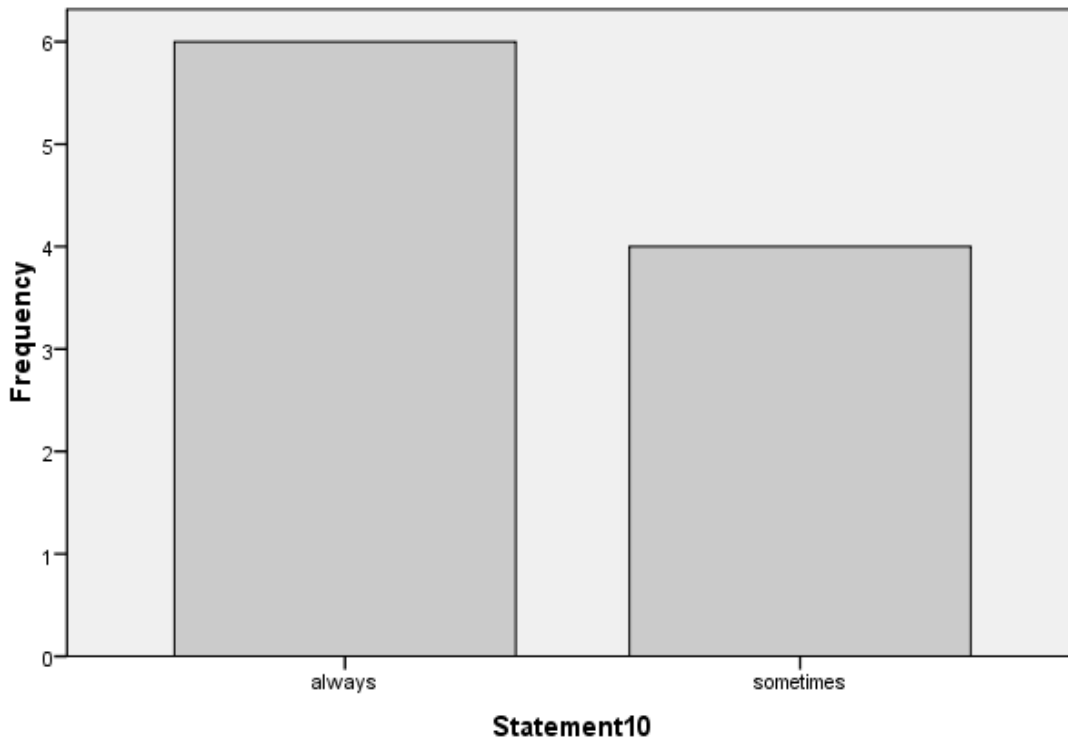


Figure (47) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (10)

10- Based on the data presented in table (47) about statement No.10, it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in (**always**). Its frequency is (**6**) which forms **60%** of the samples. Accordingly the students' mother tongue influences their writing in English.

Statement (11)

Teaching writing skills is difficult.

Table (48) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (11)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
11	2	%20	6	%60	2	%20

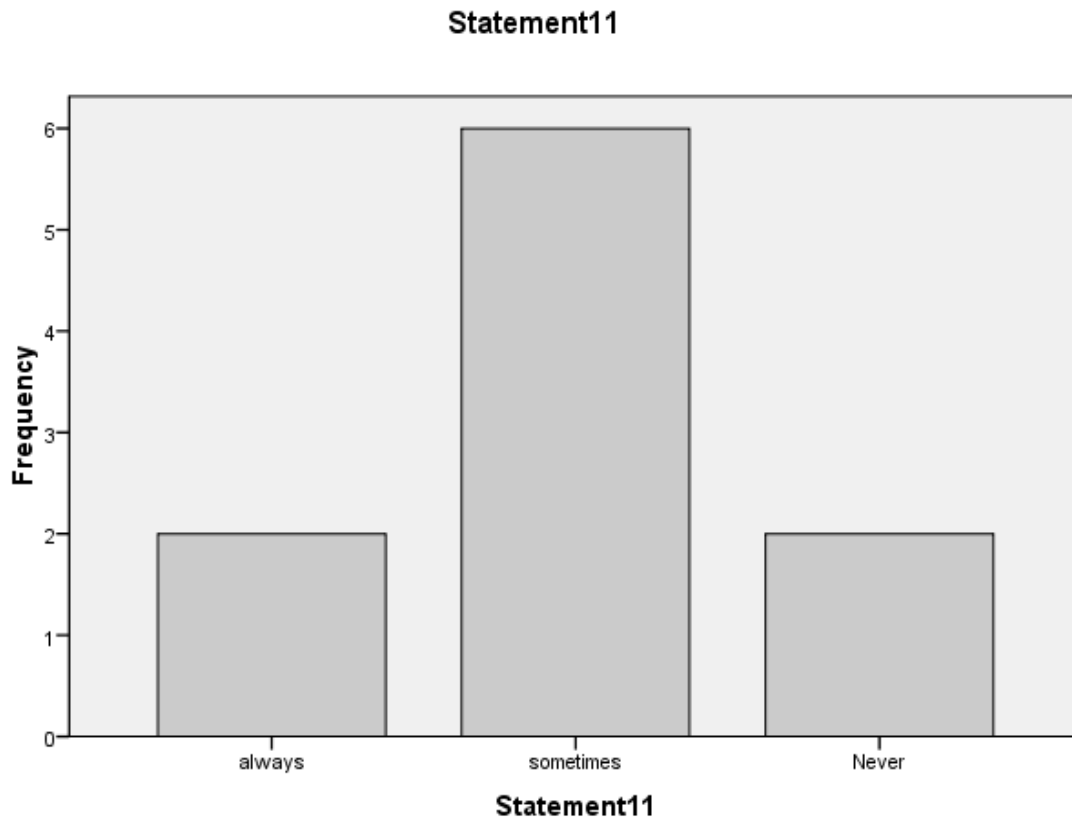


Figure (48) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (11)

11-Based on the data presented in table (48) about statement No.11, it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in (**sometime**). Its frequency is (**6**) which forms **60%** of the samples. This finding is due to the fact that teaching writing skill is sometimes difficult.

Statement (12)

Teaching writing skills needs more efforts than other skills of language.

Table (49) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (12)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
12	6	%60	3	%30	1	%10

Statement12

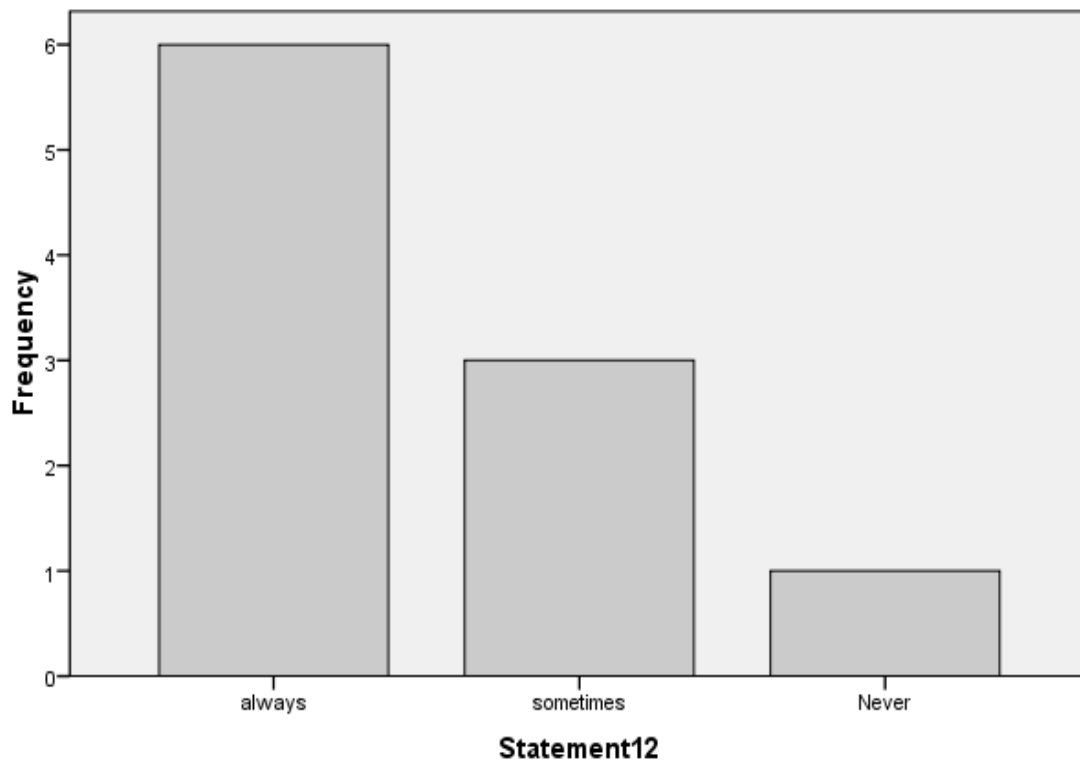


Figure (49) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (12)

12- Based on the data presented in table (49) about statement No.12, it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in (**always**). Its frequency is (**6**) which forms **60%** of the samples. This finding is due to the fact that teaching writing skill needs more efforts than other skills of the English language.

Statement (13)

The time given to students for learning writing skills is enough.

Table (50) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (13)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
13	0	%0	3	%30	7	%70

Statement13

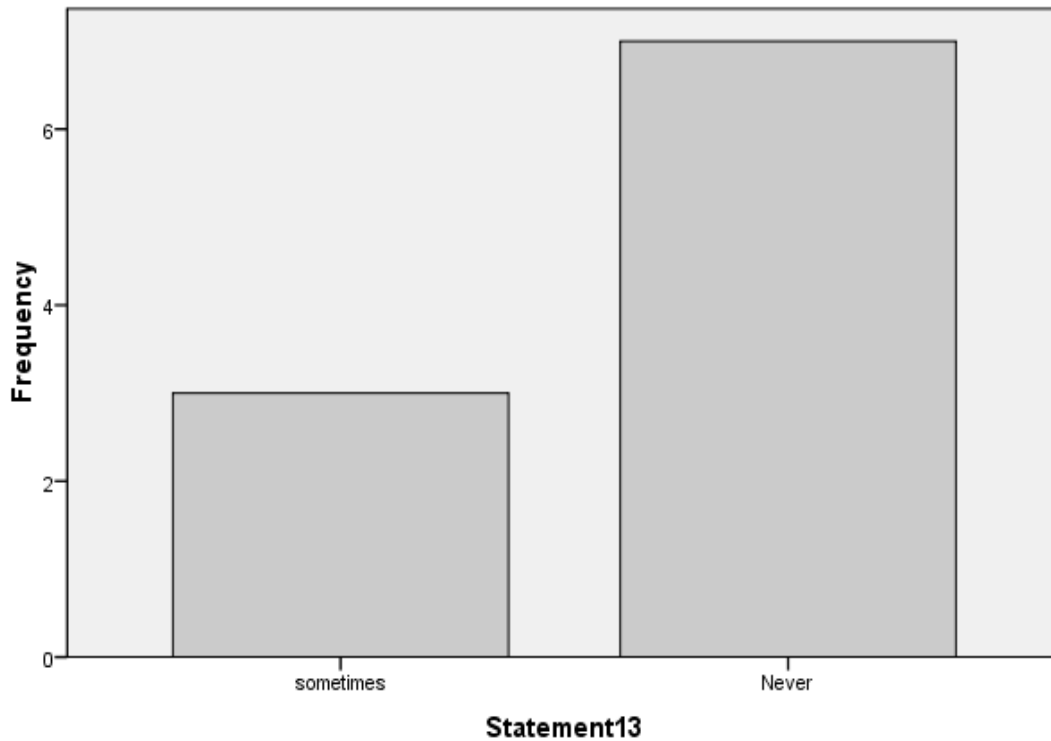


Figure (50) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (13)

13-Based on the data presented in table (50) about statement No.13, it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in (**never**). Its frequency is (**7**) which forms **70%** of the samples. This finding is due to the fact that the time given to students for learning writing skill is not enough.

Statement (14)

It is difficult to teach writing skills in crowded classes.

Table (51) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (14)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
14	8	%80	2	%20	0	%0

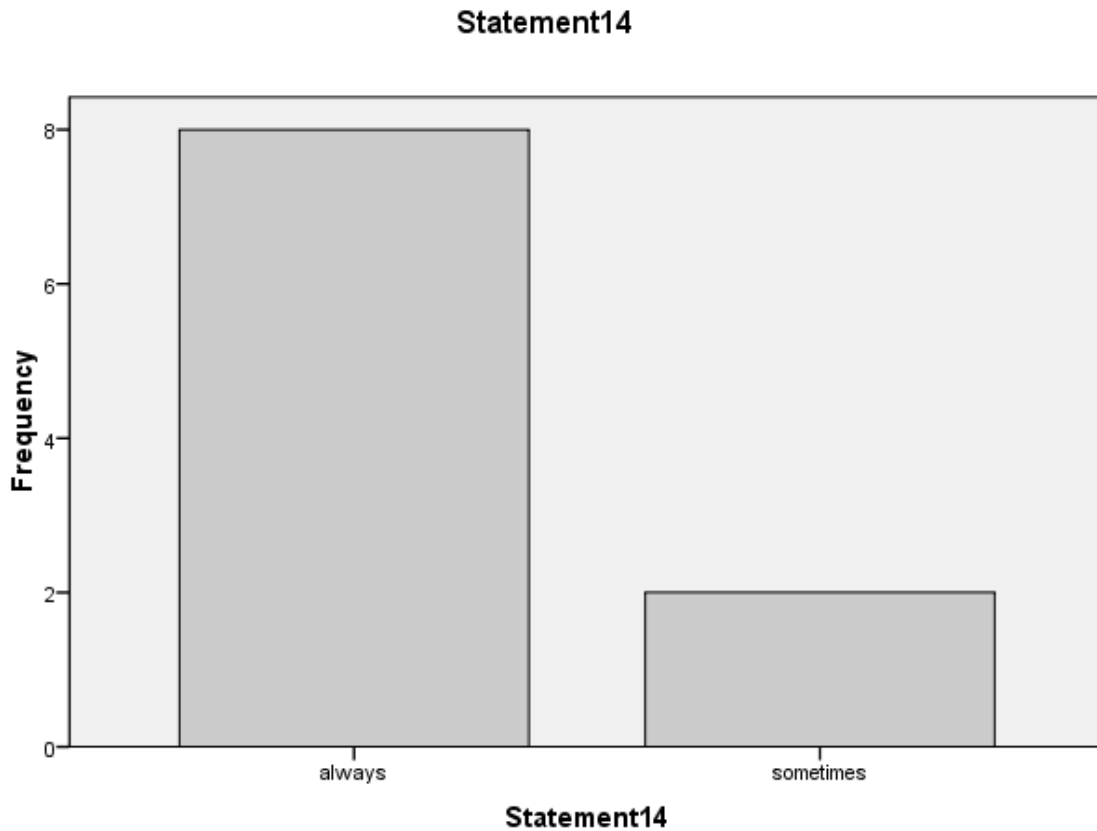


Figure (51) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (14)

14-Based on the data presented in table (51) about statement No.14, it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in (**always**). Its frequency is (**8**) which forms **%80** of the samples. So that it is difficult to teach writing skill in crowded classes.

Statement (15)

Teachers regularly give writing skill activities to their students.

Table (52) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (15)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
15	0	%0	9	%90	1	%10

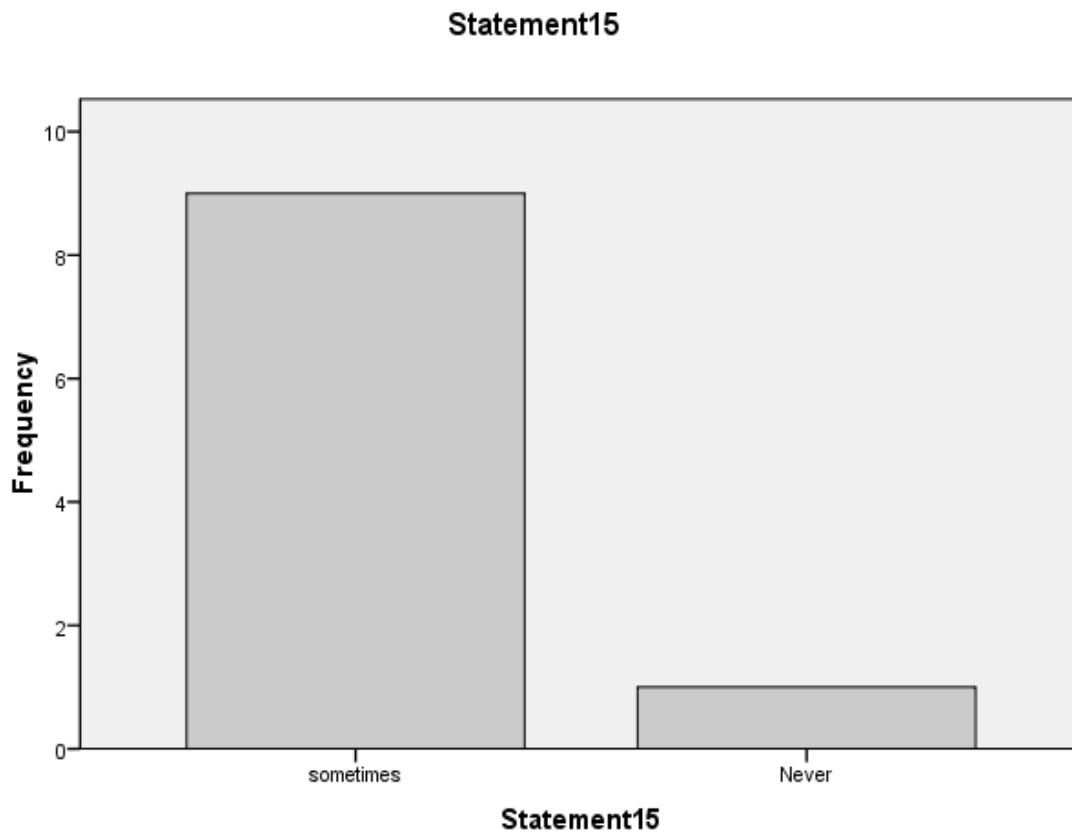


Figure (52) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (15)

15-Based on the data presented in table (15) about statement No.15, it is clear that almost all the samples responses are limited in (**sometime**). Its frequency is (**9**) which forms **90%** of the samples. This finding is due to the fact that the teachers do not regularly but sometimes give writing skill activities to their students.

Statement (16)

Giving writing skill activities is important after every class.

Table (53) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (16)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
16	10	%100	0	%0	0	%0

Statement16

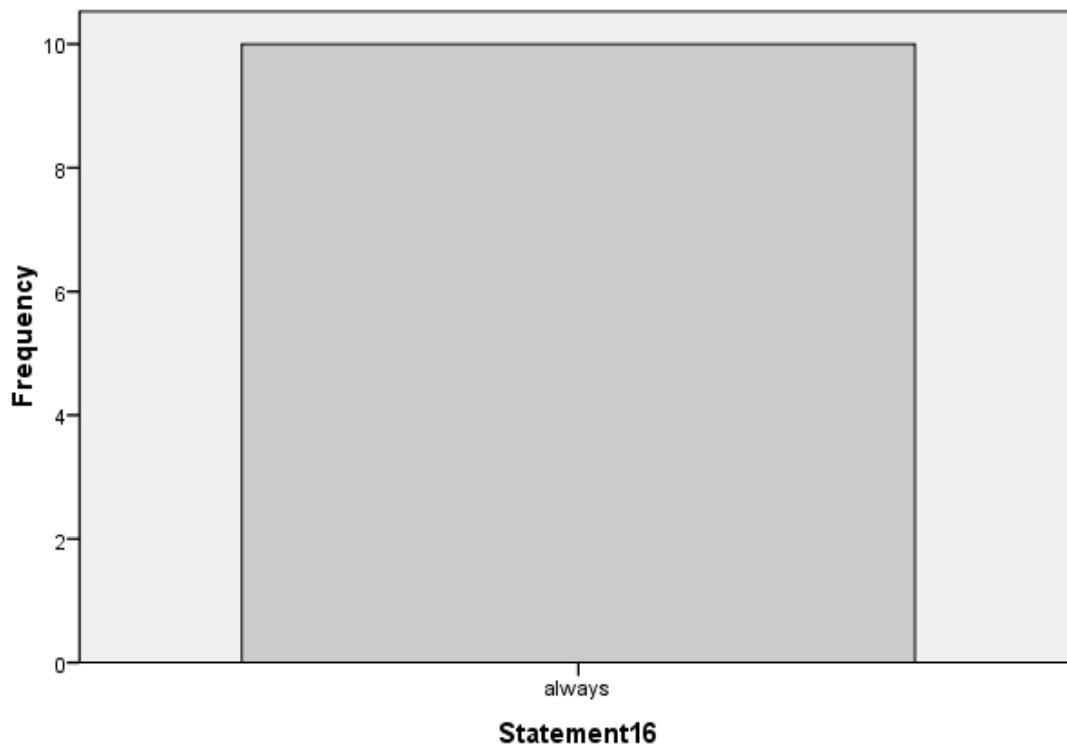


Figure (53) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (16)

16-Based on the data presented in table (53) about statement No.16, it is clear that all the samples responses are limited in (**always**). Its frequency is (**10**) which forms **100%** of the samples. This finding is due to the fact that giving writing skill activities to the students is very important after every class.

Statement (17)

There are enough activities about writing in the class.

Table (54) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (17)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
17	0	%0	6	%60	4	%40

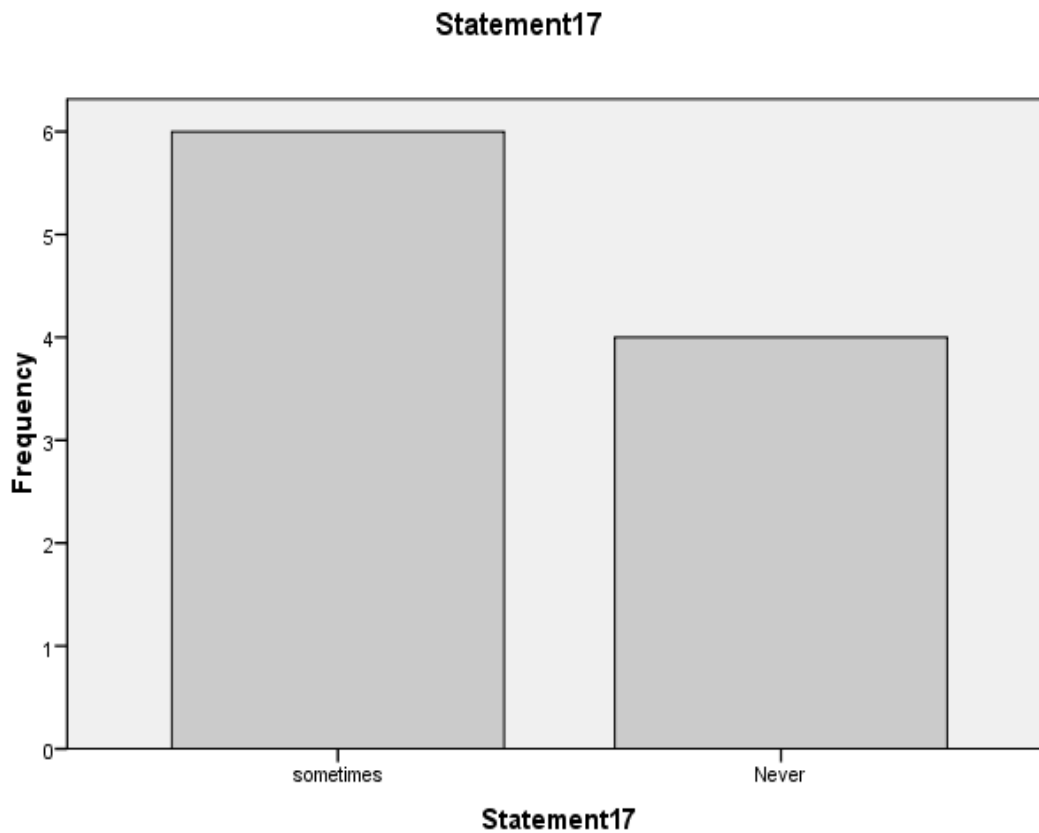


Figure (54) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (17)

17-Based on the data presented in table (54) about statement No.17, it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in (**sometime**). Its frequency is (**6**) which forms **60%** of the samples. This finding is due to the fact that the activities given to the students about writing in the class are not enough.

Statement (18)

Group work helps students apply their writing skill activities.

Table (55) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (18)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
18	5	%50	4	%40	1	%10

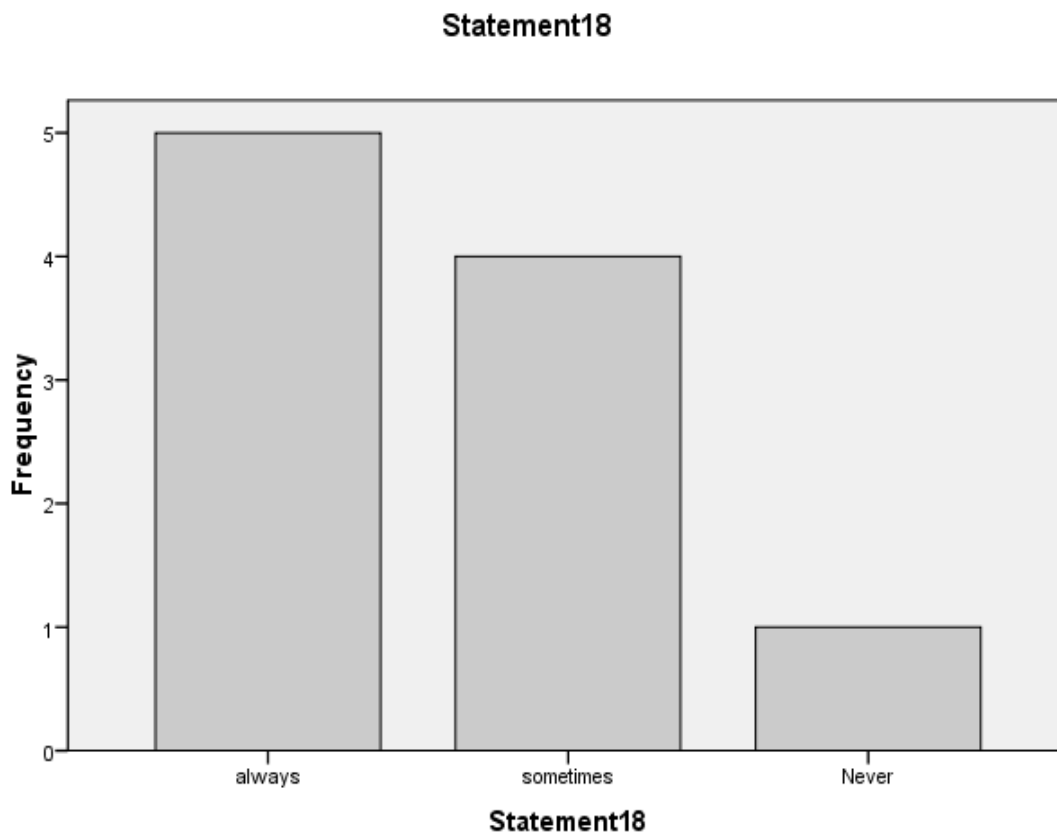


Figure (55) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (18)

18-Based on the data presented in table (55) about statement No.18, it is clear that half of the samples responses are limited in (**always**). Its frequency is (**5**) which forms **50%** of the samples. So that group work helps students do their writing skill activities.

Statement (19)

The activities of writing skills are boring.

Table (56) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (19)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
19	2	%20	6	%60	2	%20

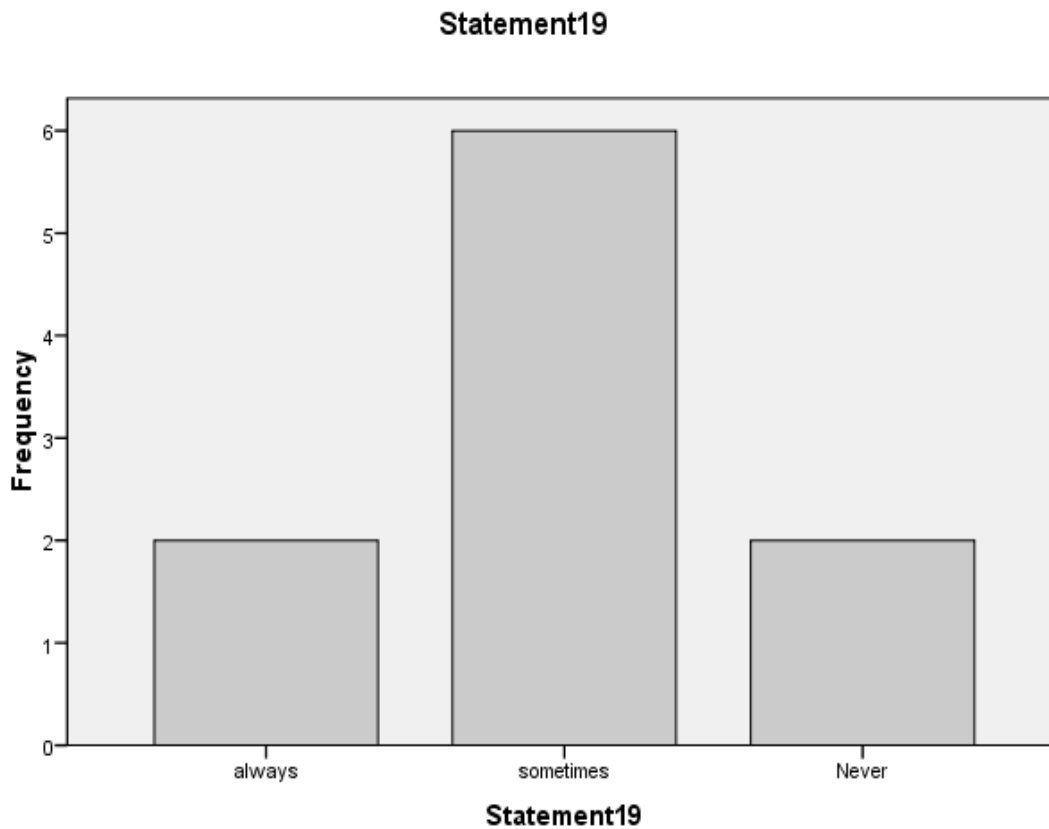


Figure (56) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (19)

19-Based on the data presented in table (56) about statement No.19, it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in (**sometime**). Its frequency is (**6**) which forms **60%** of the samples. This finding is due to the fact that the activities of writing skill are boring.

Statement (20)

It is difficult to check students' writing activities in crowded classes.

Table (57) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (20)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
20	8	%80	2	%20	0	%0

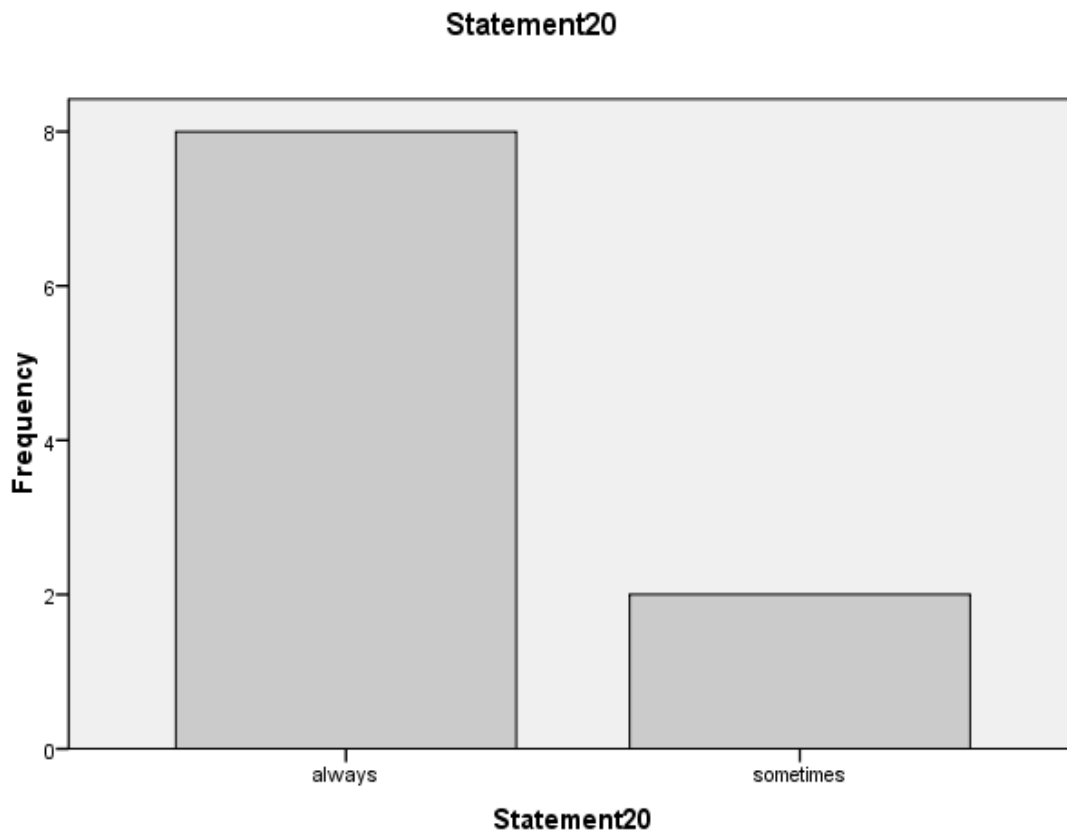


Figure (57) shows the teachers' answers regarding statement (20)

20-Based on the data presented in table (57) about statement No.20, it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in (**always**). Its frequency is (**8**) which forms **80%** of the samples. So that it is difficult to check students' writing activities in crowded classes.

4.4 Testing the Hypotheses

The four tests were given to the students have revealed that the majority of the students' performance in these tests was very weak. They failed to follow and fulfill the steps and the conditions required for any of the four tests given to them. Accordingly the researcher tests the study hypotheses in the light of the students' performance as well as in the light of the answers of the teachers' questionnaire.

4.4.1 Hypothesis (1) *There aren't enough courses of writing skills at the university*

According to data revealed from the test and the questionnaire, it is clear that writing is the most difficult skill in English language, so the students sometimes are not interested in learning it. The students have serious problems in regard to the command of the writing skills. The courses of writing skills given to the students at the university are not enough. Also there aren't enough references of writing skills at the university library. Moreover, there is no periodically revision to the syllabus of the English Department. Consequently, the whole facts revealed above come together and prove that the first hypothesis is true.

4.4.2 Hypothesis (2) *The background of the students about writing is poor.*

The students' background on writing is weak due to weakness in their pre tertiary standards in writing. They are influenced with the impression that writing is a difficult skill. On the other hand, students tend to translate from their mother tongue into English which reflects the clear interference of the L1 in their thinking and written production. Therefore, they always escape doing their writing activities. Consequently, the whole facts revealed above come together and prove that the second hypothesis is true.

4.4.3 Hypothesis (3) *Tutors do not give due attention to the teaching of writing skills.*

Since that writing is the most difficult skill in English language, teachers sometimes find it difficult to teach it to the students in a way that they could easily understand it. The time and the efforts given to teaching writing skills at the university are not enough. Despite of the importance of writing activities, teachers only sometimes give them to the students, especially after every class. Consequently, the whole facts revealed above come together and prove that the third hypothesis is true.

4.4.4 Hypothesis (4) Writing skills activities given to students are not enough.

According to data revealed from the tests and the questionnaire, it is clear that activities are boring for the students. The teachers themselves only sometimes give activities while or after classes. Moreover, teachers always find it difficult to check the students' activities especially in crowded classes. The group work helps both teachers and students doing their activities. Consequently, the whole facts revealed above come together and prove that the fourth hypothesis is true.

5.1 Summary

This study is an attempt to investigate the ability of the fourth year students (7th & 8th semesters) at the Colleges of Arts, Shendi University in writing skills. For this reason the researcher tested a sample of university students on writing a paragraph, a composition, an essay, and using mechanics (punctuation & capitalization).

This study is an attempt to find answers to the following questions:

1. Are there enough courses of writing skills at the university?
2. Is the background of the students about writing rich enough to help them understand and study writing skills?
3. Do tutors give due attention to the teaching of writing skills?
4. Are writing skill activities given to students enough?

5.2 Findings

The study yielded a number of significant results that can be summarised in the following points:

- 1-Writing is the most difficult skill in English language.
- 2-Writing is an outcome of many pre processes of teaching and learning other aspects of language like that of spelling, syntax and mechanics.
- 3- The students' background on writing skills is very weak due to weakness of the pre tertiary courses given to them in writing.
- 4- The students have serious problems with regard to the command of the writing skills.

- 5- The students have serious problems regarding the command of the paragraph writing techniques.
- 6- The students have serious problems regarding the command of the essay writing techniques.
- 7- The students have serious problems regarding the command of the composition writing techniques.
- 8- The students confuse the use of appropriate punctuation marks.
- 9- The courses of writing skills given to the students at the university are not enough to enable them to master the required writing steps.
- 10- There aren't enough references of writing skill at the university library.
- 11- The syllabus of the English Department is not revised periodically to be updated with the recent progresses of syllabi.
- 12- Students are not aware of the importance of the English writing skills.
- 13- Students are influenced with the impression that writing skill is difficult.
- 14- Students tend to translate from their mother tongue into English which reflects the clear interference of the L1 in their thinking and written production.
- 15- Teaching writing is more complicated than other skills of language.
- 16- Teachers sometimes find it difficult to teach writing skill to the students in a way that they could easily understand it.
- 17- The time and the efforts given to teaching writing skills at the university are not enough.

18-Teachers do not regularly give writing activities to the students, especially after every class.

19-Writing skill activities are boring duties, so that the students are not interested in doing them.

20-Teachers always find it difficult to check the students' activities especially in crowded classes.

5.3 Recommendations

In the light of these findings, the following recommendations can be made:

1- Reviewing the policy of the students' admission to the Department of English Language to reconsider their standards of English in Sudanese Certificate.

2- There should be coordination between universities and schools when designing curriculum for better harmony and gradation in syllabi.

3- Starting learning writing skills early at pre tertiary level to build a strong base for learning it further on.

4- Reviewing and revising the curriculum at the university to include enough writing skills courses.

5- English language library should be provided with enough writing skill references and materials.

6- Raising the students' awareness of the importance of writing skills and treat their false impression about it to make them more interested in.

7- Students should identify the differences and the similarities between their mother tongue and English language to prevent negative interference.

8- Students should be motivated in cooperative and group work to raise their confidence and to benefit from each other.

9- Teachers need to adopt and use modern techniques and methods of teaching writing other than the traditional ones.

10-Activities of writing should be given to student regularly and in an interested method to motivate them.

11- Teachers have to give more time and efforts for teaching writing skills at the university.

12-Modern educational laboratories provided with modern computerized technology should be built to improve writing learning.

13-There should be regular seminars and training courses for teachers to improve their teaching abilities and to train them using modern educational technology.

14- Since writing is the most complicated skill of the English language, teachers have to be patient and give it more attention.

15- Only long experienced teachers who have to teach students writing skills.

5.4 References

Bailey, S. (2006) **Academic Writing**, New York, Taylor & Francis e, Library

Bell, K. (1995), **Essay Writing**, De Montfort University Library

Caroline Coffin, Mary Jane Curry, Sharon Goodman, Ann Hewings Theresa M.

Lillis, Joan Swann (2005), **Teaching Academic Writing**, London Taylor & Francis e – Library.

Eckersley C.E. & Eckersley J. M. (1981), **A comprehensive English Grammar**,

Hong Kong, Longman group Limited

Eggenschwiler, J. & Biggs, E. D. (2001), **Writing: Grammar, Usage, and Style**,

New York, Hungry Minds

Foster, J. (2005) **Effective Writing Skills for Public Relations**, London, Kogan

Page Limited

Geoffrey Broughton, Christopher Brumfit, Roger Flavell, Peter Hill, Anita

Pincas, (2003), **Teaching English as a Foreign Language**, London, Taylor & Francis e-Library

Hamp, L. & Heasley, L. B. (1987), **Study Writing**, Cambridge, Cambridge

University Press

Heaton J.B. (1975), **Writing English Language Tests**, London, Longman group

limited

Hinkel, L. (2004) **Teaching Academic ESL Writing**, New Jersey, Lawrence

Erlbaum Associate Publishers.

Holtom, D & Fisher, E (1999), **Enjoy Writing Your Science Thesis or dissertation**, London, Imperial College Press.

Hyland K. 2006, **English for Academic Purposes**, U.K. Taylor & Francis e-Library

Idrees, A. M. & Hago, O. E. (2006), **Writing Skills 1**, Open University of Sudan

Idrees, A. M. & Hago, O. E. (2006), **Writing Skills 2**, Open University of Sudan

Kane T. S. (2000), **The Oxford Essential Guide to Writing**, Oxford University Press

Kelly, C. & Gargagliano, A. (2002) **Writing from Within**, U.K. Cambridge University Press

O'Donnell, T. D. & Paiva, J. L. (1993), **Independent Writing**-second edition

Pamela Cathcart, Judith DeCourdes, Susan Humphrey, Barbara Prats, Maureen Rippeel, (2003) **Reading and Writing Handbook for High Schools Students**, California, The office of curriculum, instruction, and professional development

Peter Treacher, Zuzana Svobodova, Heidrun Katzorke, Ursula Jaekel, Stefania Dugovicova , Mike Scoggin, (2000), **Writing in English**, Leonardo da Vinci programme European Commission

Raimes, R. (1980), **Techniques in teaching writing**, Oxford, University Press
Oxford

Reid, J. M. (1988), **the process of composition**, New Jersey, Englewood Cliffs

Rozakis, L. PH.D- (2003) **English Grammar for the Utterly Confused**, U.S.A,

Mc Graw – Hill,

Sargeant, H. (2007) **Basic English Grammar**, USA, Saddleback Educational

Publishing

Stark, R. (2003), **Research and writing skills: success in 20 minutes a day**,

New York, Learning Express, LLC

Toby Fulwiler(2002), **College Writing**, Boynton/ Cook Publisher, Inc. Hanover

Street.

Tredinnick, M. (2006), **The Little Red Writing Book**, Sydney, University of

New South Wales Press Ltd.

Valencia, L. L. A. V. (2002), **Teaching Technical Writing**, Mexico, FECHA:

AGOSTO

Wagner, E. N. (2002), **Express Yourself**, New York, Learning Express, LLC.

Winterowd, W, R, & Murray, P, Y, (1985), **English Writing and Skills**,

Chicago, Coronado Publisher.

Yule, G. (2006), **The Study of Language**, U.K. Cambridge University Press.

Zemach D.E. & Rumisek, L. A. (2005), **Academic Writing from Paragraph to**

Essay, Oxford, Macmillan publishers

- Ahmed, A. M. (2008), **Problematic Areas in Writing Skill**, unpublished MA, University of Sudan of science and technology
- Arabi, A. M. 2004, **The Correlation between Lexical Competence and EFL Writing Quality**, unpublished M.A. Sudan University of science and technology.
- Bashir, R. M. (2005), **Problems and Difficulties Facing Students in Secondary Schools in Writing Composition**, unpublished MA University of Juba
- ElBeshary, E. A. (2010), **Analysis of punctuation errors made by Sudanese EFL learners**, unpublished MA, University of Sudan of Science and Technology
- Hamad, H. A. D. (2006), **The Manifestation of Cohesion and Coherence in the Written English in Palestinian Senior University Students**, unpublished PhD, University of Sudan of science and technology
- Karadawi, E. A. (1994), **Deficiency of English Composition Writing in the Sudanese Final (third) Year of High Secondary School Analysis and Corrective Actions**, unpublished PhD, University of Khartoum
- Labi, A. G. (2005), **Investigating Difficulties Facing the Sudanese Secondary Schools Students in Writing in English as a Foreign Language**, unpublished MA, University of Sudan of science and technology

- Mohammad, M. M. (2010) **Evaluation of the Paragraph Writing Ability among Sudanese Learners of English as a Foreign Language**, unpublished MA, University of Sudan of science and technology
- Mohammed, M. M. (2010), **An Investigation into Coherence and Cohesion in Sudanese EFL Learners' Writing**, unpublished PhD, University of Sudan of science and technology.
- Mohamed, M. Y. (1999) **An Awareness of Paragraph Writing among Sudanese University Students**, unpublished MA University of Khartoum
- Nour Eldaim, R. E. 2008, **Problems of Teaching Writing Skills in Secondary Level with Reference to Spine (4) & (5)**, unpublished MA, University of Sudan of science and technology
- Salim, S. Y. (2008), **English Writing Problems Faced by Sudanese Pupils**, unpublished MA, University of Sudan of Science and Technology
- Tshotsho, B. P. (2006) **An Investigation into English Second Language Academic Writing Strategies for Black Students at the Eastern Cape Technikon**, published PhD theses, University of the Western Cape.
- Zein, M. M. (2006), **Investigating EFL Learners' Paragraph Writing**, unpublished MA, University of Khartoum.
- Adeline, (2007), **SWELL: A Writing Method to Help English Language Learners**, English Teaching Forum volume 45, No 4, p20

Archibald, A. (2001) **Targeting L2 Writing Proficiencies: Instruction and Areas of Change in Students Writing over Time**, University of Southampton, published in International Journal of English Studies volume 1(2)

Buckingham, L. (2008) **Development of English Academic Writing Competence by Turkish Scholars, Sabancı University, Istanbul, Turkey**, published in International Journal of Doctoral Studies Volume 3

Elyildirim, S. & Ashton, S. (2006), **Creating Positive Attitudes Towards English as a Foreign Language**, English Teaching Forum, volume 44, No 4, p 3.

Johari, S. K. (2008) **Building Vocabulary and Improving Writing While Developing a Tourist Brochure**, English Teaching Forum, volume 46, No 2, p38.