

Mentouri University – Constantine

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of Foreign Languages

**The Influence of Punctuation on Writing, and the Difficulties Students
Encounter While Using Either the Comma or the Semicolon.
The Case of Third Year Students, University of Constantine**

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree of Master in Applied Language Studies

Board of Examiners

President: Dr. Riad Belouahem University of Constantine

Supervisor: Dr. Nacif Labeled University of Constantine

Submitted by:

Supervised by:

Miss: Ihcene Nemouchi.

Dr. Nacif Labeled

2009-2010

Acknowledgements

Above all, I would thank Allah, the almighty for providing me with patience and will to study and reach this level and finish my thesis; all great praise for him.

I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Nacif Labeled, for his invaluable and grateful help, support and patience thereafter. Although these few words could not express my profound thanks, I thank him for being my preferable teacher and leader since my freshmen year.

I express my thanks to our Head, Dr. S. Laraba, to all teachers without exceptions.

I am also grateful to the library agents; especially Mr. Abd-Elghani, Mr. Abd-Elhamid, and Mr. Salim for their kindness, their precious help and encouragement in my hardest moments. Who tried their best to provide the best conditions for me; I really appreciate and deeply thank them for their help. In addition to Mr. Khaled, Mr. Manssour, Mr. Abd-Elkarim B., Mr. Abd-Elkarim.

Of course, I would thank Mrs. Ashouak Bader, with whom I carried out my experiments. I gratefully thank her for her contribution and piece of advice in my work.

I extend my thanks to my students, third year students groups 21, 27, and 28 at the Arabic Department. Who were always supporting and encouraging me.

Dedication

To my parents, who educated me on the good principles; to be honest, kind and respectful. I thank you for trusting me, which I really appreciate; for your love, patience, support and also encouragement.

To my mischievous brother Rabeh, to my sisters; Rokia, for whom I wish good luck in her BEM, and to my dearest Meriem, for whom I wish the best in her studies and life in general. To my special aunt Sihem and her husband Koukou.

To my grandfather, grandmother, uncles and aunts.

To all my cousins, especially the four little ones; Afoufa, Khouloud, Betoula, and Imen, who are the joy of my life. My best wishes for you darling, the best moments in your lives.

I extend my special dedication to you Linoush, **I missed you a lot**, to your husband and little son. I wish for you all the happiness in the world darling.

To all my friends; Aicha, Yasmina, the mischievous and cheerful Halouma, Hajer, Khalida, Rym, and Meryouma.

List of Tables

Table 01: Are students encouraged to write.....	35
Table 02: What is good writing.....	35
Table 03: The difficulties students face while writing.....	36
Table 04: Teacher’s motivation for students to punctuate	36
Table 05: Frequency of using punctuation marks	37
Table 06: Whether students pay attention to punctuation	37
Table 07: Does the Written Expression teacher pay attention to students’ mistakes in punctuation?.....	37
Table 08: Is the correction of the teacher taken into consideration	38
Table 09: Is punctuation important to have informative ideas?.....	38
Table 10: The most problematic punctuation marks.....	38
Table 11: The importance of the comma and the semicolon in conveying the exact meaning	39
Table 12: Awareness towards the comma and the semicolon.....	39
Table 1.A. Number of commas used and missed.....	41
Table 1.B. Number of semicolons used and missed	42
Table 2.A. Number of commas used and missed.....	44
Table 2.B. Number of semicolons used and missed	45
Table 3.A. Number of commas used and missed.....	47
Table 3.B. Number of semicolons used and missed	48

Abstract

Our work aims at showing the crucial role of punctuation in writing. It will show how the effective use of punctuation can; more precisely the right use of the comma and the semicolon, help in conveying the exact meaning, and thus prevent ambiguity. Through our hypotheses, we intended to investigate students' awareness of the importance of punctuation marks, especially the comma and the semicolon; this can be reached by writing intensively. Our hypotheses have been confirmed in our test, and not in the questionnaire, which were administered to a third year sample of 15 students at the Department of Languages, University of Constantine. The results gained in the questionnaire are contradictory to the results of the test; that is to say, in the questionnaire, students seem to be aware of the importance of punctuation, more precisely the comma and the semicolon. Yet, this outcome is contradicted to their performance about these marks.

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	i
Dedication.....	ii
List of Tables.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
General Introduction.....	1
1. Statement of the problem.....	1
2. Aim of the Research.....	1
3. Research Questions and Hypotheses.....	2
4. Research tools.....	2
5. Structure of the Research.....	3

Chapter One: Different Aspects of Writing

1.1. Introduction	5
1.2. Writing Definition	5
1.2.1. The Nature of Writing.....	6
1.2.2. How to Acquire Writing.....	7
1.3. The Process of Writing	7
1.3.1: The Writing Stages.....	8
1.3.1.1. Planning your Paper.....	8
1.3.1.2. Drafting your Paper.....	9
1.3.1.3. Revising your Paper.....	9
1.4. Assessing Writing to Ensure Clarity and Coherence.....	11
1.5. Conclusion.....	12

Chapter two: How to Use the Comma and the Semicolon1. Introduction

2. Definition of Punctuation	14
3. The Effective Role of Punctuation in Writing.....	14
4. Punctuation Marks.....	15
4.1. The Comma.....	17
4.1.1. The Comma Splice.....	18
4.1.2. The Wrong Placement of the Comma and Ambiguity	19

4.1.3. Cases Where the Comma should not Appear.....	20
4.1.4. The Many Functions of the Comma.....	21
4.2. The Semicolon.....	28
4.2.1. The Serviceable Semicolon	28
5. Conclusion	32

The Situation Analysis :

Chapter Three: Students' Mistakes and Confusion in Using Either the Comma or the Semicolon

1. Introduction.....	34
2. Population and Sampling:.....	34
3. Means of Research.....	34
3.1. The Questionnaire	34
3.1.1. Description of the Questionnaire	34
3.1.2. Administration of the Questionnaire.....	35
3.1.3. Analysis of the Questionnaire.....	35
3.2. The Test.....	40
3.2.1. Description of the Test.....	40
3.2.2. Administration of the Test.....	41
3.2.3. Analysis of the Results.....	41
3.3. Discussion of the Results.....	49
4. Conclusion	53
General Conclusion and Recommendations.....	54
References.....	57
Appendices.....	59

General Introduction

1. Statement of the problem

Most English students; in the department of languages at Mentour University, possess more or less weak performance in the writing strategies; especially in punctuation, more precisely the comma and the semicolon. These latter have a great effect on students' writing, as they play a crucial role in conveying a particular meaning rather than another.

Those marks are misused as they are, sometimes ignored although they are helpful in writing. For instance, the influence of those marks is clearly noticed when we have a change in meaning due to the presence or absence of comma, this may lead to ambiguity; also, when a semicolon is needed instead of a comma.

2. Aim of the Research

Our interest in such a topic comes from our classroom observation that students do not use these important marks appropriately, as they ignore them in other occasions. Although they are important and they help the writer to give one particular meaning rather than another, students do not pay attention to all this and misuse them.

In a nutshell, we will discuss different concerns of writing in relation to punctuation. Also, we will shed light on the effective role of punctuation in writing, since it helps the writer to convey one particular meaning and not another one. Besides, we will see how a careful punctuation could reduce ambiguity, i.e. lead the reader to guess the exact meaning.

Moreover, in the empirical part, we will see how do students appreciate punctuation, especially the comma and the semicolon, and how often do they use them in their writings.

3. Research Questions and Hypotheses

Many questions pertaining to our topic could be asked:

- What is the importance of punctuation in conveying the intended meaning?
- How can a careful punctuation, precisely the careful use of the comma and the semicolon, help to convey a particular meaning rather than another?
- Are third year students cautious about punctuation, especially the comma and the semicolon?

According to these questions, we can formulate the following hypotheses.

- If students are more aware of the importance of punctuation, especially the comma and the semicolon; they would ameliorate their knowledge about them and their rules.
- Students should be asked to write to get used to these important marks.

4. Research Tools

Our sample consists of fifteen third year students of the Department of languages at Mentouri University, Constantine; this sample is randomly selected. We will administer for them a questionnaire to fulfil; in addition to a test, where we will take three essays from each student, written separately and individually.

Through the questionnaire, we will show the students' attitudes and appreciation towards punctuation, more precisely the comma, and the semicolon. Besides, we will evaluate students' performance in their essays; in terms of punctuation.

5. Structure of the Research

Our research consists of three chapters. The two first chapters are concerned with the theoretical background of our topic; the last chapter is devoted for the questionnaire and the test.

The first chapter will be devoted to different aspects of writing. It includes a definition of writing, the nature and acquisition of writing. Next, we will discuss the writing stages; planing, drafting, and revising. Finally, we will see how can we ensure clarity and coherence through assessing writing.

In the second chapter we will have a definition of punctuation, the effective role of punctuation in writing. Then, we will shed light on punctuation marks; starting by the comma, which includes the comma splice, how can the wrong placement of the comma lead to ambiguity, then we will discuss the different cases where the comma should not appear, next the different functions of the comma. The last section is devoted to the semicolon and its serviceable functions.

The last chapter is concerned with the data collection from both the questionnaire and the test, which will be analysed and discussed. The first section will be concerned with the questionnaire's analysis; the second one is devoted to the text's analysis. Then we will give a general discussion for both of them, where we will state some recommendations and suggestions.

Chapter One: Different Aspects of Writing

1.1. Introduction	4
1.2. Writing Definition.....	4
1.2.1. The Nature of Writing	5
1.2.2. The Acquisition of Writing	5
1.3. The Process of Writing	6
1.3.1: The Writing Stages	6
1.3.1.1. Planning your Paper	7
1.3.1.2. Drafting your Paper	7
1.3.1.3. Revising your Paper	8
1.4. Assessing Writing to Ensure Clarity and Coherence	10
1.5. Conclusion	11

Chapter One: Different Aspects of Writing

1. Introduction

Writing is the most important language skill and the most sophisticated one, as it obeys rules and instructions. This is really true considering the efforts learners make to enhance their writing, and make words convey their thoughts in an understandable way.

This chapter is devoted to writing in general, starting by a definition of writing and how to learn this skill in academic institutions. This chapter also includes the different stages of writing, starting by planning, drafting, and then revising. Last but not least, we will also discuss the assessment of writing to assure clarity and coherence.

2. Writing Definition

Writing is one of the major skills for using language, through which one can convey his thoughts. It is stated that "writing is a reflection of what can occur only after the main ideas are in place." (Clark, 2003: 8). This means that the writer's goal is to know how to say what has been discovered, not in discovering and selecting what to say.

Learning to master this skill, i.e., to write means knowing the components of the writing system, for example letters, and how to make the difference between them, and use them appropriately. (Bader; 2007: 6). In support of the point, it is said that "to be deprived of the opportunity to learn to write is to be excluded from a wide range of social roles, including those which the majority of people in industrialized societies associate with power and prestige"(op cit. p.6). This means that learning to write the essential role to have a valuable status and professional position in society.

As writing is a means of communication between people, it should follow some conventions that are unique for all, which relate letters to have words and words to have

sentences, which must be well organized to have a coherent whole. (Bader; 2007: 7). This skill or means of communication is neither innate nor a natural process, it must be done and practiced a lot to be learnt and make use of it and its rules. In like manner, Ouskourt (2008: 13) said that since this skill is not inborn, one should practice it a lot to learn it and become a good writer.

2.1. The Nature of Writing

Writing is not taking a pen and jotting down one's thoughts, it takes also into consideration the mental activity which is the most essential part in the writing process.

The difficulty of writing is represented in the process phases a writer follows while writing. Some of these phases are identified as mentioned above (Writing Definition), still there are others a writer uses when he forgets an item or faces a difficulty in stating an idea. Psychological, linguistic and cognitive circumstances are the main factors for the writing difficulty; this is applied to both writing in the mother tongue and third language. (Nemouchi, 2008:18). For instance, if a student does not have or know the vocabulary and rules of a given language he cannot write and give his point of view. That is to say, to convey coherent and understandable piece of writing, one should make sure that he is following the right grammatical structures, using the appropriate vocabulary, and of course using punctuation correctly.

A writer does not write for himself, he writes for his readers. For that, the writer must clearly state his ideas, to make them easy for the reader to understand without any need to the writer to explain.

2.2. The Acquisition of Writing

Nemouchi (2008) differentiated between the acquisition of language and the acquisition of writing as “the acquisition of language, as natural process, comes by itself and occurs at an early age. On the contrary, acquiring writing needs intensive process of training and a long-term pedagogical assistance in specialized institutions. In fact, the difficulty in acquiring the written form of a language is mainly due to the lack of psychological predisposition that characterizes the spoken form. Consequently, writing is a skill that must be adapted to our abilities so that we can get familiar with, it taught the complex set of rules thought in class. (2008: 19).

3. The Process of Writing

Writing is a process any writer must follow to have a successful product. It is stated that Einstein said that to have a great research, all you need is a paper, a pencil and a waste basket. (Chesterman and Williams, 2002:14) Which means that what is important in the writing process is to be prepared to write whatever comes to mind. Starkey (2004:14) said that “essay writing is rarely that tortuous. But it is important to recognize that in order to do it well, you must commit yourself to a process”. He added that having a great essay does not come from the first writing, and the writer’s goal is to know how to do this task and not to come up with a finished writing.

3.1. The Writing Stages

Clark (2003:8) wrote that the writing process is made up of related stages referred to as "planning", "drafting" and "revising" often named as "prewriting", " writing" and "rewriting". Writing is referred to as a linear sequence, whose stages are related to each other, and each one follows carefully the other. The planning stage comes first; the drafting stage is the

second and the revising stage is the last one. Each successful stage determines the second stage's success, since they overlap. Clark argued that "such a model was based on the idea that writing is a reflection of what has already been formulated in the mind of the writer, and by implication suggested that writing can occur only after the main ideas are in place." (2003:8)

So, when having a preliminary plan, the writer should start writing at an early stage; write many papers, all the time. The more he writes, the easier it will be for him to produce his final paper. When writing a lot means that we have many data and thus many details; here, we can specify more and take only the major and beneficial ideas. Whereas when we have or write less or few information, we are obliged to keep it. Besides, whenever we have an idea that is related to our plan, we should jot it down not to forget it later.

3.1.1. Planning Your Paper

What begins well organized and well formed will end that way and will be really appreciated, Lipson states this as "good thesis writing begins with good planning". (2005:14). Planning is the first task to start with; it is always general, simple and informal. Lipson (2005: 123) said that it is not necessary to write down a plan, what matters is to have one in mind which helps to start writing. If the thesis is more detailed and contains more material; there must be a more detailed plan to have an effective writing. Lipson adds that the plan is not final and the writer will make different modifications; either adding new items or deleting others. According to him "planning is the basic work of organizing your material, writing informally about them, and preparing to write a first draft."(2005:123).

3.1.2. Drafting Your Paper

Once the writer has a topic and an outline to follow, he is ready to start writing. So, the next step is drafting, and by drafting is meant "writing a rough, or scratch, form of your

paper.” (Galko; 2001:49). At this stage, the writer starts a real straightforward writing, taking into consideration his plan. What really matters is that the writer will write down his ideas because it is high time to jot them down, since he has planned and decided what to put and what not.

According to Katz (2006:52), "as you translate your plans and records into words [...]; you will see what you are doing in a clearer light". This means that ideas are made clearer and more understandable if they are written on a paper. Besides, as Galko (2001:49) suggested, the writer can put down notes that will help him to come back and make his modifications or check his facts.

Writing down ones ideas is a form of thinking aloud on a paper, as a convention with himself and then with the readers. The writer writes to make his ideas far away from him, and takes them away from his mind. As Lipson (2005:124) mentioned, he will make his piece of writing clear and understandable, making the reader move slightly from one point to the next in a coherent way. In drafting, the writer is not said to consider and worry about grammar, spelling or even punctuation because these will be taken into consideration in a later stage.

3.1.3. Revising Your Paper

One way for clearing off difficulties, evaluating ones writing and making improvements is through revising. Brown and Hood (1989:20) defined revising as the stage where you check that you have said what you wanted to say and said it in a clear and appropriate way. When the writer starts evaluating his piece of writing (draft), he will find many errors. For instance, he can come across misspelled words or confusing sentences that are not clearly stated. (Galko,2001:73).

This step is really the most important one because when drafting, it seems to the writer that what he has said and what he wanted to say is clear. Yet, when he comes to revise what

he has written, he will find that he has made errors. For such a purpose, revising means evaluating

the piece of writing in a critical and objective way. When revising, the writer should make sure that his content is stated in a clear and appropriate way for his audience. Besides, he may make some changes, add new elements, delete some others, and so on. (Brown and Hood : 1989:20).

Galko (2001:75) discussed some changes or steps involved when revising the paper. Here they are:

- To evaluate and judge what the paper says. The writer should read his paper aloud to see if it conveys the exact meaning or not. To see if ideas are clearly stated and related or not.

- The writer should know what kind of modification he is going to make. Should he add supporting statements, delete parts that are unnecessary, change structures, or add the suitable punctuation to make the piece of writing sound clearer.

Brown and Hood (1989:20) said that the revising stage is useful and helpful in the writing process, in the way that the writer can know if his writing is effective and successful or not. In addition to this, he should give it the time and attention needed. For example, if someone comes to send a mobile message to a friend, he will not care a lot about punctuation, yet he wants his message to make sense. This implies that he should give importance to punctuation to make his message meaningful and avoid ambiguity. Gallo (2001:95) wrote that although it may sometimes seem trivial, punctuation can really make a difference in what your paper says. Let's consider the following examples:

- Don't! Stop now!

- Don't stop now.

(Galko; 2001:95)

In the first sentence, the person is saying “stop now”, whereas in the second sentence,

the person is saying “now isn't a good time to stop”.

Here is another example from my classroom reminiscence.

.The teacher explained why plagiarism was forbidden on Monday.

This sentence, which contains no comma, has the meaning of, “the teacher explained why plagiarism was forbidden **only** on Monday”, which is not the intended meaning. But if we reformulate the same sentence as follows:

On Monday, the teacher explained why plagiarism was forbidden.

We can understand the right meaning intended, i.e., “the explanation was on Monday and not another day.

All in all, the process of writing is the outcome of planning, drafting and revising. In addition, the more eyes that see and evaluate a piece of writing, the better it will appear. (Gough; 2005:16).

4. Assessing Writing to Ensure Clarity and Coherence

In writing, the most important goal is to write a paper that is easy to understand and to grasp its intended meaning. The writer must always write a straightforward and well organized piece of writing to ensure credibility and approval from his audience. As Dunleavy (2003:104) put it, the good style means relating the tiny elements which are sentences and paragraphs into a connected chain that will strike the big number of readers, in a logical, meaningful and accessible way. To write clear sentences, Galko (2001:103) stated three different strategies:

1. To be brief, say what you mean in a concise way.
2. To use active voice.
3. To avoid unnecessary "big" words; besides, if the writer knows how to write what to say will guarantee that his readers will understand exactly what he means to say

5. Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, we can say that one should go through much practice to get used to the writing rules and strategies, because it is not acquired in natural setting (at home, in the streets, etc.); this is why it needs an intensive process of training to get used of it and its conventions. Since the writer is not writing for himself, he should be aware of how to write and what to say. This includes mastering the writing process or strategies.

Chapter Two: How to Use the Comma and the Semicolon

1. Introduction	14
2. Definition of Punctuation.....	14
3. The Effective Role of Punctuation in Writing.....	15
4. Punctuation Marks.....	17
4.1. The Comma.....	17
4.1.1. The Comma Splice.....	18
4.1.2. The Wrong Placement of the Comma and Ambiguity	19
4.1.3. Cases Where the Comma should not Appear.....	20
4.1.4. The Many Functions of the Comma.....	21
4.2. The Semicolon.....	28
4.3. The Serviceable Semicolon.....	28
5. Conclusion.....	32

Chapter Two: How to Use the Comma and the Semicolon

1. Introduction

Punctuation takes the biggest part in writing, and it is second in importance to the message. Punctuation marks are seen as road signs which provide signals to facilitate the reader's way within a string of ideas and make him move from an idea to another without stumbling.

In this chapter, we will define punctuation marks, and then we will discuss their effective role in writing. We will also see how a correct punctuation helps in conveying the intended meaning and how can this aspect of communication prevent ambiguity and lead to clarity, simplicity and preciseness. After this, we will shed light on two important marks of our interest, which are the comma and the semicolon. We will see a brief definition of these marks and the different functions they have.

2. Definition of Punctuation

When writing, one should put in mind that his piece of writing should be meaningful. Of course, this means the right spelling, correct grammar, and most importantly using punctuation correctly. This latter is derived from the Latin word “punctum” meaning “point”. (Stilman.1997). In the same vein, Stilman said that punctuation marks used in a sentence point to the meanings given by its words, giving meaning of what otherwise can be a string of sounds. In other words, punctuation means to clarify a piece of writing and divide it into meaningful sequences (paragraphs, sentences, clauses and phrases). It is similar

to using pauses, intonation, gestures and changes of expressions, while speaking.

King (2004: 1) insisted that punctuation is the most important aspect in writing, especially when compared to spelling. He posits that "now spelling is one of the decencies of life, like the proper use of knives and forks. But if you are getting your commas, semicolons and full stops wrong, it means that you are not getting your thoughts right, and your mind is muddled." This is really true since punctuation contributes in conveying the right meaning without making the reader stumble. Besides, a misuse or an ignorance of a punctuation mark will change the writer's writing. This means that using punctuation marks is not merely to show cleverness in using them, but to add meaning to the piece of writing and make it correct and easily understood. Thus, it is suitable to divide punctuation into two broad categories; the stops and the other marks. "Stops" take their name from the fact that they correspond to pauses and intonations in speech, stops include the period, the question mark, the colon, the semicolon and the comma. The other marks are only visual signals, they do not mark any pause, they include the quotation mark, the hyphen and the parentheses. (Kane, 2000).

3. The Effective Role of Punctuation in Writing

Punctuation has an effective role to play in writing since it is second in importance to the message. It looks like the cane a blind person uses to get his way, because a piece of writing that lacks punctuation means only failure of the writer to convey his message. Goldbord (2006) said that punctuation is an aspect

of communication rather than an afterthought; which stands outside of words and affects all aspects of writing- clarity, simplicity, and preciseness. In support of this point, the role of punctuation is clearly noticed in that it helps the writer keep track of what he has written and what he will write, as it precisely helps the reader to understand what the writer wants to say. This implies that the writer should always be sure of his punctuation not to mislead the reader by, for instance, placing a full stop instead of a comma or omitting a single mark, which may lead to confusion. In line with this, punctuation makes the piece of writing more polished and technically correct and will make sense of the writer's ideas. For example, if we take the following two sentences

which are similar in the wording, but one contains no punctuation and the other contains a comma, we can find that there is a big difference in meaning between them

Eg1. My aunt Sihem prepared a delicious meal.

Eg2. My aunt, Sihem prepared a delicious meal. (Our examples)

In the first sentence, my aunt Sihem could be one of several aunts, yet in the second sentence, sihem is my only aunt. This means that writer should be aware.

Kaskill (1998) said that the modern tendency of punctuation is to prevent misreading rather than to use all punctuation that the grammatical structure will allow.

The former aims at having an inviting piece of writing; but it allows subjectivity may be because of arbitrariness in using marks is said to eliminate ambiguity, they should be used prudently and consistently.

Crème and Lea (2008) stated that in order to communicate effectively, the writer has to use various mechanisms; and this is where punctuation takes place. It permits the writer to divide up his ideas into chunks so that the reader can understand easily. The same thing is done in speaking, where the speaker helps the listener to follow his speech through the use of gestures, facial expressions and body language. Also, he can use pauses, hesitations and repetitions to add to the force of what he is saying and make sure the listener received the exact information. The same thing is done in writing, there are many rules and conventions to be followed to have a successful piece of writing. Stilman (1997) wrote that punctuation marks, as any other mechanics, have two serviceable functions. First, they define how the different elements of a sentence are related to each other. Second, they ensure an understandable and an unambiguous message. The former is mechanical and so it is learnt easily; yet, the latter helps in differentiating between the skillful writer and the novice. For instance, the aim beyond choosing one mark and not another is rather to achieve a certain nuance than to mark major differences in meaning.

4. Punctuation Marks

4.1. The Comma

Among all the punctuation marks, the comma requires the most judgment. Indeed, using it requires not only obedience to its conventions, but also a deep understanding of the piece being punctuated.

This mark outnumbers all the other marks in use. It functions as an interrupter, separates a sentence into distinct units, and thereby shows the logical relationships existing in the sentence. The occurrence of any misuse or omission could cause misunderstanding.

4.1.1. The Comma Splice

A Comma splice means the incorrect use of the comma to connect two complete sentences.

eg.1. The house is large, it has seven rooms. (Our example)

The comma in this sentence is wrongly used. To correct the comma splice, we can either:

. Replace a comma with a period, forming two sentences.

. Replace a comma with a semicolon.

.Join the two sentences with a conjunction, such as and, because, etc, to form a single sentence.

The above sentence is not a correct one, but there are several ways to make it one:

. The house is large; it has seven rooms, or

. The house is large **as** it has seven rooms, or

. The house is large **and** includes seven rooms, or

. The house is large **with** seven rooms.

Eg2:

■ Our school received an award, we raised the most money for the local charity.

[Incorrect]

■ Our school received an award. We raised the most money for the local charity.

[Correct]

Or . Our school received an award; we raised the most money for the local charity.

Or . Our school received an award, **because** we raised the most money for the local charity. (Starkey, 2004)

4.1.2. The Wrong Placement of the Comma and Ambiguity

Another common error concerning the comma occurs when the presence or lack of it leads to ambiguity, and thus leads to misunderstanding. This means that the writer should be consistent in his ideas, whether the comma is needed or not. Here are some illustrations given by King (2004).

e.g. Do we mean: My son Frederick invented the whoopee cushion.

Or: My son, Frederick, invented the whoopee cushion. (King, 2004)

This example illustrates a trap many of people fall into. Although superficially both of these sentences seem to be saying the same thing, the comma that enclose Frederick gives the meaning that Frederick is the only son; whereas in the first example, he could be one of several sons.

Another illustration involves the fate of a young warrior in ancient Greece who, in the eve of departing for a war, consulted the Oracle at Delphi. "Thou shalt go thou shalt return never by war shalt thou perish," he was told breathlessly.

Mentally placing the commas after "go" and "return" the warrior leapt on his chariot with brimming confidence.

Unfortunately, he was killed on the first battle without realizing that the Oracle means, thou shalt go, thou shalt return never, by war shalt thou perish. Two commas could have saved his life.

Ambiguity can also occur in the case of placing commas wrongly. (King, 2004).

e.g. A pretty smart, young lady.

A pretty smart young lady.

In the first example, we can notice that we have an attractive young lady who is also smart. Yet, in the second example, "pretty" is attached to "smart" to mean something between "fairly smart" and "very smart". Moreover, it makes no reference to the young lady's appearance.

4.1.3. Cases Where the Comma Should not Appear

There are many cases where the comma should not appear, here are those cases:

4.1.3.1. The Comma is not used to separate independent clauses without a coordinate conjunction.

e.g. The various newspapers usually have their own views on politics (,) they are not organs of the political parties. (Our example)

4.1.3.2. Don't split a compound subject.

e.g. Lily stomped down to her dungeon(,) and slammed the door.

(Stilman, 1997)

4.1.3.3. Don't split the two descriptions in the predicate.

e.g. The article was too long (,) and very interesting. (Our example)

4.1.3.4. Don't split the two entities affected by the action.

e.g. They have decided to visit Rome (,) and Istanbul. (Our example)

4.1.3.5. Don't split the two recipients of the action.

e.g. I will invite my relatives (,) and my friends for my reception.

(Our example)

4.1.3.6. Don't use a comma after an introductory phrase that immediately precedes the verb it modifies.

e.g. Only in recent years (,) has the delta function been rigorously defined. (Our example)

4.1.4. The Many Function of the Comma

As the most serviceable mark, the comma has many functions in writing, here they are:

4.1.4.1. Use a comma before a conjunction joining two independent clauses; and, but, for, so, nor, or, yet, and the correlations, either.... Or, neither....nor, both.....and, not only.....but.

e.g. Justice stands upon power, or there is no justice.

Note: Joining two independent clauses with a comma when there is no conjunction, is generally considered a poor way to join two complete ideas; unless they are short and parallel in construction, as in:

I entered, I looked, I left.

I entered, I looked, I left. (Gough, 2005)

4.1.4.2. Use a comma to set off elements that give additional information; it is only possible to say if the information is additional by omitting it. If the sentence makes sense without it, the information is not essential, and the commas set it off.

The thing to remember is:

. Use either two commas or no comma, unless the information comes at the beginning or at the end of the sentence and the comma is balanced with either a capital letter or an end mark.

e.g.1. I will finish my dissertation, I promise, as soon as possible.

e.g.2. This book, in my opinion, is not reliable as far as your topic is concerned.

e.g.3. Preferably, you should try other methods to solve your problem.

(Our examples)

4.1.4.3. Use a comma to set off "yes", "no" statements.

e.g. Yes, I have understood. (Our example)

4.1.4.4. Use a comma to set of contrasting ideas.

e.g. The difficulty lays in diagnosing the illness, not in finding medicine

(Our example)

4.1.4.5. Be consistent in using commas between words and phrases forming a series.

Many writers do not put the last comma, which comes before the conjunction, yet others put it. Both styles are acceptable.

The argument of omitting the last comma, in fact, is acceptable because commas themselves mean "and" and using a comma followed by "and" effectively means saying "and and".

Nevertheless, in some instances, meaning may not be clear without it.

e.g. As the safety director, he was systematically quick to assess,
address, and resolve cause of repeat accidents. (Gough, 2005)

4.1.4.6. Use a comma to prevent misreading.

e.g. My friend Lina was a friend indeed.

e.g. My friend, Lina , was a friend indeed. (Our examples)

The first sentence means that Lina is one of my friends.

The second sentence means that Lina is my only friend.

4.1.4.7. Use a comma before expressions like "will you?" <have you?" (tag questions).

e.g.1. I hope you haven't thrown my documents, have you?

e.g.2. You will not take the plane this afternoon, will you?

(Our examples)

4.1.4.8. Use a comma to separate an introductory phase or clause from the main clause.

e.g.1. To understand the rules effectively, you should go through a lot of practice.

e.g.2. Although many teachers disagree with that definition, it is widely used. (Our examples)

4.1.4.9. Use a comma to separate dates.

e.g.1. We have left London, on January 20, 1999.

e.g.2. My birthday is, on June 21, 1986. (Our examples)

4.1.4.10. Use a comma to set off geographic names and addresses.

e.g.1. Istanbul, is my preferable place for tourism.

e.g.2. Mr Armstrong lives at 2187 Mountain Street, Miami, Florida 60306. (On the Move MS4)

4.1.4.11. Use a comma to set off parenthetical elements (interrupters).

An interrupter is a nonrestrictive clause, which can be removed without affecting the meaning of the sentence. For example; according, ideally, in conclusion, specifically, that is to say, subsequently, in brief, in fact.

e.g.1. In brief, we should grasp all opportunities that come to use.

e.g.2. In conclusion, the virus has spread, despite their attempts.

(Our examples)

4.1.4.12 Use a comma to set off interjections.

e.g. Oh, are you still here? (Our example)

4.1.4.13. Use a comma to set off names.

e.g. Look, Seif, you should be consistent in your choices.

(Our example)

4.1.4.14. Use a comma to itemize word in a series.

e.g. Please put trousers, skirts, pullovers, and veils in their lockers.

(Our example)

4.1.4.15. Use a comma to set off direct speech.

e.g. She said, " I cannot come to the party tonight". (Our example)

4.1.1.16. Use a comma to emphasis a point view.

e.g. Of course, I agree with you. (Our example)

4.1.4.17. Use a comma to reinforce statements.

e.g₁. She is ill because she doesn't eat, that's why ?

e.g₂. I will think about your issue, I promise. (Our examples)

4.1.4.18. Use a comma when there is a specifying phrase.

e.g. This chapter is taken from the second edition, page 200, of the book.

(Our example)

4.1.4.19. Use a comma to set off nonrestrictive clauses and phrases that give additional information to the sentence which is not essential and can be omitted.

e.g₁. This little girl, who is very prudent, helped me a lot in my work.

e.g₂. One should be always motivated, even when failing. (Our example)

4.1.4.20. The comma is not used with restrictive clauses, because they are essential to the meaning of the sentence.

e.g. People, who live in Algeria, react violently when they are angry.

(Our example)

4.1.4.21. The comma is used to set off nonrestrictive appositives, but not restrictive ones

e.g. El-Shourouk, one of the most favored newspapers, gives faithful reports and information. (Our example)

4.1.1.22. The comma is used to set off conjunctive adverbs.

For example; anyway, besides, however, likewise, hence, in brief, similarly, in fact, certainly, namely, in particular, meanwhile, meantime.

e.g. A European volcano is bursting out, therefore, planes could not take off. (Our example)

4.1.1.23. Use a comma to indicate omission or ellipsis.

e.g₁. Some students prefer to succeed even without having a good level, others find it betraying to do so.

e.g₂. British people are the most voracious newspaper readers, they read everywhere. (Our examples)

4.1.4.24. Use a comma between coordinate adjectives but not cumulative adjectives.

Adjectives are not the same, placing them and using punctuation within depend on the meaning wanted. Coordinate adjectives are the ones that modify a noun or a pronoun with equal weight, need a comma, their position may be changed and does not affect the message. Cumulative adjectives must be in a specific order to make sense and require no comma.

e.g.1. ■ An informative, clear, easy to read article.

[Coordinate adjectives]

■. An easy, informative, clear article. (Our examples)

Her and can replace the commas between coordinate adjectives.

e.g.2. There scented liquid compounds go into the formulation.

(Our example)

Replacing one adjective with another leads the sentence to be ridiculous.

Because each adjective modifies the one that follows it, each one has a logical position in the sentence.

Adjectives of numbers and colors are cumulative, with numbers beginning the series followed by size and then color. The adjectives in the following sentences are cumulative and require no comma.

e.g. For tall green trees lines the drive. (Our example)

Note: A cumulative adjective can be followed by two or more coordinate adjectives. If so, only the coordinate adjectives carry commas or are joined by "and".

e.g. We have a choice of four innovative and exciting packaging designs.

(Gough, 2005)

4.2. The Semicolon

Field (2009) wrote "The semicolon was first recorded in England in 1644. You will sometimes find it spelt with a hyphen but as both the Oxford Dictionary and Flower, the acknowledged authority in England, write it as one word, that is assumed to be correct" (p. 88).

Using this mark seems to be fearful to many people, i.e., not to use it correctly because this mark intermediates between the comma and the period, which means that the semicolon serves a hard break than a comma, but a kindly one than a period. The semicolon works between independent clauses, separates elements with central punctuation in a list and explanatory phrases and clause.

4.3. The Serviceable Semicolon

It is a useful and helpful mark, yet it is not as problematic as the comma. Here are the functions it serves:

4.2.1.1. Use a semicolon and a conjunctive adverb between two independent clauses. The conjunctive adverb also, defines relationships between ideas. These are some of the most common conjunctive adverbs: Accordingly, however, nonetheless, in addition, moreover, therefore, hence, thus, consequently, instead, otherwise.

Note: The subordinate conjunction introduces dependent clauses that cannot stand alone as a sentence. The conjunctive adverb, however introduces independent clauses that can stand alone, with or without the adverb.

e.g. My paycheck was late. I couldn't pay my rent on time.

There are two ways for combining these two sentences:

1. My paycheck was late; therefore, I couldn't pay my rent on time.
2. I couldn't pay my rent on time, because my paycheck was late.

(Our examples)

In the first sentence, we can place "therefore" in any place, "I couldn't ", therefore, pay my rent on time. So it is a conjunctive adverb since it can be placed in different position in the sentences it links.

In the second sentence, "because" makes no sense anywhere else in the clause.

4.2.1.2. Use a semicolon between two independent clauses, if the relation between the ideas is clear.

e.g. I prefer Lina, to work with; she is really serious (Our example)

4.2.1.3. Use a semicolon to separate items in a list that contain internal commas: Although commas neatly separate most serial elements semicolons help to avoid confusion in lists with internal commas.

e.g. After celebrating her birthday, she received many presents a box of chocolates, a handbag, and a perfume. (Our example)

Note: Put a semicolon between all main elements in a series, even if only one of them contains internal commas .

That is, be consistent: don't use a semicolon just in the one place where it seems to be needed, and a comma elsewhere.

e.g. The competition drew contestants from Georgia and Alabama in the south, New York, new Hampshire and Connecticut in the northeast, and Oregon in the northwest.

4.2.1.4. Use a semicolon to emphasis contrast.

e.g. Kate may leave now, you may not. (Our example)

4.2.1.5. Use a semicolon if commas lead to misreading.

e.g. Section 01 linked to 02, 03 and 04 linked to 05, and 06 linked to 07.

(Our example)

This sentence carries a mistake, because one can read it as: section 1 linked to 2, 3 and 4; what follows is vague, “?” linked to 5; and 6 linked to 7.

Here, semicolons are needed to remove this ambiguity and keep each clause distinct from the others.

. Section1 linked to 2; 3 and 4 linked to 5; and 6 linked to 7.

Note: If commas are not strong enough, use semicolons instead, even if it is not technically needed.

4.2.1.6. Use a semicolon only between parts of equal rank; not between a clause and a phrase, or between a main clause and a subordinate clause.

e.g.1. My only hope is to visit Istanbul, I want to have souvenirs. (two main clause).

e.g.2. My only hope is to visit Istanbul, because I like it. (main clause and subordinate clause separated by a comma not a semicolon) (Our examples)

5.2.1.7. Use a semicolon to restore order in sentences suffering from «comma riot». Here is an example given by King (2004), which is spoiled by «comma riot».

His main aim in life, according to William, were to achieve financial independence, to be powerful attractive, not only to women in general but in particular to rich ladies, to eat and drink freely without putting on weight, to remain fit, vital and young-looking beyond his eightieth birthday and, last but not least, to not only read, but fully understand, professor Stephen Hawking's "A Brief History of Time".

Many professional writers would defend that sentence, despite it eleven commas. But others, perhaps more concerned with clarity than with rhythm, would suggest that some of the thoughts at least should be separated by the longer pauses provided by semicolons. So it is preferable to put the above example as follows:

His main aims in life, according to William, were to achieve financial independence; to be powerful attractive, not only to women in general but in particular to rich ladies; to eat and drink freely without putting on weight; to

remain fit, vital and young- looking beyond his eightieth birthday, and last but not least, to not read, but fully understand, professor Stephen Hawking's "A Brief History of Time."

5. Conclusion

To end up this chapter, we can say that punctuation is the salt of our writing, if we misuse, ignore or overuse it our piece of writing will lose its taste and therefore become misunderstood. This implies particularly for the two marks of our concern, the comma and the semicolon, which are the most serviceable and the most problematic.

Situation Analysis

Chapter Three: Students' Mistakes and Confusion in Using Either the Comma or the Semicolon

1. Introduction.....	34
2. Population and Sampling.....	34
3. Means of Research.....	34
3.1. The Questionnaire.....	34
3.1.1. Description of the Questionnaire.....	34
3.1.2. Administration of the Questionnaire.....	35
3.1.3. Analysis of the Questionnaire.....	35
3.2. The Test.....	40
3.2.1. Description of the Test.....	40
3.2.2. Administration of the Test.....	41
3.2.3. Analysis of the Results.....	41
3.3. Discussion of the Results.....	49
4. Conclusion	53

Situation Analysis:
**Chapter Three: Students' Mistakes and Confusion in Using Either the
Comma or the Semicolon**

1. Introduction

The aim of this research study is to find out the different problems encountered by students when writing; more specifically in using punctuation. For this purpose, a learners' questionnaire and a test were administered. The questionnaire aims at gathering data about students' background knowledge concerning punctuation in relation to writing; to see how do they appreciate punctuation. On the other hand, the test's aim is to assess the students' use of punctuation, more precisely the comma and the semicolon.

2. Population and Sampling

For our empirical part, we have randomly selected a sample of fifteen students; in the Department of Languages at Mentouri University. Age, sex and level are unwanted variables; they were not taken into consideration. We have chosen two groups (08 and 11), whose written expression teacher is our acquaintance. We have randomly selected four students from group 08 and eleven students from group 11.

3. Means of Research

For our research, we have used a questionnaire and a test.

3.1. The Questionnaire

3.1.1. Description of the Questionnaire

This questionnaire is intended to collect data about our sample's background about punctuation, especially about the comma and the semicolon. This questionnaire consists of twelve questions; eight questions are to be answered by "yes" or "no", and the four others

consist of different alternatives from which students are supposed to select the appropriate answer(s).

This questionnaire is designed first to investigate students' appreciation of writing; if they are encouraged to write, and to know about their difficulties in writing. We also wanted to know if they are motivated by their teachers to use punctuation, how often do they use punctuation marks while writing; whether they pay attention to their punctuation while writing, whether their Written Expression teacher correct their punctuation, and if they take the correction into consideration. Besides, we wanted to know if their ideas are informative when they punctuate or if they just do it haphazardly.

The last three questions, students are respectively asked about the most troublesome marks they face; whether the comma and the semicolon are serviceable to conveying the intended meaning or not. Last but not least, whether students are made aware of the importance of these two marks.

3.1.2. Administration of the Questionnaire

Our questionnaire was handled to our sample (N=15). Students did not face any problem in understanding and answering the questionnaire.

3.1.3. Analysis of the Questionnaire

Question 01

Option	N	%
Yes	13	86,66%
No	2	13,33%
Total	15	100%

Table 01: Are students encouraged to write

As Table 01 shows, 86.66% of the total respondents are motivated to write; against 13.33% who are not motivated.

Question 02

Alternatives	N	%
Informative ideas	4	26.66%
Correct grammar	3	20%
Effective punctuation	1	6.66%
Precise vocabulary	1	6.66%
Informative ideas +correct grammar	2	13.33%
Correct grammar +precise vocabulary	1	6.66%
Correct grammar + effective punctuation	2	13.33%
Informative ideas +correct grammar + precise vocabulary	1	6.66%
Total	15	100%

Table 02: What is good writing

Good writing, according to the students of our sample is informative ideas with a rate of 26.66% and correct grammar with a rate of 20%, respectively those two alternatives are most preferred. Concerning effective punctuation and precise vocabulary, they have the same rate 6.66%; in addition to other compound choices, students suggested, which are correct grammar and precise vocabulary; informative ideas, correct grammar and precise vocabulary.

Question 03

Option	N	%
Choosing vocabulary	5	33.33%
Grammar	2	13.33%
Punctuation	8	53.33%
Total	15	100%

Table 03: The difficulties students face while writing

The most problematic and difficult concept to deal with is punctuation, which takes the great number of students 53.33% followed by the choice of suitable vocabulary, also with somehow a big rate but not as the one that punctuation occupies 33.33%; and then grammar which seems to be the easiest one students deal with 13.33%.

Question 04

Option	N	%
Yes	13	86.66%
No	2	13.33%
Total	15	100%

Table 04: Teacher’s motivation for students to punctuate

86.66% of the total respondents said that they are motivated by their teachers to use punctuation, against 13.33%, who said no.

Question 05

Option	N	%
Frequently	8	53.33%
Very frequently	4	26.66%
Seldom	3	20%
Total	15	100%

Table 05: Frequency of using punctuation marks

53.33% of the students stated that they frequently use punctuation marks, 26.66% of them said that they rarely use punctuation, and 20% of students use punctuation marks very frequently.

Question 06

Option	N	%
Yes	8	53.33%
No	1	6.66%
Sometimes	6	40%
Total	15	100%

Table 06: Whether students pay attention to punctuation

53.33% of the total respondents (N=15) said that they pay attention to punctuation while writing ; 40% responded by sometimes.

Question 07

Option	N	%
Yes	15	100%
No	0	0%
Total	15	100%

Table 07: Does the Written Expression teacher pay attention to students' mistakes in punctuation?

From this table, we can notice that all the students of our sample (100%) agreed upon one answer saying that their Written Expression teacher corrects their punctuation.

Question 08

Option	N	%
Yes	14	93.33%%
No	1	6.66%
Total	15	100%

Table 08: Is the correction of the teacher taken into consideration

93.33% of our respondents said that they take the teacher's correction into consideration; yet the remaining students 6.66% responded by no.

Question 09

Option	N	%
Yes	6	40%
No	9	60%
Total	15	100%

Table 09: Is punctuation important to have informative ideas?

60% of the total respondents (N=15) disagreed against 40% who agreed.

Question 10

Suggestions	N	%
Comma	2	13.33%
Semicolon	4	26.66%
Comma+ Semicolon	7	46.66%
Comma+ Period + Semicolon	2	13.33%
Total	15	100%

Table 10: The most problematic punctuation marks

Of 46.66% of the total respondents, the most problematic marks, students suggested, are both the comma and the semicolon; against 26.66% who considered that it is the semicolon. 13.33% it is the comma in isolation.

Question 11

Option	N	%
Yes	14	93.33%
No	1	6.66%
Total	15	100%

Table 11: The importance of the comma and the semicolon in conveying the exact meaning

Although most students consider the comma and the semicolon as the most difficult marks they encounter, 93.33% said that both marks are serviceable and helpful in conveying the intended meaning.

Question 12

Option	N	%
Yes	14	93.33%
No	1	6.66%
Total	15	100%

Table 12: Awareness towards the comma and the semicolon

93.33% of the respondents (N=15) said that they are motivated and made aware of the importance of the two marks, of our interest.

3.2. The Test

3.2.1. Description of the Test

This test is submitted to evaluate third year students' use and misuse of the comma and the semicolon, and how often do they use these troublesome and serviceable marks. Our test consists of taking students' essays (three essays per student) and test their use of these marks.

The first essay was the exam one, the second was a test written in class, and the third essay was a homework. We did not interfere to ask students directly to write essays, that is to say that we have requested from the Written Expression teacher to give us their essays, because of time constraints, we agreed to take the exam one.

Since these essays were written individually; which means that students worked, more or less, in the same way; this is an unwanted variable. We think that this way of testing punctuation is better and more faithful, since they worked individually and spontaneously, than if we give them say, an authentic text to punctuate. If we asked them to do this, students

would cheat, help each other, and try to make their best to put as much punctuation as possible.

3.2.2. Administration of the Test

We have taken from each student of the sample three essays. Those essays were not taken in one time; students were asked to write those essays separately, by their written expression teacher. Besides, students ignore that their essays were to be analysed and taken into consideration in our research, which is an unwanted variable, to make students work in a spontaneous way

3.2.3. Analysis of the Results

Essay # 01:

Students	Number of sentences	Number of commas that should be put	Commas used		Commas missed	
			Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
S 1	16	35	27	77.14%	8	22.85%
S 2	13	20	13	65 %	7	35%
S 3	16	20	12	60%	8	40%
S 4	17	26	16	61.53%	10	38.46%
S 5	16	20	10	50%	10	50%
S 6	17	22	13	59.09%	9	40.90%
S 7	19	24	9	37.5%	15	62.5%
S 8	22	25	22	88%	3	12%
S 9	17	25	15	60%	10	40%
S 10	20	22	15	68.18%	7	31.81%
S 11	15	18	11	61.11%	7	38.88%
S 12	17	20	14	70%	6	30%
S 13	12	17	11	64.70%	6	35.29%
S 14	16	22	16	72.72%	6	27.27%
S 15	14	20	14	70%	6	30%

Table 1.A. Number of commas used and missed

Students	Number of sentences	Number of semicolons that should be put	Semicolons used		Semicolons missed	
			N	%	N	%
S 1	16	10	5	50%	5	50%
S 2	13	9	2	22,22%	7	77,77%
S 3	16	8	2	25%	6	75%
S 4	17	5	2	40%	3	60%
S 5	16	6	1	16,66%	5	83,33%
S 6	17	8	3	37,5%	5	62,5%
S 7	19	6	1	16,66%	5	83,33%
S 8	22	9	4	44,44%	5	55,55%
S 9	17	6	3	50%	3	50%
S 10	20	6	3	50%	3	50%
S 11	15	6	2	33,33%	4	66,66%
S 12	17	5	2	40%	3	60%
S 13	12	5	2	40%	3	60%
S 14	16	7	3	42,85%	4	57,14%
S 15	14	6	3	50%	3	50%

Table 1.B. Number of semicolons used and missed

Concerning the first essay, in Tables 1.A and 1.B; the first students used 27 (77.14%) commas instead of 35 in an essay of 16 sentences. Besides, the student used 5 (50%) semicolons out of 10. The second student used 13 (65%) commas where 20 ought to appear in 13 sentences, and 2 (22.22%) semicolons instead of 9. The third student put 12 (60%) commas out of 20 commas in an essay of 16 sentences; in addition to 2 (25%) semicolons instead of 8.

The fourth student used 16 (61.53%) commas instead of 26 in 17 sentences, and 2 (40%) semicolons of 5. Student 05 used 10 (50%) commas out of 20 in 16 sentences, and only 01 semicolon (16.66%) out of 6. The sixth student put 13 (59.09%) out of 22 in 17 sentences, and 3 semicolons (37.5%) out of 8. The next student (07) put 9 commas (37.5%) instead of 24 in an essay of 19 sentences, in addition to only 1 semicolon (16.66%) out of 6

Concerning student 08, who used 22 (88%) commas out of 25 in an essay of 22 sentences, and 4 (44.44%) semicolons out of 9. If we consider student 09 we can find that he used 15 (60%) commas instead of 25 in 17 sentences, in addition to 3 semicolons (50%) out of 6. Student 10 used 15 (68.18%) commas out of 22 in 20 sentences; besides, the student put 3 (50%) semicolons instead of 6. The following student (11) put 11 (61.11%) commas instead of 18; and 2 (33.33%) semicolon out of 6.

Student 12 used 14 (70%) commas instead of 20 in 17 sentence and 2 (40%) semicolons out of 5. Student 13 used 11(64.20%) commas out of 17, in an essay of 12 sentences; and 2 semicolons (40%) out of 5. Student 14 used 16 (72.72%) commas out of 22, in an essay of 16 sentences, and 3 semicolons (42.85%) out of 7. The last student of our sample put 14 (70%) commas instead of 20, in an essay of 14 sentences, in addition to 3 (50%) semicolons out of 6.

Essay # 02:

Students	Number of sentences	Number of commas that should be put	Commas used		Commas missed	
			N	%	N	%
S 1	16	21	11	52.38%	10	47.61%
S 2	10	16	10	62.5%	6	37.5%
S 3	17	21	10	47.61%	11	52.38%
S 4	16	24	14	58.33%	10	41.66%
S 5	14	21	15	71.42%	6	28.57%
S 6	13	19	8	42.10%	11	57.89%
S 7	16	18	7	38.88%	11	61.11%
S 8	15	18	6	33.33%	12	66.66%
S 9	21	14	10	71.42%	4	28.57%
S 10	21	19	13	68.42%	6	31.57%
S 11	12	10	7	70%	3	30%
S 12	14	16	8	50%	8	50%
S 13	18	20	17	85%	3	15%
S 14	15	19	12	63.15%	7	36.84%
S 15	16	19	9	47.36%	10	52.63%

Table 2.A. Number of commas used and missed

Students	Number of sentences	Number of semicolons that should be put	Semicolons used		Semicolons missed	
			N	%	N	%
S 1	16	5	1	20%	4	80%
S 2	10	5	1	20%	4	80%
S 3	17	8	1	12.5%	7	87.5%
S 4	16	8	3	37.5%	5	62.5%
S 5	14	5	2	40%	3	60%
S 6	13	5	2	40%	3	60%
S 7	16	7	3	42.85%	4	57.14%
S 8	15	8	4	50%	4	50%
S 9	21	3	1	33.33%	2	66.66%
S 10	21	3	2	66.66%	1	33.33%
S 11	12	4	3	75%	1	25%
S 12	14	6	3	50%	3	50%
S 13	18	5	2	40%	3	60%
S 14	15	5	2	40%	3	60%
S 15	16	4	2	50%	2	50%

Table 2.B. Number of semicolons used and missed

Considering the first student, in essay # 02 tables 2.A and 2.B; we notice that the student used 11 (52.38%) commas instead of 21, in an essay of 16 sentences, and only 1 (20%) semicolon out of 5. The second student used 10 (62.5%) commas out of 16 in 10 sentences; besides, the student put 1 (20%) semicolon instead of 5. Student 03 put 10 (47.61%) commas out of 21, in an essay of 17 sentences, in addition to only 1 (12.5%) semicolons out of 8.

Concerning the fourth student, who used 14 (58.33%) commas instead of 24, in 10 sentences, and 3 semicolons (37.5%) out of 8. The fifth student put 15 (71.42%) commas instead of 21, in an essay of 14 sentences, and 2 (40%) semicolons instead of 5. Student 06 put 8 (42.10%) commas instead of 19, in an essay of 13 sentences, and 2 (40%) semicolons

instead of 5. The seventh student used 7 (38.88%) commas instead of 18, in 16 sentences, in addition to 3 (42.85%) semicolons out of 7.

If we consider student 08, we can notice that this student used 6 (33.33%) commas instead of 18, in an essay of 15 sentences, and put 4 (50%) semicolons instead of 8. The ninth student used 10 (71.42%) commas out of 14, in an essay of 21 sentences, and used 1 (33.33%) semicolons instead of 3. The tenth student put 13 (68.42%) commas out of 19 commas, in 21 sentences, and 2 semicolons (66.66%) instead of 3. The next student (11) used 7(70%) commas instead of 10, in 12 sentences, in addition to 3 (75%) semicolons out of 4.

The twelfth student used 8 (50%) commas out of 16, in 14 sentences; besides, the student used 3 (50%) semicolons out of 6. Student 13 put 17(85%) commas out of 20, in 13 sentences, and put 2 (40%) semicolons out of 5. The following student (14) used 12 (63.15%) commas out of 19, in 15 sentences, in addition to 2 (40%) semicolons instead of 5. The last student used 9 (47. 36%) commas, in 16 sentences, where the student ought to put 19 ones; in addition, he put 2 (50%) semicolons instead of 4.

Essay # 03:

This table represents the results obtained in our test

Students	Number of sentences	Number of commas that should be put	Commas used		Commas missed	
			N	%	N	%
S 1	18	23	15	65.21%	8	34.78%
S 2	18	26	16	61.53%	10	38.46%
S 3	28	39	22	56.41%	17	43.58%
S 4	25	33	25	75.75%	8	24.24%
S 5	17	18	16	88.88%	2	11.11%
S 6	14	22	11	50%	11	50%
S 7	43	38	25	65.78%	13	34.21%
S 8	18	22	12	54.54%	10	45.45%
S 9	29	30	16	53.33%	14	46.66%
S 10	17	19	11	57.89%	8	42.10%
S 11	39	58	39	67.24%	19	32.75%
S 12	25	38	25	65.78%	13	34.21%
S 13	15	19	10	52.63%	9	47.36%
S 14	23	28	20	71.42%	8	28.57%
S 15	14	17	10	58.82%	7	41.17%

Table 3.A. Number of commas used and missed

Students	Number of sentences	Number of semicolons that should be put	Semicolons used		Semicolons missed	
			N	%	N	%
S 1	18	5	0	0%	5	100%
S 2	18	5	0	0%	5	100%
S 3	28	9	2	22.22%	7	77.77%
S 4	25	7	1	14.28%	6	85.71%
S 5	17	3	1	33.33%	2	66.66%
S 6	14	3	0	0%	3	100%
S 7	43	10	1	10%	9	90%
S 8	18	6	1	16.66%	5	83.33%
S 9	29	14	3	21.42%	11	78.57%
S 10	17	7	2	28.57%	5	71.42%
S 11	39	10	3	30%	7	70%
S 12	25	8	2	25%	6	75%
S 13	15	6	1	16.66%	5	83.33%
S 14	23	10	2	20%	8	80%
S 15	14	6	1	16.66%	5	83.33%

Table 3.B. Number of semicolons used and missed

In this essay, the great majority of students have high records in gaining rather than in failure. The first student used 15 (65.21%) commas rather than 23, in an essay of 18 sentences. Besides, the student did not use any semicolon, where 5 should appear. The second student used 16 (61.53%) commas instead of 26, in an essay of 18 sentences, and the same thing as the first student, this student did not use any semicolon. Student 03 wrote an essay of 28 sentences, the student put 22 (56.41%) commas rather than 39; besides, the student put 2(22.22%) semicolons, where 9 are needed.

The fourth student used 25 (75.75%) commas in an essay of 25 sentences, where 33 commas should appear; in addition to only 1(14.28%) semicolons instead of 7 ones. The fifth

student used 16 (88.88%) commas, where 18 are needed, in an essay of 17 sentences; in addition to 1 (33.33%) semicolon instead of 3. Student 6 put 11 (50%) commas where 22 are needed, in an essay of 14 sentences; this student did not put any semicolon, where 3 should appear. The seventh student used 25 (65.78%) commas instead of 38, in an essay of 43 sentences; this student used only 1(10%) semicolon, where 10 should appear.

Student 08 used 12 (54.54%) commas instead of 22, in an essay of 18 sentences; besides, the student used also only 1 (16.66%) semicolon, where 6 should appear. The next student (09) used 16 (53.33%) commas instead of 30, in an essay 29 sentences; the student put 3 (21.42%) semicolons instead of 14.

The tenth student used 11 (57.89%) commas instead of 19, in an essay of 17 sentences; in addition, the student used 2 (28.57%) semicolons where 7 should be put. Student 11 used 39 (67.24%) commas, in an essay of 39 sentences, where 58 commas should appear; besides, the student put 3 (30%) semicolons instead of 10. The twelfth student put 25 (65.78%) commas instead of 38, in an essay of 25 sentences; besides, the student put 2 (25%) semicolons instead of 8. The following student (13) used 10(52.63%) commas instead of 19, in an essay of 19 sentences; in addition to 1(16.66%) semicolons instead of 6.

Student 14 used 20 (71.42%) commas instead of 28, in an essay of 23 sentences; besides, the student put 2 (20%) semicolons instead of 10. The last student put 10 (58.82%) commas instead of 17, in an essay of 14 sentences; this student put only 1(16.66%) semicolon instead of 6.

3.3. Discussion of the Results

From the results obtained from our questionnaire and the ones gained from the test, we can see that there is a contradiction between what students said about writing and punctuation; precisely the commas and the semicolon, and their performance in their essays.

The results obtained from the questionnaire in (Table 01) show that students are motivated to write (86.66%), this can be interpreted by the positive attitude students hold towards writing, as the skill which sums up the other skills; that is to say that what is read, spoken or listened to can be jot down. This skill which includes different mechanics, students (26.66%) consider good writing as informative ideas (Table 02), where they considered punctuation (6.66%) as a less important aspect, this may mean that they are more prudent about ideas rather than punctuation; which is as important as informative ideas, since it contributes in making ideas informative.

This ignorance of punctuation is illustrated more again in (Table 03), where students (53.33%) classified it as the most troublesome concept to deal with while writing. On the other hand, the great majority of students (86.66%) stated that they are motivated, by their teachers, to use punctuation as illustrated in (Table 04). The results obtained in (Table 05) are complementary to the ones in (Table 04) as they are related and logical. Yet, if we compare these results to the ones we got in the test, we can find that there is a contradiction. On one hand, students said that they are motivated and frequently use punctuation; on the other hand, they do not seem to do so. This is according to their performance; for instance, if we take the results obtained in the three essays, we find that there is a decrease in the use of the comma and the semicolon, among the majority of students.

If we consider the following students; 1, 2,3,6,8,10,12,14, and 15, we can find that their use of the comma was decreasing from the first to the second essays. For example, the second student got (65%) in using the comma in the first essay, in the second essay the record

was (62.5%). The same thing concerning the third student whose records respectively were; (60%) and (47.61%). The eighth student's results were (88%) and (33.33%) respectively, in using the comma.

If we consider the results obtained, in the three essays, in using the semicolon, we find that there is also a great decrease in using this mark. Student 1 recorded 50% in the first essay, then 20% in the second and 0% in the third one. The same thing happened with other students (2, 4, 9, and 14), whose records in the three essays were (22.22%), (20%), (0%); (40%), (37.5%), (14.28%); (50%), (33.33%), (21.42%); (42.85%), (40%), (16.66%) respectively.

If we relate the decrease of the results obtained in using the comma and the semicolon to the results we got in (Tables 7 and 8), we find that there is completely a great contradiction. In (Tables 7 and 8) almost all the students (100%, 93.33% respectively) said that their Written Expression teacher corrects their punctuation and that they take the correction into consideration to avoid the errors made later. Yet, in their performance and according to the results obtained, students do not seem to consider their teacher's corrections. If they did so, their results would not decrease such away. This may mean that students may have problems while revising; they did not revise their punctuation well. The revising stage is the most important stage in the writing process (see chapter1, section 3.1.3), as Galko (2005) put it when he said that the more eyes that see and evaluate a piece of writing, the better it will appear. (Chapter 1, section 3.1.3).

Another point to be discussed is that student's performance differed in the three essays. In the first essay, they got really higher records than in the second and the third essay, in using both the comma and the semicolon. The majority of the records were beyond the average. For instance, student 1 got (77.14%), student 8 got (88%) and student 10 got (68.18%). Concerning the semicolon students had more or less better results; for instance, students 1,9,10 and 15 got the same record (50%), student 14 got (42.85%). These results are

complementary to the results obtained in Table 6, where students (53,33%) stated that they pay attention to their punctuation and 40% answered by sometimes. Those results are complementary only with the ones of the first essay. Because the results obtained in the other essays do not seem that students pay attention. The suitable interpretation here is that students wanted their essays to convey the exact meaning and have an understandable message using effective punctuation to avoid ambiguity (see Chapter 2, section 4. 1.2).

This shows that students are more aware of punctuation when their piece of writing is to be evaluated and marked rather than when it is a homework or a test where they are less careful.

If we shed light on the results obtained about missing the comma and the semicolon, we find that there is an oscillation in the records. Students' failure in the first essay increased in the second, then in the third essay we find that there is a decrease. For example, student 6 recorded (40. 90%) in the first essay, in terms of failure in using the comma; in the second essay, this student had (57.89%), and in the third essay the student had (50%). The same thing concerning student 8 who got (12%) in the first essay, (66.66%) in the second and (45.75%) in the third essay.

In missing the semicolon, 6 students recorded an increase in missing this mark in the three essays. Student 1 had (50%) in the first essay, (80%) in the second and (100%) in the third essay; also, student 9 had (50%) in the first essay, (66.66%) in the second and (78.57%) in the third essay.

In the results obtained in terms of failure in using the two marks, we find that students had higher scores in missing the semicolon than in failing in using the comma. For example, there are three students who had (100%) in terms of failure in using the semicolon, (1,2,6) in the third essay; in addition to the student 7 who had (90%) in the third essay. Student 14 got (80%) student 8 and 13 had (83. 33%).

So, according to the scores recorded and relating them to the results obtained in Table 10, where (26.66%) of the respondents said that the most problematic mark is the semicolon, against (13.33%) who said that it is the comma, besides, (46.66%) considered both marks as the most problematic marks.

This can be mainly interpreted by the total ignorance of rules, especially the semicolon; which can lead to ambiguity and misleading the reader (Chapter 2, section 4.1.2). This ambiguity resulted from the lack of comma or when there is an overuse of it, where the semicolon is needed (Chapter 2, section 4.1.2).

The results obtained are totally contradicted to what we got in Tables 11 and 12, where students (93.33%) said that they are aware of the importance of these two serviceable marks in conveying the exact meaning.

In a nutshell, students seem to have a less background knowledge and awareness of these two serviceable and sophisticated marks, more precisely the semicolon, where they had very high scores in missing it. Due to this lack of rules and awareness of the importance of it, they intended to use simple and short sentences in their writings to avoid long and complex ones to refrain from using the semicolon.

4. Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, we can say that what students said, in the questionnaire, is contradicted to their performance in the test. According to the results obtained in the questionnaire, students are aware of the importance of punctuation, more precisely the comma and the semicolon; in conveying the exact meaning.

Yet, this awareness is absent in their piece of writings. So, what students said was not what they did. This lack of awareness in their performance needs more practice to arise it and make students get used of it to have understandable piece of writings.

General Conclusion and Recommendations

Through this work, we attempted to pose the problem of punctuation third year students, in the department of languages at Mentouri University, encounter. Due to this problem, we have discussed the effective role of punctuation in writing, in addition to the different functions of each of these marks; to raise students' awareness of these important marks.

In the first chapter, writing: different aspects, we gave a definition to writing, we included the nature and acquisition of this skill. Then, we stated the different stages of writing; planning, drafting, and revising. The last section dealt with the assessment of writing to ensure clarity and coherence.

In the second chapter, we stated a definition of punctuation; then we discussed the effective role of punctuation in writing. Finally we talked about the two marks of our interest, the comma and the semicolon; starting by the comma, where we discussed the comma splice, the wrong placement of the comma and ambiguity; next, the cases where the comma should not appear and then the many functions of the comma. The last section was devoted to the semicolon and its serviceable functions.

For our empirical part, two tools were used, a questionnaire and a test. The questionnaire aimed at collecting data about students' background and appreciation towards punctuation. The test included the students' essays written separately and individually, where we evaluate their use of the comma and the semicolon.

The results obtained in the questionnaire show that students are aware of the importance of punctuation, more precisely the comma and the semicolon, as the most serviceable and troublesome marks in writing. Yet, this outcome is contradicted by their performance in the test, where the results gained show that students are more or less not cautious about those

Punctuation marks, especially the ones of our interest, which is second in importance to the message as it helps in conveying one particular meaning rather than another. This lack of awareness could be interpreted by the lack of knowledge about punctuation rules.

The test of our experiment has answered our questions. That is to say, punctuation has an effective role in writing; besides, a careful punctuation, precisely the careful use of the comma and the semicolon, help to convey the intended meaning rather than another. These two points are clearly illustrated in the students' piece of writings, where a lack of commas and semicolons or any ignorance led to ambiguity and thus to misunderstanding of the piece of writing.

On the other hand, the test also confirmed our hypotheses. The first one, that students should be more aware of the importance of punctuation marks, especially the ones of our interest, to ameliorate their knowledge about them and their rules. This what students said in the questionnaire, but in their performance, students seem to have a lack of background knowledge. The second one, that students should be asked to intensively write to get used to these important marks.

From the results obtained, as results shown in both the questionnaire and the test; and to make students more aware of punctuation and have understandable piece of writings. Our recommendations are the following:

Both written Expression teachers and Grammar teachers should teach students punctuations, since this latter is related to both fields. This collaboration will arise students' awareness and make them cautious of its importance.

Since punctuation is second in importance to the message; it should take more or less a good part of the Written Expression session. This means that the Written Expression sessions should be extended to 3 or 4 sessions per week to give this skill the attention needed.

Teachers should inform students about the crucial role of punctuation starting from when they are freshmen. As they should write more essays, let's say 4 essays per month (concerning third year students).

We hope that our research has helped highlight some of the difficulties our students have, especially our third year students. We also hope that we have participated in sound reflection of one of the important issue is the use of the comma and the semicolon in students' writing.

References

- Allen, R. (2005). *How to Write Better English*. United States: Penguin Group.
- Arab, S.A.Riche, B. On the Move: Middle school, year For
- Bader, F.(2007). *Writing Under the Competency- based Approach: The Case of Second Year Middle School Pupils. Unpublished Majister Thesis*. Mentouri University, Constantine
- Brown, K. & Hood, S (1989). *Writing Matters*. New York: Cambridge.
- Chesterman,A.& Williams, J.(2002). *The Map: A Beginner's Translation Studies*. United Kingdom: St. Jerome.
- Clark, I.L. (2003) *Concepts in Composition*. New Jersey: Laurence Erlbaum Associates; Inc.
- Crème, P. & LEA, M.R.(2008). *Writing at University*. (3ed Ed.). United Kingdom: Open University Press.
- Dunleavy, P. (2003). *Authoring A P H D*. London: Palgrave Macmiblan.
- Field, M. (2009). *Improve your Punctuation*. United Kingdom: How to books.
- Field, M. (2009). *Improve your Written English: Master the Essentials of grammar, punctuation, and spelling and with greater confidence* (5th Ed.). United Kingdom: How to books.
- Foster, J. (2005). *Effective Writing Skills for Puplic Relations* (3rd Ed.). United Kingdom Kogan Page
- Galko, F.D.(2009). *Better Writing Right Now*. New York: Leaning Express.
- Gold bord, R. (2006). *Writing for Science*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Gough, J.(2005). *Write it Down: Guiding for Preparing Effective and Compliant Documentations* (2nd Ed.). Boka Raton: Taylor and Francis Group.
- Hughes, E. & Silverman, J. & Weinbroer, D.R.R (2005). *Shortcuts for the Student Writer*. United States: Mc DRAW.

Kame? T.S.(2000)*The Oxford: The Essential Guide to Punctuation*. New York: Berkley Books

Kaskill, M.K.Mc.(1998). *Grammar,Punctuation and Capitalization*. Virginia: Langley Research Center

Katz, M.J.(2006). *From Research to Manuscript*. United States: Springer.

King, G.(2004).*Good Punctuation*. Collins: Estate of Graham

Lipson; C.(2005). *How to Write a AB Thesis*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Nemouchi, A.(2008).*Writing Connection with Grammar and literature in the University of Constantine*. Unpublished Doctorate Thesis. Mentouri University. Constantine

Ouskourt, M.(2008). *Developing Efficient Writing Strategies Through the Process Approach and Teacher's Feedback: A Case Study of Second Year Students in Setif*. Unpublished Doctorate Thesis. Mentouri University. Constantine.

Starkey, L.(2004). *How to Write Great Essays* New York : Learning Express

Stilman, A.(1997). *Grammatically Correct*. United States. Writer's Digest Books

Swetmam, D.(2004). *Writing Your Dissertation: The bestselling guide to planning, preparing and presenting first- class work*. United Kingdom: How to books

Yang; J.T.(1995). *An Outline of Scientific Writing*. British Library: Wold Scientific Publishing

Appendices

Appendix 01

Students' Questionnaire

This questionnaire serves as a data collection tool for a piece of research to obtain a Master's degree in applied linguistics. You are kindly asked to fill in this questionnaire, which is designed to assess your knowledge about punctuation.

I greatly thank you in advance for your contribution which is appreciated.

1- Are you encouraged to write?

Yes

No

2- Good writing, in your opinion, is:

Informative ideas

Correct grammar

Effective punctuation

Precise vocabulary

3- When writing, do you have difficulties in:

Choosing vocabulary

Grammar

Punctuation

4- Are you motivated, by your teacher, to use punctuation?

Yes

No

5- How often do you use punctuation marks in your writing?

Frequently

Very frequently

Seldom

6- Do you pay attention to punctuation while writing?

Yes

No

Sometimes

7- Does your Written Expression teacher correct your punctuation?

Yes

No

8- If yes, do take the correction into consideration to avoid the errors made later?

Yes

No

9- Do you think that your ideas are informative when you punctuate just haphazardly?

Yes

No

10- Concerning punctuation, what are the most problematic marks?

-

-

-

-

11- What about the comma and the semicolon, are they serviceable to convey the intended meaning?

Yes

No

12- Are you made aware of the importance of these marks?

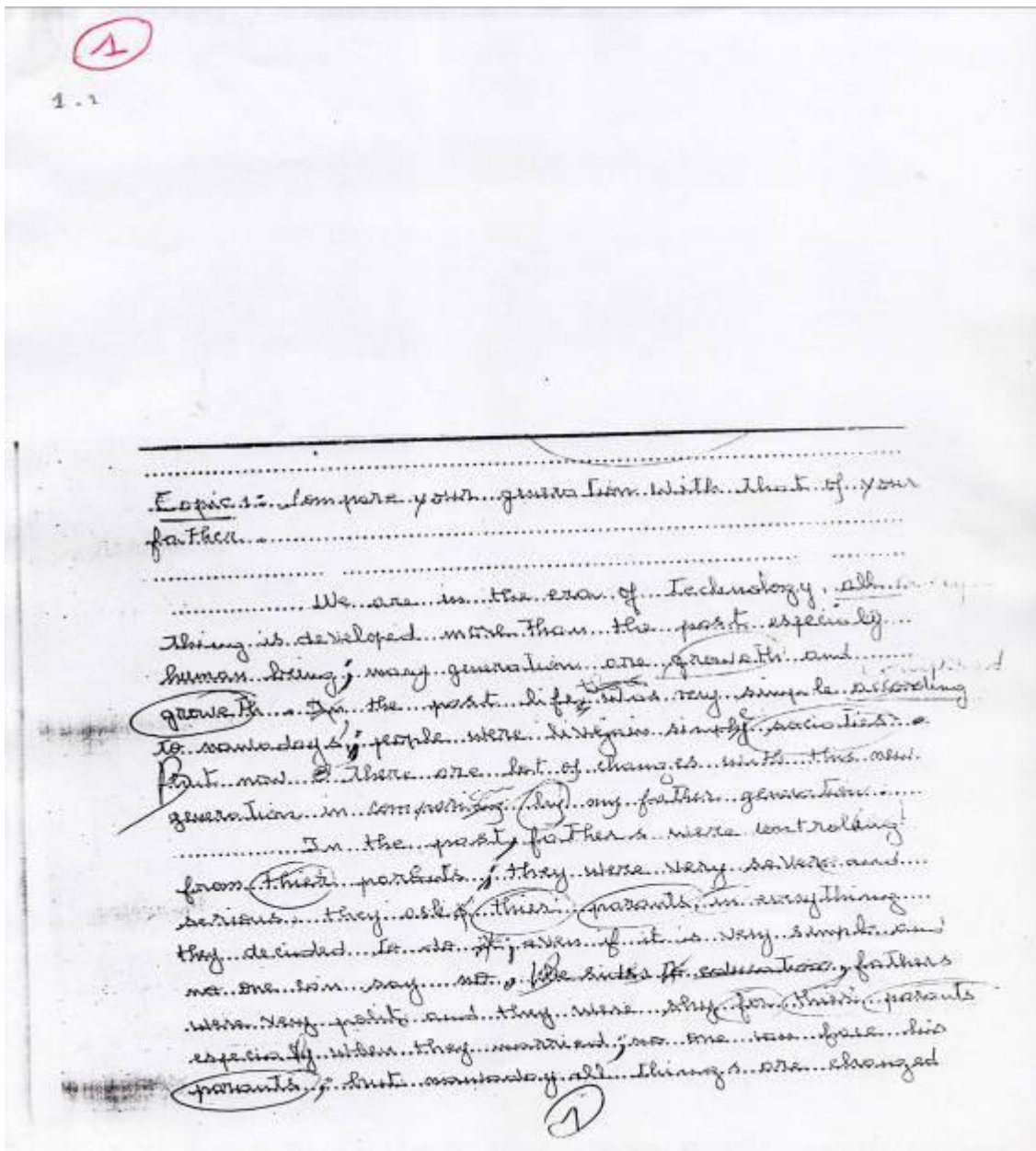
Yes

No

Appendix 02

The First Students' Essays

Essay 01



The new generations changed all the diff fun now, they are responsible for themselves no one can talk with them, they do what they want without taking any ~~permission~~ permission from their parents, they sleep when they want and get up when they want, all thing is easy for them, even if it forbids. the new generation cut all the traditions which were in the past, they don't know that there is something called tradition and all this is from the past.

The old generations were very simple. they were live in simplicity, especially in fashion. they wearing a simple clothes and simple hair dressing, they ^{used to wear} were wearing trousers and teacherts and their poor parents who were choosed by their clothes, if their parents said that the clothes are bad, no one can say it is good, but now there are a famous of clothes, the mode very popular. they wearing all the kinds of fashion especially

©

when they have ~~experiences~~ experiences in a given subject. For example, students who used to write and practice a given type of essays will do better than those who just know about this type. So, the point here is that experience helps a lot in the learning process. While on the other hand, people who rely only on books to memorize and to learn usually do not do well always. Take, for example, a student of Biology who used to read from books and from his lectures without attending at the laboratory in order to practice; he will find great difficulties in learning and memorizing his lessons.

To conclude, I think that learning from books is something good, but is not enough, because we learn from experience (A) more than we learn from books. This is why I am with the idea which says that experience teaches us more than books do.

life is the best teacher and there are many ways
to learn from this life. It means that it is not necessary
to get into a school or a university in order to learn.
People can learn from their mistakes, for they have
experienced before, as they may learn from others
mistakes and experiences. They may also learn
from reading books and magazines, from what
they see on TV or at the internet. In general, people
usually learn through two main ways; through
reading books, or through experience. But, however,
despite the fact that people can learn from books
as well as from experience, the differences between
the two ways of learning are quite obvious.
Learning from experience and from books
have different effects on our lives. Experience, for
example, permits us to learn the real value of
things. Because sometimes we need to experience
the opposite things in order to know the value of things.

For example, we can not know the meaning of what of happiness if we ~~did not~~ ^{were} sad one day and the reverse, for we can not distinguish between what is good, wrong and right, unless we experienced them. While books do not always provide us with this opportunity to discover the value of things. Books usually give us everything ready, so that we find ourselves, sometimes because of lack of competence, obliged to accept everything, trying to learn from other people's experiences. For example, we read that something is good or bad (but) because of many things; but we ^{are} still not convinced because we are just reading others point of views.

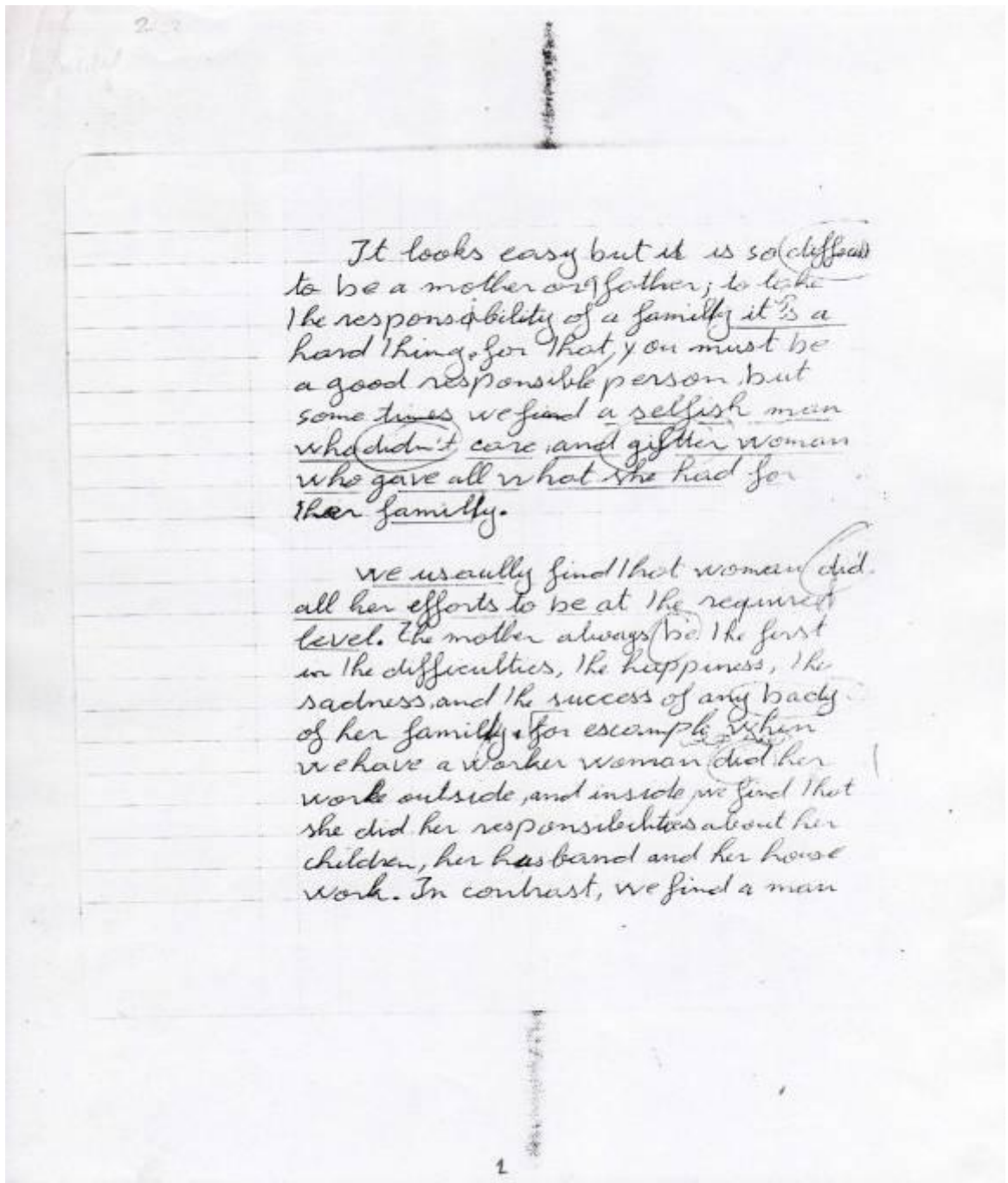
(The effects)

The different effects of our (memorizing) memories is another point of contrast between learning from books and learning from experience; most people in real life do not learn well and memorize better

Appendix 03

The Second Students' Essays

Essay 01



who worked just out said, this one didn't care about his children, he thought that the responsibility is financial way, he didn't ask about the persons of the family, who was happy or ill. He left every thing inside the house to his wife without any interesting.

The woman by nature is tender, when one of her children have a problem she helps him, she listens to him and she tries to decrease his pain, she is a comprehensive man and this helps the children to be fine. In other hand, the man is stronger person, He doesn't know how to deal with the children, like if ~~some~~ one of them have a problem; may be he doesn't take it easily and this could be bad for the morality ~~of~~ of the child.

parents is some thing which must

No post
-check of organisation!

know it well, a man or a woman every
one of them ~~do good their~~ should
know their role to do their best
for their children "After a great
man there is a woman".

- punctuation problems?

- spelling!

Many communities have many problems, one of them which is very spread is the illegal relationships between the two sexes. In the muslims societies, for example, this problem appeared due to the non capacity of men to marry. Marriage is a good thing as it protects the person to fall in a sin and the prophet (P.B.U.H) ordered the youngs to marry if they can, if they cannot, they fast. However, nowadays teenage marriage is different from adult one because of many reasons.

The first factor that makes teenage marriage different from ~~the~~ adult one is responsibility. Adults people always feel responsible because they have a long experiance in life and maybe the major reason of delaying marriage is because of the other responsibility like study and work. They don't go to another responsibility till they finish the one before. In contrast, te teenagers ~~do~~ generally do anything

randomly. For instance, if a teenager likes a girl, he will ask to marry her without thinking about the responsibilities that will face him. The result is the end of his life with his wife through divorce. If ~~visiting~~ ^{visiting} for instance, the court we will find a lot of divorce situations among teenagers and few situations among adults.

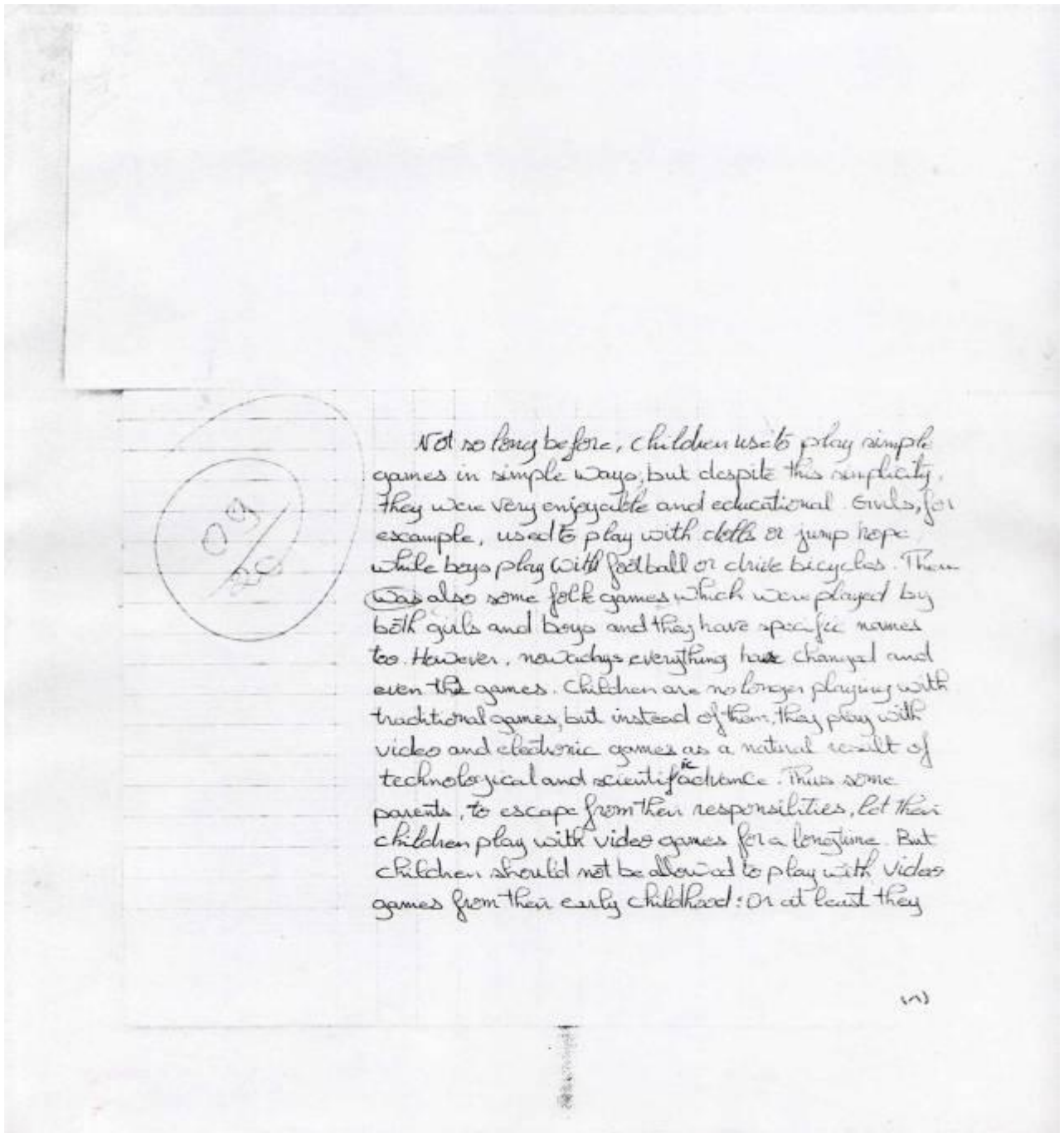
Another factor that differentiates between teenage and adult marriage is being Understanding Comprehensive. Adults can understand each other, either they satisfy each other or they convince themselves that something is wrong. On the other hand, teenagers may face big problems due to little things because they do not try to understand each other. For example, if a wife of a teenage asks him to allow her to visit her family, he may refuse without giving a reason, ~~reverse~~ ^{reverse} an adult who ~~will~~ ^{will} try to ~~convince~~ ^{convince} her that it is not a suitable period.

Finally, we conclude that teenage marriage differs from adult marriage because of many reasons like responsibility and being comprehensive. Despite this difference, we can say that adult and teenage marriage are similar as adults and teenagers try to protect themselves to fall in prohibited things through marriage.

Appendix 04

The Third Students' Essays

Essay 01



should not be let alone in front of a computer or a playstation because of the bad effects of such games, be it on their health or on their relationships with others.

One reason why video games should not be allowed at early childhood is the bad effects of such games on the child's health. Physically, playing for a long time with video games leads to many problems. ^{through} ~~by~~ the time, children will become lazier and overweight, since they spend a lot of time without moving. As they may also suffer from eye problems because of the radiation to which they are exposed; this is on one hand. On the other hand, children at this age are at the risk of having psychological problems such as stress and depression; these problems are mainly caused by staying for a long time under the pressure of the game especially if it is a violent one, in addition, children may become addicted to video games which is the most dangerous effect on them, especially while parent's control and direction are absent.

This is Psychological
(Your time & time spent)
physical effects

Another effect for which children should not be allowed to play video games at their early childhood is that they negatively affect their relationships with family and society members in general. To ~~bring~~ To throw some light on how video games destroy the child's relationships, it is worth mentioning that most video games are violent and rarely educational as parents think. As a result, children gradually will acquire an aggressive behaviour since they are so confronted with violent sights. These sights create a bad image inside the child about the external world and consequently affects his relationships with others. Moreover, violent video games often create a feeling of fear within the child himself and usually reflected in their dreams as nightmares or as some unsocial behaviours.

Some people may claim that electronic games help children in developing their intelligences through imagination and interaction with such digital world. However, video games create a kind of

laziness among children because they do not do anything more than pressing some buttons or keys. The best example that such games do not help so much, is that most of children who play with video games most of their free times do not reach a good level in school, but they are worse than those who do not play so much. In addition to that, there are other activities and sports which are more effective in improving children's intelligence than electronic games.

Others who are against this idea argue that video games are one way for children to get familiar with technology from their early childhood. To a certain extent they are right, but children at their early ages need to be rose up in the normal conditions since they are about to discover the real world. This is why kids should not be allowed to play with video games in order not to get confused between what is real and what is not. Moreover, understanding how technology works does not need more than a couple of months training. For example, computer

Boucheffa
Khasula

literacy does not require more than three or four
month of training.

No one can reject the crucial role that
which technology play in our lives or the fact that
not all video games are bad and not educational
However, looking at the bad effects of such
electronic games on our children, whether on
their health or on their relationships with others;
It is necessary to take a quick and wise
decision and not let (children) kids or school aged
children to play with video games randomly and
for long time, but or at least limit the amount
of time and control the contact of such games.

Teenagers are known as the lovers of the adventures. The time that teenagers spend is considered as the best moment in their life. And they are as students, they meet many people and treat with different kinds of them, most of their time is spent with their friends, In fact, I think that passing time with friends is a waste of time.

Waste of time

Several people think that spending time with friends is a waste of time. A person needs to spend his time alone, he needs to think about his goals and tries to find a way to reach them. For example, in University, it's better for students to spend their time alone, in order to learn how they can depend on themselves, and being responsible of their behaviours and their decisions. All these makes them good and successful persons in their studies, by looking in libraries, searching in Internet, asking teachers.

What is your agreement in this paragraph? It is not really good!

- The opponent of this idea claims that, passing time with friends is good. We are as human beings, ^{we} can't stay most of the time alone, we need friends, we need to know many people, and discover their ideas, all these may help in their studies by studying in a group that makes them understand better. However, studying in group is not good; there will be noise, everybody talks, a person can't concentrate with people especially in physics and Maths. These materials need concentration and thinking and that doesn't work with a group.

- Furthermore, passing time alone teaches persons 'of time'. They will learn how to organize their time.

Furthermore, passing time alone teach students for example, the importance of time. They will learn how to organize ^{their} time between studying, play, a kind of sport for example, discover their

- Do not put everything in one sentence!

Hobbies and use them, & also, it would be better if they read books, get new ideas, and read about new inventions and try to develop their skills and opinions.

The opponent of this idea
- (The claim of this opponent) claims that, Passing time with friends makes your time interesting; like doing some exercises or playing games, discovering new places by travelling. Moreover knowing friends teaches people how to help each other. However, passing time alone will make you know what you need, also helps you to avoid and be away from troubles and your life would be calm and easy.

- To sum up, Passing time with friends or alone depends on the person himself. He knows his benefit. All that depends on his good choice.

- This essay should be organized as follows
(and the arguments first & then the refutation or vice versa)