

Dedication

First of all, my thanks go to ALLAH the lord of the world.

*Words are not enough to express my immense thankful to my parent for their
encouragement and devotion.*

To my brothers Mohammed, Abdelhakim, Abdelhak, Azzeddine and Hocine,

To my sisters Soumia and Faiza,

To my nieces Khawla, Hadjar, Asmaa and my nephew Fayçal,

To my partner Kheira,

To all those I know and love, but those names have not mentioned.

Amina



Dedication

First of all, I thank "ALLAH" the lord of the world who grants me his guidness and help me to acheive my aim to accomplish my extended essay.

I dedicate this work to whom I owe everything, to my parents, the two candles of my life, who help and encourage me a lot to succeed in my studies from school to university.

With a great happiness and gratitude, I dedicate it to my lovely sisters Amel, Fatima Zohra and Bahidja.

To my dearest brothers Sidi Mohammed, Hichem and Ahmed.

To my future husband Belkacem.

To my sweety nieces Amina, Zineb, Asmaa, Fadila, Bouchra, Kawtar and my nephews Youcef, Ibrahim and Oussama.

To my dear partner Amina .

Finally, I would like to dedicate it to my family and all those I know and love but I have not mentioned their names.

Kheira



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Abstract

Among the four English language skills, writing is considered to be the most difficult and complex one. Although, great efforts are done to improve this important and productive skill, Algerian English language students seem still facing many difficulties in the writing tasks. The present work attempts to investigate these problems that our English learners may often encounter, mainly those of cohesion and coherence at the university level. This case study was based on the analysis of essays written by third-year “Civilization and Literature” students, in addition to a questionnaire directed to the same sample population. The main findings of this study revealed that English learners have problems with the different aspects of the two main discourse features stated before. At the level of cohesion they were of “ellipsis” and “substitution”, while at the level of coherence learners had problems of creating the unity of ideas, specially at the essay level.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

L1: First Language.

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General Introduction

Since the publication of cohesion in English in 1976 by Halliday and Hasan, textual cohesion and coherence have been important notions in text analysis, and have aroused great interest of different scholars all over the world. But unfortunately, its application in Algeria is by far not satisfactory, especially in EFL writing.

Students writing in an EFL classroom context should show their awareness of their own communicative goals, of the reader, and of the writing context, through producing acceptable academic essays where sentences and ideas must be connected one to another using cohesive devices, and coherence to create unity of the text context.

But writing cohesively and coherently is a major challenge, specially at the essay level for many EFL students at Tlemcen University.

For this purpose, a general research question in addition to three sub-questions are asked to reach the objectives of this study:

-Do our EFL students have difficulties with cohesion and coherence in essay writing?

* Is EFL students' lexical knowledge important to develop coherent and cohesive written essays ?

* Do our EFL students respect the use of cohesive devices in their essay writing ?

*How may writing strategies help our EFL students overcome their difficulties with cohesion and coherence ?

These questions lead to suppose the following hypotheses:

- Cohesion and coherence are the main common difficulties that our students encounter in EFL essay writing.

*Lexical knowledge is very important for EFL students to develop coherent and cohesive written essays.

* Our EFL students do not respect the use of cohesive devices in their essays.

*It appears that the use of writing strategies may help our EFL students to overcome their difficulties in their essay writing.

To support these hypotheses this case study has opted for students' exam papers and students' questionnaire which will be later analyzed and discussed. These papers were written by English students at Tlemcen University.

In order to achieve this purpose, this work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter represents the theoretical part, which will define some key concepts that have a close relation with the writing skill. Besides, it will illustrate some of the main writing difficulties mainly the ones of cohesion and coherence. Whereas, the second chapter or the practical part of the study will introduce the participants, the research instruments and data analysis. While, the third chapter will deal with the discussion of the main results, some suggestions proposed to improve writing skills and some recommendations.

Chapter One

Theoretical Concepts

Chapter One: Theoretical Concepts

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1.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this literature review is to shed light on some aspects related to the development of EFL writing in general.

This chapter will mainly tackle aspects of EFL writing. It will introduce the definition of EFL writing .It will also deal with the different writing challenges and difficulties that EFL students encounter in their writing .These difficulties has been divided into subsections including : organizational difficulties with special reference to cohesion and coherence, lexical difficulties and technical writing difficulties such as : grammar, spelling, revision and editing.

This section will also describe writing as a process and deal with the writing strategies.

1.2. WRITING DEFINED

Writing is one of the four main language skills. It is a creative and interactive one, which depends on an audience (reader) to provide feedback (Harmer: 2004).

Writing is a complex and difficult process for EFL student to achieve, even for native speakers of the language (Lyons and Heasley,1987) .This process is not only about setting symbols and letters but it mainly reflects the writers' communicative and cognitive skills, they use to express their thoughts and ideas, as pointed out by Flower and Hayes that "*Writing is best understood as a set of distinctive thinking Processes which writers orchestrate or organize during The act of composing*"(1981, qtd in Bouakoub2011:10).

Another definition which considers writing more than a group of symbols is that of Byrne (1988:1) who claims that:

Writing is clearly much more than the production of graphic symbols, just as speaking is more than the production of sounds. The symbols have to be arranged, according to certain conventions, to form words, and words have to be arranged to form sentences.

Jim A.P (2010:2) explains that writing skill is complex and difficult to learn. Requiring mastery is not only grammatical patterns but also the rule of writing such as high degree of organization in the development of ideas and information and also choosing the appropriate vocabularies and sentence structure to create a style which is appropriate to subject matter. Therefore the write conclude that Writing is making a hand writing where the one who write gives a form for everything what he or she thinks and whatever he or she feels. A writer has to be able in using written language to give an idea or message.

According to Heaton (1975:138), there are four skills necessary for writing.

They are:

- a. Grammatical skill : The ability to write correct sentences.
- b. Stylistic skill : The ability to manipulate sentence and use language effectively.
- c. Mechanical skill : The ability to use correctly those conversations peculiar to the written language e.g. punctuation, and spelling
- d. Judgment skill : The ability to write in an appropriate manner for a particular purpose with on ability to select, organize and relevant information.

Finally, one may denote that writing is a very important skill that all EFL students should master in order to produce effective and sufficient pieces of work.

1.3. WRITING as a PROCESS

Recently writing as a process has gained much more attention as it has been related to the thinking process and focuses on how to create and join ideas.

The writing process is described as “a road map” which allows students to express their ideas and thoughts in meaningful piece of writing “from the beginning of writing” untill the final product. However, this map is considered as a guide that gives the writer instructions about the best strategies to be followed to produce well structured and effective essays (kavkaytar and Yasar, 2008).

The process of writing involves at least four distinct steps: pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing to reach the final product. Furthermore, a “*Good writing is result of a writing process, a series of steps the writer has taken*” (Fawcett and Sandberg, 2004:4).

This process is known as being recursive i.e., while the students are revising, they might have to return to the pre-writing step to develop and expand their ideas (Manchon and Roca De Larios, 2007).

According to Wohl(1985: 2) in almost all kinds of writing the basic structural unit is the paragraph which is basic to all good writing.

Moreover, Wohl (1985: 3) said that there are 3 writing processes:

1. Finding the Topic Sentence:

Usually some students find difficulties in recognizing the topic sentence of paragraph. The topic sentence is usually taken from several things such as: an experience and from the book and it occurs most frequently at the beginning of a paragraph. When the topic sentence does occur at the end, it serves to summarize the preceding sentence and to conclude the paragraph.

2. Developing Paragraph from Topic Sentence:

Some students can write a paragraph without following any formal steps or using formal techniques such as a topic sentence. Here are some steps to develop a paragraph according to Wohl (1985:13) :

- a. Choose a general topic of interest to you.
- b. Narrow down the topic. Select one aspect of the topic and decide what your main point is.
- c. Write down the few facts, believe or opinion that are directly related to your

topic sentence details that will help to support or explain it.

d. Take a second look at your tentative topic sentence.

e. Using the fact and ideas from step three, develop the topic sentence into a full paragraph. This is your final draft.

f. Think about unity as you read what you have written. Revise as necessary

and then write your final draft.

3. Editing the Finish Product:

The final step in completing a piece of writing is editing. Editing is the checking of one's written work for various faults in making last-minutes changes and correction (Wohl, 1985: 14). Students of English as second language must check their writing for basic grammatical errors. Basic grammatical errors include the improper use of tense and aspect agreement articles, word order and other small but important details.

All these aspects of writing as a process should present in the students' mind whenever they write in order to succeed in doing so because the more students use this process appropriately, the more they can express themselves effectively (Cohen, 1998).

1.4. WRITING DIFFICULTIES

The writing skill seems very difficult to achieve because students face many obstacles as they write. The students' unwillingness to write can be because they rarely write in their own language. Moreover, these difficulties may be derive from anxieties they have about organization including cohesion, coherence, lexical difficulties, as well as technical ones such as: grammar, punctuation, spelling, and handwriting (Harmer, 2004).

1.4.1. Discourse Level

Sentences need to be connected to each other to produce an affective piece of writing. To enhance connectedness of sentences in a text, writers may use cohesion to join ideas between sentences to create texture, and coherence to provide unity.

1.4.1.1. Coherence

Coherence which is defined in Longman Dictionary as the relationship which link sentences in a text, is concerned with the way ideas are presented and related to each other, rather than the language used to express these ideas. Malmkjaer (2002:544) argues that : “*coherence concerns the way in which the things the text is about[...] are mutually accessible and relevant*”.

It also refers to texture which means that a piece of writing with its components: words, sentences, and words discussing only one thing that can be easily caught by the readers. This means that the readers are able to follow what is written only if sequences, ideas and details fit together clearly, in this case, the work is coherent.

Coherence in written texts is “*a complex concept involving a multitude of reader-and text-based features*”(Johns, 1986, qtd in Ahmed 2011:86). Text-based features mean cohesion, i.e., the linking of sentences, whereas, reader-based features refer to the reader understanding of the context. The most important elements that an essay should include to be coherent are: an introduction, a thesis statement, rhetorical support and a conclusion (Carrel, 1982).

Coherence, also refer to unity that must exist between sentences of the same paragraph. Harmer (2004) suggests two techniques that have to be understood by the reader in a coherent text:

- The writer’s purpose: the reader need to know about the topic, also be able to understand the writer’s purpose about the text produced.

- The writer' line of thought: the writer has to keep his/her readers well informed about the topic. For example, the reader should be able to follow what is written to understand the story in the case of a narrative essay.

The management of coherence in EFL writing is very important to produce meaningful sentences and unified paragraphs. In this response, Lee (2002) proposes five features to develop coherence in essay writing only if the students comprehend the role of these features.

- 1- An outline should be put by the writer to achieve the aim of expressing the main ideas following a chronological order for narrative writing.
- 2- The ideas of a coherent text must have a specific organization by setting the new information after the old ones.
- 3- Examples are used to expand and explain, or justify an information. If the writer do not use examples, his/ her information are too general.
- 4- Cohesive devices such as : reference, substitution, conjunctions...etc. have to be present in a coherent text for the purpose of providing connectivity and unity of the piece of writing.
- 5- The writer should help the reader to understand and assess his /her text, this can be achieved through the use of markers which are called ‘‘metadiscourse markers’’ like : therefore, but, certainly, firstly, secondly...

There are some reasons accounting for Algerian students' difficulties in writing coherently. First, it could be that students did not plan well before starting to write. Second, students might not be aware of the difference between the thesis statement and the topic sentence. Third, they might lack the strategy for producing unified writing. Fourth, the exam anxiety can be a negatively effective factor. Finally, their teachers might not have taught them how to write in a coherent way.

1.4.1.2. Cohesion

Cohesion, also, is a very important aspect of writing, because it affects the quality of students' writing. Longman Dictionary defines cohesion as the

grammatical and lexical relationship that exist between parts or items of a sentence and between sentences in a text.

However, a cohesive writing has to be grammatically correct, as well as, the ideas at the sentence and at the paragraph level should be connected. In this response, Malmakjaer (2002 :543) claims that cohesion means “ *the way in which the linguistic items of which a text is composed are meaningfully connected to each other*”.

Cohesion is when sentences are linked and connected to each other in a paragraph using devices or as Conor (1996:83) points out that cohesion is “*the use of explicit devices to signal relations between sentences and parts of texts*”. These devices which are known as cohesive ties are either words or phrases used by the writer to link ideas or information stated in the beginning with those that comes in the end, and to keep the reader informed about what is already stated and what will be stated (Conor, 1996). So, if EFL students want to achieve cohesion in their writing, they have to take into consideration the use of several linkers like: “firstly”, “moreover”, “in addition”...etc, to guide the reader.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) identified five cohesive devices that signal coherence in texts: ellipsis, substitution, reference, lexical cohesion and conjunctions.

1) *Reference*: this cohesive device consists of “*words which do not have a full meaning in their own right*”(Salkie, 1995:64). While writing, learners must avoid repetition of nouns by replacing them with pronouns or possessive. For example: - Laila is a good girl. She always help her mother. (The personal pronoun “she” and “her” refer to the noun Laila).

2) *Substitution*: it occurs when a word or a group of words are replaced by another one. The reader can fill in the correct element based on the preceding sentences (Rankema, 1993). This cohesive device is often used to substitute long phrase by a

short one that follows. Substitution involves the use of terms “one(s)” or “(the) same” for nouns, “do so” for verbs. Examples are:

- I want a cup of tea. Do you want one? (The word “one” is the substitute for “a cup of tea”).
- Ahmed thinks the film is fun to watch. His brother does not think so (The word “so” is the substitute for “the film is fun to watch”).

Lack of substitution knowledge is believed to be another factor causing students’ difficulty in cohesion. Moreover, lack of reading is considered as the main factor behind this problem.

3) *Ellipsis*: it refers to the elision of a word or a part of a sentence as pointed out by Halliday and Hasan (1976:88) that ellipsis is “*the omission of an item*”. This cohesive device is used when a structure is omitted without affecting the meaning. Thus, ellipsis plays an important role in sentence connection and unity, as in this example:

- Which shirt will you wear? –This is the best.

Unfortunately, some students are not proficient in using cohesive aspect in writing for a reason or another, but mainly because they do not know which words or phrases should be deleted to make the sentence cohesive without affecting the general meaning.

4) *Lexical cohesion*: is the case when two words are related in meaning (Nunan, 1993). It involves the repetition of noun phrases, or the use of use of other noun phrases which bears a relation to the noun phrase mentioned before.

Using lexical cohesion incorrectly or do not use it at all is an obstacle that faces many EFL students in their essays writing. This problem may be said to be originated either from learners’ lack of vocabulary or from their mother tongue interferences which affect their ability to express their ideas in the target language.

5) *Conjunctions (or linkers)*: are words used to link two ideas, sentences and paragraphs together. Furthermore, linkers express a number of text relationships. These relationships are those of addition (and, also, in addition, furthermore, for instance,...), of contrast (however, but, yet, instead, on the other hand,...), of time (then, next, first, at last, finally,...), of result (consequently, thus, for this result,...) (Baker, 1992).

There are some reasons behind the cohesion difficulties in the English writing. First, lack of reading English texts can cause students' difficulty in writing cohesively. Additionally, lack of cohesion knowledge was believed to be another factor causing students' difficulties in cohesion.

1.4.1.3. The Relationship between Cohesion and Coherence

Cohesion and coherence are related notions which interact to a great degree, but they are clearly distinct. There are two types of views concerning their relationship.

A- Cohesion is neither necessary nor sufficient to account for coherence. That is, a text may be cohesive (i.e. linked together), but incoherent (i.e. meaningless). Here is one such (invented) text:

I am a teacher. The teacher was late for class. Class rhymes with grass. Is always greener on the other side of the fence. But it was.

B- Cohesion and Coherence cannot be separate, because there is a close relationship between them since both are important to structure a unified written work. In this respect, learners must be aware of these two aspects to write meaningfully.

Furthermore, cohesion does not lead to coherence, and coherence itself is not sufficient to make a text coherent, but it needs some features like cohesion to make a text coherent. However, a text can be cohesive but not coherent and vice versa, as it can be cohesive and coherent at the same time.

Example 1: Have you seen the film? It was very funny.

In the first example, the two sentences are related to each other through the pronoun (it), and they are also semantically related. We conclude that they are cohesive and coherent.

Example 2: Liverpool shot a goal. The whistle blew. (Tangkiengsirisin 2010:62).

In the second example, there is no cohesive element but the two sentences are semantically coherent.

Example 3: My grandfather died. I shall see him tomorrow. (Tangkiengsirisin 2010:62).

The third example is cohesive but it lacks the coherent feature. It is cohesive since it contains the cohesive device ‘reference’, which is represented in (him), also, it is semantically inappropriate.

It is somehow difficult to separate them because a coherent work need to be cohesive, but a piece of writing can contain more cohesion than coherence.

Three other variables are to be taken into consideration for effective writing as described by Abi Ayad (2008:8-9-10): purpose, content and audience.

- Purpose: writers have to consider the purpose of their writing, i.e., what they want to write about, the type of the text, the language used and the information included in the message they want to convey.
- Content: writers have to take into consideration the content of their writing, i.e., the selection of ideas since EFL learners seem to have trouble with the organization of ideas.
- Audience: writers should keep in mind the category of readers (age, educational level, needs...) their writing is going to be addressed too.

1.4.2. Sentence Level

Like other skills, writing has its mechanical components including: punctuation, spelling and handwriting. These mechanical components described by Harmer (2004) are very important at the stage of learning how to write in English.

1.4.2.1. Punctuation

Most teachers and English learners consider punctuation as an important writing skill.

Learners have to use punctuation correctly while writing since this latter is judged not only at the level of content and the language used, but also punctuation. This is why; they should have some knowledge about this skill to write in a clear way. In addition, they need to be aware that punctuation marks are not used without purpose, but in fact, they influence the meaning , because incorrectly-punctuated writing force the reader to stop and reread to understand the sentence. Grellet (1996:8) describes the role of punctuation as: *“to make the text you write clear and easy to read. Defective punctuation can make a text very difficult to understand, and even lead to misunderstanding”*. Each punctuation mark is has a specific role, for example, full stops are used to indicate the boundaries between sentences. The following table gives an explanation of the use of the punctuation marks:

Mark	Name	Use to...
.	period	End a sentence or indicate an abbreviation
,	comma	Separate list items, link complete thoughts, enclose parenthetical thoughts, or separate introductory phrases
;	semicolon	Separate two independent clauses not joined by a conjunction. Often thought as a soft period
:	colon	Introduce a list
“ ”	double quotes	Indicate a quotation from a person or publication
‘ ’	single quotes	Indicate a slang or a quotation within a quotation
()	parentheses	Set off remarks that explain or comment on the sentence
[]	brackets	Indicate your own words within a quotation
...	ellipsis	Indicate words that have been deleted from a quotation
–	emdash	Enclose or set off parenthetical expressions or abrupt changes in thought
-	en dash	Indicate continuing or inclusive numbers, such as dates, time, or reference numbers
-	hyphen	Create hyphenated words, such as “co-worker”, or to create compound modifiers, such as “one-day course”
?	question mark	Indicate question
!	exclamation mark	Emphasize a statement_ infrequently used in business writing
&	ampersand	Replace “and”_ spell out instead
/	slash	Indicate an and/or situation (avoid by stating whether one or both possibilities exist)

Table 1.1 : Common marks of punctuation (adopted from Duncan Kent & Associates 2002 : 76)

1.4.2.2. Spelling

The English spelling is considered as a complex one. Harmer (2001) claims that the reason behind spelling difficulties for EFL learners is that the correspondance between the sound of a word and the way it is spelt is not always clear. Furthermore, a single sound may have different spellings, for example, /k/ in the following words (car, scheme, knock, king, queen) is spelt differently. The same case for the sound /i:/ in (piece, clear, meet, vehecule, kiwi).

Another issue is that not all the English varieties spell the same words in the same way, so, teachers should help their students to focus on one variety. For instance, British English spelling defers from the American one (centre or center/ programme or program/ color or colour).

Spelling plays a basic role in writing. EFL students are obliged to master spelling skills because if they misspelled words, the meaning will be completely affected, and this can lead to problems in comprehension. Bad spelling is considered as carelessness from the writer, since it involves a negative impression on the reader, this is why; learners need to give more attention to spelling since it enables the reader to understand writing. Teachers can solve the students 'problems of spelling by encouraging them to read (harmer).

1.4.2.3. Handwriting

Despite the widespread use of technology, legible handwriting is still an important skill that deserves more attention, because bad handwriting influences the reader in a negative way. This is why; students have to improve this skill because they need it in writing their personal letters, homeworks and in exams. Furthermore, copying activities still the best way to improve handwriting (Harmer, 2004)

1.4.3. Language Structure Control

In order to write effectively, learners need to have a certain grammatical and lexical knowledge. The knowledge of grammar rules is important since it makes

learners reduce the number of mistakes, whereas, lexical is essential to avoid ambiguity of information.

1.4.3.1. Grammatical knowledge

Crystal (1992:35) defines grammar as “*an analysis of the structure of language*”. Without grammar, people would have only individual words; this is why it is necessary for English learners to be aware of grammar rules to use the language effectively and appropriately. It also helps them to avoid mistakes and make effective pieces of writing since incorrect grammar leads to misunderstanding. Moreover, good grammatical knowledge enables the students to be aware of techniques that make a successful written essay to attract the attention of the reader, how to join words into coherent sentences and those sentences into paragraphs.

In sum, knowledge of grammar helps learners to build correct grammatical structures, so that they produce meaningful works.

1.4.3.2. Lexical knowledge

Another important element that makes EFL students’ writing more effective is a strong vocabulary, which is known as words of a language that carry a meaning. In this response, Wilkins (1972, qtd in McCarten:20) claims that “*...while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed*”.

Since vocabulary has an important role in producing meaningful writing, researchers list three important aspects of “students’ writing performance”:

- 1- Shaping teachers’ perception of writing quality,
- 2- Predicting students’ overall writing performance.
- 3- Enhancing the quality of students’ written compositions. (Papadopoulou, 2007:15)

Lexical knowledge is very important for EFL learners in order to be able to communicate either in spoken or written form. Having a repertoire of vocabulary is very essential in writing. It is helpful because it gives the writer the ability to use lexical items appropriately. In addition to this, learners must be aware of the linguistic relations such as: synonymy, antonymy and hyponymy.

Linguistic relations	Common use	Example
Synonymy	When a word can be exchanged for or substituted by another, without changing the meaning of the sentence.	Gorgeous- beautiful Agreement- arrangement Take place- happen
Antonymy	When a word carries an opposite meaning.	Private- public Success- failure Amuse- bore
Hyponymy	Refers to the hierarchy that exists between words in terms: general and specific words	Flower- rose Meal- lunch Computer- keyboard

Table 1.2: Example of linguistic relations and common use (adopted from Hedge2000, qtd in Bouakoub, 2011:53).

1.5. WRITING STRATEGIES

As almost for any writer, getting started is the hardest part of the writing process. For EFL students, this is often the case, because they view a writing assignment as an obligation to fill five pages rather than as an opportunity to say something. It may seem obvious, but arguing a point is much easier if we have ideas about it. This latter point is similar to the opening step of the writing strategies known as:

1.5.1. The Pre-writing Stage

It is the most crucial stage where students brainstorm to select a topic or if the topic has been already assigned (given by the instructor) they move to think about it, decide on a way to refer to it and choose and generate the relevant ideas and information. Furthermore, during this stage students create an outline of their ideas for the structure of the written texts that will express their ideas effectively on the topic.

Also, at this stage students make some initial organizational decisions, which are:

The topic: the “what” of writing.

The audience: to “whom” students are writing.

The purpose: the “why” of writing.

The form: the shape or structure of the writing.

Concerning the form, the writer has to divide the essay into three parts: the first one is the introduction, in which the topic is briefly introduced in addition to a preview of what is to come in the body. The second part is the body -the longest part in the essay- that includes details about the main ideas concerning the topic, and finally the conclusion which summarizes and restates the main idea.

It is evident that, for a well-structured writing students need to pass through this step before writing any drafts. The purpose of pre-writing is to generate notes and ideas either individually or in groups, that will give pupils some strategies for writing a draft, without the results of there-writing phase leads to poorly constructed writing. Thus, it is necessary for students to deal with this stage before moving to the next one.

1.5.2. The Drafting Stage

Actually, the students at this stage start writing their drafts by linking their ideas in logically connected paragraphs that contain enough supporting details, and

concluding with strong endings, without worrying about making mistakes in grammar, spelling and punctuation, since they can go back to correct and improve them because their first aim is to write down information and ideas about the topic. After writing the body, they can think of good and effective introduction and conclusion. It is very necessary that to use the suitable connectors, in order to make the text more cohesive and coherent.

Drafting enables students change their ideas order or even creating new ones and elaborating them as noted by Bouakoub(2011:31) that *“the drafting is then the technique or the strategy that allows students the flexibility to explore, to make discoveries and to change their ideas”*. However, at this level, students give much more importance to how to create an essay with well-organized ideas, and ignore the spelling rules.

Once students have finished drafting they have to move to the following stage which is revising.

1.5.3. The Revising Stage

As the product of the previous stage still requires evidence, the revising stage is needed. At this level students look again at their writings to add, substitute, delete and/or modify the content to clarify meaning and expand ideas to ensure that they express their thoughts in the most effective way. Sommers (1982) sees revision as *“a process of making changes throughout the writing of a draft, changes that work to make the draft congruent writer’s changing intentions”*.

Finally, Revising make students aware not only of the content of their final writing product, but more essentially of the style and the structure of their writings as well as their audience.

1.5.4. The Editing Stage

Ultimately, the learners have the responsibility for the accuracy of their works. Thus, the writers focus on the mechanics of their pieces of writing; they check and ensure that there are no grammar mistakes and vocabulary misuses (Hamzaoui,

2005), proofread for spelling, punctuation, capitalization and syntax, in order to enhance the clarity and effectiveness of their writings.

At this stage, it can be assumed that students have reached their final work to be shared with others, through publishing it.

1.6. Conclusion

This chapter had dealt with writing as a language skill. It is an attempt to demonstrate the nature of writing skill, and all that it requires from writers concerning the writing process and its main strategies. Also, it has clarified some key concepts in EFL writing and learning. Therefore, writing like the other three basic skills has to be integrated within any foreign language.

ChapterTwo

Research Design and Data Analysis

Chapter two: Research Design and Data Analysis

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2.1. Introduction

This chapter represents an overview on the practical phase of the study. It is reserved to the research methodology followed in the current study. It will consist of a description of the participants and research instruments, in addition to data analysis.

2.2. The Participants

The sample of participants taking place in this study is made of third-year EFL students in the English language department, the faculty of letters and languages at Tlemcen University.

This present work is a case study, where it was dealt with twenty six students randomly chosen from the second group in the “section of Civilization and Literature”, during the academic year 2014/2015. These students are ranged between twenty two and fifty four years old. This sample is made of fourteen (14) females and twelve (12) males, whose first language is standard Arabic (L1); while, their mother tongue is the western variety of Algerian Arabic.

2.3. Research Instrument and Data Collection

The current study is based on the use of two different research tools which are students’ exam papers and students’ questionnaire.

2.3.1. Students’ Exam Papers:

This study will primarily evaluate twenty six argumentative essays written by third year university students in the first semester exam of academic writing module.

In this composition, the students were asked to write an argumentative essay in which they discuss the political, economical and the social consequences of brain drain, or sport, ..in their native countries. Therefore, they were expected to perform

their own knowledge about the topic, express their ideas and thoughts and link them clearly and logically.

The central aim of this work is to examine the use of the cohesive and coherent ties in EFL learners' writings. First, we will go deeply to investigate the cohesive aspects including: reference, substitution, ellipsis, lexical cohesion and conjunctions. Secondly, we will deal with the coherency of the written essays.

2.3.2. Students' Questionnaire:

The questionnaire is a tool used for gathering information about a particular topic of interest. It is considered as one of the most used instruments for collecting data. The questionnaire of this study contains eighteen questions. The purpose of the three first questions is to show students' attitude toward the writing skill, while the fourth and the fifth questions are about learners' knowledge of vocabulary. Moreover, the sixth and the seventh questions are asked to know about spelling and the use of punctuation, however, questions from eight to eighteen are about writing strategies, cohesion and coherence.

2.4. Data analyses

In this section, research will respectively be concerned with the students' exam papers and students' questionnaire to analyse and discuss.

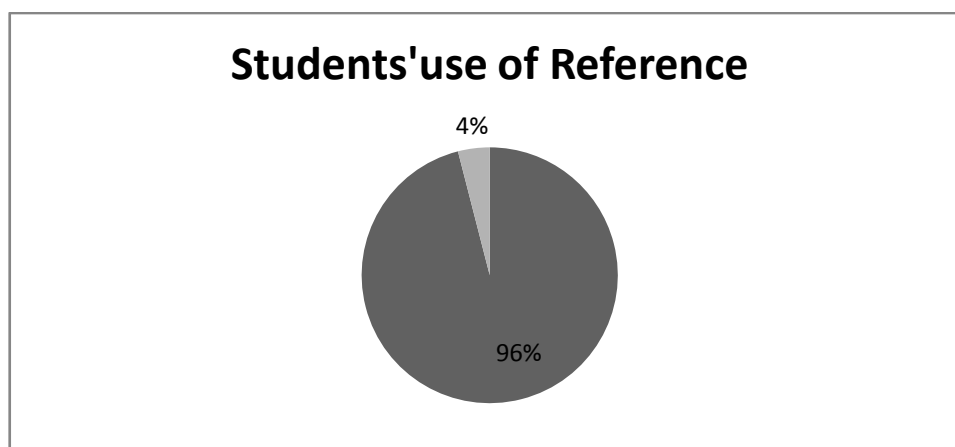
2.4.1. Exam Papers Analysis

2.4.1.1. Using Reference:

The table below shows students' use of reference in their EFL writing.

<i>Students</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>NO</i>
A.F	25	1
R.F	96%	04%

Table 2.1: Students' Use of Reference.



Pie-chart: 2.1: Students' Use of Reference.

From the evaluation of the students' exam papers and concerning the use of the cohesive device "reference" in EFL essay writing it was found that the majority of students i.e., 96% of them are aware of the use of "reference" in their writing.

The respondents have used this cohesive aspect in order to connect their ideas and mainly to avoid repetition and refer to entities already mentioned or about to be mentioned, such as: the use of personal reference including: personal pronouns (It, I...etc.), possessive pronouns especially "Its" and personal determiners as "their", "His". Besides, they have mentioned demonstrative reference such as: this, these, that, those...etc. finally, they have denoted comparative reference using adverbs such as: likewise, so. Whereas, only 4% of the students under study have not inserted references in their piece of writing, so they have shown a low achievement specially at the essay level, and this may be due to the lack of knowledge about when and how to refer to what has been stated before.

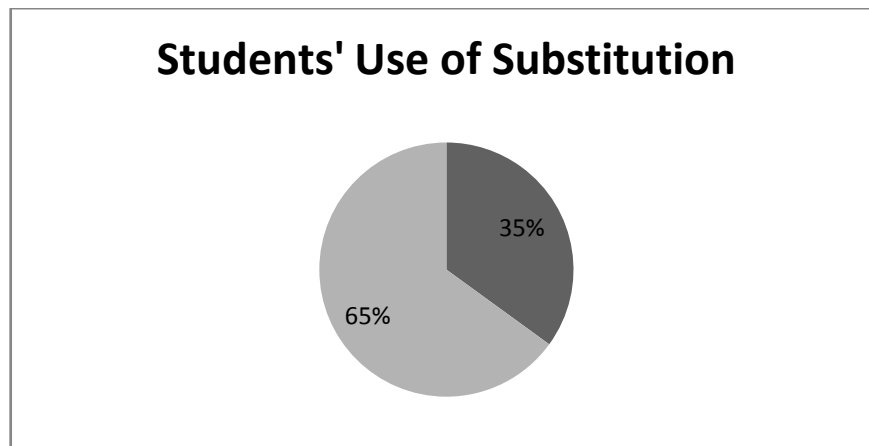
2.4.1.2. Using Substitution:

Students 'use of substitution is presented in the next table:

<i>Students</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>NO</i>

A.F	9	17
R.F	35%	65%

Table 2.2: Students' Use of Substitution.



Pie-chart 2.2: Students' Use of Substitution.

Regarding this study, it was noted that 35% of the participants have succeeded in involving this cohesive aspect, mainly the substitution for nouns as in: -“among all of the economical, political and social problems, the most noticeable **one** is that of...”

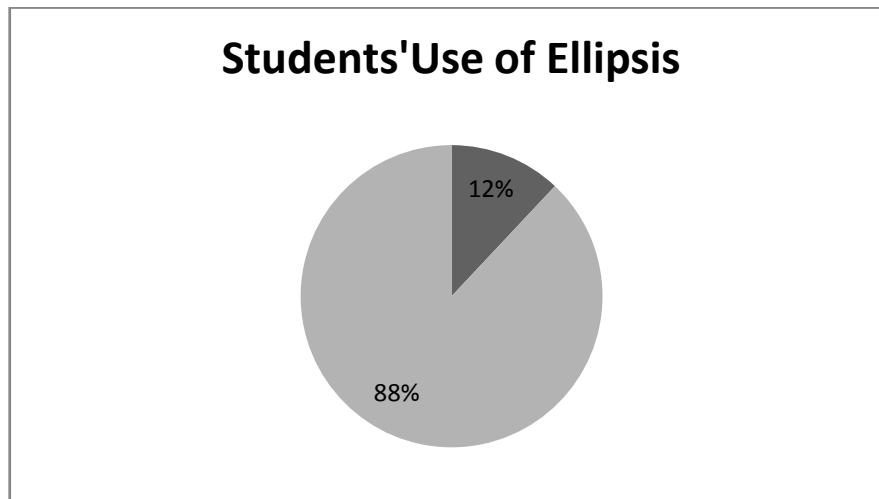
The term “one” is used to substitute for “problem”.

While, the majority of the students (65%) did not use “substitution”. It appears that the source of this problem is from the learners’ lack of reading, since only through reading students can master and become familiar with the use of this cohesive feature. Furthermore, the respondents seem to be unaware of this writing aspect, the fact that makes their writing not cohesive and insufficient.

2.4.1.3. Using Ellipsis:

Using ellipsis by students is introduced in the table below:

<i>Students</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>NO</i>
A.F	3	23
R.F	12%	88%

Table 2.3: Students' Use of Ellipsis.**Pie-chart 2. 3: Students' Use of Ellipsis.**

As it can be noted from the above table, the lack of using “ellipsis” is the most common writing problem noted in this study. It ranks number 23 out of 26 students that have this writing difficulty. It seems, that the main reason behind this issue is that either they were afraid of affecting the general meaning of the sentence; the base upon which we have explain the non-proficiency in using this discourse feature in the theoretical part of this study, or, because they are not aware of this crucial aspect. Therefore, this problem should be handled appropriately by professional teachers by providing more activities and explanations concerning the use of this cohesive device.

However, only 12% among the respondents have tackled the problem of repetition through using “ellipsis” correctly, which made their writing more cohesive and sufficient.

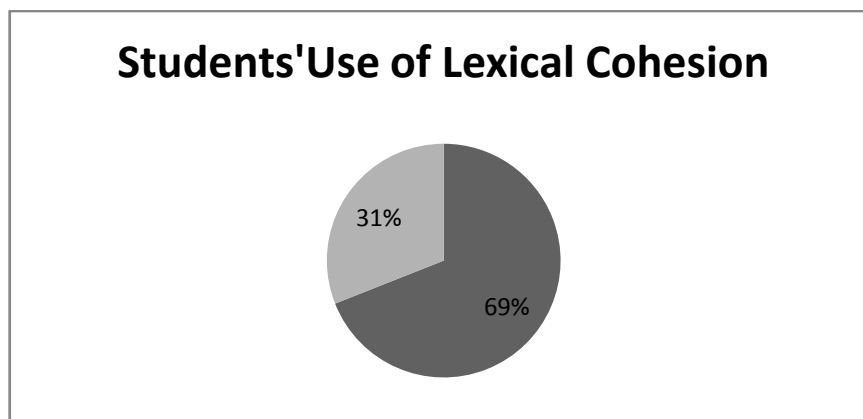
2.4.1.4. Using lexical Cohesion:

Concerning aspects related to lexical cohesion, the following table exposes the frequencies of students' use.

<i>Students</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>NO</i>
A.F	18	8

R.F	69%	31%
------------	-----	-----

Table 2.4: Students' Use of Lexical Cohesion.



Pie-chart 2.4: Students' Use of Lexical Cohesion.

The majority of the learners, namely 69% of the examined participants, in contrast to ellipsis, have achieved the most important type of cohesion which is “the lexical cohesion”. For several times, they substitute the main noun phrase by another one so that they are semantically close to each other. For instance, many students have substituted the noun phrase of the topic “brain drain” by “this phenomenon”, this social problem, “this issue”...etc.

This denotes that this type of cohesion is well understood by the learners and that they have a mastery of vocabulary that paves the way for them to state the key words and phrases of the topic differently in the right way.

On the contrary, this was not the case for the rest of the students who represent 31% of the subject population, as they found difficulties in using “lexical cohesion” in their writings since their lack of vocabulary.

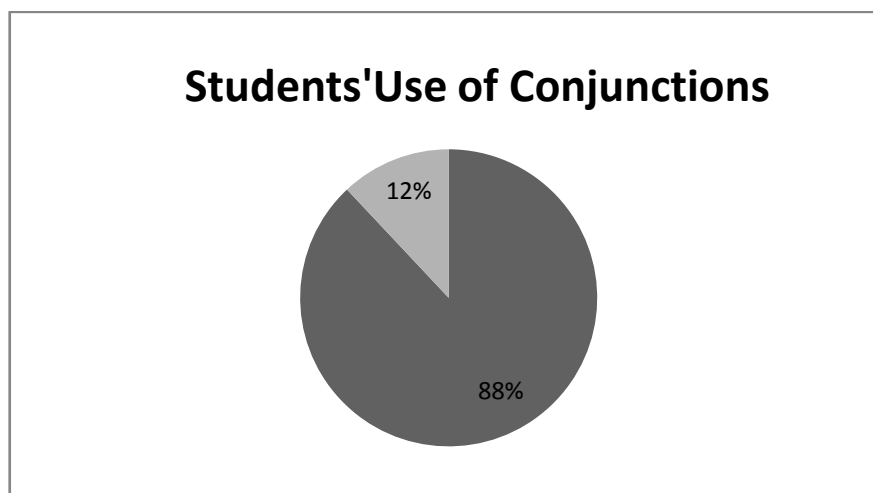
Finally, the above observations denote that lexical cohesion is a well-known device by students, which made their writings coherent and stylistic.

2.4.1.5. Using Conjunctions:

Regarding the use of the fifth cohesive device, i.e., conjunction, the table below indicates the learners' use of this device.

Students	Yes	No
A.F	23	03
R.F	88%	12%

Table 2.5: Students' Use of Conjunctions.



Pie-chart 2. 5: Students' Use of Conjunctions.

At the level of conjunctions, the majority of the students, that is to say 88% of the sample, have succeeded in using “conjunctions” in their essays to link their sentences and paragraphs.

By regarding the kinds of linkers it was mentioned in the first part of our work, concerning conjunctions, It was possible to see that all the learners have used different types of linkers to express different text relations such as the ones of addition (and, in addition, also, besides), of contrast (but, however, yet...), of time (first, then, in conclusion, finally...) and of result (thus).

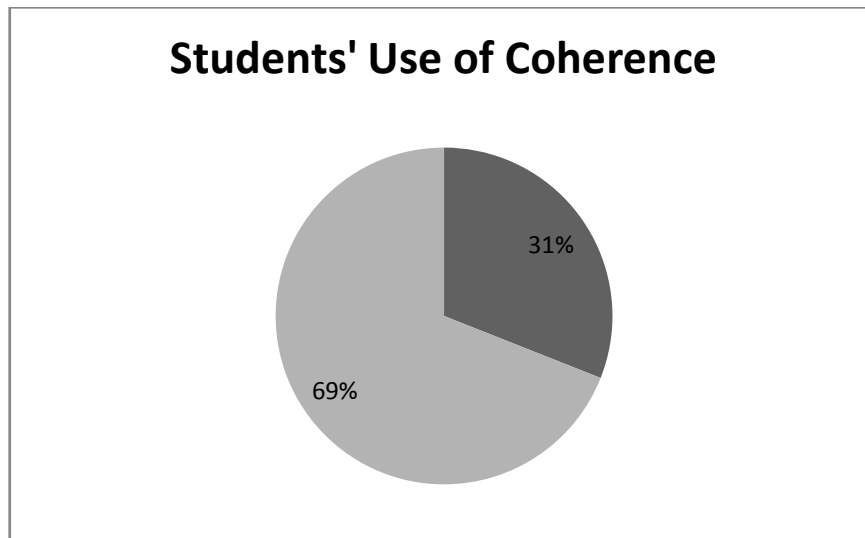
Through the use of these conjunctions, participants have linked their preceding information with the new ones in a logical order. From this, it has been denoted that learners know how to control their use of this crucial cohesive device.

2.4.1.6. Coherence:

The frequencies concerning students' use of coherence are clarified in the next table:

<i>Students</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>NO</i>
A.F	08	18
R.F	31%	69%

Table 2.6: Students' Use of Coherence.



Pie- chart 2.6: Students' Use of Coherence.

From the above table it was deduced that 18 (69%) students from the whole group of respondents haven't written coherent essays where ideas and sequences were not chronologically related to each other the fact that made the reader confused and demotivated. For instance the case where the student is tackling a point or discussing the topic from a particular angle, then, he moves to a completely new and different side of the problematic and then he goes back to the first or preceding idea, will make the reader lost.

In reference to the causes that have been mentioned in the previous chapter, the main variables behind this writing difficulty are: the exam's anxiety that the student may face and led to lack of concentration and waste his time. Furthermore, the direct writing on the exam sheet without planning his work before as mentioned in the review of literature.

8 among them (31%); whereas, have succeeded in producing coherent essays, by introducing the topic, than developing and discussing the main ideas and ending with a conclusion. This enables the reader to be informed about the whole written passage.

2.4.2. Questionnaire Analysis

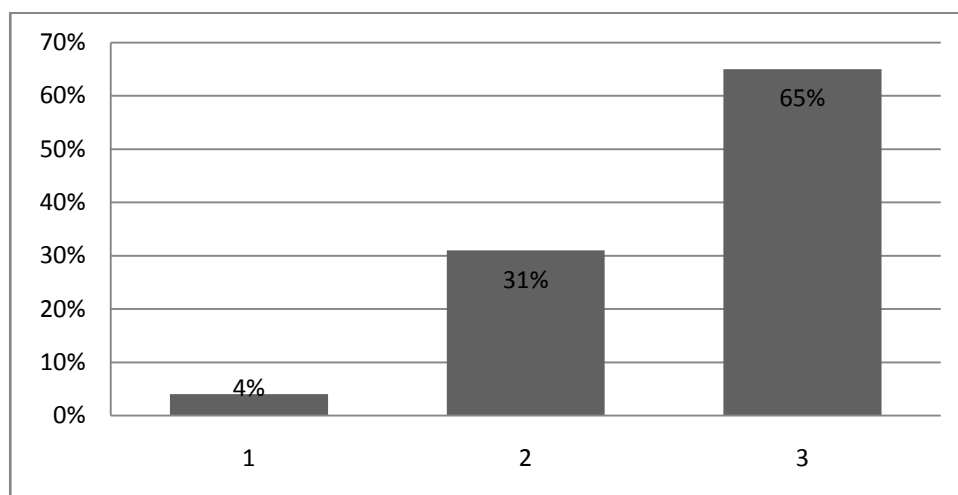
Here are the different questions addressed to our students:

***Question 1:** *I enjoy writing in English.*

Concerning the first question, 17 (65%) participants answered that they usually enjoy writing in English, 8 (31%) students said sometimes they do; while, only 1 (4%) of them claimed that it is rarely done. Their responses are summarized in the following table.

Rate	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
Frequency	/	1	8	17
Percentages	/	4%	31%	65%

Table 2.7: Students' Attitudes towards Writing in English.

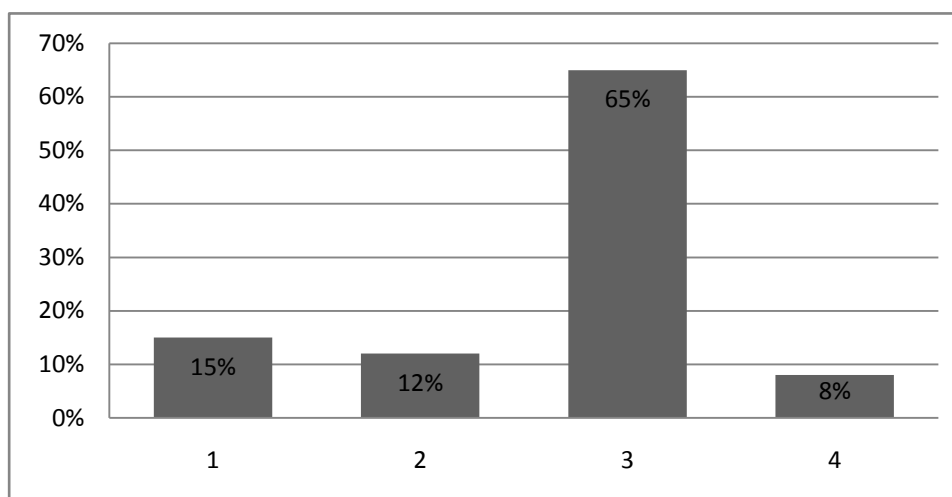


Bar-graph 2.1: Students' Attitudes towards Writing in English.

***Question 2:** *Writing is a difficult skill for me to achieve.*

Rate	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
Frequency	4	3	17	2
Percentages	15%	12%	65%	8%

Table 2.8: *Students' Performance of the Writing Skill/ Students' Difficulty in performing the Writing Skill*



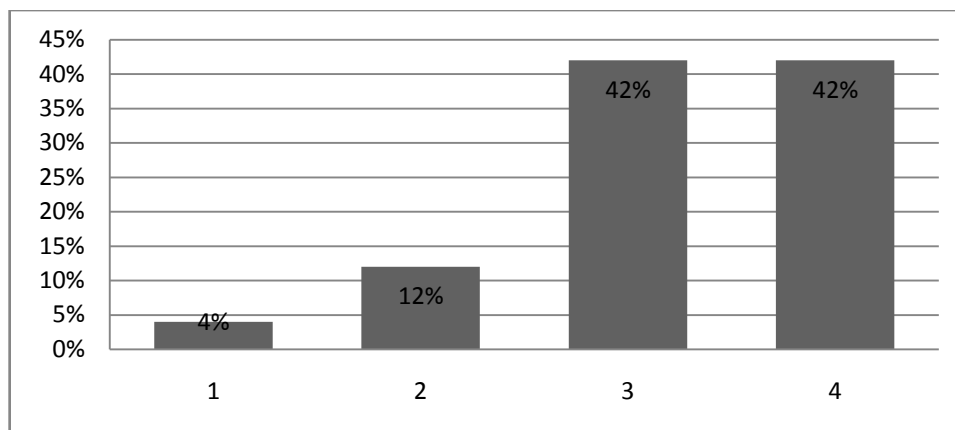
Bar-graph 2.2: *Students' Performance of the Writing Skill.*

65% of the sample (17 students) found writing sometimes difficult for them to achieve, while, 15% considered writing as an easy task, and 12% of the sample (3 students) rarely found writing difficult to perform. However, 8% revealed that writing is difficult to achieve.

*** Question 3:** *I can write correct paragraphs in English.*

Rate	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
Frequency	1	3	11	11
Percentages	4%	12%	42%	42%

Table 2.9: *Students' Ability to Write Correct Paragraphs in English.*



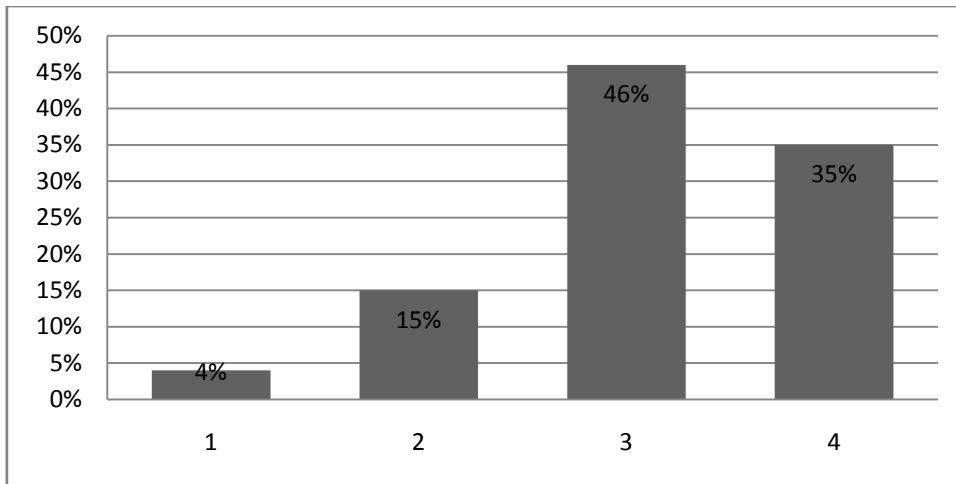
Bar-graph2.3: Students' Ability to Write Correct Paragraphs in English.

When asked about the ability to write correct paragraphs in English; 11(42%) students said that they usually can. The same number of the participants answered by sometimes. However, only 3(12%) students rarely can write correct passages in English, while just 1(4%) is not able as he/she claimed.

***Question 4:** *While writing, I can find lots of words quickly on a topic of my interest.*

Rate	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
Frequency	1	4	12	9
Percentages	4%	15%	46%	35%

Table 2.10: Students' Ability of Finding Appropriate Words on a Topic of Interest.



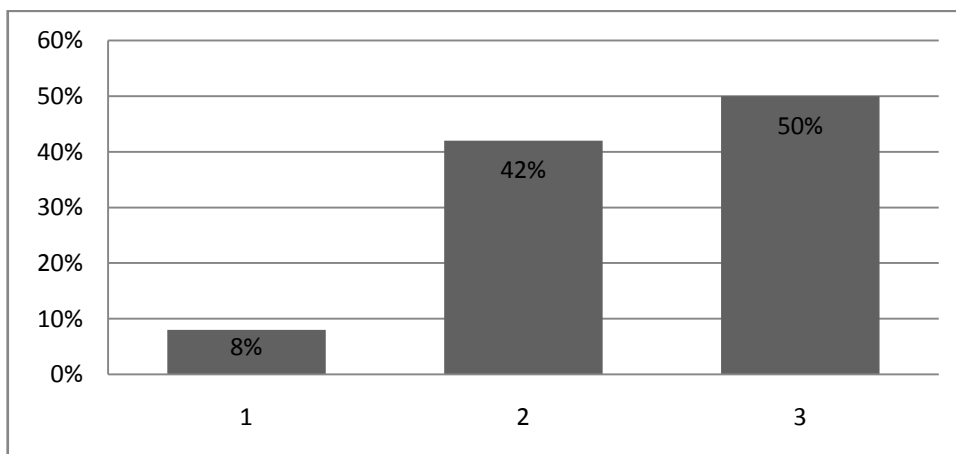
Bar-graph 2.4: Students' Ability of Finding Appropriate Words on a Topic of Interest.

35% of the participants claimed that they find words quickly on a topic of interest, while, 46% they sometimes do. However, 15% of the students rarely find words quickly related to their topics, and 4% of them never succeed to find words easily.

***Question 5:** *I can use appropriate vocabulary.*

Rate	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
Frequency	/	2	11	13
Percentages	/	8%	42%	50%

Table 2.11: Students' Ability to Use Appropriate Vocabulary.



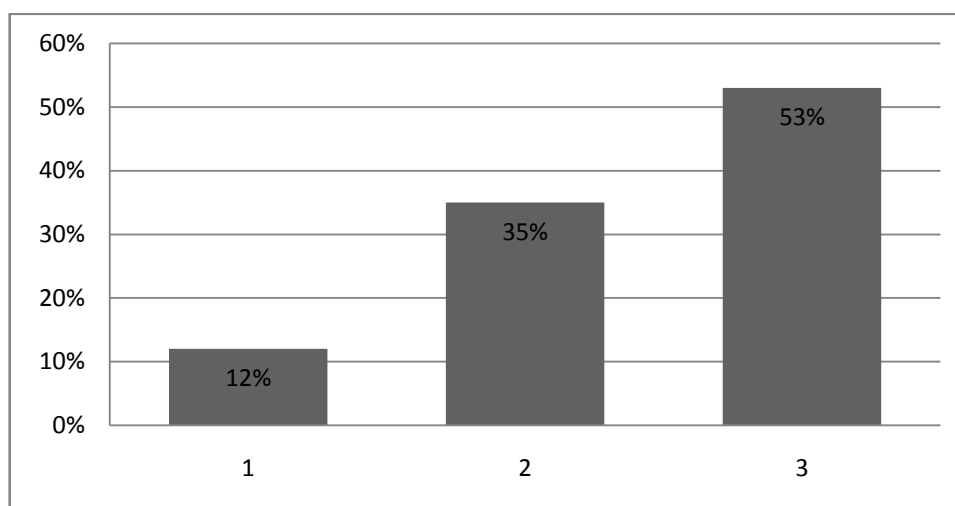
Bar-graph 2.5: Students' Ability to Use Appropriate Vocabulary.

Half of the population (13 students that is to say (50%)) answered that they are able to use the appropriate vocabulary while writing essays in English. 11(42%) students said that they sometimes succeed in using the suitable vocabulary .however, only 2(28%) claimed that they are rarely able.

***Question 6:** *I can use appropriate spelling.*

Rate	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
Frequency	/	3	9	14
Percentages	/	12%	35%	53%

Table 2.12: *Students' Ability to Use Appropriate Spelling.*



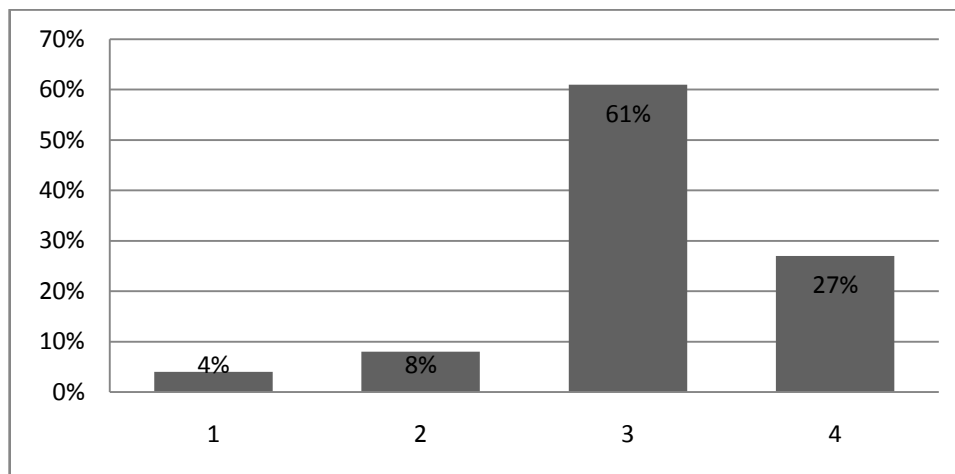
Bar-graph2.6: *Students' Ability to Use Appropriate Spelling.*

The majority of the students (53%) use appropriate spelling when writing, 35% revealed that they sometimes do, and 12% of them rarely use appropriate spelling

***Question 7:** *I can use appropriate punctuation.*

The answers of this question are provided in the following table:

Rate	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
Frequency	1	2	16	7
Percentages	4%	8%	61%	27%

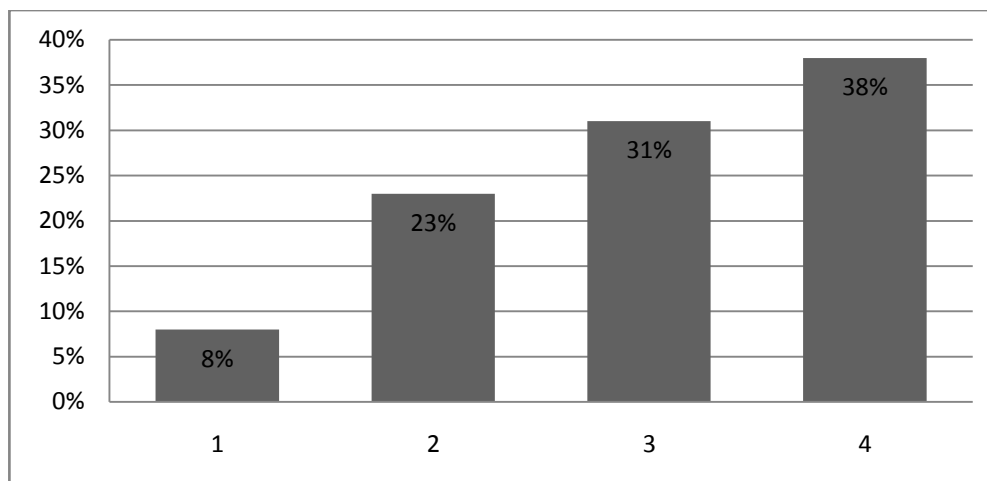
Table 2.13: Students' Ability to Use Appropriate Punctuation.**Bar-graph.2.7: Students' Ability to Use Appropriate Punctuation.**

Thus, the majority (16 that is to say (61%)) of the students pointed out that they can sometimes use the appropriate punctuation .while, one third of the population (7 students that is to say (27%)) answered that are usually able to choose the correct punctuation. Whereas, 2(8%) students often cannot. Only 1(4%) students answered by never.

***Question 8:** *I edit to improve grammar and punctuation.*

Rate	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
Frequency	2	6	8	10
Percentages	8%	23%	31%	38%

Table 2.14: Students' Edition to Improve Grammar and Punctuation.



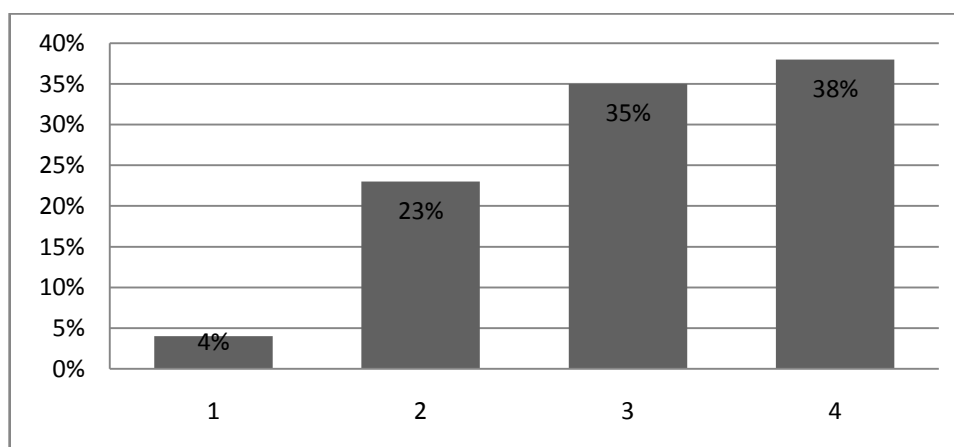
Bar-graph2.8: Students' Edition to Improve Grammar and Punctuation.

Concerning the question of editing to improve grammar and punctuation, 10 participants use this strategy. However, 8 students sometimes edit to correct their grammatical and punctuation mistakes. Hence, 6 informants answered by rarely and only 21 students revealed that they never use edition to improve grammar and punctuation.

***Question 9:** *I edit to correct spelling mistakes.*

Rate	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
Frequency	1	6	9	10
Percentages	4%	23%	35%	38%

Table2.15: Students' Edition to Correct Spelling Mistakes.



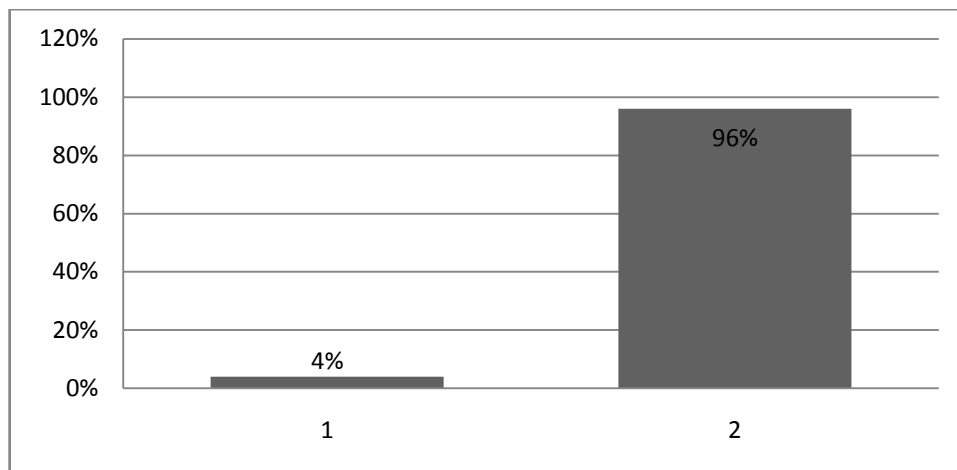
Bar-graph2.9: Students' Edition to Correct Spelling Mistakes.

For the ninth question, 10(38%) students usually edit to correct spelling mistakes.9 (35%) informants answered by sometimes. While 6 (23%) participants claimed that they rarely modify and correct such mistakes. Finally, there was only 1 (4%) student never done that.

Question10:My essays always include an introduction, a body and a conclusion.*

Rate	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
Frequency	/	/	1	25
Percentages	/	/	4%	96%

Table2.16: *Students’ Respect of the Appropriate Essay Structure.*



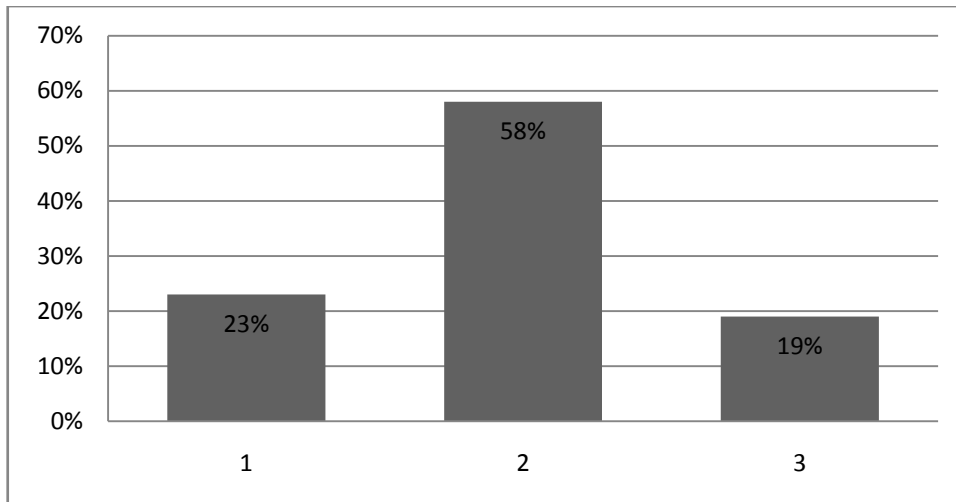
Bar-graph2.10: *Students’ Respect of the Appropriate Essay Structure.*

The majority of the students (96%) said that their essays include an introduction, a body and a conclusion.

Question 11:I use conjunctions to link two ideas, sentences and paragraphs in my writing.*

Rate	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
Frequency	/	6	15	5
Percentages	/	23%	58%	19%

Table 2.17: *Students’ Use of Conjunctions.*



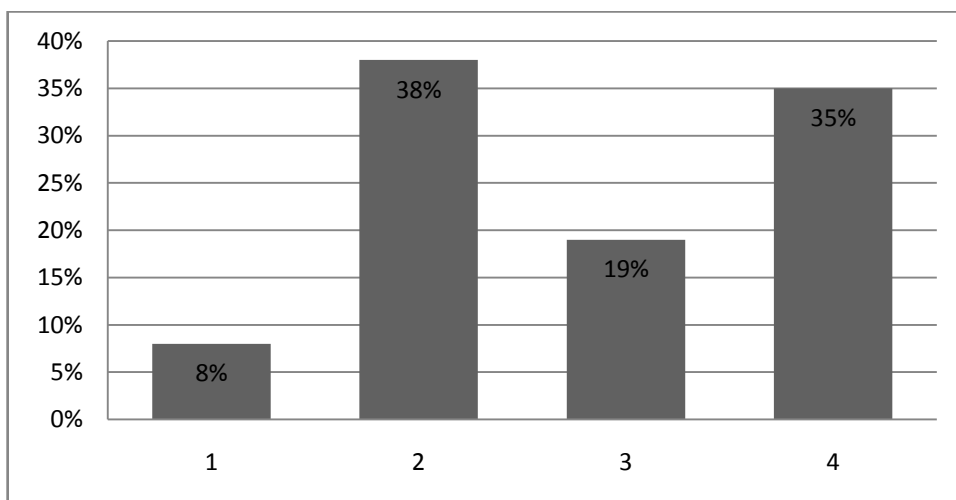
Bar-graph 2.11: Students' Use of Conjunctions.

Concerning the use of conjunctions in order to link ideas, sentences and paragraphs, 15 (58%) students claimed that they use them sometimes, while this is done by 6 (23%) participants. However, just 5 (19%) informants use these linking devices usually when they write

***Question 12:** *I put a plan before starting to write.*

Rate	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
Frequency	2	10	5	9
Percentages	8%	38%	19%	35%

Table 2.18: Putting a Plan before Starting to write.



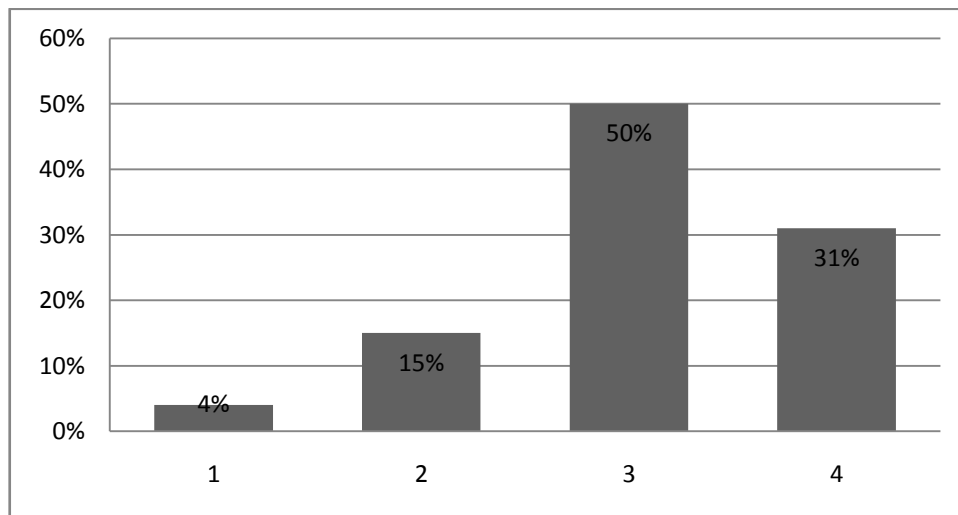
Bar-graph 2.12: Putting a Plan before Starting to write.

When students were asked about putting a plan before starting to write, 10 (38%) of them said that they rarely do, 5 (19%) answered by sometimes and 9 (35%) claimed that they usually do. However, only 2 (8%) students do not put a plan.

***Question13:** *I can effectively brainstorm my ideas before writing.*

Rate	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
Frequency	1	4	13	8
Percentages	4%	15%	50%	31%

Table 2.19: *Students' Ability to brainstorm Ideas Effectively.*



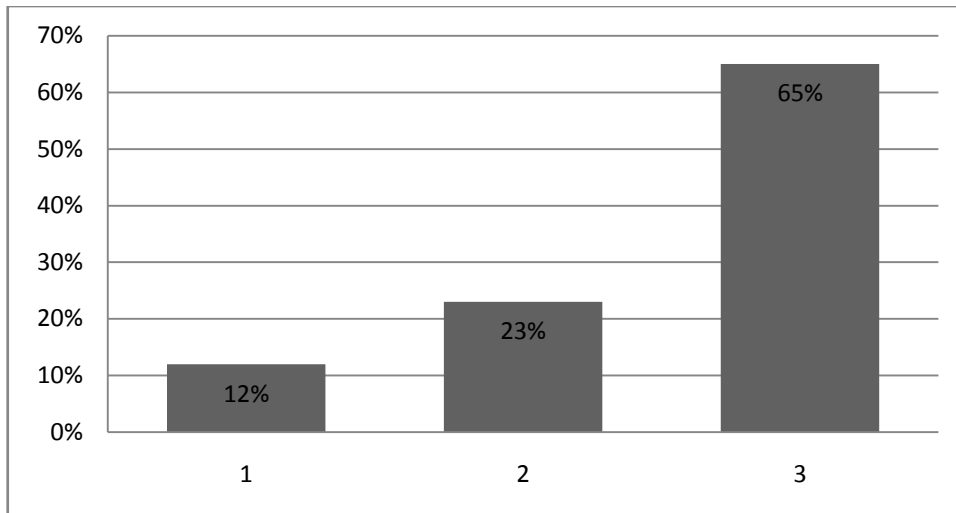
Bar-graph2.13: *Students' Ability to brainstorm Ideas Effectively.*

8(31%) participants answered that they usually brainstorm their ideas before writing, while for half of the sample(13 students that is to say (50%)) this is sometimes done.4(15%) students affirmed that they rarely brainstorm their thoughts and only 1(4%) informant claimed that he/she never apply this pre-writing strategy.

***Question 14:** *I use a draft before writing my final essay.*

Rate	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
Frequency	/	3	6	17
Percentages	/	12%	23%	65%

Table2.20: *Students' Use of Draft before Writing the Final Draft.*



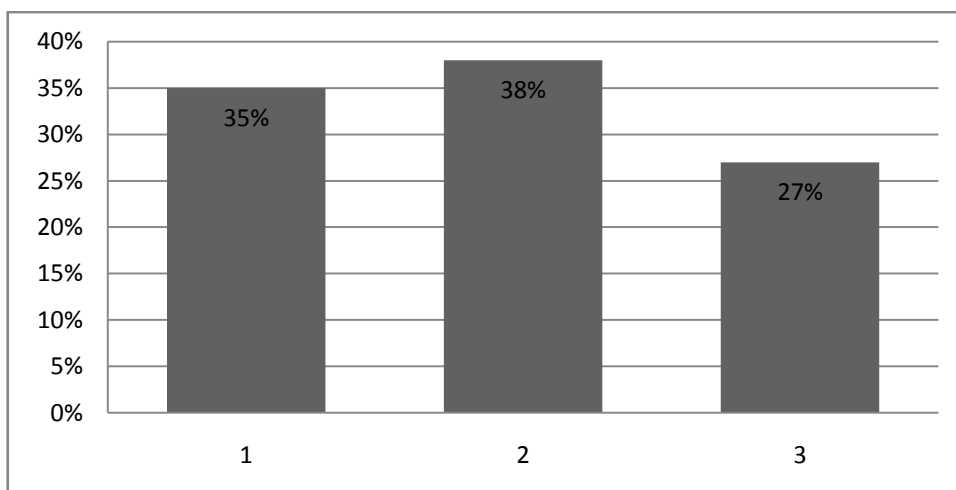
Bar-graph 2.14: Students' Use of Draft before Writing the Final Draft.

65% of the informants usually use draft before writing their final essays, 23% sometimes use a draft, while 12% claimed that they rarely do.

***Question 15:** *I can logically organize my ideas when writing a paragraph.*

Rate	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
Frequency	/	9	10	7
Percentages	/	35%	38%	27%

Table 2.21: Students' Ability to Organize Ideas Logically.



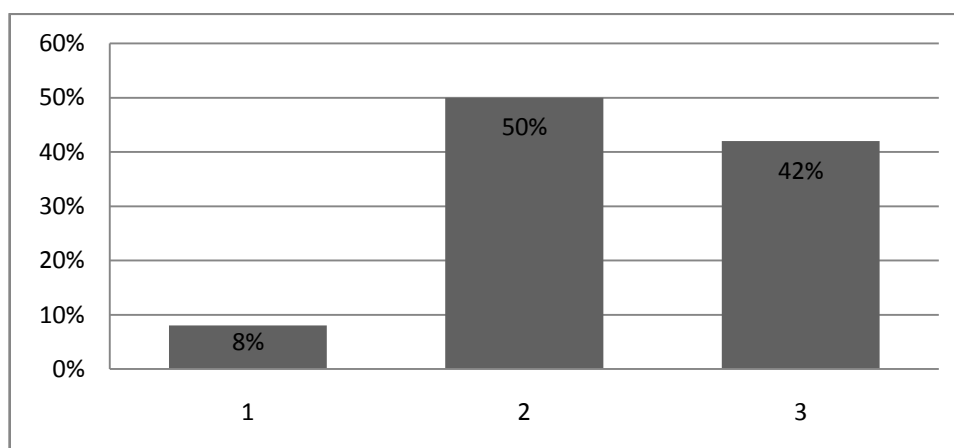
Bar-graph 2.15: Students' Ability to Organize Ideas Logically.

Regarding this question, 10(38%) students affirmed that they can sometimes succeed in writing coherently. Whereas, 9(35%) participants claimed that they can rarely organize their ideas in a logical order, while, only 7(27%) students said that they are able to write coherently.

***Question 16:** *I connect sentences to each in a paragraph.*

Rate	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
Frequency	/	2	13	11
Percentages	/	8%	50%	42%

Table 2.22: *Students' Connection of Sentences in a Paragraph.*



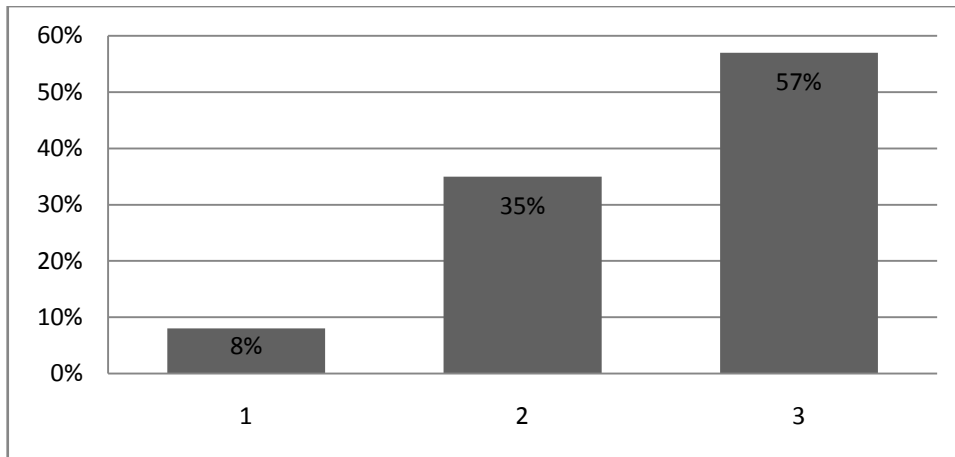
Bar-graph 2.16: *Students' Connection of Sentences in a Paragraph.*

Concerning connecting sentences to each other in a paragraph, 50% of the population revealed that they sometimes link sentences, 42% answered by usually, while; only 8% do not join sentences to each other at the paragraph level.

***Question 17:** *I revise my writing to improve the ideas and the organization of my essay.*

Rate	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
Frequency	/	2	9	15
Percentages	/	8%	35%	57%

Table 2. 23: *Students' Revision of the Final Product.*



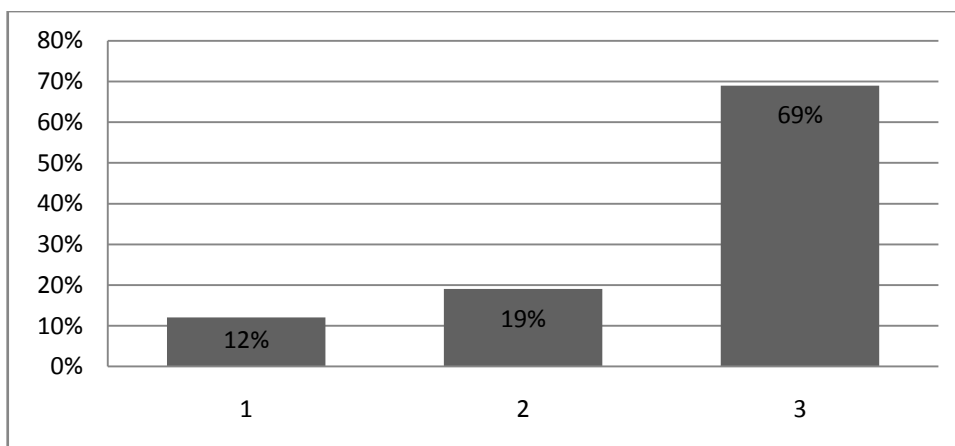
Bar-graph 2.17: Students' Revision of the Final Product.

Hence, 15(%) students answered that they usually revise their writings to improve their ideas and organization of their essays. However, 9(35%) participants claimed that they do not revise their works. Only 2 (8%) students affirmed that they rarely check up their essays.

***Question18:** *I reread my essay while and after writing.*

Rate	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
Frequency	/	3	5	18
Percentages	/	12%	19%	69%

Table2. 24: Rereading the Essay While and After Writing.



Bar-graph2.18: Rereading the Essay While and After Writing.

69% of the population informed that they usually reread their essays while and after writing. However, 19% revealed that they sometimes reread their products and only 12% of the participants who rarely do so.

2.5. Conclusion:

This chapter has exposed a description of the sample population composed of twenty six (26) students, and the research instrument used in the current investigation, which are: students' exam papers and students 'questionnaire. Also, it dealt with data analysis and interpretation.