

## **Exploring the Meta-Linguistic Problems that Encounter Freshmen in Sudanese Tertiary Level Institutions in Academic Writing**

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### **Abstract**

This study attempted to explore the problems of meta-linguistic awareness which encounter Sudanese freshmen in tertiary level in academic writing. The study adopts the descriptive methodology. The population of the study comprises all of the freshmen in English medium universities and other institutions. It also includes freshmen whose specialty is English language. The sample consists of (1) 50 students, and (2) 30 teachers. Data were collected by two tools; (1) An MCQ test for the students, and (2) A 5-point Likert Scale questionnaire for teachers. The test and the questionnaire cover five main areas of the aspects of meta-linguistic awareness. Data were analyzed statistically using SPSS programme. The One-Sample t-test of the students' test revealed that the performance of the students was far below the pass mark (5 marks). It also showed that the t-value was negative, which supports the result that the mean score is less than the t-value of 5. The weighted means of the teachers' responses revealed a unanimous agreement that the students are weak in the area of meta-linguistic. The study recommended that aspects of meta-linguistic awareness must be taught to freshmen through explicit instruction in order to enhance their awareness of this aspect.

**Keywords:** Meta-linguistic awareness , freshmen, academic writing, one-sample t-tests, weighted means.

## 1.1 Introduction

It has been observed that freshmen in Sudanese tertiary level institutions face many problems in academic writing. University teachers continuously voice concerns about the inability of freshmen to write their academic assignments and term papers.

This study tries to explore one aspect of academic writing that represent a real challenge to freshmen and prevents them from meeting the required standards set by academic institutions. This aspect is meta-linguistic awareness

## 1.2 Literature review

### 1.2.1 What is academic writing?

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

- (1) It must address a topic or title clearly.
- (2) It has some characteristics that must be present in the text such as:
  - accuracy,
  - organisation,
  - argument,
  - coherence,
  - cohesion,
  - appropriateness, and
  - referencing.

These characteristics enable the reader to understand the academic problem in a clear way.

Many researchers such as Anderson and Poole (2001), Jordan (1986, 1999) discuss those features in different ways. These characteristics are:

- **Organisation**

Organisation in academic writing stresses the importance of having a clear introduction, body and conclusion. In addition, the progression of ideas and paragraphing must be clear and supported with examples. There must also be a reasonable number of alternative points of view and it is crucial to achieve a sense of argumentation. Greetham (2001, p. 182-202) emphasizes the importance of the introduction, paragraphs and conclusion that must be clear and coherent. He believes that the introduction is a key part in which the writer must interpret the title or question and tell the readers the map that they are going to follow through the piece of

writing. He also emphasises that the body paragraphs must follow the map which the writer outlined in the introduction. He points out that the writer should have a topic sentence for each paragraph which gives the reader a brief description about what is going to follow. With respect to conclusions, Greetham (2001 p. 197) says: "The opinions you express in the conclusion must reflect the strength and balance of the arguments that have preceded them in the body of the essay."

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

- **Task achievement**

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

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

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

According to Tarnopolsky and Kozhushko (2007) academic writing is "the most creative type of writing that can be taught to students of English as a foreign or second language" (para. 4), and they have also account for it as

...a unique means for learners' consciously mastering the creative, productive, and expressive approach towards communicative performance in the target language (para. 5).

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

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

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

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

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

### **1.2.2 Meta-linguistic awareness**

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

In the present study, these features are

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

### **1.2.3 Previous studies**

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

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

The study conducted by Aunurrahman and Enim (2017) aimed to explore the students' academic writing competencies that focus on critical thinking. The study involved thirty-six first-year tertiary EFL students from a regular class of a private university in Pontianak, West

Kalimantan, Indonesia. The source for data collection was the students' texts. Three texts were selected and the students were categorized into low, medium, and high levels of writing achievement. The text analysis utilized functional grammar rooted in systemic functional linguistics. The analysis shows that the students, regardless of their levels of writing achievement, have little control over the schematic structure and linguistic features of an argumentative writing. The text analysis also shows that the students' texts have some limitations as regards their critical thinking capacity. Still, a few examples of academic language were detected in the texts. The findings suggest that the lecturer should incorporate explicit teaching and cooperative learning activities to alleviate the students' difficulties and develop their academic writing and critical thinking capacity.

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

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

The researcher employed three data collection instruments to collect the research data: The vocabulary and grammar sections of a TOEFL test to assess the homogeneity of the participants' lexical and grammar knowledge as two prerequisite requirements for writing, a writing pre-test to delineate whether the groups were homogeneous with regard to the

accuracy and organization of their writing and a parallel writing post-test to compare the three groups and delineate probable significant differences

The findings revealed that making teachers linguistically aware does have an impact on teachers' linguistic behavior. The instructed group was found more accurate in the use of plural –s but less accurate in the use of progressive –ing. No difference however was found in the use of articles. The control group in achieved lower levels of accuracy compared to the other experimental groups. What differentiated the groups was the type of grammar instruction they received. In the experimental groups, grammar instruction was more explicit, focused and intensive compared to the control group.

### **1.3 The present study**

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

The freshmen academic meta-linguistic awareness has to be raised in order for the students to be able to perform better in their academic writing.

The study tries to find an answer to the following question:

To what extent are freshmen college students in Sudanese English medium institutions at tertiary level aware of the metalinguistic aspects of academic writing?

It also tries to verify the following hypothesis>

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

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

#### **1.3.1 Methodology**

This study is descriptive. It tries to draw a clear picture of the problems that freshmen face in academic writing.

#### **1.3.2 Population and sample**

The population of the study is the entire body of freshmen in tertiary level institutions in the Sudan. It comprises freshmen in English medium universities and other similar institutions. It also includes students whose specialty is English language.

The sample consists of two groups:

- (1) 50 freshmen, and
- (2) 30 university teachers

### 1.3.3 Data collection tools

The study employed two tools for data collection:

- (1) An MCQ test for the students. It consists of 5 sections covering the areas mentioned above, and
- (2) A 5-point Likert Scale questionnaire for teachers. It also covers the same areas.

## 1.4 Analysis and discussion of data

### 1.4.1 The students' test

The students' test is checked under the statistical technique "one-sample t-test". Because the two samples are random samples and because they consist of 39 teachers and 50 students, there is no need for the test of normal distribution of data.

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

**Table 1: Students' Meta-linguistic test: One-Sample t-test**

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

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



**Table 2: Students' Meta-linguistic test: One-Sample test (2)  
One-Sample Test**

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

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

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

1. They have problems in understanding instruction words, This explains why the students are not able to properly answer the questions in their academic assignments.
2. They cannot distinguish between facts, opinions, and feelings. Accordingly, they cannot draw objective conclusions to support their thesis.
3. They are not able to talk about the different points of view. This can lead to confusion support their arguments and which ones cannot.
4. They are not able to organize their writing properly so that it is reader-friendly in such a way that facilitates the communication of the intended message.
5. They are not able to describe their research methodology. They cannot differentiate between the different research designs and consequently, they might go off the track and come to results that does not match the adopted methodology.

#### 1.4.2 The teachers' questionnaire

**Table 3: Meta-Linguistic awareness: Weighted means of the teachers' questionnaire**

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

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

### 1.4.3 Correlation between the students' performance and the teachers' views

**Table 4: Correlation between the students' performance and the teachers' views**

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

The table above shows that:

$$r = 0.030$$

This means that the correlation between the teachers' views and the students performance is not so strong.

### 1.5 Conclusion and recommendation

From the analysis and discussion above, it can be concluded that freshmen encounter many meta-linguistic problems in academic writing.

1. The students cannot properly understand the instruction words. Consequently, they might go astray and do not achieve the required tasks.
2. The students cannot differentiate between facts, opinions and feelings. Consequently, they come to conclusions which are not solid enough to support their arguments.
3. The students are not able to talk about different points of view. This will lead to confusion and will make them unable to classify the different points of view and decide which ones are in favour of their thesis and which are not.
4. The students are not able to organize their writing in the way that helps their audience to follow the threads of their arguments and to get the message they intended to communicate.
5. The students do not describe the research methodology they adopted accurately. This leads to mixing up of different research designs and methods. The result will be conclusions that do not match the design they claim to follow.

The study recommends that aspects of meta-linguistic awareness in academic writing must be taught through explicit instruction in order to enhance the awareness of the students in this respect.

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## **Appendix one: Students test**

### **Students' Test: Metalinguistic Awareness**

**Time: 2 hours**

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

#### **Section one: Understanding instructional words**

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

- (1) Your tutor asks you to write in detail about "*the case for and against using translation in teaching foreign languages*", showing the different ideas and opinions about that. Which rubric will s/he use?
  - (a) Explain the merits and demerits of using translation as a technique for teaching foreign languages.
  - (b) Discuss the different views about using translation as a technique for teaching foreign languages.
  - (c) Explore the potentialities of using translation as a technique for teaching foreign languages.
  
- (2) Your tutor asks you to think carefully about using songs in classes where some learners think that music is *haram* in order to make a decision about using them in your teaching. Which rubric will s/he use?
  - (a) Consider the feasibility of using songs in classes where some learners think it is not *halal* to listen to music.
  - (b) Describe the problem of using songs in classes where some learners think that religion does not allow listening to music.

- (c) Illustrate the problem of using songs in classes where some learners think that religion does not allow listening to music.
- (3) Your tutor asks you to make the meaning of the "*communication process*" clearer by using examples, diagrams, etc. Which rubric will s/he use?
- (a) Demonstrate how communication takes place between interlocutors (speakers and listeners).
  - (b) Investigate how communication takes place between interlocutors (speakers and listeners).
  - (c) Illustrate how communication takes place between interlocutors (speakers and listeners).
- (4) Your tutor asks you to show clearly the effect of using literature on improving cultural awareness ; giving proof or evidence of what you say. Which rubric will s/he use?
- (a) Demonstrate the impact of using literature on improving cultural awareness of learners.
  - (b) Discuss the impact of using literature on improving cultural awareness of the learners.
  - (c) Describe the impact of using literature on improving cultural awareness.
- (5) Your tutor asks you to study, very carefully, the role of motivation in learning languages. Which rubric will s/he use?
- (a) Explain the role of motivation in learning languages.
  - (b) Explore the role of motivation in language learning.
  - (c) Examine the role of motivation in language learning.
- (6) Your tutor asks you to give an explanation of changes that took place in teaching methods over the years. Which rubric will s/he use?
- (a) Account for the changes that took place in teaching methods over the years.
  - (b) Illustrate the changes that took place in teaching methods over the years.
  - (c) Describe the changes that took place in teaching methods over the years.
- (7) Your tutor asks you to write an essay about the stages of child development in a way that makes it easy to understand. Which rubric will s/he use?
- (a) Investigate the four main stages of child development.
  - (b) Explore the four main stages of child development.
  - (c) Explain the four main stages of child development.
- (8) Your tutor asks you to survey the different aspects of English as an international language completely and carefully in order to find out more about it. Which rubric will s/he use?
- (a) Explore the different aspects of English as an international language.
  - (b) Demonstrate the different aspects of English as an international language.
  - (c) Account for the different aspects of English as an international language.
- (9) Your tutor asks you to write an essay about the mechanism of speech sounds production to show what it is like. Which rubric will s/he use?
- (a) Describe the mechanism of speech sounds production.
  - (b) Demonstrate the mechanism of speech sound production.
  - (c) Investigate the mechanism of speech sound production.

- (10) Your tutor asks you to find out information and facts about difficulties which students face in oral communication. Which rubric will s/he use?
- (a) Illustrate the difficulties which students encounter in oral communication.
  - (b) Demonstrate the difficulties which students encounter in oral communication.
  - (c) Investigate the difficulties which students encounter in oral communication.

**Section two: Distinguishing between facts, opinions and feelings**

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

- (a) facts and opinions
- (b) opinions and attitudes
- (c) attitudes and facts

**Section three: Talking about points of view.**

(1) When a point of view is based on personal feelings and opinions (rather than facts), then it is subjective.

- (a) True
- (b) False
- (c) Not always

(2) When a point of view is not influenced by personal feelings or opinions (considering only facts), then it is objective.

- (a) Not always
- (b) True
- (b) False

(3) When a point of view is in favour of thorough and complete change, then it is radical.

- (a) True
- (b) Not always
- (c) False

(4) When a point of view is against great or sudden change, then it is conservative.

- (a) Not always
- (b) True
- (c) False

(5) When a point of view is based on reason (logic) rather than emotions, then it is rational.

- (a) True
- (b) False
- (c) Not always

(6) "In my own point of view; instead of strengthening the social relations between people, social media have, in fact, considerably weakened those relations - not only between friends and relatives, but even between the members of the same and one family." This point of view is:

- (a) subjective
- (b) objective
- (c) neutral

(7) "The new English language series is just a complete mess. It has all the weaknesses of the previous one and none of its strengths. Moreover, it has added its own serious defects. In brief, it is just a disaster." This point of view is:

- (a) subjective
- (b) objective
- (c) neutral

(8) "Although great efforts have been exerted in writing the new English language series, it still manifests some drawbacks in the scope and sequence of vocabulary and



structures in terms of selection, gradation and distribution over the units and lessons."  
This point of view is:

- (a) subjective                      (b) objective                      (c) neutral

(9) "The unprecedented widespread of IT and ITC has actually and factually necessitated complete and thorough changes in the content and methods of instruction." This point of view is:

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

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

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

#### **Section four: Organization of writing**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Section five: Describing research methods**

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

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

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

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

(3) If a researcher wants to find out the reasons of a problem or a phenomenon, then his/her research will have to be -----

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

(4) A researcher should carry out a ----- study before the main study to see if the methods used are reliable.

- (a) field                      (b) pilot                      (c) case

(5) Which of the following is a statistical technique?

- (a) T-test                      (b) questionnaire                      (c) observation

(6) Which of the following is a data collection tool?

- (a) test                      (b) chi-square                      (c) correlation

(7) Which of the following techniques is used for checking reliability?

- (a) Chi-square                      (b) mean                      (c) Cronbach's Alpha

(8) The ability of a data collection tool to collect only the relevant data is -----

- (a) reliability                      (b) validity                      (c) objectivity

(9) The restrictions imposed on the research by the context of the study is known as ---- of the study.

- (a) limitations                      (b) delimitations                      (c) significance

(10) The restrictions imposed on the research by the researcher himself/herself are known as ----- of the study.

- (a) objectives                      (b) limitations                      (c) delimitations

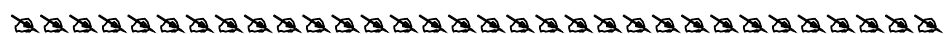


## Appendix two: Teachers questionnaire

### Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear colleague

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



*Please tick the box which expresses your opinion.*

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

***In academic writing, students face problems in the following aspects***

| No | Statement  | SA | A | N | DA | SDA |
|----|--|----|---|---|----|-----|
| 1  | Understanding instructional words (illustrate, investigate, account for, etc.) |    |   |   |    |     |
| 2  | Distinguishing between facts, opinions and feelings.                           |    |   |   |    |     |
| 3  | Talking about points of view.  |    |   |   |    |     |
| 4  | Organization of writing.   |    |   |   |    |     |
| 5  | Describing research methods  |    |   |   |    |     |

*Thank you very much.*