
The Effect of Using a New Inductive Technique on EFL College Students' Use of Punctuation Marks

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Abstract

When you speak to other people, you punctuate your speech in many ways. You may pause or change your facial expressions, your tone of voice, or the rhythm of your sentences. This helps listeners to understand you; they can ever ask you a question or get you to repeat something. When you are reading, these verbal and visual clues are not available. The punctuation marks used written English act in the same way as expressions do for speech. Punctuation marks are important because they help to make a sentence have a clearer meaning. It is difficult to understand a sentence without punctuation marks. Besides, a sentence without punctuation marks can also be easily misunderstood. The present study aims at experimentally investigating the effect of using new technique on college students achievement in the course of composition in using punctuation marks . It is hypothesized that there is no statistically difference between the achievement mean score of the students who practice the new technique and that of the students who do not practice this technique in the punctuation posttest. The population of the study is limited to second year students at the Department of English, College of Basic Education , Al-Mustansiryah University for the academic year 2012-2013. The sample consists of 50 students, each of the experimental and control groups consist of 25 students. An experiment lasted for ten days. The t-test for two independent samples was implemented here to compare the mean score of the experimental group and that of the control one in the posttest of achievement. The result shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups in the posttest, because the computed t-value is 1.698 which is less than the tabulated t-value which is 2.013 the degree of freedom of (48) at 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that the new inductive technique is

ineffective teaching punctuation marks. At the end, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further studies are put forward.

Chapter One

Introduction

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

Awad (2012: 213) Considers these two sentences:

Eat children. Eat, children.

Both sentences are commands, but the first sentence would be correct only in a society where people eat human flesh. So wrong use of punctuation marks is a distinctive indicator of un clarity in texts.

Punctuation is a device by which we aid words to tell their story. Words have done this at times without such aid, and may now do so, but at constant risk of serious misunderstanding.

1.1 Problem of the Study and its Significance

In academic life the writing skill has a special importance as it is an active skill in evaluating the actual language competence of language learners. Yet, the students who study at English Language Departments are not enough trained in composing activities during their high school education since they are accepted to the universities by taking a general test in which there are grammar, translation, reading comprehension and some organization questions in paragraph, but there are no such active skills as writing and speaking skills test questions.

Freshman students, in particular, struggle for composing for some time till they get enough instruction on the issue how to compose. However, the writing skill courses do not always cover punctuation and capitalization topics in detail ; they only raise students' awareness in linguistic skills as grammar and other organizational problems in composition. When it comes to mechanical issues in composing, there are lots of problems evident in

exam papers of students that may be stemming from neglecting them but emphasizing other areas of linguistic categories. In this context, students fall in short conveying their ideas in writings clearly. So, here, drawing their attention to punctuation and capitalization may be effective in getting rid of ambiguity in their written works (Elkilic et al, online: 279).

In this part, the researcher tried to show the great importance of the different punctuation marks which have been developed to help learners make up for the lack of voice intonation and body language in written communication. They themselves carry meaning and express relationships between ideas; thus, it is important to choose the punctuation mark that best expresses the relationship learners have in mind.

Punctuation is not used as a decoration in the written work, but it is so essential for the unity of the sentence and for clarifying the ideas given in the piece of written communication. Without punctuation, the written work look like a jumble mass of words without divisions to mark pauses and breaks in thought, which inevitably make the ideas irrelevant and hinder understanding the meaning of the written work (Surhan, 1987:1).

From the researcher's own experience, it is commonly known that, the learners of English commit many errors in their writing concerning their use of punctuation marks. This phenomenon has been noticed in almost all the courses when the learners study composition and other subjects.

All human languages are based on rules of grammar, punctuation, and spelling. In particular, each language has its own system of grammar, which governs the ways that words can be combined. Without agreed rules, people would be unable to express or share their thoughts. There are also rules governing punctuation, the marks, and symbols that clarify language in written form. Punctuation replaces the many pauses and changes of tone that people use to express themselves when language is spoken. Correct spelling is important because it avoids confusion over the meaning of written communication; spelling errors interrupt the flow of a message and make a poor impression on the reader (Ebest, 2003:126).

Good punctuation is crucial for successful academic writing. Many students' essays use little punctuation beyond commas and full stops. But to be restricted to just two forms of punctuation mark, when writing your essay, is like building a house using only a hammer and a saw: you can do it; but

not very well. By learning to use more, or all, of the available forms of punctuation you will be able to communicate and express your ideas, and arguments, more clearly (Adorno,2012:45).

The art of punctuation, as any other art, is acquired only by study and practice. There are certain well-defined rules observed by all; the mastery of these will make one capable of deciding where rules do not apply. (Lukeman, 2006).

Some studies have investigated the effect of using good punctuation. For example, Meyer (1985 as cited in Awad 2012:216) found that educators see punctuation accuracy as the difference between “good” writing and “bad” writing. He added that writing in an easy to read style, requires students to use various punctuation marks correctly to help the reader construct the intended meaning of each sentence appropriately and meaningfully

1.5 Value of the Study

The value of this study stems from the importance of punctuation marks in learning. The findings of this study will try to shed light on the correct use of punctuation marks in order to remove ambiguity for the reader. In addition, the findings may give teachers some useful insights to adopt suitable strategies and develop effective practices in order to solve the problems of punctuation marks and to increase the students' competence in writing correctly.

1.2 The Aim of the Study

The present study aim at experimentally investigating the effect of using a new inductive technique on EFL college students' use of punctuation marks .

1.3 Limitations of the Study

The present study is limited to second year students in the Department of English at the College of Basic Education / Al-Mustanisiryah University for the academic year 2012 – 2013 .

1.4 Hypothesis of the Study

It is hypothesized that there is no statistically difference between the achievement mean score of the students who practice the new technique and that of the students who do not practice this technique in the punctuation posttest.

1.6 Definitions of Basic Terms

1.6.1 Punctuation marks

Punctuation marks are symbols used to add clarity to writing. Without punctuation it would be difficult to determine the exact meaning of sentences (online , 2004).

Hamilton (2007 : 1) defines punctuation as “ a device by which we aid words to tell their story. Words have done this at times without such aid, and may now do so, but at constant risk of serious misunderstanding”.

Lauchman (2010:17) defines punctuation as a code, used in writing, that is often necessary for meaning and for emphasis. This code originated in attempts to capture, in text, the various stops, pauses, and inflections of speech. Today it is logical in application. Both writers and readers need to understand it and pay attention to it.

Chapter Two *Literature Review*

2.1 An Introductory Note

Sentences need to be properly punctuated if they are to be clear and readable. An unpunctuated sentence reads like a puzzle, which must be solved before its meaning can be grasped. This sentence, for example- 'if you can come before it gets too dark'- is confusing: it reads, in fact, like a sentence fragment. But the meaning becomes clear when a comma is placed after 'can'- 'if you can, come before it gets too dark' (Soles, 2005:109).

When we write, we have to use signs or symbols to make our meaning clear. These symbols are called punctuation marks. They have their own meanings, and these meanings "supplement the meanings of words" (Razzak & Al Hassan, 1981 :90).

2.2 The Importance of Punctuation Marks

Page and Norstrom (2010:166) view the importance of punctuation marks like traffic signals. They tell the reader when to stop, slow down, or proceed. Terminal (ending) punctuation marks appear at the end of a sentence and tell the reader to stop. Internal (within or inside) punctuation marks tell the reader when to pause and help the reader to interpret the sentence as the writer intended.

Clutterbuck (2011:107) resembles the importance of punctuation as " a stop sign signals to a motorist that she must stop and not proceed until everything is clear. A period tells us we must stop a moment so that sentences do not run into each other and become difficult to understand. A yield sign tells a motorist to pause to ensure the traffic has passed. A comma tells us to pause to ensure the sentences makes sense. If all motorists obey the traffic signs, then cars, trucks, and bikes will travel along streets safely. If we all obey the punctuation signals, then we will be able to convey our thoughts and ideas clearly".

Vickers (2013:4) holds that correct use of punctuation marks makes written material easier to read. This is true, both in the sense of easily recognizing the words being used and understanding which words relate to each other.

Punctuation is used to clarify the meaning of written or printed language. Well-planned word order requires a minimum of punctuation. The trend toward less punctuation calls for skillful phrasing to avoid ambiguity and to ensure exact interpretation. The adopted style, however, must be consistent and based on sentence structure(VeriSign: online).

Singh (2010:123-24) clarifies that the chief end of punctuation is to mark the grammatical connection and the dependence of the parts of a composition, but not the actual pauses made in speaking. Very often the points used to denote the delivery of a passage differ from those used when the passage is written. Nevertheless, several of the punctuation marks serve to bring out the rhetorical force of expression.

Poor punctuation give the reader a bad impression of the writer. It can bring into question how much the writer cares about the material being written. This can really work against you when it comes to school work, cv., and job applications (Ibid).

Ganeri (2012:6-9) clarifies punctuation is used to break up words and sentences. It makes writing clearer and easier to understand. In speech, people can change the way their words sounds to show what they mean. In writing, punctuation helps to do this job. Thousands of years ago, people did not leave gaps between words. Later, they started leaving spaces and using punctuation marks.

When you think of punctuation marks, you might think only of the marks used in sentences—for instance, commas, colons, and periods. But there are punctuation marks that are used in words as well. Proper placement of the punctuation marks that are used in words is essential. If you misplace an apostrophe or a hyphen, you may be drastically changing the meaning of the word (Junior Skill Builder,2009:115) .

Hamilton (2007: 6) indicates the two systems of punctuation in use, known respectively as the close and open systems. The close, or stiff, system, using points wherever they can be used, is of importance in precise composition of every sort, such as laws, contracts, legal and ecclesiastical statements, and the like. The open, or easy, system, omitting points wherever they can be omitted, is used generally in the commoner forms of composition. The tendency, sometimes pushed too far, is toward an extremely open style of punctuation. The general attitude of writers and

printers may be summed up by saying that you must justify the use of a punctuation mark, particularly a comma, rather than its omission.

2.3 Types of Punctuation Marks

Punctuation marks help to obviate ambiguity and confusion. To punctuate properly, you ought to be familiar with proper conventions of punctuation that are widely adopted by the writers of composition. In this study, the researcher will account for five types of punctuation marks:

- 1- End punctuation marks,
- 2- Non - end punctuation mark,
- 3- Enclosing punctuation marks ,
- 4- Punctuation marks used within the word ,
- 5- Capital letters.

2.3.1 End Punctuation Marks

End punctuation marks are those used at the end of sentences. Razzak& Al- Hassan (1981:92) state that when we come at the end of a sentence we must put a punctuation mark. The symbol we use will depend on the kind of sentence we have written. There are three symbols we can use to mark the end of the sentence.

- a- The full stop or period (.)
- b- The question mark (?)
- c-The exclamation mark (!)

A- Full stop or period (.)

Singh (2010:143) clarifies that the period is the simplest punctuation mark. It is simply used to mark the end of a complete sentence that is neither interrogative nor exclamatory. Primary Grammar and Word Study (2008:62) mentions that period usually show the end of the idea or thought in a sentence. They also indicate that a break is needed where reading.

Lukeman (2005:7) clarifies that the full stop is the red light of the punctuation world. By providing boundary, a full stop delineates a thought. Its presence divides and its absence connects. To employ it is to make a statement; to leave it out, equally so.

Partridge (2005:8) states that the stop that comes at the end of a sentence or of any other complete statement has been called point, elliptical for full (or perfect) point; full (or complete) pause; full stop; and period.

There are some uses of full stop.

1-At the end of statements and indirect questions in order to close them:

-The cat is sitting on the bed.

-He asked me what time it was.

2- At the end of commands and requests:

-Please show me your passport.

3- After most abbreviated words:

-Blackwell Ltd.

- Citrus fruits e.g. oranges

-The answer is on p. 64.

-Dr. Breslin ,Mr. and Mrs. Liu

-Ms. Barsky ,M. A. degree.

4- Use a period to mark the end of an elliptical (condensed) expression that represents a complete statement or command (Sabin,2001:4).

Yes. / No./ Of course. / Indeed / Done that. / been there.

B- Question Mark (?)

Razzak & Al- Hassan (1981:95) believe that the question mark has the same force as the full stop in marking the end of a sentence. It is used at the end of a direct question, as in,

-“What did you put in this stew?” Grandpa asked.

Ehrenhaft et al (2004:89) state that the question mark is unlikely to cause the trouble on English test. Problems mainly occur **a)** because of failure to distinguish between direct and indirect questions, or , **b)** because of mistaken combination of question marks with other punctuation marks.

Manser (2006:355) and Singh (2010:145) clarify that the question mark should not be used in the case of indirect question, as in:

-Please ask the bus driver if we can get off at Spruce Street.

-He asked me what my name was.

Sabin (2001:11) mentions that the question marks may be used to indicate doubt, as in:

-He was born in 1900(?) and died in 1980.

C- Exclamation Point(mark) (!)

Sabin (ibid:12) clarifies that the exclamation mark is an emotional mark of punctuation that is most often found in sales and advertising copy. Like the word *very*, it loses its force when overused, so avoid using it wherever possible.

The exclamation point shows that a word or statement expresses excitement or another strong feeling.

Look out for that car!

Primary Grammar and Word Study (2008:62) and Singh (2010:146) mention that the exclamation mark is used to express exasperation, astonishment or surprise or to emphasize a comment or short, sharp phrase. For example:

Help! Help!

The exclamation mark is used after exclamatory sentences to express “some kind of astonishment or a sharp outburst or comment”(Al-Nu’aimi and Al-Khayal,1990:14, as cited in Habeeb ,2009:4).

2.3.2 Non-End Punctuation Marks

Jamil (1989 as cited in Habeeb ibid:5) says that non- end punctuation marks are those marks which are used “to indicate the relationship and the relative importance of elements within the sentence “.

Non- end punctuation marks are used to show that the flow of thought is being interrupted. Soles (2005:110) classifies the non – end punctuation or punctuation within a sentence as four types. These are the comma, the semi – colon, the colon, and the dash.

A-The Comma (,)

The comma is by far the most difficult of all the punctuation marks to use correctly. Usage varies greatly from time to time and among equally good writers and printers at the same time. Certain general rules may be stated and should be learned. Many cases, however, will arise in which the rules will be differently interpreted and differently applied by different people (Hamilton ,2007 : 7).

Partridge (2005:13) and Judson (2010:138) state that in modern practice, the comma serves to separate not only clauses but phrases and

words; more precisely, certain kinds of clauses and certain kinds of phrase and certain groupings of words.

The comma indicates a short pause. It helps to clarify the meaning of written sentences. Thus, a comma should be used whenever a slight pause is to be made (Razzak & Al-Hassan,1981:98). The main uses of the comma can be summarized as follows (see Razzak & Al-Hassan,1981:98-100 ; Davidson, 1998: 24; Sabin,2001:13 ; Soles ,2005:110 ;Habeb, 2009:5) .

1- It is used to separate the items in an enumeration .

Baghdad, Mosul, Kirkuk, and Basra are the largest towns in Iraq.

2-It is used before tail questions.

-They played well, didn't they?

3-It is used to mark off a) nouns used in address, b) words or phrases in opposition, c) participial phrases .

-I think, sir, that you are wrong.

-Baghdad, the capital of Iraq, is a very interesting city.

-Having finished my business, I returned home.

4- It is used to mark off an adjective clause which merely comments but does not limit or define.

-The boys, who are fooling, were punished.

5- It is used after an introductory part of a sentence.

-However, the truth finally came out.

B- COLON(:)

The colon as a punctuation mark within the sentence is used to explain, interpret, or amplify what has preceded it. It is also used to introduce lists or series, and lengthy quotations. And thirdly, it is used to separate elements such as numerals in ratings and time references, and the subtitles from the titles of books (Davidson, 1998: 53).

The principle use of a colon -a mark of anticipation - is to introduce a list or a series. Linguists suggest that a colon will catapult the attention of the reader forward, to seek further clarification, amplification, or example in the immediately following words(see Razzak & Al-Hassan,1981:106 and Sabin,2001:44 :).

-Only three students came to the meeting: Wilbur, Fred, and Albert.

Colon can introduce a list, a quotation, an example, an emphatic assertion, and a subtitle (Silverman et al, 2002:37).

-First, you need the basic supplies: a tent, a sleeping bag, a cooking kit, and a backpack.

-The author begins with a shocker:” Mother spent her summer sitting naked on a rock.”

-Vegetarians often use legumes: for example, beans or lentils.

-This is the bottom line: I refuse to work for less than \$10.00 an hour.

-Rules of thumb: A Guide for Writers.

Writers may also use colons to introduce a single example:

-Walter had only one ambition: to pass English 1 A.

It is conventional to complete the first pattern with the phrase, “the following” or to remove the colon entirely and to indirectly quote following the relative pronoun that.

-The important trees in the area are the following: Redwood, Douglas fir, and cedar.

-The president said that: America is on the move.

Use a colon after a complete sentence to introduce related details. Before a colon, you must have a complete statement. Do not use a colon after *are* or *include* or *such as*(Ibid).

C- Semi-Colon (;)

When sentence patterns are joined by a sentence connector (however, therefore, consequently), writers usually use a semicolon between the patterns(see Razzak & Al-Hassan,1981:105; Sabin,2001:40 ; Silverman et al, 2002:36).The semicolon is used most of the time as follows:

-He wanted the sports car; however, he could not afford it.

-Every morning in Humboldt County is cool and moist; consequently, I keep a sweater in my car.

Singh (2010:163) refers to the use of a semicolon to join related independent clauses in compound sentences; you can use a semicolon to separate items in a series if the elements of the series already include commas.

-Members of the band include Harold Rostein, clarinetist; Tony Aluppo, tuba player; and Lee Jefferson, trumpeter.

Singh (2010:141) indicates another use of semicolon when linking two independent clauses with no connecting words, for example:

I am going home; I intend to stay there.

Such patterns could also be separated by a period, of course, for they are complete sentence patterns:

-He wanted the sports car. However, he could not afford it.

-Every morning in Humboldt County is cool and moist. Consequently, I keep a sweater in my car.

The difference here is one of emphasis. The period throws a little more weight on the second pattern.

Semicolons are also used to link short, closely related sentences not joined by a sentence connector.

-He was a conscientious teacher; the students respected him.

Both of these patterns could be punctuated as separate sentences, but they are connected by the semicolon because the writer wished to have them considered as one idea.

Unlike the colon, which indicates “Go on,” the semicolon says “Pause here.” (Other punctuation marks,2007:127).

Semicolons are used between two complete thoughts in two ways:

- To join two complete thoughts not connected by a joining word.
Barry cleans the house and cooks; Lana does the laundry and the grocery shopping.
- To join two complete statements with a transitional word.
I have never liked my father-in-law; furthermore, he knows it.

E- Dashes (-)

Manser (2006:347) clarifies that the dash is a versatile punctuation mark which is used both singly and doubly, sometimes as an alternative to other punctuation marks such as commas, hyphens, and parentheses. It often behaves as informal version of a colon. Overuse of dashes is to avoided in formal writing and there are no spaces on either side of the dash.

The dash-as a rule-is a mark of abrupt and emphatic interruption or separation between units in a sentence, as in the use of exclamation mark

-The new dean-and what a snob- strutted down the hall.

-Linda came late-but that is another story-while Cindy did not show up at all.

Singh (2010:149) mentions that dashes can be used to add parenthetical statements in much the same way as you would use brackets. In formal writing you should use the bracket rather than the dash as a dash is considered less formal in most cases. However, they should not be overused nor used to replace commas although they can be used to create emphasis in a sentence.

Hamilton (2007:20) shows the usefulness of dash as a punctuation mark which has been greatly overworked by careless writers. It is very easy to make in manuscript and serves as a convenient cover for the writer's ignorance of what point should properly be used. The conspicuousness of the dash makes it a very useful mark for guiding the eye of the reader to the unity of the sentence. It is particularly useful in legal pleadings where there is much repetition of statement and great elaboration of detail. In such cases commas, semicolons, and even parentheses are so multiplied that the relation of the clauses is lost sight of. The confusion thus arising may often be cleared up by intelligent use of the dash.

Dashes connect groups of words to other groups of words in order to emphasize a point or show that the information is unessential. Usually the dash separates words in the middle of a sentence from the rest of the sentence, or it leads to material at the end of the sentence (Basic Punctuation Rules,2013:3).

Dashes are useful and versatile punctuation marks, but they should be used with care and restraint. One popular structural use of dashes, which is always correct and which allows the writer to express much information in a dynamic, direct manner, is to summarize or list first and then to follow with the explanation by using the dash.

-John, Peter, Mary, and Ron - these are the officers.

-Psychology, political science, and history - these are the disciplines which prepare the mind for logical thought.

It is an informal punctuation device that marks a sudden break in thought, an interruption, or an abrupt change of tone:

-I suggest that you go tomorrow – no, wait a moment; you cannot because the pilots are on strike.

2.3.3 Inclosing Punctuation Marks

A- PARENTHESES ()

Hamilton (2007:23) states that the parenthesis, commonly used in pairs, encloses expressions which have no essential connection with the rest of the sentence, but are important to its full comprehension. It is liable to be neglected by writers because the dash is easier to make, and by printers because it is generally thought to mar the beauty of the line. Its distinct uses, however, should not be neglected.

Parentheses show that the information inside them is less important than the other material presented (Silverman et al, 2002:38). Soles (2005: 116) writes that parentheses enclose information of borderline importance to a sentence; in other words, information which a writer decides to include but does not consider vitally important.

-Professor Rodriguez (one of my favorite teachers) is going to retire this year.

-The assignments that follow (Exercises 1, 2, and 3) will help sharpen your Understanding of everyday defense mechanisms.

Singh (2010:152) mentions that the round brackets - () -, or 'parentheses' are used in a similar way to commas when we want to add further explanation, an afterthought, or comment that is to do with our main line of thought but distinct from it. Many grammarians feel that the parentheses can, in fact, be replaced by commas in nearly all cases.

According to Student Learning Center (2013:online) the parentheses or brackets are used to clarify, or to avoid confusion. In your academic writing such confusion should not arise, and so this use of brackets will not be necessary.

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

B- Quotation Marks (“ ”)

Hamilton (2007:31) indicates that quotation marks are signs used to indicate that the writer is giving exactly the words of another. A French printer named Morel used a comma in the outer margin to indicate a quoted

line about 1550. About a century later another Frenchman, Ménage, introduced a mark («») resembling a double parenthesis but shorter. These marks were cast on the middle of the type body so that they could be reversed for use at either the beginning or the end of a quotation. The French have retained these signs as their quotation marks ever since.

When the English adopted the use of quotation marks, they did not take over the French marks, but substituted two inverted commas at the beginning and two apostrophes at the end of the quoted paragraph. These marks are typographically unsatisfactory. They are weak and therefore hardly adequate to their purpose in aiding the understanding through the eye. Being cast on the upper part of the type body, they leave a blank space below and thus impair the beauty of the line and interfere with good spacing. Certain rules for the position of quotation marks when used with other marks are based upon these typographical considerations rather than upon logical considerations(ibid).

Singh (2010:153) asserts that the primary function of quotation marks is to set off and represent exact language (either spoken or written) that has come from somebody else. The quotation mark is also used to designate speech acts in fiction and sometimes poetry. Since you will most often use them when working with outside sources, successful use of quotation marks is a practical defense against accidental plagiarism and an excellent practice in academic honesty.

Quotation marks are also used to mark off words that must be set apart from the rest of the text, for example, words that are being discussed as words.

-Woods work terms, such as "crummy," "window marker," -"barber chair," and "kill gone" are part of the popular speech in McKinley Ville.

-Just the phrase, "cause to sue," is enough to get some lawyers chasing ambulances.

Keeley (2010:6-10) mentions that the quotation marks are like the character actors of print, playing a wide variety of roles. A very popular historical use of quotation mark is something somebody once said somewhere. e.g.

-"I have a dream " is something Martin Luther King Jr. said once .

Nickname, a person's or place's nickname or assumed name is often marks. Ex.

- *Just ask my friend " the droller".*

2.3.4 Punctuation Within a Word

Two punctuation marks can occur within a word. They are the apostrophe and the hyphen.

A- Apostrophe (')

According to Singh (2010:159) the apostrophe should come under the comma rather than under the quotation marks or double comma. The word is Greek and signifies a turning away from. The letter elided or turned away is generally an e. In poetry and familiar dialogue the apostrophe marks the elision of a syllable, as "I've for I have"; "Thou'rt for thou art"; "you'll for you will," etc. Sometimes it is necessary to abbreviate a word by leaving out several letters. In such case the apostrophe takes the place of the omitted letters as "cont' d for continued" (Ruth,2006:26).

The apostrophe is used to indicate three circumstances:

- 1) The possessive with nouns and indefinite pronouns,
- 2) Contractions or the omission of one or more letters in a word,
- 3) and the plurals of letters or numbers.

Junior Skill Builder (2009: 117) states that the apostrophe is most commonly misused punctuation marks, often showing up where it simply isn't needed. There are only two uses for apostrophes: to make a contraction and to show possession. Never use an apostrophe to form the plural of a word.

-*This is Dr. Peterson's problem (the problem of Dr. Peterson).*

-*Men's clothes are very conservative this year (the clothes of men).*

-*Everybody's business is nobody's business.*

-*Somebody's bathing suit floated downstream.*

-*The lawyers' fees were outrageous.*

(The fees of more than one lawyer).

-*Charles' coat OR Charles's coat.*

-*Mr. Dryfuss' scandal OR Mr. Dryfuss's scandal.*

-*Sam Clemens' book OR Sam Clemens's book.*

-An hour's ride... A two hours' ride...

Finally, it is important to note an exception to the apostrophe rule in possessives. The apostrophe is often omitted in proper names which have become established, especially in brand names, commercial names, and instructional or place names (Derespinis et al. 2011:41).

-Teachers College

-Pikes Peak

-Old Folks Rest Home

The apostrophe is generally used before an s to form the plurals of letters and numbers.

-There are three "e's" in "cemetery."

-He was told to dot his "i's" and to cross his "t's" in the early 1920's.

B- Hyphen

Junior Skill Builder (2009: 123) mentions that we can use hyphens in many ways: to divide a word at the end of a line, to join numbers and some compound words, and to attach prefixes to other words. Keep in mind that although most prefixes are joined directly to words without the need for hyphens, there are instances when you will need to use a hyphen to add a prefix. Joining two or more words, however, often calls for the use of a hyphen, especially if the phrase will act as an adjective. A hyphen serves to divide words at the end of a line, to combine words into compounds, and to communicate numbers.

A hyphen separates, in some cases, the prefix from the second part of the word.

- Use a hyphen between a prefix and an open-compound word as,
{ anti-gun control }
- In number words of the type "twenty-one", "thirty-two", "four hundred and forty-three"
- In time and size/quantity phrases, when used as adjective phrases:
My cat is two years old » I have a two-year-old cat.
Our house has four stories. » We live in a four-story house.
- Between an adverb and adjective before a noun when the adverb has the same form, as its adjective form and the phrase could otherwise be

ambiguous – is “a light blue bag” For the first, we could use “a light-blue bag”, for the second, “a light, blue bag”.

- Never use a hyphen when a compound modifier starts with an –ly adverb as, { happily married couple }

2.3.5 Capitalization

The capitalization task, also known as true casing (Waldohorn, 1981:32), consists of rewriting each word of an input text with its proper case information given its context. Silverman (2002:13) states that it is the first letter of every sentence and of names of people, locations, days of the week, and months.

Gray (1987:109) defines capitalization as the act or system of using capital letters in writing. All the important words in the titles of books, plays, etc. must begin with a capital. Articles (a, an, the), coordinating conjunctions, and short preposition are not capitalized, except, of course, when they form the first word of the title (Razzak & Al-Hassan,1981:118).

Sabin (2001:87) clarifies that the function of capitalization is to give distinction, importance, and emphasis to words. Thus, the first word of a sentence is capitalized to indicate distinctively and emphatically that a new sentence has begun.

-Iraq Iraqi - Spain Spanish - Shakespeare Shakespearian
-“Romeo and Juliet”
-Monday
-February

Silverman (2002:14) mentions that we cannot use the capital in the following cases;

- 1- Subjects in school whose names do not come from the names of countries as, history – marketing
- 2- Genres of literature and art as , novel – poetry .
- 3- Family names like mother, aunt , after a, the, my etc.
- 4- Seasons of the year as , spring , autumn .
- 5- Titles of people separated from their names as,
I went to the doctor.
- 6- Generic names as, facial tissues - pizza .

- 7- Private celebrations as , birthday – anniversary .
8- A type of place, event, and so forth as ,
a dark street - the eve of battle - high school
9- For emphasis, don't capitalize whole words (AMNESIA); do not
capitalize an entire essay or internet message.

Chapter Three **The Procedures of the Study**

3.1 Population and Sample:

The population of the study is limited to the second year students at the Department of English, College of Basic Education , Al-Mustansiryah University for the academic year 2012-2013. These students are divided into two sections, Section A is randomly selected to represent the experimental group, and section B is left to be the control group. The sample consists of 50 students representing 88% of the whole population, which is 60, after excluding all the repeaters and primary school English teachers from the study. Each group consists of 25 students.

3.2 Experimental Design of the Study:

The experimental design followed in this study is called posttest (see Table 1).

Table 1 The Experimental Design of the Study

Groups	Independent Variable	Posttest	Dependent Variable
Experimental	New Method	Achievement Test	Achievement
Control	Traditional Method	Achievement Test	Achievement

3.3 The Equivalence of the Sample:

To ensure the experimental validity of the experiment, the researcher has equalized the two groups (experimental and control) in some important variables which may influence the dependent variable (achievement) and

these variables are; the age of the students, and their achievement in two subject matters (literature and the history of England) of the first class. The researcher has chose these two subjects because both of them use punctuation marks in writing more than other subjects.

Table 2 The t-test Statistics for the Age Variable

Group	N	X	S ²	Df	t-value		Level of significance
					Computed	table	
Experimental	25	20.56	18.036	48	0.231	2.013	0.05
Control	25	20.84	18.819				

Table 3 The t-test statistics for the students' scores in the ' Literature ' and 'History of England' subject matter

Subject Matter	Group	N	X	S ²	Df	t-value		Level of Significance
						Computed	Table	
Literature	Experimental	25	63.04	337.458	48	1.413	2.013	0.05
	Control	25	55.88	305.134				
History of England	Experimental	25	65.12	756.886	48	0.655	2.013	0.05
	Control	25	60.88	292.043				

3.4 The Instrument (The Achievement Test):

The instrument of the study is an achievement posttest which has been constructed by the researcher to measure the second year students' achievement in using punctuation marks. The test includes comprehension passage and sentences without punctuation marks and the students are asked

to insert the correct punctuation marks was the tool used to collect the necessary data. The researcher used this comprehension passage as it requires from students to refer to almost all punctuation marks.

To ensure the validity and suitability of the test, it has been exposed to a jury of experts* in TEFL and linguistics. According to their notes, some items are modified and others are omitted until the test has gained their agreement.

❖ the jury members are:

1. Assistant Prof. Dr. A.J. Darwesh (College of Basic Education, Al-Mustansiriyah University).
2. Assistant Prof. Dr. Duha Attallah Hassan (College of Basic Education, Al-Mustansiriyah University).
3. Assistant Prof. Dr. Saad Salal (College of Basic Education, Al-Mustansiriyah University).
4. Instructor Dr. Ridha Ghanim (College of Basic Education, Al-Mustansiriyah University).
5. Instructor Afrah Munshed (College of Basic Education, Al-Mustansiriyah University).

Also, the researcher chose 20 students from the evening studies as a pilot sample and exposed them to the test to determine the required time to answer the questions, to identify the discrimination power and the difficulty level of the test items, and to find out the reliability of the test. It was found that the average time is approximately one hour and some items were discarded from the test because their difficulty levels were more than 0.80 and their discrimination power were less than 0.30; The researcher used the Pearson correlation coefficient between the researcher scoring and that of another rater in order to estimate the interrater reliability of the test and it is 0.74 which indicates that the test is reliable.

3.5 Instructional Period and Material:

The experiment lasted for ten days during the first course of the academic year 2012-2013, in which students of both groups were taught the same syllabus in composition. Both groups were taught by lecturing as a method of teaching, but the experimental group was taught by using a new inductive technique in teaching punctuation marks.

Both groups were taught composition three lectures per week, each lecture lasted for 50 minutes.

3.6 The New Inductive Technique

The procedure is adopted for the experimental group. It lasts for 10 days, each day differs from other days (Angelillo,2002:20).

Day 1: introduce punctuation by distributing books to partnerships of two or three students and asking them to read the books focusing on the punctuation. Then make a chart of the marks they notice, the examples from the books, and the students' thoughts on why and how the authors used each mark to convey meaning.

Day 2: Distribute books again. Ask students to read aloud to each other and to notice what the punctuation makes them do with their voices as they read. They may need to rehearse this several times, saying, "How does this sound?" Students may practice reading with punctuation. At the end of the lesson, the teacher adds another column to the chart: what students decided they did with their voices in response to each punctuation mark.

Day 3: Choose a page from a book that the students know well, such as a read aloud book or touchstone text from writing workshop. Put the page on an overhead transparency, and ask the students to notice what the writer did with the punctuation on this page. Let them talk with others and refer back to the book they studied and to the punctuation chart from the previous days. Ask them to jot down notes about punctuation from their reading in their reading notebooks or on stickiest.

Day 4: Begin a second chart (or add a column to the first chart) to which students contribute samples of what the authors of their independent reading books did with punctuation. Then during independent reading time, ask students to find more examples of uses of punctuation from their books and to write these on index cards or stickiest and add them to the chart.

Day 5: The purpose of this lesson is to refine and deepen students' understanding of punctuation. Ask students to look over both charts and choose one punctuation mark they want to study in depth. Then form study groups on these punctuation marks; students choose which group they want to join. Students work together in their groups, looking at books to

“research” ways writers have used each mark. They may look in books they have already read or in the class’s read aloud books.

Day 6: Today is the mid-point of the unit and a chance for a small celebration on what they have learned about punctuation in reading workshop. Therefore, the punctuation study groups will report on their findings in little seminars for each other. These reports should include what the punctuation mark was used for, as well as examples of each use from actual books. If there is time remaining, students should read independently, paying careful attention to how the punctuation helps the voices in their minds and possibly taking notes about punctuation to share at the end of the class.

Day 7: Today the punctuation focus flips from reading workshop to writing workshop. Just as writers use punctuation to convey meaning in books, students need to use punctuation to communicate to their readers. On the overhead projector, the teacher rereads some of her or his writing to add or change some of the punctuation based on what the class has learned about punctuation. The teacher may refer to the charts or to the books they have studied. Students reread their writing notebooks or drafts to find places where they can practice some of the punctuation they have studied. As they try out punctuation in their own writing, they write examples on stickiest and add these to the charts in another column.

Day 8: Today, by thinking aloud, the teacher show on an overhead transparency how he or she composes a short piece of writing using punctuation to communicate meaning. Then students practice this by writing entries in their notebooks, paying careful attention to using punctuation to convey meaning.

Day 9: The teacher shows that when he or she has a question about how or when to use punctuation, there are ways to get some answers: look at the writing of a writer you know and respect, look in a reference book in the classroom, or ask an expert.

Day 10: Students celebrate by sharing some writing in which they deliberately have used punctuation to express meaning. They also reflect on what they have learned and plan for independent work in punctuation.

3.7 The Administration of the Post Achievement Test and Scoring:

At the end of the teaching period, the students of both groups were administered the post achievement test and it lasted for about 45-55 minutes.

3.8. The Scoring Scheme:

The total score of the test is 100 scores distributed as (each punctuation marks have one degree). The test consist of (10) sentences and one passage.

Chapter Four

Results, Conclusions, Recommendations, and Suggestions

4-1 Results:

4.1.1 Comparison of the Experimental and Control Group in the Posttest

The t-test for two independent samples was implemented here to compare the mean score of the experimental group and that of the control one in the achievement posttest. The result shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups in the posttest, because the computed t-value is 1.698 which is less than the tabulated t-value which is 2.013 with 48 degrees of freedom 0.05 level of significance. (See Table 4). The students' scores on the posttest are shown in Appendix B.

Table 4 The t-test Statistics for the Students' Total Scores on the Posttest

Group	N	X	S ²	Df	t-value		Level of significance
					Computed	Table	
Experimental	25	76.28	443.237	48	1.698	2.013	0.05
Control	25	65.72	523.507				

4.1.2 Comparison of the two Groups in the Posttest at the type of Punctuation Marks

The t-test is also used for the comparison between the type of punctuation marks according to divided into five types :(Capitalization, Punctuation within a word, Inclosing punctuation marks, Non-end punctuation marks,

and End punctuation). The findings reveal that there are no statistically significant differences between the two groups in all types of punctuation marks except the inclosing punctuation marks, since there is a significant difference between the two groups. The computed t-value (**2.185**) is higher than the tabulated t-value which is 2.013 with the (48) degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance (See Table 5).

Table 5 The t-test Statistics for the Students' Scores on the Punctuation Types in the Posttest

Type	Group	N	X	S ²	Df	t-value		Level of significance
						Computed	Table	
Capitalization	Exp.	25	23.88	41.204	48	1.154	2.013	0.05
	Con.	25	21.76	43.169				
Punctuation within a word	Exp.	25	9.04	7.945	48	1.483	2.013	0.05
	Con.	25	7.68	13.086				
Inclosing punctuation marks	Exp.	25	7.24	15.124	48	2.185	2.013	0.05
	Con.	25	4.92	13.085				
Non-end punctuation marks	Exp.	25	19.56	32.115	48	1.593	2.013	0.05
	Con.	25	16.76	45.144				
End punctuation	Exp.	25	16.56	16.599	48	1.643	2.013	0.05
	Con.	25	14.6	18.965				

4.1.3 Interpretation of the Results:

The results show that according to the posttest scores there is no statistical significant difference between the two groups in using punctuation marks. In other words, the new inductive technique is unsuccessful technique in teaching punctuation marks in the Iraqi context and this may be due to the following:

- 1- The period of time for the experiment was short only ten days.

2-Students use different punctuation marks wrongly. Sometimes, they use certain marks unnecessarily; other times, they do not use a particular mark although it is indispensable.

4.2 Conclusion

As a result of the study it is clear that the new inductive technique adopted in this study is ineffective for Iraqi EFL college students. Moreover, students are prone to commit punctuation and capitalization errors which can be traced to the drawbacks of learners. Even though the number of such errors isn't so high and such errors can diminish as the level increases, for the immediate purposes such as passing the written exams during the study period one has to be proficient enough in using punctuation marks. Interference errors or errors of other types can be ignored if the students are learning English for the purposes other than teaching in the future, but if they are expected to teach in the target domain, they have to learn and use them properly.

4.3 Recommendations

Due to the importance of using correct punctuation marks as a distinctive indicator of clarity in texts, the researcher presents the following recommendations which may represent some guidelines for teachers of English to improve their writing.

- 1- The difference between direct and indirect speech, between common and proper noun, between statements, questions and exclamations, and the limits within sentences or clauses are by no means of "natural" distinctions for students.
- 2- Punctuation marks are best understood when presented in combination, so that students can establish similarities and differences between them.
- 3- The teaching of punctuation marks should involve writing complete, meaningful and organized texts.
- 4- Teacher should encourage students to use all types of punctuation marks.
- 5- It is important to raise students' awareness of the importance of applying these types and using them in their writing.

- 6- Exposing students to the basic systems of punctuation by including exercises in the textbooks along with continual practice in the end of each period by asking students to punctuate a short text.
- 7- Syllabus designers should consider the similarities and differences between Arabic punctuation system and its English counterpart, which can be used it in the subject of translation and writing composition. Exercises and activities should be included somewhere in each unit. Conducting other studies that show the best strategies to employ in teaching punctuation marks.

4.4 Suggestions For Further Studies

In the light of the results obtained, the following suggestions are put forward:

- 1- Conducting a study to investigate the effect of using a combination of inquiry and direct instruction on EFL students' use of punctuation marks.
- 2- Conducting a comparative study to examine the similarities and difference between Arabic and English punctuation systems.
- 3- Conducting a study to examine the effect of using other modern techniques on EFL learners' mastery of punctuation marks.

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Appendix A

Insert the period (.), the question mark (?), the exclamation point (!), the colon (:), semicolon (;), hyphen (-), a apostrophe (') dash (—), parentheses () , a comma(,) , a capitalization, and Quotation Marks (“ ” and ‘ ’), to each sentence or passage.

1. The hard- working clerks in the billing office use humorous messages to remind people to pay their bills. Their current favorite is this one: “Dear Customer, You have been on our books for a year. We have carried you longer than your mother did”.
2. I helped my brother clean the house otherwise, he never would have gotten it done in time. I swept under the radiators (a job he usually forgets) and dusted the furniture.
- 3- Raoul dressed carefully for his big date. He wore his gray suit, new shoes, and a handsome shirt and tie. Just before he went out the door, he glanced in the mirror to admire himself-- and noticed he had forgotten to shave.
- 4- During the tourist season (June through August) the population of the seaside town nearly doubles. Tourists come to enjoy cool sea breezes, fresh-caught seafood, and, best of all, splashing in the Atlantic.
5. “I’d like to kill whoever keeps taking my pencils!” Sandy screamed. “Don’t people realize I occasionally need to write something down?”
6. I watched my sister searching through the drawers. Finally I asked her what she was looking for. “Why do you have to know?” she asked angrily.
7. “If you ever take money out of my purse again, I’m throwing you out of this house!” Michiko screamed at her teenage son.
8. The novel *Beloved* by Toni Morrison (who also wrote *The Bluest Eye*) is a powerful story about the painful legacy of slavery.
9. “Hating People,” wrote Harry Emerson Fosdick, “is like burning down your own house to get rid of a rat”.
10. The supervisor wondered out loud, “Does Sam ever admit that he made a mistake?”

Everyone has a bad dream at times ; moreover, people often have the same nightmare repeatedly. My friend Carla (I've known her since kindergarten) frequently dreams she is falling off a cliff. "It's always a slow-motion fall," she says, adding, "I have lots of time to be terrified, but I never hit bottom." My roommate Cassie's nightmare is of a huge red boulder -- always exactly the same size and color -- rolling down a hill toward her. My father's dream has been the same for years: a black cat is sitting on his chest, suffocating him. In my most frequent nightmare, I'm trying to walk somewhere ; my shoes are terribly slippery. I can see my (destination often an exam room on campus), but I just can't get there. My sense of ever-increasing frustration stays with me long after I wake up. Psychologists say that nightmares -- especially the recurring kind -- tell us a great deal about our inner fears. My particular fear seems obvious: it's the fear that I'm incapable of reaching my goals.

Appendix B

Insert the period (.), the question mark (?), the exclamation point (!), the colon (:), semicolon (;), hyphen (-), a apostrophe (') dash (—), parentheses () , a comma(,) , a capitalization, and Quotation Marks (“ ” and ‘ ’), to each sentence and passage .

1. The hard working clerks in the billing office use humorous messages to remind people to pay their bills. their current favorite is this one dear customer you have been on our books for a year. We have carried you longer than your mother did.
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6. I watched my sister searching through the drawers. Finally i asked her what she was looking for. why do you have to know she asked angrily.
7. If you ever take money out of my purse again Im throwing you out of this house michiko screamed at her teenage son.
8. The novel beloved by toni morrison who also wrote The bluest eye is a powerful story about the painful legacy of slavery.
9. hating people wrote harry emerson Fosdick is like burning down your own house to get rid of a rat.
10. The supervisor wondered out loud, does Sam ever admit that he made a mistake

Everyone has a bad dream at times moreover people often have the same nightmare repeatedly. My friend carla Ive known her since kindergarten frequently dreams she is falling off a cliff. its always a slow motion fall she says adding i have lots of time to be terrified but i never hit bottom. My roommate cassies nightmare is of a huge red boulder always exactly the same size and color rolling down a hill toward her. My fathers dream has been the same for years a black cat is sitting on his chest suffocating him. In my most frequent nightmare im trying to walk somewhere my shoes are terribly slippery. I can see my destination often an exam room on campus but i just cant get there. My sense of ever increasing frustration stays with me long after i wake up. Psychologists say that nightmares especially the recurring kind tell us a great deal about our inner fears. my particular fear seems obvious it's the fear that im incapable of reaching my goals.

الخلاصة

عندما نتحدث إلى الآخرين، فأنتك تصيغ طريقة كلامك بعدة طرق. فربما تتوقف قليلا أو ربما تستخدم تعابير الوجه، نغمة الصوت، الإيقاع الكلامي في الجمل التي تنوي أن تنقل معناها إلى الآخرين. هذه التعابير أو الإيقاعات الصوتية يستخدمها المتحدث من أجل إيصال فحوى رسالته إلى المستقبل ببسر وسهولة، ومن خلال محادثته مع الآخرين من الطبيعي أن يسألك المستقبل بضعة أسئلة أو يطلب منك إعادة بعض ما قلته لتوضيح الالتباس. هذا عندما يكون ما تريد إن تنقله عن لسانك أو عن لسان المتحدث آخر، لكن هل هذا الحال ينطبق عندما تقرأ؟ أو عندما تريد أن تنقل رسالة للآخرين عن طريق الكتابة فكيف سيكون الوضع عندئذ؟ فعنما نكتب أو نقرأ فأنا من المؤكد سوف نرى علامات أو إشارات يستخدمها الكاتب ليستعيض عنها بتعابير أو الإيقاع الكلامي، هذه ما تسمى علامات التنقيط و التفريز التي تلعب دورا هاما في جعل معنى ما تقرأ أكثر وضوحا و اقل غموضا.

فمن الصعب جدا أن نفهم جملة بدون هذه العلامات ومن هنا يستطيع الباحث ان يشبه علامات التنقيط بالعلامات التي يستدل بها سائق السيارة الموجودة والمثبتة على جانب الطريقة علاوة على ذلك فأن علامات التنقيط هي خارطة الطريق للجمل التي تقرأها فبدونها يقع القارئ والكاتب في الالتباس.

هذه الدراسة تهدف إلى إن تبحث تجريبيا اثر استخدام طرق جديدة على تحصيل طلاب الكليات في كتابة الإنشاء واستخدام علامات التنقيط والتفريز عند ممارسة الكتابة. وفرضت الباحثة انه لا يوجد فرق دلالة بين المجموعتين.

عينة هذه الدراسة اقتصرت على طلاب المرحلة الثانية لقسم اللغة الانكليزية، كلية التربية الأساسية، الجامعة المستنصرية للعام الدراسي ٢٠١٢/٢٠١٣. عينة هذه الدراسة تحتوي ٥٠ طالب، وقسمت العينة إلى مجموعتين تضمنت الأولى ٢٥ طالب وهي العينة التجريبية والثانية ٢٥ طالب وهي العينة الضابطة. استخدمت الباحثة الاختبار التائي لمقارنة المتوسط الحسابي لكتلا المجموعتين (الضابطة والتجريبية) واستخدمت الباحثة تحصيل الاختبار ألبعدي. والنتائج المعروضة بينت انه ليس هناك فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين المجموعتين عند إجراء الاختبار ألبعدي لان

القيمة المحسوبة للاختبار هي (1.698) والتي هي اقل من القيمة الجدولية لقيمة تاء وقيمتها هي (2.013) بدرجة حرية (٤٨) على مستوى (0.05).
وعلى ضوء النتائج قدمت الباحثة جملة من التوصيات والمقترحات.