EFL STUDENTS' PROBLEMS AND ERRORS IN

WRITING GRADUATION PROJECTS

A Thesis

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وأنزل الله عليك الكتاب والحكمة وعلّمكَ ما لمْ تكنْ تعلمْ وكانَ فضل الله عليكَ عظيما *

صدق الله العظيم

سورة النساء " الآية113"

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Problem of the Study and its Significance

Every student at the college level is required to submit a formal paper as a prerequisite for graduation. According to CUFE (2009:Int) graduation project is the last step in preparing the student for professional practice after graduation and therefore it is considered an opportunity to apply and demonstrate the students' accumulation of knowledge, skills and experiences throughout their undergraduate education. All the students' education including lectures, tutorials, discussion groups, labs, seminars, field trips, and industrial training should be reflected in the graduation projects. It requires continuous work and commitment to achieve the required goals.

The graduation project is an important milestone to every student. When a student starts to work on his graduation project, he most likely feels that he has proceeded quite enough in his education to the level that permits him to demonstrate his intellectual, technical, theoretical, analytical, problem solving, communication, and teamwork skills to develop solution for real-life problems (Department of Information Technology and Computer engineering, 2003:13). The paper he submits will assure that he is able to apply, analyze, synthesize and evaluate information before graduating from college (NCDPI, 2006:30).

The goal of the graduation project is to challenge the student to go beyond those learnings that occur as the result of his prescribed educational program (Department of Information Technology and Computer Engineering, 2003:14). The student will derive a sense of completion of a piece of work that is a reflection of his interest and abilities.

Sardiko (2004:9) also regards the graduation project as an integral part of the study programme of any academic educational institution. Its aim is to develop students' abilities of scientific research and to foster their creativity and independent learning skills.

Moreover, research in academic institutions has become one of the important criteria by which programs, administrators, teachers and students are evaluated (Al-Samawi, 2000:1).

However, there is a need to evaluate the graduation project with the objective of improving it and increasing its effectiveness. University research evaluation wants to "measure" several dimensions of it, such as quality, efficiency, relevance and viability (Campbell, 2005:22).

The graduation project, which is the essential part of Methods of Research, is considered a basic element given to the students at the Departments of English at the Colleges of Basic Education. Students are trained in how to quote, how to document and, in general, how to write a research paper scientifically and accurately. However, students face difficulties and suffer from inaccuracies when writing their graduation projects; these inaccuracies are either

related to the procedures of the project or the topic selection. The problem of the present study stems from the fact that graduation projects prepared by the Iraqi EFL fourth year students at the Departments of English in the Colleges of Basic Education are not satisfactory. This is felt as a result of interviewing a number of college instructors at a number of Iraqi universities (namely, universities of Mustansiriya, Baghdad, and Misan). Those instructors hold the opinion that their students make many mistakes in writing their graduation projects.

It is hoped that the present study will be useful in helping to work out an accurate picture of research writing at college level. It tries to fill a gap in our knowledge since this is the first time, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, in which the topic is considered empirically.

1.2. Value of the Study :

It is hoped that the present study may be valuable for both instructors and students as follows:

1. The study may direct the instructors' focus on the problematic areas faced by Iraqi EFL when writing the graduation projects and this may lead to provide remedial which may lead to improvement in the level of students in research writing.

2. The study may be a guide that the students can be referred to especially the study derived and developed in familiar (identical) setting to that of the students.

3. The study may be a source of motivation for further studies especially those aspects of the graduation project that have not been covered in the present study.

1.3. Aims of the Study

The present study aims at :

1. identifying and classifying the problems faced by Iraqi EFL students in writing graduation projects , and

2. analyzing a sample of graduation projects in the light of the approved criteria.

1.4. Hypothesis of the Study

In order to fulfill the aims of the study, the following hypothesis is posed:

The graduation projects of Iraqi EFL students at the Colleges of Basic Education are not up to the standard.

1.5. Limits of the Study

The present study is limited to:

1. Fourth-year EFL students at the College of Basic Education ,University of Misan , and the College of Basic Education , University of Al – Mustansiriyah .

2. The academic year 2009-2010.

3. Investigation of the :

   a. Topic selection

   b. Research procedures

c. Layout

1.6. Definitions of Basic Terms

The basic terms used in this study are defined for the purpose of clarity as follows:

1.6.1. Error

Corder (1971:152) states that an error is 'the result of some failure of performance'.

Norrish (1983:7) defines 'an error' as a systematic deviation that happens when a learner has not learnt something and consistently 'get(s) it wrong'.

James (1998:1) also identifies a language error as an unsuccessful bit of language.

The Operational Definition is:

An error is any deviation that fourth-year EFL college students made in writing their research papers.

1.6.2. Problem

A problem is an obstacle which hinders the achievement of a particular goal, objective or purpose. It refers to a situation, condition, or issue that is yet unresolved (Wikipedia, 2006: Int).

According to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2010: 1202), it also refers to a thing that is difficult to deal with or to understand**.**

The Operational Definition is:

A problem in writing graduation projects is any obstacle or difficulty that fourth –year EFL college students faced in writing their research papers.

1.6.3. Graduation Project

The graduation project is a requirement in partial fulfilment of the requirement of a graduate course or for an academic degree (Best, 1981:32).

It is a key piece of individual work involving in –depth research about a topic with the product being a formal report (and in some instances a presentation). It often forms part of the assessment at later stages in a course, as it requires the use of higher – level cognitive skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Payne and Whittaker, 2006:352).

It is a country requirement for all graduating college students to demonstrate what they have learned. Each student must complete his or her own project (Kipphut et al., 2009:8).

The Operational Definition is:

The graduation project is the research paper that every student must submit at the end of the fourth year in the English Department, Colleges of Basic Education. It is a partial requirement of getting B.A. degree in methods of teaching.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

An Introductory Note

This chapter presents theoretical concepts and principles that form the theoretical basis of this study. These concepts include explanation of the term graduation project, importance of graduation project, steps of writing graduation project, parts of writing graduation project and style of writing graduation project.

Explanation of the Term Graduation Project

The graduation project is an important part of graduate education. Most students are surprised how much they learn in the process, both in understanding and organizing the material and in writing the project.

The graduation project is a formal assignment chosen by a student or small group of students on a topic related to the curriculum and involves out-of-class research and development (Council Rock School District, 2008:4).

The graduation project can be seen as a well-organized product that requires the student to plan, prepare, and research information relating to career exploration or community service (Penns Manor Area School District, 2008:7).

Research paper is the most important part in graduation project. Al- Samawi (2000:72) points out that "graduation

paper" is one of the synonyms of the "graduation project" besides "graduation research "and "research paper". Consequently, the terms "graduation projects", "research paper", "term paper" or "scientific paper" are used interchangeably throughout this study.

The term research paper, has been described by many authors, but perhaps the most succinct definition appears in Basic College Research written by P. Berge and C. Saffioti(1987:32): "A research paper is exactly that: a paper written to reflect a search that will present information to support a point of view on a particular topic".

Markman et al. (2001:25) show that the term 'research paper' refers to a particular genre of academic writing, in which the writer's own interpretation, evaluation, or argument on a specific issue is given prominence.

Nunan (2003:12) states that, "a research paper is an extended essay (it could be between ten and twenty-five pages, using three to ten outside sources) that summarizes information about a particular subject in order to prove a point".

Hubbuch (2005:3) believes that a research paper is a report that an individual presents to others about the conclusion s/he has reached after investigating a subject and critically assessing the evidence he or she has gathered.

According to the NCDPI (2006: Int), the research paper "requires students to develop and demonstrate proficiency in

conducting research and writing proficiently about a chosen in-depth topic. A graduation project steering committee at the school sets parameters to guide the length, format, sources, writing style and other characteristics related to acceptable topic selection, research practices, and writing styles."

A research paper can be seen as a scholarly document dealing with a specific topic of scientific or practical interest (Trost, 2007:1).

According to Gibaldy (2009:3), this term describes a presentation of student research that may be in a printed, an electronic or a multimedia format.

Importance of the Graduation Project

Graduation projects have two different purposes. One purpose is to demonstrate and examine a student's ability to deal with a scientific topic or problem. At the same time writing a paper is a powerful exercise in learning how to deal with a topic in a structured and constructive manner. Moreover, one learns how to handle a given question within a limited period.

The purpose of a paper itself is to provide the reader with a complete and current view on recent research and findings about a given topic. The reader of the paper should be provided with an overview about major aspects of this topic. As a rule of thumb, it can be assumed that the readers are professionals in

that area but without any clue about the specific topic (Trost, 2007:22).

Moreover, according to the Academic Standards and Assessment Pennsylvania School Code (1998:44), the graduation project will:

encourage creativity, resourcefulness, practicality, organization and in depth study of a specific topic;

engage students as self directed, active, independent learners and role models;

integrate various curricular areas of learning;

strengthen language and communication skills;

promote accountability and responsibility at acceptable levels of performance;

promote community involvement in student learning experiences; and

provide students with an opportunity to reflect on personal interests and abilities.

Day et al. (1999:3) state that research project:

teaches a student how scientists approach a problem and seek answers;

teaches lifelong learning skills, organization, and time management;

allows personal development as students become "experts" in their field of investigation; and

encourages students to pursue their natural curiosity and questions that they are interested in answering.

2.4 Steps of Writing Research Papers

2.4.1 Selecting a Topic

Choosing a research topic is the first and one of the most important stages of the research process as it will have a bearing on all the other stages of the research project.

However, novice researchers always experience great difficulty selecting a topic to investigate. Such a problem is mainly due to their limited or zero experience (Al- Samawi, 2000: 11).

The difficulty lies in selecting a topic that satisfies many different criteria. For example, the topic must be interesting and meaningful to the student and his/her advisor, and there must be adequate resources available to perform the work. The topic must be something that can be accomplished within the time constraints available to the student (Thomson, 2007:8).

Strategies for Selecting a Topic

To reduce the pressure that assignment brings, Perrin (1996:2) draws the following strategies that the researcher should consider in choosing a topic:

Learn more about a regular activity.

Explore possibilities in academic subjects.

Consider subjects introduced in your classes.

Think in term of people.

Consider problems.

Examine subjects that generate strong opinions.

Explore special interests.

Once a basic research idea has been chosen, the next step is to ensure that the topic has merit. This step can be accomplished by answering the following basic questions:

Can the selected topic be investigated? (doability)

Is the selected topic important enough to be investigated? (significance)

Is the selected topic big enough to be a research topic?(qualification)

Is the selected topic specific enough to be investigated thoroughly? (focus).

(Al- Samawi, 2000: 11-12)

Formulating Hypotheses

A hypothesis is a temporary imaginative solution to a problem. As Hatch and Farhady (1982:3) define it," it is a tentative statement about the outcome of the research". This statement is used as a framework to guide the researcher in his investigation. In general, hypotheses identify the primary relationships that the theory predicts, or expects given a given set of conditions outlined in the theory. It is imperative that any hypothesis that the researcher formulate contain reference to at least one concept that represents an independent, or predictor,

variable and reference to one concept that represents a dependent variable. Additionally, it is imperative that each hypothesis reflect conciseness and clarity (Enterline, 2007:23).

Koul (2009:197) states that hypotheses can take three kinds of statements:

The Declarative Hypotheses: these are statements that show a positive attitude towards the outcome of the study;

The Null Hypotheses: these are statements that show no relationship exist between variables; and

The Question Hypotheses: here, instead of stating what outcome is expected, a question is asked as what the outcome will be.

Travers (1978:69-72) has suggested seven criteria to which hypotheses should conform:

Hypotheses should be stated clearly and precisely;

Hypotheses should be testable;

Hypotheses should state the expected relationship between variables;

Hypotheses should be limited in scope;

Hypotheses should be consistent with most known facts;

Hypotheses should be stated as far as possible in simple terms; and

The hypotheses selected should be amenable to testing within a reasonable time.

Gathering Data

Gathering data is the activity of acquiring and compiling information from different sources (Goodwin et al., 2006:9).Gathering appropriate and relevant information is one of the most important research skills to develop. It is a critical factor in the success of the research.

The quality of the information available can vary from a uniformed opinion to thoroughly researched facts. When gathering material for a research; the researchers should aim to obtain the most relevant, accurate and reliable information as possible as they could, within the limits imposed by time, cost and their own research ability. Unreliable and inaccurate information leads to faulty judgment and decision (Payne and Whittaker, 2006:163).

Evaluating Sources

Payne and Whittaker (ibid: 188) list a number of criteria that the researcher should use in evaluating the sources that he is going to use in his research. The criteria are:

Objectivity: The researcher should be accurate and inclusive. he should deal with facts rather than interpretations of fact ;

Authority: the researcher must check credentials of the originator of the information;

Currency: the researcher has to check the date of the publication or compilation of the source. The information may be out of date and not reflect the current position;

Reliability and validity: the information should be supported by facts .Any data on which the information is based should have been collected using method(s) that provide reliable and valid results .The way in which the information was gathered – the research method and sample size used – might distort the results. In this case, the information should be treated with caution;

Suitability for purpose: the information may not meet the researcher's requirements exactly as it may have been collected with a different purpose or objective in mind. Different definitions, terminology or measurements may have been used. Thus, it is important to be aware of how the data the researcher chooses to use are defined or measured; and

User friendly: the researcher must be comfortable with the format of the materials he is intending to use. Is it easy to follow and interpret?

Note-taking

Notes can be defined as short condensations of a source material that are generated by writing them down while simultaneously listening, studying, or observing. Their function is to gather information distributed in a lecture, a book

or in any other situation that needs to be remembered. In other words, notes are external memories whose content is more or less explicit (Hartley, 2002:12).

Note takers must select the information to record and format it in ways that differ from the source material.

Classification of Notes

Reading –reference notes have been classified under principal categories.

Quotation: the exact words of an author are reproduced, enclosed in quotation marks.

Paraphrase: the researcher restates the author's thoughts in his/her own words.

Summary: the researcher states in condensed form the contents of the article.

Evaluation (commentary): the researcher records his/her own reaction, indicating agreement or disagreement, or interpreting the point of the writer.

(Best, 1981:43-44)

Writing an Outline

An outline is a useful intermediary document between research and writing. It helps gaining an overview of the paper and keeps track of all-important aspects of the subject (Gibaldi, 2009:45).

A formal outline classifies the issues of the study into clear, logical categories with main heads and one or more levels of subheads. Not all papers require the formal outline, and not all researchers need one. A short research paper can be created from code words or a list of issues (Lester, 1995:81).

Format of writing an outline

There are many forms in writing a standard outline. Below are the most frequently used forms:

The first one is by listing the major categories and subtopics:

I. ----------------------------- first major heading

  A. ------------------------ subheading of first degree

     1. -------------------- subheadings of second degree

    2. ---------------------

       a. ----------------- subheadings of third degree

      b.-----------------

         (1)------------ Subheadings of fourth degree

         (2)------------

           (a)--------- Subheadings of fifth degree

           (b)---------

  B. ------------------------- subheading of first degree

The second form, which is used mainly for papers in business and the sciences, is the decimal outline. In this form, numerical divisions divide material, as follows:

1. -------------------------------

1.1. ------------------------

    1.1.1. -----------------

    1.1.2. ----------------

    1.1.3. ----------------

1.2. ------------------------

    1.2.1.------------------

    1.2.2.------------------

2. ---------------------------------

(ibid:82)

Writing Drafts

From the outline, one can now write a first draft of the paper. It should be a relatively easy task if one has been organized and careful while gathering sources and taking notes. Kothari (2009:345) believes that the researcher now has to write down what he has done in the contest of his research study including all the gathering data procedures, the analysis techniques, the findings, generalizations and suggestions.

The successful research paper is usually the culmination of a series of drafts. The researcher should not be concerned if he found that writing the first draft is rushed and fairly rough (Gibaldi, 2009:46). The researcher should make a habit of writing at least two or three drafts, taking into account that rereading and rewriting are closely related and mutually reinforcing process. When rereading or rewriting a draft, the

researcher may discover a word, a phrase or idea that can be stated better; or he may come up with words and ideas he did not think of before (Ebest et al., 2003:11).

After leaving the paper for two or three days, the researcher can now reread it from a fresh viewpoint. Then he can revise and edit what he writes taking in consideration the following tasks:

Issues of content- titles, theses, organization, development, and balance,

Issues of style- tone, sentences, diction, and variety,

Issues of technical correctness- grammar, punctuation, mechanics, note style, citation style, and manuscript preparation,

Having several people , read and respond to the paper and finally,

 Proofreading the final printed copy (Perrin, 1996:148).

Avoiding Plagiarism

The term plagiarism is derived from the Latin word "plagiarius" (kidnapper). To plagiarize means "to commit literary theft "and to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source"(Merriam – Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 2003 :350).

 In modern times, the term refers to a form of cheating which has to do with the false assumption of authorship. To put it another way, plagiarism is the wrongful act of taking the

product of another person's mind and presenting it as one's own (Gibaldi, 2003: 26). The Modern Language Association (2009:52) defines plagiarism as "using another person's ideas, information or expressions without acknowledging that person's work ".

Tips on Avoiding Plagiarism

The rules of thumb given below are taken from Mecham (1992: 43) and Gibaldi (2003: 26-9).

It is a regular practice to use other persons' words and thoughts in your research paper, but do not present them as your own.

Always let your reader know when you move from your own words to those of your source by introducing a quotation or a paraphrased portion.

Every sentence with borrowed material (either ideas or words) must contain a signal to the reader: an author's name, quotation marks, page number, or pronoun reference. List the author in the References section.

Silverman et al. (2002:114) add the following advice to the abovementioned tips:

Write your first draft with your books closed. Do not write with a book or magazine open next to you. Do not go back and forth taking ideas from a source and writing your paper.

Do not let your sources take over the essay. Tell what you know well in your own style, stressing what you find most important.

Language and Style

The use of proper language is an essential element in writing scientific papers. Koul (2009:482) sees that the language of papers should be formal, straightforward, concise and brief. A scientist who uses complicated, metaphorical or ambiguous sentences may mislead the readers: accordingly, they will not properly understand his message. As Day (1983: 5) comments: In scientific writing, language need not be difficult; and the best English is that which gives the senses in the fewest short words. Literary tricks, metaphors and the like, divert attention from the message to the style. They should be used rarely, if at all, in scientific writing.

When a scientist starts writing, he has to think of how his ideas are organized into sections and paragraphs. At the same time, he has to choose appropriate words, phrases and grammatical structures. Using a series of long and complicated sentences throughout the whole paper will baffle the reader; on the other hand, using a stretch of short and simple sentences will be monotonous and boring to the reader. The research paper should have a creative, clear and concise style (Best & Kahn, 2008:66).With respect to this, Kirkman (1966: 151) states:

The best style for writing about a scientific subject is a direct, simple and unadorned choice of words and structures, designed to convey your meaning with economy and precision. Your purpose is usually to transmit ideas and information as

economically, unemotionally, and unambiguously as possible: accordingly, you should choose language which will be as economical, unemotional and explicit as possible.

The researcher should put in his consideration the organization and development of the ideas, the coherence of his presentation, grammar, dictation, and the mechanics of writing –capitalization, spelling, punctuation and so on(Gibaldi, 2009:49). O'Connor (1995, 97) states the following principles for solving problems of writing style:

Be simple and concise.

Make sure the meaning of every word.

Use verbs instead of abstract nouns.

Break up noun clusters and 'stacked modifiers' (that is, strings of adjectives and nouns, with no clue about which modifies which)

However, not all stylebooks present exactly the same rules. Hence, the researcher has to select a particular style to follow throughout his paper. In general, the following points may be taken in consideration in writing papers:

Slang, worn-out, or rude phrases and folksy style should be avoided ((Best & Kahn, 2008:66).

Only the last names of cited authorities are used without using titles such as professor, Dr., Mr. or Dean (Ibid).

Abbreviations may be used only after their referent has been spelled out, with the abbreviation following in parentheses (ibid).

Sexist language should be avoided. The researcher needs to be explicit in identifying the gender referred to (ibid). Gibaldi(2009:50) suggests that the researcher can solve such issue by using the plural form or eliminating the pronouns.

The past tense should be used in describing completed research procedures while the present tense is mainly used in presenting established knowledge and theoretical material (Ibid).

The personal pronouns –I, me, we, you, our, and us- should not be used (Van Dalen, 1962:352), though there are new trends to use them nowadays.

The language of scientific English usually does not use language style as follows:

Contractions: it didn't; they've; I won't.

Hesitation fillers: er, um, well, you know.

Verb phrases or prepositional verbs (Jordan, 1987:33).

In conclusion, to write a good scientific paper we should take into account some linguistic aspects such as tense choice, style, clarity and conciseness, sentence variety, word choice, etc.

Parts of research paper

Turabian (2007:377) divides most research papers into three major divisions: front matters, the text of the paper itself and back matter. Under each division, there are also many subdivisions accordingly. Swale (1993:76) sees that the general structure of a paper comprises three major sections: introduction, body, and discussion. The progression of the thematic scope of a paper within these sections typically follows a general pattern, namely the "Hourglass Model" (Figure.1).The introduction leads the reader from general motivations and a broad subject to a particular research question to be dealt with in the paper. The body of the paper stays within a tight thematic scope; and describes the research methods, and results in detail. Finally, the discussion section aims to draw general conclusions from the particular results. Both of these division systems share the same major parts. Therefore, the researcher will tackle the former one.
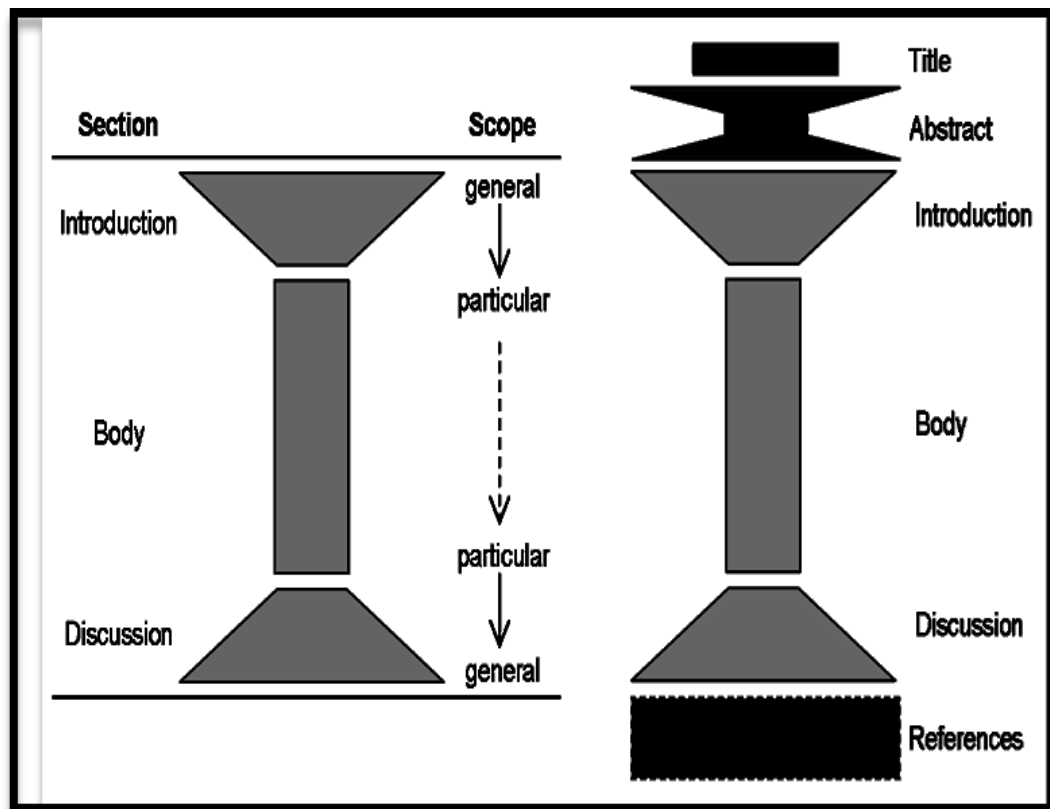
Figure (1) Hourglass Model (Swale, 1993:77)

2.5.1 Front Matter

The preliminary pages, which consist of the title page, acknowledgment page, table of contents, and abstract page constitute the front matter of most research papers. Longer research papers may include lists of tables and lists of diagrams. The numbers of the pages of the acknowledgements should be in roman numerals.

2.5.1.1 Title Page

The title page is the first page of the paper that contains the title which Day (1983:9) defines as the fewest possible words that adequately describe the contents of the paper.

A sufficient title for a study is one that represents a reasonable restriction and implies an objective approach (Koul, 2009:200).It should both announce the topic of the research and communicate its conceptual framework. So it must be build out of the key terms that the researcher earlier and underlined so when the readers see the keywords in a title turn up again in the introduction and then throughout the research they are more likely to feel that its parts hang together (Turabian , 2007 :108).

Therefore, a good title should give clear and concise description of the scope and nature of the paper itself.

2.5.1.1.1 Format of the Title Page

Van Dalen (1963:341) shows that only the initial letters of principal words are capitalized and if the title extends beyond one line, it is double-spaced and placed in an inverted pyramid style.

To create the title itself, Perrin (1996:145) gives the following strategies to be considered:

The researcher should use words or phrases that explicitly identify the topic. Search the draft for expressions that are clear and brief.

He should consider variations of well-known expressions.

In addition, he should match the tone of the title with the tone of the paper, using serious titles for serious papers, less formal titles for informal papers.

Finally, he may consider two-part titles, the first part imaginative, the second part descriptive. Separate the two parts with a colon.

2.5.1.2 Acknowledgments Page

The researcher records those people who materially contributed to the project in this section. It is required for good academic practice (Guidelines for Student Research Projects, 2009: 6).

An acknowledgements section is not usually required; however, most papers include a paragraph of acknowledgements and thanks for help received on the research or the paper (JYI, 2005:12).

The MHRA Style Book (1996: 66), on the other hand, proposes a different approach: A preface may usefully follow the list of contents. General assistance that you wish to recognize—from supervisor, librarians, friends, grant- giving bodies—should be acknowledged here. Acknowledgements of specific instances of assistance are frequently better placed in a note at the relevant point in the text; acknowledgement of permission to

reproduce illustrations, quotations, etc, should appear with the material concerned.

2.5.1.2.1 Format of the Acknowledges Page:

The first page should be labeled 'acknowledgements' at the top of the page. and the that title must not repeated if the acknowledgments are more than one page . Two blank lines should be left between the title and the first line of the text. Then the acknowledgments should be double –spaced and being format to match the main text (Turabian, 2007:389).

2.5.1.3 Table of Contents

A table of contents usually indicates that the writer has thought about the organization of the paper. It is often advantageous to the student in terms of grading (Hinckley, 2001:11), and to the reader in term of locating quickly each section of the paper (Koul, 2009:479).

The researcher should make sure that these terms exactly match the corresponding wording and numbering in the body of the paper. If, in the text, the researcher refers back or forward to other sections or chapters, s/he should make sure that the references are accurate (Turabian, 2007: 119).

2.5.1.3.1 Format of the Table of Contents

The researcher should number all pages of this item with roman numerals, and label the title contents (or table of contents) at the top of the page. If it is more than one page , the title should not be repeated . Leaving two blank lines between the title and the first item listed the researcher then should leave a blank line between items (ibid: 387).

The major divisions of the paper should be listed – the preliminary matter of the paper (minus the title page and the Table of Contents itself) ;the parts of the body of the paper that are marked by the headings ; the List of References , Literature Cited , or Notes and Bibliography , as appropriate ; and the Appendixes with the page number of each item (Baily et al. ,1981 :180).

2.5.1.4 Abstract Page

An abstract is a short summary of the main points of an academic text. It is written after the paper has been completed (McCormack & Slaght, 2006:31) .The purpose of an abstract is to summarize the whole paper .It must be written tightly because it provides considerable information in a short space (Riazi, 1999:2-3).

 Brown & Rodgers (2004:22) clarify that an abstract is the opening section of a research paper which includes the research question, the research method, and the result, whereas Zohrabi

and Farroki (2006:1) believes that an abstract should contain at least the following information:

A clear statement of the topic and purpose of the paper ,

A brief description of the participants and materials used in the paper ,

An explanation of the procedures followed and the statistical analyses used , and

A summary of the results and their implications in the field.

2.5.1.4.1 Format of the Abstract Page

According to Perrin (1996:237) an abstract can be seen in the page that follows the title page, it can be between 120-200 words. The descriptive title "Abstract" is centered underneath the header, two spaces below; the abstract should be typed as a single paragraph.

2.5.2 The Text

The text of the paper includes a number of suctions and subsections, according to the nature of the research itself. It may comprise introduction, literature review, methodology section, results section and finally the conclusion or the discussion section.

2.5.2.1 Introduction Section

An introduction is the section in which the researcher discusses the nature of research .It contains the background to the research topic, the purpose of the research, the significance of the problem, and the questions to be addressed (Zohrabi & Farrokhi, 2006:114).

McKay (2006:146) explains that the introduction is a critical component of the paper. It should show how the research project has addressed an important gap in the field, not only get the interest of the reader.

Wilkinson (1991, 96) clarifies that "the introduction is the part of the paper that provides readers with the background information for the research reported in the paper. Its purpose is to establish a framework for the research, so that readers can understand how it is related to other research ". The introduction creates an interest in the readers, states and analyzes the nature of the problem, relates the study and states its position in relation to relevant literature, and is a vehicle to reach out the audience (Van Dalen, 1962:345).

Even though the introduction is the first main section in a paper, many researchers write – or at least finish – it very late in the paper writing process, as at this point the paper structure is complete, the reporting has been done and conclusions have been drawn.

2.5.2.1.1 Importance of the Introduction

According to Hubbuch (2005, 138) in the introduction, the researcher accomplishes two things: the first is informing the reader about the theories that the paper is based on, the second is explaining to the reader where the paper fits in the general picture of the current theories and the work that has been done.

The introduction serves the overall purpose of putting the study in perspective and tells the reader which area of the field is involved and then narrows to the specific specialization and topic that is investigated. This goal is normally accomplished through a review of the relevant literature and a statement of the purpose of the study (Riazi ,1999 :134). Bailey et al. (1981:71) add that the introduction can serve as a motivator to gain the readers' interest but not in a way that will distract them from the thesis.

To sum up, the introduction should provide sufficient background information to understand why the research is being undertaken (Payne & Whittaker, 2006:358).

2.5.2.1.2 Techniques and Procedures in Writing the Introduction

In order to engage the audience's interest, Ebest et al. (2003:336) suggest the following procedures :

Definition: opening with a definition is effective if it gives the audience new information or new understanding.

Interesting characteristics: if the subject has some unusual characteristics, one of them can be used to open the paper and capture the audience's attention and interest.

Surprising statistics or facts: an interesting or startling statistics or facts can also be used in opening the paper.

Anecdote: a brief narrative of an amusing, peculiar, or interesting incident can provide a striking introduction.

Background: providing some background or historical material about the subject may arouse the audience's concern and interest.

2.5.2.2 Literature Review Section

The review of the literature provides the background and context for the research problem. It should establish the need for the research and indicate that the writer is knowledgeable about the area (Wiersma, 1995, 406).

A literature review addresses a specific topic by evaluating research that others have done on it. The researcher will weave his review article around a certain thesis or problem he wishes to address, evaluate the quality and the meaning of the studies done before, and arrives at a conclusion about the problem based on the studies evaluated (JYI, 2005: 39).

According to Mckay (2006:153), it is a selective account of previous work on a topic that in some way is relevant to the present study. In some instances, the researcher may want to

evaluate critically the studies he cited. Koul (2009:200) states that the researcher has to make it clear that his problem has roots in the existing literature, but it needs further research and exploration

Best and Kahn (2008:40) add that a literature review may be a complete inclusion of everything known on a given research topic or a short summary of the literature most pertinent to the specific topic under study.

The main purpose of the literature review is to map the work already done by others on the same topic. This is like a mini essay with an introduction to the main issue(s), a main body and a conclusion (Turner et al., 2009:20).

The researcher can organize this section by grouping sources into themes in order to outline trends in the field. Turner et al.(ibid:21) recommend summarizing others' work critically, showing how it relates to the research, and concluding with how this reading has informed it in terms of 'things the researcher will be building on, gaps he'll be filling, etc.'

2.5.2.3 Methodology Section

The Method section is very important because it tells the readers how the researchers plan to tackle their research problems. It will provide the work plan and describe the activities necessary for the completion of the project. Wiersma (1995:409) believes that the methods or procedures section is

really the heart of the research proposal. The activities should be described with as much detail as possible, and the continuity between them should be apparent.

Seliger and Shohamy (1989:252) classify the design or the methodology section shows:

A clear and precise elucidation of the research questions,

The different variables of the study and the specific methods which the researcher selected to investigate the research problem or topic ,

The design of the study (whether it is descriptive , experimental , or correlation for example),

The procedures of the data collection ,

A description of the sample and subjects of the study, and

The type and form of the data collected.

These materials can be arranged into more subsections as shown by: subjects, materials, procedures and analysis.

The subsection on subjects needs to identify the participants of the study, the number of persons included in the study, and the means by which the participants were selected. Some characteristics such as the age, sex, socioeconomic status of the subjects are also included (Best and Kahn, 2008:64).

The Materials subsection includes a description or copy of any research instruments the researcher used (Mckay, 2006:159).

The procedures subsection describes the actual steps carried out in conducting the study. This includes the measurement

devices, the experimental treatments, the assignment of subjects to conditions, the order of assessments, the time period, and any design features used to control potentially confounding variables (Best and Kahn, 2008:64).

Mckay (2006:159) also adds analysis as a fourth subsection that describes how the researcher went about analyzing the data. Here, the information should be given specifically and in detail so the researcher will demonstrate exactly what is planned.

2.5.2.4 Results Section

The results section is a straightforward description of the researcher statistical analysis and findings (Birjandi and Mosallanejad, 2005:238). According to Best and Kahn (2008:64), the results section may contain all the relevant findings even those that do not support the hypotheses of the study.

Moreover, the purpose of the result section is to summarize the grouped data and the result of the analyses. This technical summary is often done with tables and figures for the sake of economy (Riazi, 1999:240).

2.5.2.4.1 Methods of Presentation

After analyzing data ,Al-Samawi (2000:168) shows that results can be presented using one single method or a combination of the two methods presented below .The method that is used differs according to the type of data and the type of analysis :

Expressive presentation: this method adopts the form of describing information and a result in wording .It is used with all types of research particularly in literary oriented research (ibid).

Graphic presentation: this method has many forms .It is used with numerical and non- numerical data. When the researcher uses a combination of these forms , only one of them is essential while the rest are only supporting forms (ibid).There are various forms for this method such as; tables , line graph, bar graph or chart , maps, organization charts and the circle ,pie , or sector chart .The last types may be included under the title 'figures'.

(a)Tables: A table is a systematic method of presenting statistical and wording data in vertical columns and horizontal rows according to the classification of the subject (Best and Khan, 2008:70 and Al-Samawi, 2000:169).Good tables are relatively simple, including a limited number of ideas. However, it is advisable to use several tables rather than to include too many details in a single one (Best and Khan, 2009:70).

Format of Tables

A table is usually labeled "Table" and placed as close as possible to the part of text to which they relate given an Arabic numeral and titled .Both label and title should be typed flush left on separate lines above the table , and capitalize them as

titles . The source of the table and any notes should be given immediately below the table in a caption (Gibaldi,2009:118).

(b) Figures: A figure is a device that presents statistical data in graphic form. This term is applied to a wide variety of graphs, charts, maps, sketches, diagrams, and drawings. Figures are included to emphasize certain significant relationships (Best and Kahn, 2008:72).

Format of Figures

A figure should be labeled figure (usually abbreviated fig.), assigned an Arabic numeral, and given a caption (Gibaldi, 2009:118). Best and Kahn (2008:72) give the following characteristics of good tables that are equally appropriate when applied to figures:

The title should clearly describe the nature of the data presented.

Figures should be simple and understandable without the aid of textual description.

Numerical data that made the basis of the figure should be presented in the text or an accompanying table.

Figures should be used sparingly .Too many figures detract from the presentation.

Figures follow tables in the order of items in a manuscript.

Figures should follow, not precede, the related textual discussion.

A number, not "the figure above or the figure below", should refer to figures.

2.5.2.5 Conclusion and Discussion Section

The purpose of the conclusion section is to interpret the results, relating them to previous studies that the author and other authors have done (JYI, 2005:30). After that, the conclusions place the results in a broader and more general context and perspective, often generalization beyond the specific sample of the study (Zohraby and Farrokhi , 2006:30).

This section reminds the reader of the research, and provides a sense of finality. Reminding the reader of the research does not mean repeating the words that are used in the introduction, but just imply the thesis. The sense of finality can be best done by returning to the introduction motivator to close the loop (Baily et al., 1981:71).   In other words, the researcher will be telling the readers what he learned by doing his study. The conclusion itself can have a variety of moves, among them the following:

A summary of the major findings of the study.

A call for further research on questions raised by the study

A statement of the limitations of the study.

A repletion of the theme or issue raised in the introduction.

An explanation of the pedagogical implications of the study.

A statement of the overall significance of the topic addressed in the study.

The following guidelines suggested by Silverman et al. (2002:74) can be followed in writing a conclusion:

Return to your introduction: build on your introduction using some of the same language and say what your research has added to your initial thoughts.

Suggest a solution to a problem: come up with a solution you think might make a difference, and tell how your findings could affect the future.

Put your ideas in a wider perspective: what is the importance of what you have said? What is the larger meaning? Move from the specifics of your topic to the deeper concerns it suggests.

Raise further questions or implications: which issues now remain? Acknowledge the limitations of what you have covered. Reaffirm what you have established. Examine what it implies.

A conclusion should succinctly sum up the researcher's position. It should not merely consist of a summary of his paper; rather, it should state conclusions he has drawn, based on the arguments he has assembled in the main body of the paper and, if applicable, the results of his empirical study. The conclusion should not contain any new ideas not covered in the body (Trost, 2007:10).

2.5.3 Back Matter

This part consists in most students' research papers of the reference section and the Appendices.

2.5.3.1 Works Cited Page

The "Works Cited" page is a list of citations which is alphabetized based on author's last names. It includes only the evidence that the researcher quoted in the research (Krause, 2007:22).

Citing sources is important because the researcher acknowledge what they have read to protect themselves against charges of plagiarism. It is also vital for the researcher to:

prove that the research has a substantial, factual basis;

show the research he has done reaches his conclusions; and

allow readers to identify and retrieve the references for their own use.

(Ferris, 2000:22)

There are different kinds of source lists indicating the literary sources referred to in any paper, such as References, Works Cited, Literature Cited, Bibliography, and so on.

References

References consist of all documents, including journal articles, books, chapters, technical reports, computer programs and

unpublished works mentioned in the text (Best & Kahn, 2008: 65).

Gibaldi (1995: 106) points out that such a list simplifies documentation by allowing writers to make only brief references to these works in the running text. List of References appears at the end of the paper, and the entries are listed in alphabetical order by the surname of the author.

2. Other Source Lists

Below is a presentation of other source lists:

Bibliography

The word bibliography is derived from the Greek word for book, biblion (Hubbuch, 2005:57). A Bibliography is an alphabetical list of sources the researchers used in preparing their papers (Maxwell, 2003:20). It includes everything in the reference section in addition to the other useful works not cited in the text (Best & Kahn, 2008:65).

b. Annotated Bibliography (or Annotated List of Works Cited) contains descriptive or evaluative comments on the sources.

The heading Selected Bibliography (or Selected List of Works Consulted) is appropriate for lists suggesting readings in the field.

The title Works Consulted indicates that the list of entries is not confined to works cited in the paper.

Notes: Endnotes and Footnotes

Footnotes are the notes that are printed at the bottom of the page, while notes that are collected in a list at the end of the paper are called endnotes (Turabian, 2007:136).

In addition to documenting sources, notes may serve to present different types of information; for example, comments or longer references.

The Appendices

The appendices includes additional material used , such as samples of data collection procedures , tests , raw data , copies of permission to use the instruments , or anything which may be of significance to the reader but is too detailed to be included in the body of the research paper (Seliger & Shohamy ,1989:253).

Each appendix begins on a new page with the label "Appendix" and its identifying letter, centered. Following this label is the centered title of the appendix and then the materials (Best & Kahn, 2008:65). Koul (2009:502) adds that if there are different items or groups included in the appendix, they are grouped and labeled as Appendix A, Appendix B, etc., and listed in the table of contents.

According to the MHRA Style Book (1996: 67), appendices should contain the kind of supporting information "which would constitute too great an interruption of the main text and

which is too extensive to be included in the notes". Therefore, writers of theses are advised to introduce appendices for the material which is not directly relevant to the argumentation in the paper, such as:

• lists

• statistical data

• questionnaire forms

• copies of documents

• samples of texts under discussion

• transcribed material, etc.

2.5.3.1.1 Format of Works Cited Page

The researchers have to put this page at the end of the papers, beginning it on a new page and numbering each page, completing the numbering of the text .Then centering the title Works Cited an inch from the top of the page, there should be a double space between the title and the first entry. Each entry should begin flush with the left margin. The second line – if there any –should be indented one –half inch from the left margin (Gibaldi, 2009:130).

CHAPTER THREE

PROCEDURES

3.1 Introductory Note

The purpose of this chapter is to survey the procedures that are carried out to achieve the aims of this study as follows:

1. The population and the selection of the required sample,

2. The instrument of the study, i.e. the building up of the checklist and the questionnaire.

3. The validity and reliability of the checklist and the questionnaire.

4. The statistical means used for analyzing the collected data.

3.2 Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of all the fourth year students at the Department of English, at the colleges of Basic Education of Al-Mustansiriyah University and Misan University for the academic year 2009-2010. The total number of those students is one hundred and eight. Fifty- one students are assigned as the main sample and twenty-five students are assigned for the purpose of the pilot study. The second sample is the papers of those students; also, sixty-six papers are assigned as the main sample, and ten papers are chosen for the purpose of the pilot study.

Table 1

The sample and population for the questionnaire and the checklist

The questionnaire sample		
University	**Total**	**Sample**
Al- Mustinsiria	50	38
Misan	58	38
Total	108	76
The checklist sample		
University	**Total**	**Sample**
Al- Mustinsiria	50	30
Misan	58	46
Total	108	76

3.3. Instruments of the Study

In order to achieve the aims of this study, i.e. to point out the problems and errors made writing graduation projects, the researcher has constructed a questionnaire and a checklist.

3.3.1. The Questionnaire

If large –scale information is needed from a great many people; questionnaire is typically the most efficient way of gathering that information (Brown & Rodgers, 2004:22). Good and Hatt (1952: 33) state that in general the word 'questionnaire' refers to a device for securing answers to a series of questions by using a form which the respondent fills in himself . Barr et al. (1953:65) define questionnaire as a systematic compilation of questions that are administered to a sample of population from which information is desired.

3.3.1.1. The Construction

The questionnaire of this study is constructed to identify the problems that fourth year/ EFL students face in writing their graduation projects. It has been drawn from the following sources:

1. Related literature that includes books, periodicals, and newspapers,

2. Internet: The researcher has benefited from the questionnaires that have been prepared by foreign researchers, and

3. Interviews: the researcher has conducted many interviews with instructors in the field; namely, Asst. Prof. Safaa Isaa Hassan/University of Misan/ College of Education/, Asst. Prof. Abdul Kareem Alkam/University of Misan/College of Basic Education and Asst. Prof. Mohammad Kadhim Al-Jezani.

Firstly, the researcher conducted an open – form questionnaire that calls for a free response in the respondent's own words (see Appendix B). Then she constructed a restricted one based on these responses. The questionnaire consists of five areas. The first area is labeled as **"teaching research methodology"** and this area has four sub-areas. The second area deals with "topic selection". This area consists of seven sub-areas. The third area deals with "the supervisor" and consists of seven sub-areas. The fourth area deals with "library work and sources", which includes seventeen sub-areas.

3.3.1.2 The Validity:

Validity is the most important criterion to consider in selecting or constructing any research instrument capable of achieving the aims behind it. Validity refers to "how appropriate a judgment (or score) is of whatever it purports to measure (White and Gunstone, 1992:177). An instrument validity is a reflection of how well it measures what it is designed to measure (Mehrens and Lehman, 1991:50). Best (1981: 153) states that "validity is that quality of data -gathering instrument or procedure that enables it to determine what it was designed to determine".

Face validity refers to whether the instrument looks like measuring what is supposed to measure (Celce –Murcia and Macintosh, 1979:330). Ebel (1972:410) adds that face validity is used by asking experts to decide whether the statements represent the features we want to measure.

To ensure the face and content validity of the questionnaire, it has been exposed to a jury of experts in the field of TEFL and linguistics (see Appendix A) to ensure that each item of the questionnaire is related obviously to the topic under investigation. The jurors are also requested to include their remarks and suggestions about the suitability of the items of the questionnaire for achieving the objectives of this study. The items are discussed with them and their directions and modifications are considered before putting the questionnaire in its final form. All experts agreed upon the validity of the questionnaire and its suitability for the students. Hence, the constructed questionnaire is considered valid in its contents.

3.3.1.3. The Pilot Study

It is a common practice that data collection instruments should be tried out before they are finally administered (Klein, 1974: 129). Therefore the questionnaire has been administered to a sample of twenty-five students has been collected randomly from both colleges. The aim of this application is to:

1. estimate the appropriateness of the questionnaire to the students' ability,

2. identify ambiguous and unsuitable items,

3. Calculate the reliability of the questionnaire, and

4. Determine the average time required for the students to finish the questionnaire.

The pilot study was carried out on 15 May 2010. The findings of the pilot administration have indicated that the questionnaire items are appropriate to the respondents and the time which all the students take to answer it ranges from 20 to 25 minutes.

3.3.1.4. The Reliability:

Validity is essential but has to be coupled with reliability. The latter refers to "the consistency of the judgment that follows from the use of a test "(White and Gunstone, 1992: 182). A questionnaire is reliable when it yields the same results over a given time. Best (1981:199) adds that "a test is reliable to the extent that it may measure consistently, from one time to another". Gronlund (1965:79) states that reliability is an important characteristic of evaluating results. To ensure the reliability of the present questionnaire, Alpha Cronbach Formula has been used. This approach is based on the number of items, and variance of the questionnaire. The reliability calculated is 0.98, which is considered very high.

3.3.1.5. The Final Administration

After being certain that the questionnaire is valid and reliable, it has been administrated from the 10th to the 12th on May 2010 to the sample of 76 EFL students of fourth stage of English departments at the universities of Al-Mustinsiria and Misan. They are asked to

respond to the assumptions of the questionnaire by choosing one of the alternatives (always, often, sometimes, rarely, and never).

3.3.1.6. The Scoring Scheme

The questionnaire consists of forty-four items divided into five areas. The first area includes four items, the second area includes seven items, the third area includes seven items, the forth area includes nine items and the fifth area includes seventeen items. Each item in the questionnaire is given five alternatives (always, often, sometimes, rarely, and never). The alternative (always) is given four points, the alternative (often) is given three points, the alternative (sometimes) is given two points, the alternative (rarely) is given one point and the alternative never is given zero.

3.3.2. The Checklist

In order to analyze a sample of EFL students' papers, a checklist as regarded the most appropriate tool is constructed.

Gronlund (1965:325) states, "a checklist is basically a method of recording whether a characteristic is present or absent". Therefore, checklists provide a systematic procedure for obtaining and producing the judgment of observers, especially for those performance skills that can be divided into a series of clearly defined and specific actions.

It consists of a prepared list of items. The presence or absence of the item may be indicated by checking Yes or No, or the type or

number of items may be indicated by inserting the appropriate word or number (Best, 1981: 162).

3.3.2.1 The Construction

The checklist in this study is constructed to identify errors made by fourth-year EFL students in writing their graduation projects. In addition to the above-mentioned sources (see page 57), the checklist has been drawn from observing students' research papers. It consists of fifty-eight items divided into eight areas.

3.3.2.2 The Validity:

To ensure the face and content validity of the checklist, it has been exposed to a jury of experts in the field of TEFL and linguistics (see appendix B). They are asked to modify, change or add anything suitable to the checklist which serves the aims of the present investigation. Therefore, the percentage of the agreement and disagreement of the members of the jury about the checklist items is considered to achieve the face validity of the checklist items. According to their notes, some items are modified and the checklist is redistributed again until it gained their consensus. The whole number of the checklist items before the modifications is thirty-six items (see Appendix D). The final version of the employed checklist includes fifty-eight items, which are arranged into eight areas of (see Appendix E).

3.3.2.3 The Pilot Study

The checklist has been applied on a sample of ten papers collected randomly from both colleges and rechecked again after a period of three weeks.

3.3.2.3 The Reliability:

The best method of ensuring the reliability of a checklist is intra-rater reliability. A small sample of ten papers of the target community of informants was scored twice in the light of the checklist over a period of three weeks, yielding a reliability coefficient of 86%.

3.3.2.4 The Final Administration

After the checklist has gained the validity and reliability qualifications, it was applied to the selected sample that consists of sixty-six papers of the EFL students fourth stage of English departments at the universities of Al-Mustinsiria and Misan. The researcher herself checks the papers on July 2010.

3.3.2.5 The Scoring Scheme

The checklist consists of fifty-eight items divided into eight areas. Each area includes many items. The first area includes four items, the second area includes six items, the third area includes six items, the fourth area includes eight items, the fifth area includes ten items, the sixth area includes seven items, the seventh area includes eleven items and the eighth area includes six items. Each item is

given the options (satisfactory, fairly satisfactory, unsatisfactory). An item satisfactory rendered is given 2 points, fairly satisfactory is given 1 point and unsatisfactory is given zero. Concerning the items that are not found in the papers, they are considered wrong and given zero.

3.3.3 Statistical Means

The following statistical means have been used to manipulate

the data achieve the aims of the study

1. *Weighted Percentile*

It is used to show the extent to which the students have got less than a specific score. It can be calculated through the following formula:

$$P = 100\frac{F}{N}$$

(Birjandi and Mosallanejad, 2005: 134)

Where:

F= cumulative frequency

N= total number of scores

P= percentile rank

2. *Pearson Correlation Coefficient* :

It is used to compute the reliability of the checklist. The following formula is used.

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

<div align="right">(Kothari, 2009: 139)</div>

Where:

N= number of sample;

$\sum$= summation;

X= first variance; and

Y = second variance .

3. ***Weighted Mean***: (Fisher Formula).

It is used to calculate the weighted means of the items of the questionnaire and the checklist. The following formula is used:

$$\bar{x}_1 = \frac{\sum w_i \,{}^{\jmath}}{\sum w_i}$$

<div align="right">(ibid: 132)</div>

Where:

$\bar{x}_1$= weighted item

w= weight of ith item

$\sum$ Summation

x=Value of the ith item

4. ***Alpha Cronbach***: it has been used to find out the judgment reliability coefficient.

$$\alpha = \frac{n}{n-1}\left\{1 - \frac{\sum s^2 i}{s^2 x}\right\}$$

Where:

n = number of items of the questionnaire;

$\sum s^i$ =sum of the variance of the different parts of the questionnaire; and

s^2 = variance of the questionnaire scores.

5. ***The t-test*** for two independent samples

$$t = \frac{M_1 - M_2}{\sqrt{\frac{s_1^2 (N_{1-1}) + s_2^2 (N_{2-1})}{N1 + N2 - 2}} \times \frac{1}{n1} + \frac{1}{n2}}$$

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.1 Introductory Note

This chapter includes the tabulation and analysis of the collected data and discussion of the results obtained from applying the questionnaire .It contains a detailed description and display of the results related to each of the aims of the present study.

4.2 Aim 1: Identifying and classifying the problems faced by EFL students in writing graduation projects.

4.2.1. Research Methodology

From the inspection of table (6), it is indicated that this is a problematic area, since the average weighted mean is 1.94, which is less than the theoretical mean 2. The ranking order and the weighted mean of this area is arranged respectively in table (6) as follow : items 1, 2 and 3 take the weighted means 2.21, 2.14 , 2.08, which are higher than theoretical mean . These items are related to "There is no connection between the theoretical and practical aspects", "Not all teachers keep pace with the scientific and epistemic development in the academic research field", and "Research methodology is considered a minor subject and does not receive the adequate emphasis". Item 4 takes the lower weighted mean 1.33 this item deals with "Some teachers are not qualified to teach this subject".

Table (1)

The weighted means and the weighted percentile of the items related to the "Teaching Research Methodology"

N Item	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	Std. Deviation	Rank Order
1	2.21	%55	1.64	1
2	2.14	%53	1.30	2
3	2.08	%52	1.45	3
4	1.33	%33	1.40	4

4.2.2. Topic Selection

It is clear from table (6) that this area is less effective since the average weighted mean is 1.91, which is less high than theoretical mean 2. The ranking order and the weighted mean of this area are arranged in table (2) as follow: items 9 and 11 have the weighted means 2.58 and 2.22 respectively whereas items 5, 8, 6, 10 and 7 take the weighted means 1.89, 1.88, 1.86, 1.86and 1.11 respectively, which are less than theoretical means.

Table (2)

The weighted means and the weighted percentile of the items related to the" Topic Selection"

N Item	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	Std. Deviation	Rank Order
9	2.58	%65	1.45	1
11	2.22	%56	1.49	2
5	1.89	%47	1.59	3
8	1.88	%47	1.61	4
6	1.86	%46	1.72	5.5
10	1.86	%46	1.52	5.5
7	1.11	%28	1.51	7

4.2.3. The Supervisor

It is clear from Table (6) that the efficiency of the supervisor is acceptable since the average weighted mean is 1.76, which is lower than the theoretical mean 2. The ranking orders and the weighted means of this area are arranged in table (3) as follow: item 15 have the weighted mean 3.18 , which is higher than the theoretical mean

2. The items 18, 17, 16 and 12 have the weighted means, 1.99, 1.75, 1.58and 1.51 respectively which are less than the theoretical mean 2 whereas items   13, 14 have the weighted means 1.05 and 0.88. Those items are less efficient in this area.

Table (3)

The weighted means and the weighted percentile of the items related to "The Supervisor"

N Item	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	Std. Deviation	Rank Order
15	3.18	%80	1.21	1
18	1.99	%49	1.54	2
17	1.75	%44	1.53	3
16	1.58	%40	1.75	4
12	1.51	%38	1.75	5
13	1.05	%26	1.55	6
14	0.88	%22	1.43	7

4.2.4. Library Work and Sources

Table (6) shows that this area plays negative role in writing graduation projects. This fact is concluded from the average

weighted mean of this area (2.23) which is higher than the theoretical mean 2. However, the ranking order presented in table (4) shows that items 24, 19, 27, 26, and 22, have the weighted means 3.20, 3.08, 3.04, 2.16, and 2.12 which are above the theoretical mean 2. These items are related to: "I cannot find most of the main sources because they are borrowed (there are not enough copies)", " The lack of sources hinders us from writing our projects ", "I am obliged to look for sources in other places because of the scarcity of sources that are found in college library ", " I have a problem in choosing appropriate information from references", and "The time limit for borrowing books is not enough".

The other items, which occupy the order 25, 23, 20, and 21 whose weighted means 1.91,1.55 ,1.74 ,1.55 ,1.28 are less than the theoretical mean. These items are related to "I do not know how to access sources on the internet ", "Some books are torn and lack some chapters or pages ", "The librarians do not cooperate with us very much ", and " I do not know how to borrow books"

Table (4)

The weight means and the weighted percentile of items related to the "Library Work and Sources"

N Item	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	Std. Deviation	Rank Order

24	3.20	%80	1.05	1
19	3.08	%77	1.17	2
27	3.04	%76	1.31	3
26	2.16	%54	1.48	4
22	2.12	%53	1.58	5
25	1.91	%48	1.49	6
23	1.74	%44	1.47	7
20	1.55	%39	1.64	8
21	1.28	%32	1.57	9

4.2.5. Research Procedures

Table (6) indicates that the average weighted mean for this area is 2.72 which is higher than theoretical mean 2 this means this area is the highest efficient in general. The ranking order and the weighted means of the items of this area are arranged as follow: 34, 33, 42, 37, 36, 39, 44, 31, 32, 43, 35, 29, and 30 have the weighted mean respectively: 3.27, 3.20, 3.20, 3.18, 3.16, 3.13, 3.13, 3.08, 3.08, 3.08, 3.01, 2.09 and 2.04. These items have the weighted means that are higher than theoretical mean 2. These items are

related to: "I do not know how to document sources", "I have a problem in summarizing the topics"; "I do not know how to write bibliography ", "I do not know how to formulate the research problem ", "I find it difficult to write the introduction", "There is no seminar committee for research projects in the department" , " I do not know how to make my oral presentation " , "I have a problem in paraphrasing ", " I lack the experience and practical training" , " I find a difficulty in drawing the final conclusions of my project" , "I am not familiar enough with the research procedures and mechanisms", "I have a problem in collecting and organizing my thoughts when writing my project ", "I do not have sufficient time for writing the research ".

The rest of items numbers: 38, 41, 28, and 40 have the weighted means respectively: These items have the weighted means $1.99, 1.91, 1.86, 1.86$, which are less than theoretical mean 2 this means these items plays negative role in this area. Moreover, these items are related to: "I do not know how to make footnotes for my research ", "I have a problem in formulating sentences and paragraphs in English", "I do not know how to write the research plan" and " I have a problem in dealing with the computer and other modern appliances".

Table (5)

The weighted means and the weighted percentile of items related to the "Research Procedure"

N Item	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	Std. Deviation	Rank Order
34	3.27	%82	0.92	1
33	3.20	%80	0.96	2.5
42	3.20	%80	0.86	2.5
37	3.18	%79	1.15	4
36	3.16	%78	0.98	5
39	3.13	%78	1.04	6.5
44	3.13	%78	0.84	6.5
31	3.08	%77	1.25	9
32	3.08	%77	1.40	9
43	3.08	%77	0.87	9
35	3.01	%75	0.93	11
29	2.09	%52	1.38	12
30	2.04	%51	1.51	13

38	1.99	%49	1.59	14
41	1.91	%48	1.46	15
28	1.86	%47	1.49	16.5
40	1.86	%47	1.57	16.5

From Table (1) to Table (5), it could be concluded that these areas of this study turn out to be less efficient, in general. The average of this efficiency is 2.11, which is higher than the theoretical mean 2 as shown in Table (6). However, it seems that these areas play an efficient role in the areas of "research procedure" and "library work and sources". The ranking order of the questionnaire areas according to their average weighted means can be depicted in table (6) below:

Table (6)

The weighted means and weighted percentile of the questionnaire areas concerning problems faced by EFL students in writing graduation projects

N Subscale	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	Std. Deviation	Rank Order
5	2.72	%68	0.88	1

4	2.23	%56	0.56	2
1	1.94	%49	0.67	3
2	1.91	%48	0.61	4
3	1.76	%44	0.55	5
Average	2.11			

4.3. Aim 2: Analyzing a sample of graduation projects in the light of the approved criteria.

4.3.1. Title Page:

The examination of table (15) indicates that the average weighted mean of this area is 1.03, which is above of the theoretical mean 1. The ranking order and the weighted means of the items of this area are arranged in table (7) as follow:1.23 , 1.20 which are higher than the theoretical mean 1. These items are related to; "The title reflects the contents of the paper" and "The title page contains the graduation project title, the   student's name , the advisor's name, the department, the university and the date (written as the month, year) on separate lines, double spaced, beginning one inch from the top of the first page". The other items, which occupy the weighted means:0.85 and 0.83 which are less than the theoretical mean. These items are related to: "Nouns serve as the key words in the title" and   "The title is brief, specific and informative".

Table (7)

The weighted means and the weighted percentile of items related to the "Title Page"

N Item	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	Std. Deviation	Rank Order
3	1.23	%62	0.55	1

1	1.20	%60	0.47	2
4	0.85	%43	0.75	3
2	0.83	%42	0.65	4

4.3.2. Introduction

It is clear from Table (15) that writing introduction is not satisfactory since its average weighted mean is 0.63, which is less than the theoretical mean 1. Moreover, the ranking order and the weighted means of the items of this area are arranged as follow:7, 5,6 , 10, 8, 9 , take the weighted means $0.98, 0.89, 0.73, 0.64, 0.55, 0.00,$ which are less the theoretical mean. These items are related to: "The introduction describes any necessary background information about the setting for the study", "The introduction clarifies the importance (significance) of the study", "The introduction clearly presents the nature and scope of the problem to be investigated", "Keywords should be defined clearly" , "The aims of the study are clearly mentioned", and "The hypotheses (if found) should be clearly written".

Table (8)

The weighted means and the weighted percentile of items related to the "Introduction"

N Item	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	Std. Deviation	Rank Order
7	0.98	%49	0.69	1
5	0.89	%45	0.73	2
6	0.73	%37	0.83	3
10	0.64	%32	0.78	4
8	0.55	%28	0.73	5
9	0.00	%0	0.00	6

4.3.3. The Content

This division contains the "Content" area, which consists of six items. The results of this area are manifested in Table (9) which is descendly ordered according to their weighted means: 13,14 these items take the weighted means 1.02, 1.02 which are higher than the theoretical mean 1. These items are related to " the content of the paper adequately covers its topic" and " all the paragraphs or sections in the paper are relevant"

The other items take the order: 12, 15, 11 and 16. These items take the weighted means 0.94, 0.94, 0.83, 0.83. These items are related to "The sections, as well as the paragraphs, have unity

because they explore one topic in depth", "The ideas are clearly expressed", "The topic is of an appropriate scope (neither too broad, nor too narrow)" and "Each paragraph expresses a separate idea".

Table (9)

The weighted means and the weighted percentile of items related to the "Content"

N Item	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	Std. Deviation	Rank Order
13	1.02	%51	0.45	1.5
14	1.02	%51	0.57	1.5
12	0.94	%47	0.46	3.5
15	0.94	%47	0.52	3.5
11	0.83	%42	0.67	5.5
16	0.83	%42	0.67	5.5

4.3.4. Grammar

This side concerns the grammatical area, which contains the following items that are arranged descendly according to their

weighted means in Table (10): $20, 19, 18, 17, 22,$ and 24. These items

take the weighted means:1.26 , 1.17, 1.15, 1.11, 1.03and 1.03, which

are above than the theoretical mean 1. These items are related to :

"All pronouns agree with their antecedents" , "All the verbs agree with their subjects", "Conjunctions are correctly chosen", "Definite and indefinite articles are correctly used", "The present tense is mainly used in presenting established knowledge and theoretical material", "There are no shifts in verb tense or person unless necessary". Only the items 23 and 21 are below the theoretical

mean 0.79, and 0.61.these items are related to : "The paper does

not contain references to I, me or you unless these words are in a quotation" and "The past tense or present perfect tense is used when describing other people's findings or the researcher's own methods and results".

Table (10)

The ranking order and the weighted means of items related to the "grammar"

N Item	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	Std. Deviation	Rank Order
20	1.26	%63	0.51	1

19	1.17	%59	0.54	2
18	1.15	%58	0.53	3
17	1.11	%56	0.59	4
22	1.03	%52	0.53	5.5
24	1.03	%52	0.55	5.5
23	0.79	%40	0.75	7
21	0.61	%31	0.72	8

4.3.5. Spelling

It is clear from Table (15) that the overall performance of the EFL students in this area is acceptable since the average weighted mean is 0.94, which is rather less than the theoretical mean 1. Items number 27, 25, 29, 31, 26 and 30 have the weighted means: 1.23, 1.17, 1.12, 1.12, 1.06 and 1.03. These items are related to; "All the proper names are spelled correctly", "The plural is written correctly", "The possessive is written correctly", "Breaks within words or over spaces and punctuation are written correctly", " Words that sound alike are used correctly", and "Compound words are written correctly (whether they should be hyphenated, left

open; with a space between elements, or closed; spelled as one word)".

Whereas the items number 34, 33, 32, 28, take the weighted means:0.98 , 0.71, 0.52, 0.45 which are below the theoretical mean. These items related to "All abbreviations are spelled out in full the first time they are used", "Numbers less than or equal 10 are written as words", "All numbers at the beginning of a sentence are written as words" and "Contractions such as 'don't' and 'it's' are avoided".

Table (11)

The weighted means and the weighted percentile of items related to the "Spelling"

N Item	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	Std. Deviation	Rank Order
27	1.23	%62	0.46	1
25	1.17	%59	0.48	2

29	1.12	%56	0.54	3.5
31	1.12	%56	0.50	3.5
26	1.06	%53	0.52	5
30	1.03	%52	0.49	6
34	0.98	%49	0.57	7
33	0.71	%36	0.76	8
32	0.52	%26	0.61	9
28	0.45	%23	0.66	10

4.3.6. Punctuation

From Table (15) the average weighted mean is 0.80, which is rather less than the theoretical mean 1. Item number 35 has the weighted mean 1.06, which is higher than the weighted mean. This item related to "Capitalization is used correctly". Items number 41, 38, 40, 39, 36 and 37 take the weighted means 0.95, 0.93, 0.80, 0.77, 0.68 and 0.62, which are below the theoretical mean. These items related to "Each sentence ends with an appropriate end mark", "Hyphens, slashes, dashes and multiple dashes are used correctly",

"Parentheses and brackets are used correctly", "Apostrophes and quotation marks are used properly", "A space of about an inch should be left at the beginning of a paragraph" and "Commas, colons, and semicolons are used correctly".

Table (12)

The weighted means and the weighted percentile of items related to the "Punctuation"

N Item	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	Std. Deviation	Rank Order
35	1.06	%53	0.49	1
41	0.95	%45	0.68	2
38	0.93	%44	0.67	3
40	0.80	%40	0.73	4
39	0.77	%39	0.67	5
36	0.68	%34	0.50	6
37	0.62	%31	0.57	7

4.3.7. Format

Table number (15) shows that this area gains the weighted mean0.90, which is less high than the theoretical mean 1. Items number 42, 43, and 51 have the weighted means 1.74, 1.64, 1.30. These items are related to "The paper has an introduction and a conclusion", "The paper includes a table of contents".

"All text in papers is double –spaced except the block quotations, table titles and figure captions; also footnotes or endnotes, bibliographies or reference lists but with a blank line between items" , and "Each new section starts on a new page". While items number 50, 48, 46 have the weighted means 0.48, 0.46, 0.41 respectively. These items related to "The abbreviation ' ibid' is used properly in documentation", "In-text citations are always inside end punctuation: "…higher fitness (Lewontin 1976)." Not "…higher fitness. (Lewontin 1976)" and "Numbers and names of tables and figures are placed correctly (tables at the top, figures at the bottom)".

Table (13)

The weighted means and weighted percentile of items related to the "Format"

N Item	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	Std. Deviation	Rank Order
42	1.74	%87	0.54	1
43	1.64	%82	0.67	2
51	1.30	%65	0.58	3
52	1.03	%52	0.58	4.5
47	1.03	%52	0.48	4.5
44	0.67	%34	0.64	6
49	0.59	%30	0.66	7
45	0.48	%24	0.73	8.5
50	0.48	%24	0.61	8.5

48	0.46	%23	0.64	10
46	0.41	%21	0.72	11

4.3.8. References

As shown in table (15) this area has the weighted mean (0.62). Items numbers 53 have the weighted mean 1.17 which is higher than the theoretical mean. This item related to "The paper contains a minimum of five sources that are listed alphabetically and appropriately in the References section". Items 58 and 56 have the weighted means0.29, 0.21 "The websites of the internet are correctly documented and dated" and "Unpublished theses and dissertations in print forms are treated as unpublished manuscripts".

Table (14)

The weighted means and weighted percentile of items related to the "References"

N Item	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	Std. Deviation	Rank Order
53	1.17	%59	0.81	1
54	0.86	%43	0.72	2

55	0.73	%37	0.62	3
57	0.47	%24	0.56	4
58	0.29	%15	0.60	5
56	0.21	%11	0.51	6

), it could be concluded 14) to Table (7From inspection tables (

that these areas of this study turn out to be less efficient, in general. However, it seems that these areas play an efficient role in the areas of "research procedure" and "library work and sources". The ranking order of the questionnaire areas according to their average weighted means can be depicted in table (6) below:

Table (15)

The weighted means and weighted percentile of the checklist areas concerning errors made by EFL students in writing graduation projects

N Subscale	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	Std. Deviation	Rank Order
1	1.03	%52	0.52	1
4	1.02	%51	0.47	2
5	0.94	%47	0.61	3
3	0.93	%46	0.65	4
7	0.90	%46	0.72	5
6	0.80	%40	0.45	6
2	0.63	%32	0.66	7
8	0.62	%31	0.48	8

4.4. Discussion of the Results

The results of this study show that the students of the college of basic education are deficient in writing GP. This may attributed, to many factors such as:

1. The most difficulties the EFL college students face are in research procedures, library work and sources, research methodology and selecting a topic. These items take the highest weighted means.

a. Research procedure:

b. library work and sources

c. research methodology

d. selecting a topic: The difficulty here lies in selecting a topic that satisfies many different criteria. For example, the project must be interesting and meaningful to the student and his advisor, and there must be adequate resources available to perform the work.

2. The weighted means of errors indicates that the areas of writing title page, grammar, spelling, the content and format of research papers take the high weighted means of errors made by EFL college students in writing GP.

a. Writing title page:

b. Grammar: The most obvious evidence showing the deficient in grammar is that " even the best students do not learn every rule they are exposed to" (Krashen, 1985: 16).

c. **Spelling:**
The real difficulty of English spelling is its inconsistency and unreliable rules which pose a great problem for the foreign learners in general (Baron, 1939: 12). One of the most serious writing problems for many people is the inability to spell correctly and confidently. The fear of

making mistakes in spelling, and thereby exposing their ignorance, often makes it difficult for poor spellers to put their ideas on paper (Kinsella, 1981: 325).

d. The content:

e. The format

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1. Introductory Note

This chapter deals with the conclusions inferred from the findings of the study in addition to the recommendations and suggestions for further studies. More specifically, it is divided into three sections, the first section indicates the conclusions that the present study has yielded. The second section contains a number of recommendations and the last section states suggestions for further investigations.

5.2. Conclusions

The conclusions below are drawn in the light of the results reached at by this study:

1. The fourth year students of the Department of English at the College of Basic Education in Misan University and Al-Mustinsirya University are deficient in writing GPs.

2. They have many problems in research procedures, library work and sources and selecting a topic.

3. Their errors are mostly in writing the introduction, the content, in grammar, spelling, punctuation, format and references.

4. Writing GP is complex and difficult skill which demands good command of another skills which are reading comprehension, critical thinking,

5. Students' weakness in writing GPs could be majorly attributed to their limited experience in that area and to the less attention this area has given in universities.

5.4. Recommendations

In order to improve EFL college students in writing GPs and enable them to overcome the problems they face, the following points are recommended:

1. EFL college students need extensive and intensive training in writing English in general and in writing GPs in specific.

2. The instructors should provide the EFL college students with effective models of academic writing so they can follow in GP writing.

3. Increasing the time allotted for teaching the course of "Research Methodology" for third year students at least to be three hours a week instead of two.

   EFL college students should be taught to distinguish between the various types of note taking (summary, paraphrase, and quotation), i.e. they should be trained in how to use the suitable techniques in their writing of English.

4. The college instructors, in the process of evaluating students' GPs, could utilize the checklist of this study. Hence, deficiencies can be diagnosed and remedial work can be offered.

5. The college instructors should emphasize on the recent trends and techniques of teaching research methodology.

6. The theoretical training course books should be reviewed and modified from time to time in order to cope with the new trends in GP writing.

5.4. Suggestions for Further Studies

The following studies are suggested in order to follow up the present work:

1. A comparative study could be conducted between Arabic and English GP to show the effect of the Arabic style of writing GP on acquiring English GP writing.

2. A similar study can be conducted to get a full description of writing GPs in other educational or scientific colleges.

3. An investigation can be carried out to find out the essential requirements for successful teaching of research methodology.

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Appendix A

Jury Member

N	Name	Certificate	Academic Rank	College	University
1	Al – Jumaily, Abdul Latif	Ph. D	Prof	Arts	Baghdad
2	Al-Rifai, Fatin Khairi	Ph. D	Prof	Ibn Rushd	Baghdad
3	Yahya, Iman Fat'hi	M. A	Prof	Basic Education	Al - Mustansiriyah
4	Al – Bakri, Shaima'a	Ph. D	Asst. Prof.	Ibn Rushd	Baghdad
5	Al-Dulaimy, Munthir Manhal	Ph. D	Asst. Prof	Languages	Baghdad
6	Ali, Sundus Muhsin	Ph. D	Asst. Prof	Arts	Baghdad
7	Darwesh, Abdul Jabbar Ali	Ph. D	Asst. Prof	Basic Education	Al - Mustansiriyah
8	Hussein, Abbas Lutfy	Ph.D.	Asst. Prof	Ibn Rushd	Baghdad
9	Jabbar, Salam Hamid	Ph. D	Asst. Prof	Ibn Rushd	Baghdad
10	Jasim, Abbas	Ph. D	Asst. Prof	Basic Education	Al- Mustansiriyah

11	Sa'eed, Mu'ayad Mohammed	Ph. D	Asst. Prof.	Ibn Rushd	Baghdad
12	Al – Any, Lamya'a	M. A	Asst .Prof.	Ibn Rushd	Baghdad
13	Farhood, Abbas Hilal	M. A	Asst. Prof.	Basic Education	Al - Mustansiriyah
14	Habeeb, Mo'yad Rasheed	M. A	Asst. Prof.	Basic Education	Al - Mustansiriyah
15	Hasan, Safaa' Isaa	M.A	Asst. Prof.	Ibn Rushd	Misan
16	Lazim, Abdul-Kareem	M.A	Asst. Prof.	Basic Education	Misan
17	Maroof, Firas Awad	M.A	Asst. Prof	Ibn Rushd	Baghdad
18	Sarhan, Saad Salal	M. A	Asst. Prof	Basic Educatio	Al – Mustansiriyah
19	Dakhil, Ridha Ganim	Ph.D	Instr.	Basic Education	Al – Mustansiriyah
20	Kareem, Mahdi Inayat	Ph.D	Instr.	Arts	Baghdad
21	Malik, Mukhalad	Ph.D	Instr.	Ibn Rushd	Baghdad
22	Abdul Hussein, Fatima Rahim	M.A	Instr.	Basic Education	Misan

23	Abdul- Wahab, Huda Baheer	M. A	Instr.	Basic Education	Al - Mustansiriyah
24	Dhafir, Ila'a	M.A	Instr.	Basic Education	Misan
25	Faris, Ali Abdul-Hameed	M.A	Instr.	Ibn Rushd	Misan
26	Lahad, Afrah Minshid	M. A	Instr.	Basic Education	Al -Mustansiriyah
27	Hanih, Nibras Hashim	M. A	Asst. Instr.	Basic Education	Al -Mustansiriya

Appendix B

AL-Mustansiriyah University

College of Basic Education

English Department

The Open Questionnaire

First question:

What are the difficulties that you face in writing your graduation projects?

Second question:

Have you been practice on writing papers in previous stages?

The researcher

Haifaa Kadhim Muhammad

Appendix C

The Questionnaire

AL-Mustansiriyah University

College of Basic Education

English Department

Dear student ………………….

The researcher intends to conduct a descriptive study entitled "EFL Students' Problems and Errors in Writing Graduation Projects". This study is limited to the   fourth- year EFL students at the College of Basic Education, University of Missan, and the College of Basic Education, University of Al-Mustansiriyah .To achieve the aims of the study, a questionnaire divided into fields is designed.

You are kindly requested to read the questionnaire carefully and answer its items by checking the alternative which applies to you .Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

The Researcher

Hayfaa Kadhum Muhammed

Under the supervision of

Asst. Prof. Dr. Dhuha Atallah Hassan

	THE QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM	THE ALTERNATIVE				
NO	**1: TEACHING RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**	Always	**Often**	Some-times	Rarely	Never
1	There is no association between the theoretical and the practical aspects of teaching research methodology					
2	Not all teachers keep pace with the scientific and epistemic development in the academic research field					
3	Research methodology is considered a minor subject and does not receive the adequate emphasis					
4	Some teachers are not well qualified to teach this subject					
no	**2 :TOPIC SELECTION**	Always	Often	Some-times	Rarely	Never
5	I do not know how to select a topic					
6	I believe that the topic must agree with the academic developments and the students' interests					
7	I think that the department should propose some topics for projects and leave the choice for the students					
8	I think that the student should suggest the topic that is suitable for him , not the department					

No		Always	Often	Some-times	Rarely	Never
9	The sources of some topics are very rare					
10	I have a problem in understanding the research topic					
11	Some topics need specific equipment which are beyond our own abilities					
No	**3:THE SUPERVISOR**	Always	Often	Some-times	Rarely	Never
12	I prefer to choose the supervisor by myself since the good relationship between the supervisor and the student can motivate the latter to work hard					
13	The supervisor does not cooperate with me in putting a research plan					
14	The supervisor does not have enough knowledge of the research topic					
15	I think that the number of meetings with the supervisor is not enough					
16	I believe that the department must designate regular hours in which we can meet with the supervisors					
17	Some supervisors put plans that surpass the students' abilities					
18	Some supervisors oblige us to use so many references					
No	**4:LIBRARY WORK AND SOURCES**	Always	Often	Some-times	Rarely	Never

No		Always	Often	Some-times	Rarely	Never
19	The lack of sources hinders us from writing our projects					
20	The librarians do not cooperate with us very much					
21	I do not know how to borrow books					
22	The time limit for borrowing books is not enough					
23	Some books are torn and lack some chapters or pages					
24	I cannot find most of the main sources because they are borrowed (there are not enough copies)					
25	I do not know how to access sources on the internet					
26	I have a problem in choosing appropriate information from references					
27	I am obliged to look for sources in other places because of the scarcity of sources that are found in college library					
No	**5:RESEARCH PROCEDURES**	Always	Often	Some-times	Rarely	Never
28	I do not know how to write the research plan					

29	I have a problem in collecting and organizing my thoughts when writing my project					
30	I do not have sufficient time for writing the research					
31	I have a problem in paraphrasing					
32	I lack the experience and practical training					
33	I have a problem in summarizing the topics					
34	I do not know how to document sources					
35	I am not familiar enough with the research procedures and mechanisms					
36	I find it difficult to write the introduction					
37	I do not know how to formulate the research problem					
38	I do not know how to make footnotes for my research					
39	There is no seminar committee for research projects in the department					
40	I have a problem in dealing with the computer and other modern appliances					
41	I have a problem in formulating sentences and paragraphs in English					

42	I do not know how to write bibliography					
43	I find a difficulty in drawing the final conclusions of my project					
44	I do not know how to make my oral presentation					

Appendix D

The Checklist

AL-Mustansiriyah University

College of Basic Education

Dept. of Higher Education

Identifying Experts' Opinions about the Validity of the checklist Items

Dear ………………….

The researcher intends to conduct a descriptive study entitled "EFL Students' Problems and Errors in Writing Graduation Projects". This study is limited to the   fourth- year EFL students at the College of Basic Education ,University   of Misan, and the College of Basic Education , University of Al-Mustansiriyah .To achieve the aim of the study a checklist divided into fields is designed .As a specialist in the field of TEFL or linguistics you are kindly requested to read the checklist carefully and decide whether it is valid and suitable for the aims of the study .Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation. Any comments or modifications you may suggest will be highly appreciated.

The Researcher

Under the Supervision of

Hayfaa Kadhum Muhammed

Asst. Prof. Dr. Dhuha Attalah Hassan

	THE CHECKLIST ITEM	VALID	invalid	MODIFICATION
NO.	**Title page**			
1	The paper begins with the student's name , the advisor's name, graduation project title, the department ,the university and the date (written as number of the day, month, year) on separate lines, double spaced, beginning one inch from the top of the first page .			
2	The title does not promise more than the paper can deliver.			
3	The title is succinct and avoids redundant phrases.			
4	The title is clear and reflects the content of the paper.			
5	The wording of the title are accurately chosen.			
NO	**Introduction**	VALID	invalid	MODIFICATION
6	The introduction begins with a statement of the main issues being addressed.			
7	It makes a clear case as to why the study is needed.			
8	It describes any necessary background information about the setting for the study.			
No	**Grammar**	VALID	invalid	MODIFICATION
9	All the verbs agree with their subjects.			
10	All pronouns agree with their antecedents.			

No		VALID	invalid	MODIFICATION
11	The past tense is used when describing other people's findings, and the researcher's own methods and results			
12	The simple present is used in presenting theoretical material and facts.			
13	The paper is written in the third person and does not contain references to *I, me or you* unless these words are in a quotation.			
14	There are no shifts in verb tense or person.			
No	**Punctuation**	VALID	invalid	MODIFICATION
15	Capitalization is used correctly			
16	Commas ,colons, and semicolons are used correctly			
17	Dashes , parentheses ,and slashes are not overused and are used correctly			
18	Apostrophes are used properly			
19	Each sentence ends with an appropriate end mark			
No	**Spelling**	VALID	invalid	MODIFICATION
20	All words are spelled correctly.			
21	Words that sound alike are used correctly.			
22	All the proper names are spelled correctly.			
23	Contractions such as 'don't' and 'it's' are avoided .			
24	All numbers at the beginning of the sentences are written out.			
No	**Format**	VALID	invalid	MODIFICATION
25	The paper includes a table of content.			

No		VALID	invalid	MODIFICATION
26	The format is consistent and appropriate (e.g. single blank lines between paragraphs, no indentations at the start of paragraphs, no multiple blank lines).			
27	Tables and figures are always cited in the text and all have numbers and titles.			
28	All abbreviations are spelled out in full the first time they are used.			
29	The paper has the appropriate number of pages in which the topic of the study is completed.			
No	**References**	VALID	invalid	MODIFICATION
30	The paper contains a minimum of five sources that are listed alphabetically on the Works Cited page.			
31	The citations and references follow a consistent format.			
32	The references are complete and match the citations in the paper.			
33	The references should be somehow new.			
34	The references are in the required order.			
35	The websites of the internet should be correctly documented.			
36	Every source listed on the work cited page is referenced with appropriate parenthetical citations in your paper.			

Any additional items

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Appendix E

The Checklist

AL-Mustansiriyah University

College of Basic Education

Dept. of Higher Education

Identifying Experts' Opinions about the Validity of the checklist Items

Dear …………………

The researcher intends to conduct a descriptive study entitled "EFL Students' Problems and Errors in Writing Graduation Projects". This study is limited to the   fourth- year EFL students at the College of Basic Education ,University of Misan, and the College of Basic Education , University of Al-Mustansiriyah .To achieve the aim of the study a checklist divided into fields is designed .As a specialist in the field of TEFL or linguistics you are kindly requested to read the checklist carefully and decide whether it is valid and suitable for the aims of the study .Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation. Any comments or modifications you may suggest will be highly appreciated.

The Researcher   Under the Supervision of

Hayfaa Kadhum Muhammed   Asst. Prof. Dr. Dhuha Attalah Hassan

	THE CHECKLIST ITEM	VALID	INVALID	MODIFICATION
NO.	**1.Title page**			
1	The title page contains the graduation project title, the student's name , the advisor's name, the department, the university and the date (written as the month, year) on separate lines, double spaced, beginning one inch from the top of the first page.			
2	The title is brief, specific and informative.			
3	The title reflects the contents of the paper.			
4	Nouns serve as the key words in the title.			
NO	**2.Introduction**	VALID	INVALID	MODIFICATION
5	The introduction clarifies the importance (significance) of the study.			
6	The introduction clearly presents the nature and scope of the problem to be investigated.			
7	The introduction describes any necessary background information about the setting for the study.			
8	The aims of the study are clearly mentioned.			
9	The hypotheses (if found) should be clearly written.			
10	Keywords should be defined clearly.			
No	**3.The content**	Valid	Invalid	Modification
11	The topic is of an appropriate scope (neither too broad, nor too narrow).			
12	The sections, as well as the paragraphs, have unity because they explore one topic in depth.			

13	The content of the paper adequately covers its topic.			
14	All the paragraphs or sections in the paper are irrelevant.			
15	The ideas are clearly expressed.			
16	Each paragraph expresses a separate idea.			
No	**4 .Grammar**	Valid	Invalid	Modific ation
17	Definite and indefinite articles are correctly used.			
18	Conjunctions are correctly chosen.			
19	All the verbs agree with their subjects.			
20	All pronouns agree with their antecedents.			
21	The past tense or present perfect tense is used when describing other people's findings or the researcher's own methods and results.			
22	The present tense is mainly used in presenting established knowledge and theoretical material.			
23	The paper does not contain references to I, me or you unless these words are in a quotation.			
24	There are no shifts in verb tense or person unless necessary.			
NO.	**5. Spelling**	Valid	Invalid	Modific ation
25	The plural is written correctly.			
26	Words that sound alike are used correctly.			
27	All the proper names are spelled correctly.			
28	Contractions such as 'don't' and 'it's' are avoided.			

NO.		Valid	Invalid	Modification
29	The possessive is written correctly.			
30	Compound words are written correctly (whether they should be hyphenated, left open; with a space between elements, or closed; spelled as one word).			
31	Breaks within words or over spaces and punctuation are written correctly.			
32	All numbers at the beginning of a sentence are written as words.			
33	Numbers less than or equal 10 are written as words.			
34	All abbreviations are spelled out in full the first time they are used.			
NO.	**6. Punctuation**	Valid	Invalid	Modification
35	Capitalization is used correctly.			
36	A space of about an inch should be left at the beginning of a paragraph.			
37	Commas, colons, and semicolons are used correctly.			
38	Hyphens, slashes, dashes and multiple dashes are used correctly.			
39	Apostrophes and quotation marks are used properly.			
40	Parentheses and brackets are used correctly.			
41	Each sentence ends with an appropriate end mark.			
NO.	**7. Format**	Valid	Invalid	Modification
42	The paper has an introduction and a conclusion			
43	The paper includes a table of contents.			
44	All text in papers is double –spaced except the block quotations, table titles and figure captions; also footnotes or endnotes, bibliographies or reference lists but with a blank line between items.			

NO.		VALID	INVALID	Modification
45	Figures and Tables appear as close as possible following their mention in the text. They are put either on the same page (if they fit) or on the page immediately following their mention.			
46	Numbers and names of tables and figures are placed correctly (tables at the top , figures at the bottom)			
47	The paper has the appropriate number of pages in which the topic of the study is complete.			
48	In-text citations are always inside end punctuation: "…higher fitness (Lewontin 1976)." Not "…higher fitness. (Lewontin 1976)"			
49	Series of parentheses, such as: (Davis 1999) (Figure 1) are avoided. Combine the information: (Davis 1999; Figure 1).			
50	The abbreviation ' ibid' is used properly in documentation.			
51	Each new section starts on a new page.			
52	The printing is accurate / The handwriting is legible			
NO.	**8. References**	VALID	INVALID	Modification
53	The paper contains a minimum of five sources that are listed alphabetically and appropriately in the References section.			
54	The citations and references follow a consistent format.			
55	The references are complete and match the citations in the paper.			
56	Unpublished theses and dissertations in print forms are treated as unpublished manuscripts.			
57	An adequate number of up -to-date references are used.			
58	The websites of the internet are correctly documented and dated.			

Any additional items

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Any additional items

مشكلات وأخطاء طلبة اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية في كتابة بحوث التخرج

رسالة ماجستير تقدم بها

هيفاء كاظم محمد المحمداوي

إلى مجلس كلية التربية الأساسية / الجامعة المستنصرية

جزءً من متطلبات نيل درجة الماجستير آداب في التربية

(طرائق تدريس اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية)

إشراف
الأستاذ المساعد الدكتور ضحى عطا الله حسن

1431 هـ   2011 م