Misan University

Collage of Basic Education

English Department

Evening Studies

**Difficulties Faced by Iraqi EFL Student in Writing Graduation Projects**

Preperd by:

**Kumail Sadiq Abdul Zahra** & **Mohamed Youssef**

Supervisor:

***Assist. Prof. Dr. Haifa Kadem Al-Dahamat***

**Dedication**

From the depths of our soul, we pour forth these words,

A tribute to those who shaped our world.

To the Divine hand that set us on the way,

The Prophet's light that guided every day.

To those who held us close, their love a guiding star,

Our family's embrace, reaching from afar.

To the mentor's wisdom, a beacon ever bright,

Our father's strength, a pillar in the night.

To the mother's tender touch, a soothing balm,

Her love a refuge, weathering every storm.

To those who shared our laughter, wiped our tears,

Our siblings, companions through the passing years.

With humble heart, we offer this, our art,

A testament to love that fills our heart.

**Acknowledgment**

We would like to express our gratitude to our supervisor, Assist. Prof. Haifa Kadem Al-Dahamat who guided us throughout this research. We would also like to thank our friends and family who supported us and offered deep insight into the study. We would also like to show our deep appreciation to each supervisor who helped us finalize our research.

**Contents**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Pages*** | ***Materials*** |
| **I** | **Dedication** |
| **II** | **Acknowledgments** |
| **III** | **List of Tables** |
| **Chapter One: Introduction** |
| **1** | **The Problem of the Study and its Significance** | **1.1** |
| **1** | **Value of the study** | **1.2** |
| **1** | **Aims of the study** | **1.3** |
| **1** | **Hypotheses of the study** | **1.4** |
| **1** | **Limits of the study** | **1.5** |
| **2** | **Definitions of basic terms** | **1.6** |
| **Chapter Two: Theoretical Background** |
| **3** | **Introductory Note** | **2.1** |
| **3** | **Explanation of the term graduation project** | **2.2** |
| **4** | **Importance of Graduation Project** | **2.3** |
| **4** | **Steps in Writing Research Paper** | **2.4** |
| **4** | **Selecting a Topic** | **2.4.1** |
| **10** | **Parts of Research paper** | **2.5** |
| **Chapter Three: Procedures** |
| **15** | **Introductory Note** | **3.1** |
| **15** | **The Population and Sample of the Study** | **3.2** |
| **15** | **Instruments of the Study** | **3.3.** |
| **16** | **The Construction of the Questionnaire** | **3.3.1** |
| **16** | **The Pilot Study** | **3.3.1.1** |
| **17** | **The Questionnaire Validity** | **3.3.1.2** |
| **18** | The Questionnaire Reliability | **3.3.1.3** |
| **Chapter Four Results**  |
| **19** | **Introductory note** | **4.1** |
| **19** | **Research Methodology** | **4.2** |
| **20** | **Topic Selection**  | **4.3** |
| **21** | **The Supervisor** | **4.4** |
| **22** | **Library Work and Sources** | **4.5** |
| **23** | **Research Procedures** | **4.6** |
| CHAPTER FIVE |
| **32** | **Introductory Note** | **5.1** |
| **32** | **Conclusions** | **5.2** |
| **33** | **Recommendations** | **5.3** |
| **33** | **Suggestions for Further Studies** | **5.4** |
| **34** | **References**  |  |

**Chapter One**

**1.1. The Problem of the Study and its Significance**

1. Graduation projects serve as a vital culmination of students' academic and practical experiences, preparing them for professional practice.

2. These projects require students to apply their accumulated knowledge and skills to solve real-life problems effectively.

3. The process demonstrates students' ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information for their academic and career readiness.

**1.2. Value of the Study**

This study helps instructors understand the challenges Iraqi EFL students face in writing graduation projects, potentially improving their skills. It also serves as a useful reference for students and may inspire further research on related topics.

**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 light of the approval.

**1.4. Hypothesis of the Study**

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**

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.

The present study is limited to:

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

2. The academic year 2024-2025.

3. Investigation of the:

a. Topic selection

b. Research procedures

c. Layout

**1.6. Definitions of Basic Terms**

**Error:** A systematic deviation by learners who have not fully acquired a skill, resulting in consistent mistakes (Corder, 1971; Norrish, 1983; James, 1998).

**Operational Definition:** Any deviation made by fourth-year EFL college students in their research papers.

**Problem:** An obstacle that hinders the achievement of a goal or remains unresolved (Wikipedia, 2006); something difficult to handle (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2010).

**Operational Definition:** Any difficulty faced by fourth-year EFL college students in writing their research papers.

**Graduation Project:** A requirement for obtaining a graduate degree involving individual research, culminating in a formal report and possibly a presentation (Best, 1981). It assesses higher cognitive skills like analysis and synthesis (Payne and Whittaker, 2006).

**Operational Definition:** The research paper submitted at the end of the fourth year, required for a B.A. degree in teaching methods at the Colleges of Basic Education.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

**2.1 An Introductory Note**

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

**2.2 Explanation of the Term Graduation Project**

The graduation project is an important part of graduate education. Most students are surprised by 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).

Markman et al. (2001:25) show that the term ‘research paper’ refers to a particular genre of academic writing, in which the writer’s 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 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.

**2.3 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 of recent research and findings about a given topic. The reader of the paper should be provided with an overview of the 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).

**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 the subjects introduced in your classes.

Think in terms 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? (do ability)

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

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

Is the topic chosen 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. Any hypothesis that the researcher formulated must 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, each hypothesis must 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 exists between variables; and

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

**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 uniform opinion to thoroughly researched facts. When gathering research material; the researchers should aim to obtain the most relevant, accurate, and reliable information as possible they could, within the limits imposed by time, cost, and their 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 several 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 the credentials of the originator of the information.

Currency: the researcher must 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. How 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 intend to use. Is it easy to follow and interpret?

**Writing an Outline**

An outline is a useful intermediary document between research and writing. It helps gain 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 a 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 of 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 must 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 rough (Gibaldi, 2009:46). The researcher should make a habit of writing at least two or three drafts, considering 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).

**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.

**2.5 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 results. Both division systems share the same major parts. Therefore, the researcher will tackle the former one.

**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.

**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).

**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.

**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).

**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).

**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).

**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.

**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.

**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).

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.

**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)

**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 The Population and Sample of the Study**

 The population of this study consists of all the fourth-year students at the Department of English , at the college of Basic Education / Al-Mustansiriyah University and at the College Of Basic Education /Misan University for the academic year 2024-2025 . The total number of those students is five , of whom five students are assigned for the pilot study.

 The second sample is the papers of those students; also, seventy-six papers are assigned from both colleges, from which ten papers are chosen for the purpose of the pilot study.

**3.3. Instruments of the Study**

 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 Construction of 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 respondents fills in himself . Barr et al (1953:65) define questionnaire as a systematic compilation of questions that are administrated to a sample of population from which information is desired.

The questionnaire was constructed in this study 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 includes books, periodicals, and newspapers,
2. Internet: The researcher has benefited from the questionnaires that have been prepared by foreign researchers and,

Firstly, the researcher conducted an open–form questionnaire, which calls for a free response in the respondent's own words. Then she constructed a restricted one based on these responses. The questionnaire consists of five areas (Good & Hatt, 1952 ,33). Each area includes several items which are treated as follows:

**3.3.1.1. 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. Analyze the questionnaire items to find out the …
4. Determine the average time required for the students to finish the test.

The pilot study was carried out on the of April 2025. The findings of the pilot administration have indicated that the questionnaire items are appropriate to the respondents, and the time that all the students take to answer it ranges from 10 to 15 minutes.

**3.3.1.2 The Questionnaire 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 & Gunstone, 1992:177).

Instrument validity is a reflection of how well it measures what 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 & Macintosh, 1979:330). Eble (1972:410) adds that face validity is used by asking experts to decide whether the statements represent the features, we want to measure.

Content validity is concerned with the relationship between the questionnaire contents and detailed curriculum aims (Davis , 1968 :32). It is a form of validity which is based on the degree to which a tool adequately and sufficiently measures the particular skills or behavior it sets out to measure ". Hence, the constructed questionnaire is considered valid in its contents.

 To ensure 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 question of the questionnaire related obviously to the topic under investigation.

3.3.1.3 The Questionnaire Reliability:

Validity is essential but has to be coupled with reliability. The latter "refers to the consistency of the judgment that follows from 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. Reliability of questionnaires may be inferred by a second administration of the instrument, comparing the responses with those of the first, or by comparing the responses of an alternate form with the original form (Best, 1981:179). To ensure reliability, 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 considered high.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**ANALYSIS of DATA and DISCUSSION 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. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

 From the inspection of table (1) it is indicated that this area is effective , since the average weighted mean is 3.02 which is higher than the theoretical mean 3 .The ranking order and the weighted mean of this area is arranged respectively as follow : items 1, 2 and 3 take the weighted means 3.13 , 3.59 , 3.27 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". Only one item i.e. "Some teachers are not qualified to teach this subject" takes the weighted mean 2.10 which is less than theoretical meaning.

**Table (1)**

The Ranking Order and the Weighted Means of the Items Related to the "Teaching Research Methodology"

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item No.** | **Rank order** | **Weighted Means** | **percentile Weighted** | **Std. Deviation** |
| **1** | **20** | **1.88** | **%47** | **1.66** |
| **3** | **26** | **1.68** | **%42** | **1.67** |
| **2** | **30** | **1.36** | **%34** | **1.41** |
| **4** | **36** | **1.12** | **%28** | **1.66** |

**4.3. TOPIC SELECTION**

 It is clear from table (2) that this area is less effective since the average weighted mean is 1.37 which is less than theoretical mean 3.The ranking order and the weighted mean of this area are arranged as follow : items 9 and 5 have the weighted means 3.59 and 3.03 respectively whereas items 11, 10 ,6 ,8 and 7 take the weighted means 2.22 ,1.85 ,1.85 ,1.84 and 1.51 respectively which are less than theoretical means .

**Table (2)**

The Ranking Order and the Weighted Means of the Items Related to the" topic selection"

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item No.** | **Rank order** | **Weighted Means** | **Weighted****percentile** | **Std. Deviation** |
| **6** | **1** | **3.80** | **%95** | **0.50** |
| **7** | **5** | **2.96** | **%74** | **1.51** |
| **10** | **13.5** | **2.20** | **%55** | **1.38** |
| **9** | **13.5** | **2.20** | **%55** | **1.32** |
| **5** | **16** | **2.08** | **%52** | **1.25** |
| **8** | **17** | **2.00** | **%50** | **1.38** |
| **11** | **21** | **1.84** | **%46** | **1.62** |

 **4.4 THE SUPERVISOR**

 It is clear from Table (3) that the efficiency of the supervisor is acceptable since the average weighted mean is 3.10, which is higher than the theoretical mean 3. The ranking orders and the weighted means of this area are arranged as follow : item 12 ,14 ,16 ,13 and 15 have the weighted means 3.36 , 3.18 , 3.17 ,3.13 and 3.06 respectively which are higher than the theoretical mean 3 whereas items 17 ,18 have the weighted means 2.92 and 2 .89. Those items are less efficient in this area.

**Table (3)**

The Ranking Order and the Weighted Means of the Items Related to "The Supervisor"

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item No.** | **Item Rank** | **Weighted Means** | **Weighted****percentile** | **Std. Deviation** |
| **17** | **2** | **3.44** | **%86** | **1.26** |
| **13** | **3** | **3.40** | **%86** | **1.35** |
| **16** | **22.5** | **1.80** | **%45** | **1.63** |
| **18** | **28** | **1.44** | **%35** | **1.22** |
| **14** | **34** | **1.24** | **%31** | **1.36** |
| **12** | **39** | **1.08** | **%27** | **1.28** |
| **15** | **42** | **0.52** | **%13** | **0.91** |

**4.5. LIBRARY WORK AND SOURCES :**

 Table (4) shows that this area plays negative role in writing graduation projects. This fact is concluded from the average weighted mean of this area (2.45) which is less than the theoretical mean 3.However, the ranking order presented in table (4) shows that items 19 ,25 ,27 and 24 have the weighted means which are above the theoretical mean 3, these items are related to:" The lack of sources hinders us from writing our projects "

 ," I do not know how to access sources on the internet", and "I am obliged to look for sources in other places because of the scarcity of sources that are found in college library ".

The other items, which occupy the ranks fifth to ninth whose weighted means, are less than the theoretical one, reflect the deficiency of these items on writing graduation projects.

**Table (4)**

The Ranking order and the Weight Means of Items Related to the "library work and sources"

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item No.** | **Rank Order** | **Weighted Means** | **Weighted****percentile** | **Std. Deviation** |
| **22** | **8** | **2.68** | **%67** | **1.54** |
| **27** | **15** | **2.16** | **%54** | **1.59** |
| **26** | **18.5** | **1.96** | **%49** | **1.45** |
| **24** | **30** | **1.36** | **%34** | **1.68** |
| **20** | **32.5** | **1.32** | **%33** | **1.34** |
| **25** | **35** | **1.16** | **%29** | **1.37** |
| **23** | **41** | **0.60** | **%15** | **0.91** |
| **19** | **43** | **0.04** | **%1** | **0.20** |

 **4.6. RESEARCH PROCEDURES**

 Table (5) indicates that the average weighted mean for this area is 2.48 which is less than theoretical mean 3 this mean this area is less efficient in general. The ranking order and the weighted means of the items of this area are arranged as follow: 40,42 ,37 ,36 and 39 have the weighted mean respectively : 3.27 , 3.23 , 3.18 , 3.15 and 3.14 .these items have the weighted means which are higher than theoretical mean 3 .these items are related to :" I have a problem in dealing with the computer and other modern appliances " , "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 " ,and "There is no seminar committee for research projects in the department " the rest of items numbers : 31 , 32 ,33 ,44 ,35 ,29 ,43 ,30 ,41 ,34 ,28 and 38 have the weighted means respectively :2.89 ,2.76 ,2.55 ,2.5 , 2.32 , 2.09 , 2.05 , 2.03 ,1.9 ,1.85 ,1.85 and 1.47 these items have the weighted means which are less than theoretical mean 3 this means these items plays negative role in this area . moreover ,these items are related to : "I have a problem in paraphrasing "

 "I lack the experience and practical training " , "I have a problem in summarizing the topics " ," I do not know how to make my oral presentation

 " , "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 " , "I have a problem in formulating sentences and paragraphs in English" ," I do not know how to document sources " , "I do not know how to write the research plan " , "I do not know how to make footnotes for my research ".

**Table (5)**

The Ranking Order and the Weighted Means of Items Related to the "Research procedure"

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item No.** | **Rank Order** | **Weighted Means** | **Weighted****percentile** | **Std. Deviation** |
| **43** | **5** | **4.30** | **%75.5** | **1.34** |
| **32** | **6.5** | **2.50** | **%72** | **1.22** |
| **38** | **6.5** | **2.85** | **%72** | **1.34** |
| **29** | **9.5** | **2.56** | **%63** | **1.66** |
| **35** | **9.5** | **2.78** | **%63** | **1.34** |
| **31** | **11** | **2.29** | **%61** | **1.28** |
| **42** | **12** | **2.10** | **%60** | **1.10** |
| **28** | **18.5** | **1.49** | **%49** | **1.12** |
| **34** | **22.5** | **1.89** | **%45** | **1.17** |
| **41** | **24.5** | **1.88** | **%43** | **1.19** |
| **36** | **24.5** | **1.90** | **%43** | **1.90** |
| **39** | **27** | **1.10** | **%63** | **1.88** |
| **30** | **30** | **1.70** | **%34** | **1.55** |
| **40** | **32.5** | **1.70** | **%33** | **1.46** |
| **33** | **37** | **1.12** | **%28** | **1.30** |
| **37** | **38** | **1.12** | **%28** | **1.33** |

 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 2.48 which is less than the theoretical 3 as shown in Table (6). However, it seems that these areas play an efficient role in the areas of "supervisor "and "teaching research methodology". The ranking order of the questionnaire areas according to their average weighted means can be depicted in table (6) below

**Table (6)**

The Ranking Order and the Weighted Means of the questionnaire Areas Concerning problems faced by EFL Students in writing graduation projects

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Area No.** | **Area Rank** | **Area** | **Weighted mean** |
| **2** |  | **Supervisor** |  |
| **1** |  | **Teaching research methodology** |  |
| **2** |  | **Research procedures** |  |
| **4** |  | **Library work and sources** |  |
| **1** |  | **Topic selection** |  |

**Table (7)**

The Ranking Order and the Weighted Means of Items Related to the "Title Page"

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item No.** | **Item Rank** | **Weighted Mean** | **Weighted****percentile** | **Std. Deviation** |
| **4** | **1** | **1.15** | **%54** | **0.749** |
| **2** | **2** | **0.89** | **%55** | **0.659** |
| **1** | **3** | **0.83** | **%62** | **0.481** |
| **3** | **4** | **0.47** | **%17** | **0.535** |

Table (8)

The Ranking Order and the Weighted Means of Items Related to the "Introduction"

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item No.** | **Rank order** | **Weighted Means** | **Weighted****percentile** | **Std. Deviation** |
| **9** | **1** | **2.00** | **%100** | **0,00** |
| **6** | **2.5** | **1.27** | **%64** | **0.83** |
| **10** | **2.5** | **1.27** | **%64** | **0.81** |
| **8** | **4** | **1.21** | **%61** | **0.83** |
| **5** | **5** | **1.07** | **%54** | **0.72** |
| **7** | **6** | **0.98** | **%49** | **0.69** |

Table (9)

The Ranking Order and the Weighted Means of Items Related to the "content"

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item No.** | **Rank Order** | **Weighted Mean** | **Weighted****percentile** | **Std. Deviation** |
| **10** | **1** | **1.16** | **%58** | **0.66** |
| **13** | **2** | **1.15** | **%57** | **0.66** |
| **11** | **3** | **1.06** | **%53** | **0.46** |
| **15** | **4** | **1.03** | **%52** | **0.52** |
| **12** | **5.5** | **0.98** | **%49** | **0.44** |
| **14** | **5.5** | **0.98** | **%49** | **0.56** |

Table (10)

The Ranking Order and the Weighted Means of Items Related to the "grammar"

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item No.** | **Rank Order** | **Weighted Mean** | **Weighted****percentile** | **Std. Deviation** |
| **21** | **1** | **1.39** | **%70** | **0.72** |
| **23** | **2** | **1.21** | **%61** | **0.75** |
| **22** | **3.5** | **0.96** | **%48** | **0.52** |
| **24** | **3.5** | **0.96** | **%48** | **0.55** |
| **17** | **5** | **0.89** | **%45** | **0.58** |
| **18** | **6** | **0.87** | **%44** | **0.54** |
| **19** | **7** | **0.83** | **%42** | **0.54** |
| **20** | **8** | **0.74** | **%37** | **0.50** |

Table (11)

The Ranking Order and the Weighted Means of Items Related to the "Spelling"

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item No.** | **Rank Order** | **Weighted Mean** | **Weighted****percentile** | **Std. Deviation** |
| **28** | **1** | **1.53** | **%77** | **0.66** |
| **32** | **2** | **1.46** | **%73** | **0.61** |
| **33** | **3** | **1.28** | **%64** | **0.75** |
| **34** | **4** | **1.01** | **%51** | **0.56** |
| **24** | **5** | **0.96** | **%48** | **0.55** |
| **26** | **6.5** | **0.93** | **%47** | **0.52** |
| **30** | **6.5** | **0.93** | **%47** | **0.49** |
| **31** | **8** | **0.89** | **%45** | **0.50** |
| **29** | **9** | **0.84** | **%42** | **0.53** |
| **27** | **10** | **0.77** | **%39** | **0.45** |

Table (12)

The Ranking Order and the Weighted Means of Items Related to the "Punctuation"

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item No.** | **Rank Order** | **Weighted Mean** | **Weighted****percentile** | **Std. Deviation** |
| **35** | **1** | **1.34** | **%67** | **0.66** |
| **36** | **2** | **1.31** | **%66** | **0.50** |
| **38** | **4** | **1.19** | **%60** | **0.66** |
| **39** | **4** | **1.19** | **%60** | **0.68** |
| **40** | **4** | **1.19** | **%60** | **0.72** |
| **37** | **6** | **1.15** | **%58** | **0.68** |
| **41** | **7** | **0.93** | **%47** | **0.49** |

Table (13)

The Ranking Order and the Weighted Means of Items Related to the "Format"

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item No.** | **Rank Order** | **Weighted Mean** | **Weighted****percentile** | **Std. Deviation** |
| **46** | **1** | **1.59** | **%80** | **0.72** |
| **45** | **2.5** | **1.51** | **%76** | **0.61** |
| **50** | **2.5** | **1.51** | **%76** | **0.72** |
| **48** | **4** | **1.50** | **%75** | **0.66** |
| **49** | **5** | **1.40** | **%70** | **0.65** |
| **44** | **6** | **1.33** | **%67** | **0.64** |
| **47** | **7** | **0.98** | **%49** | **0.48** |
| **52** | **8** | **0.96** | **%48** | **0.58** |
| **51** | **9** | **0.69** | **%35** | **0.58** |
| **43** | **10** | **0.36** | **%18** | **0.67** |
| **42** | **11** | **0.25** | **%13** | **0.53** |

Table (14)

The Ranking Order and the Weighted Means of Items Related to the "References"

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item No.** | **Rank Order** | **Weighted Mean** | **Weighted****percentile** | **Std. Deviation** |
| **56** | **1** | **1.78** | **%89** | **0.51** |
| **58** | **2** | **1.74** | **%87** | **0.56** |
| **57** | **3** | **1.46** | **%73** | **0.61** |
| **55** | **4** | **1.27** | **%64** | **0.62** |
| **54** | **5** | **1.13** | **%57** | **0.72** |
| **53** | **6** | **0.80** | **%40** | **0.80** |

Table (15)

The Ranking Order and the Weighted Means and Weighted percentile for Total

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Items**  | **Rank Order** | **Weighted Mean** | **Weighted****percentile** | **Std. Deviation** |
| **References**  | **1** | **1.36** | **%68** | **0.38** |
| **Introduction** | **2** | **1.30** | **%65** | **0.54** |
| **Punctuation** | **3** | **1.19** | **%60** | **0.48** |
| **Format** | **4** | **1.10** | **%55** | **0.35** |
| **Content** | **5** | **1.06** | **%53** | **0.39** |
| **Spelling** | **6** | **1.05** | **%52** | **0.33** |
| **Grammar** | **7** | **0.98** | **%49** | **0.43** |
| **Title page** | **8** | **0.90** | **%45** | **0.47** |

**A questionnaire for the research about ( Difficulties Faced by Iraqi EFL Student in Writing Graduation Projects)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Items | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 1. | Selecting a relevant and manageable research topic for my graduation project is challenging. | 30 | 10 | 5 | 12 | 5 |
| 2. | I clearly understand the requirements for an appropriate graduation project topic in my field. | 20 | 5 | 10 | 6 | 5 |
| 3. | Finding sufficient academic resources (e.g., books, journals) related to my chosen topic is difficult. | 10 | 20 | 5 | 7 | 5 |
| 4. | My chosen topic aligns well with my academic interests and career goals. | 20 | 10 | 15 | 6 | 5 |
| 5. | I received adequate guidance from instructors in refining my research topic. | 19 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 5 |
| 6. | Formulating clear research objectives and questions is difficult for me. | 17 | 20 | 1 | 5 | 5 |
| 7. | Conducting a comprehensive literature review is a major challenge. | 12 | 4 | 10 | 5 | 5 |
| 8. | I understand how to apply appropriate research methodologies (qualitative/quantitative) to my project. | 10 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 10 |
| 9. | Collecting and analyzing data for my project has been a significant challenge. | 21 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 10 |
| 10. | Time management during the research process is problematic for me. | 30 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 11. | Formatting my project according to departmental guidelines (e.g., font, spacing, margins) is challenging. | 23 | 20 | 10 | 5 | 5 |
| 12. | Structuring my project into logical sections (introduction, methodology, etc.) is clear to me. | 15 | 15 | 5 | 7 | 15 |
| 13. | I find it difficult to adhere to academic writing conventions (e.g., formal tone, citation styles). | 25 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 5 |
| 14. | Proofreading and editing my final draft for grammatical and structural errors is a major challenge. | 30 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 15. | The departmental guidelines for project layout and presentation were clearly communicated to me. | 6 | 10 | 15 | 5 | 15 |

**SA: Strongly Agree A:Agree N:Neutral D: Disagree SD:Strongly Disagree**

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 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**

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

**References**

1. (1998) .***Academic Standards and Assessment Pennsylvania School Code.*** Available from: www.pacode.com/secure/data/022/…chap4toc.html
2. Retrieved at: June 2008
3. American Psychological Association. (2009).***Publication Manual Of The American Psychological Association***, (6th Ed). Washington, Dc: American Psychological Association
4. Al- Samawi, Ahmad.M. (2000). ***An Introduction to Research Techniques in Linguistics and Literature. Sana'a***: Sana'a University Press
5. Bailey, Edward P., Jr & Powell, Philip A. & Shuttleworth, Jack, M. (1981).***Writing Research Papers: A Practical Guide*** . New York: Holt, Rinhart and Winston
6. Barr, A.S., Robert A. Davis and Palmer O. Johnson. (1953). ***Educational research and Appraisal***. Chicago: J.B. Lippincot Co.
7. Bachman, L.F. (1990). ***Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing.*** Oxford: Oxford University Press.
8. Best, John.W (1981) .***Research In Education*** .4th Ed .New Jersey: Prentice –Hall, INC. Engleood Cliffs
9. Best ,John W. & Kahn , James .V . (2008) .***Research In Education***. (10th Ed). Delhi :Pearson Education
10. Berge, P. and Saffioti, C. L., (1987).***Basic College Research***. New York: Neal-Schuman
11. Birjandi ,Parviz & Mosallanejad ,Parviz (2005).***Research :Methods And Principles 1 & 2*** .Tehran .
12. Brown, James, D. And Rodgers Theodore S.(2004***). Doing Second Language Research. Oxford***: Oxford University Press
13. Campbell, David F. J. (2005)***. Evaluation of University Research in Europe: Conceptual Framework and Comparative Typology.*** HOFO Working Paper Series 05.002
14. Council Rock School District (2008). ***Graduation Requirement: Graduation Project***
15. Ebest, Sally, Barr ;Alred ,Jerald ,J .;Brusaw ,Charles , T .;Olio , Walter ,E .(2003) .***Writing From A To Z :The Easy To Use Reference Handbook*** .(4th Ed) .New York :McGraw Hill Company
16. Frankel, Susan & McHale, Nina (2002). ***Writing the Research Paper***. Reference/Digital Resources Librarian. Howard Community College
17. Ferris, S. (2000). ***How to be a writer*.** Chichester, UK: Summersdale Publishers Ltd.
18. Gibaldi, J (2003). ***MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers****.* (6th Ed) .New York: The Modern Language Association of America.