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Difficulties Face Students In Writing a Research Project

ABSTRACT

Writing a Research is a serious and challenging mission requires an accepted knowledge of the subject matter .It is considered as a graduation research for students in the final year of studying at most of the college level . Writing a research needs careful planning and hard working in order to finish the task successfully. This study is an attempt to find out the challenges and difficulties that face students in writing a research graduation project. The sample of the study is (120) students (60 male and 60 female) which represents the fourth stage of students at English Department - College of Basic Education -Diyala University during the academic year 2022-2023. The study includes a questionnaire and informal interview with students of the target groups to gain information related to the aims of the study . Clearly, the results of the study showed that the participants face challenges and difficulties in writing a research project. The study explored a number of these challenges during writing the research project as misunderstanding the exact scope of the topic for the suggested title, lack of knowledge about the suggested topic, weakness in the methods of research as a guide for research writing, difficulty in searching for related references ,the absence of interest in writing a research and difficulty in understanding of the whole subject matter. The study ends up with some suggestions and recommendations which may help students for improving the process of writing research project.

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الصعوبات التي تواجه الطلبة في كتابة مشروع بحث التخرج

نزار حسين ولي / جامعة ديالى / كلية التربية الأساسية

الخلاصة:

تعتبر مهمة كتابة البحث مسألة جادة وفيها تحدي كبير للطلبة لأنها تتطلب نسبة مقبولة من المعرفة في موضوع البحث والتي تعتبر بحث تخرج للطلبة في المرحلة الرابعة على مستوى الدراسة الجامعية. تتطلب كتابة البحث خطة محكمة وعمل جاد من أجل أكمل المهمة بنجاح وهذه الدراسة هي محاولة لمعرفة المعوقات التي تواجه الطلبة في بحث التخرج أما عينة البحث فهم (120) طالب وطالبة (60 طالب و 60 طالبة) يمثلون طلبة قسم اللغة الأنكليزية-الدراسة الصباحية-المرحلة الرابعة- كلية التربية

الأساسية –جامعة ديالى للسنة الدراسية 2022- 2023. تتضمن الدراسة أستييان ومقابلة من اجل الحصول على معلومات مرتبطة بأهداف الدراسة التي أوضحت نتائجها بان الطلبة لديهم معوقات ومشاكل في كتابة بحث التخرج منها عدم الفهم الواضح للعنوان ومدى شمولية وعمق عنوان البحث وقلة المعرفة المناسبة لدى الطالب بعنوان البحث بالإضافة الى الضعف في منهجية كتابة البحث كدليل للكتابة بالإضافة الى الضعف في البحث عن المراجع وعدم الرغبة في كتابة البحث وصعوبة فهم موضوع عنوان البحث بالكامل قدمت الدراسة بعض المقترحات والتوصيات والتي قد تساعد في تحسين عملية كتابة بحث التخرج للطلبة.

الكلمات المفتاحية :- كتابة البحث , مشروع بحث التخرج

1.Introduction

Writing as a skill is regarded as one of the basic skills of English language .It is a difficult skill for most of learners who learn English as second language. Forming a good piece of writing requires not only high proficiency of the second language but also demands good cognitive skills in organizing ideas and information Khan, I. (2011).

In order to succeed in this task ,writing needs certain abilities as previous knowledge of grammatical strucures of language and vocabularies of the target language in order to write correctly. Research writing Project can be defined as a research required from students at the fourth stage as part of graduation . Students have a title in one of the fields of English language ; linguistics, literature and methodology.Each student has a supervisor to guide ,facilitate and advise students by giving notes in order to finish the research successfully at the exact time. Students may face various challenges in writing a research.The role of students is to have the linguistic ability to write about the suggested topic.Students may suggest preliminary outline for the research .The suggested outline may contain the main titles and subtitles about the topic.Supervisors may modify by adding or omitting the suggested topics in order to begin with writing the research.Writing depends on the ability of students in writing and their knowledge about the topic.Writing a research depends on student's ability in the methods of writing a research Widagdo (2017).

There are internal and external factors affecting on students in research writing. The absence of experience may be one of the main factors in writing a research project. lack of motivation may consider as an internal reason. Deficiency of proficiency in English language and,understanding research methodology,are classified as external factors.Writing in general needs good knowledge of the topic and ability to make an outline as essential requirement for writing a well - qualified research project.

This study attempts to find out the difficulties or challenges which may face undergraduate students in writing a research project and suggest suitable solutions to these problems or difficulties. Students may face many difficulties

as they are writing research proposals and projects at the fourth stage. The main reason for this research is to discuss the common obstacles in this stage of writing and give an idea to teachers (supervisors) to be aware of these challenges and the suggested techniques for overcoming them.

2. Historical

Background

writing as a procedure is stimulating process system which depends on the scientific methods of research writing .It needs certain qualifications from students .It is related to writing a research according to the linguistic structure of English language in addition to follow the suitable way that deals with the scientific methods of research writing. Fear of writing is considered one of the challenges which widespread among students . Students are afraid of writing practice . It involves decent understanding of the language and the aptitude of locate forward the concepts logically and scientifically. Many studies conducted on writing skill and the challenges that may face students in writing. the productive skills of language , writing and speaking display great worry among students more than other language skills, (Atay & Kurt, 2006 and Aydin, 2008).

The ability of writing is considered one of the basic requirements in academic writing. Students may face many challenges in writing a research project . Topics may be too broad , too limited or may be unclear topics. In addition , students may face the failure in methodology which is related to the systematic and logical way of writing . Students need a scientific knowledge about the suggested topic in writing as terms of the main titles or subtitles that create the outline of the research . In writing a research, there are problems in indicating the literature review that gives a historical background about the topic and previous studies that studied by others concerning the same subject or similar to the main title.

The deficiency of typical format of writing and the nonexistence of knowledge in identifying the topic may regard as obstacles in writing which means lack or weak informaton that students have about the topic. Some students may find difficulty in understanding the notes, modifications and feedbacks that are presented from the supervisors about to the topic. Many interesting studies related to the difficulties of undergraduate students were conducted. The study focused on three studies as related literature which might have a direct relation to the present study arranged historically . The first one was done by Al-Khairi, M. (2013) which investigated the major academic writing problems in Saudi Arabia. The undergraduates students found difficulty in writing a research project and had weak knowledge about the suitable methods in writing . The second study presented by Manchishi, Ndhlovu, & Mwanza, (2015) which investigated the problems and challenges faced by postgraduate students in University of Zambia. The study concluded that the challenges that face university students in Zambia dealt with developing their writing in English. The study explored that learners had a difficulty in

presenting ideas or information about the topic in a correct way. Students in Zambia would change the stylistic features from their first language to the second language (English). It created a lot of problems and difficulties as learners which influenced by the mother language. Students wrote long sentences, repeated the same ideas and discussed things around without directing the main idea. The third study was submitted by Al-Qaseri I. (2016) which investigated the problems in writing a research for undergraduate students in (Ibb) (name of a city) University in Yemen. The study found that students were weak in constructing correct sentences and students had weakness in vocabulary and using English language skills.

Ankawi A. (2015) states that One of the main reasons for lack of proficiency in writing among undergraduate students is related to grammatical weakness. It deals with inability in using the linguistic structures correctly as using the tenses in writing a research. lack of practice which means that students didn't have enough practice in writing a research project. Furthermore, participants had weak knowledge about the research title. This issue leads to difficulty in getting information and references about the suggested topic.

Students have a clear weakness in using the references and collecting data about their topics. On the other hand, some other participants have weakness in the methodology of research which is studied in detail in the previous year. Hence, it is supposed for students to have an accepted ability in writing a research project.

3. Research Project Requirements

Research project is a research is written by students at the fourth stage as part of graduation requirements with the help of a supervisor. The main points that are needed for completing the research project successfully can be summarized in the following points Rumsey, S. (2008) :-

A. Students need to find more about the historical background on the subject. They can search about the topic to have a comprehensive idea about it.

B. Checking different types of references to get information about the suggested topics particularly the main references which contain detailed information. These general references may help for seeking good background material about the suggested title.

C. Studying previous studies to have an idea about the scientific methods in writing a research as studies are different in types and procedures.

D. Suggesting preliminary outline for writing the research containing the main titles, sub-titles and sections to find out the scope of the research.

E.Listening to the modifications of the supervisor on the suggested outline as supervisors may add , omit and modificate titles in order to have the final form of the outline to the suggested project.

F.Writing the titles of the outline by following the paraphrasing technique which needs knowledge about the linguistic features of language in addition of using new vocabularies and data for completing the topic successfully.

G.Presenting the draft of the research to the supervisor for checking and correcting mistakes if any.

These are some of the basic requirements that are needed in writing a research.It is supposed to be studied and discussed in detail in the subject of (Methods of Research).The syllabus of this subject give a chance to have a simplified idea about the features of the suggested research projects and the the main steps of writing and collecting data about the topic.However ,students still have difficulties in writing a research project.

4.Methodology

A questionnaire was constructed based on the review of literature and previous studies. The questionnaire consisted of (11) items related to the exact problems or difficulties that may face students in writing a research(Appendix No.1).The pilot administration was tested with a group of (50) students before it was submitted to the sample of study to have an idea about the items,the time and students' responses about the questionnaire in general.

The sample of the study consisted of (120) students of morning study (60 males and 60 females) at English Department –College of Basic Education – Diyala university during the academic year 2022-2023.

The questionnaire was distributed to the the graduate students in their classes. It consisted of three point scale (agree,disagree,and neutral).

The purpose of study is described clearly to students . Significantly, students were informed that their answers in the questionnaire were only used for research purposes and kept privately. The participants in the study were selected based on appropriate sampling technique so that they participated in responding the questionnaire based on their agreeing and readiness .The participants had been studied the subject of (Methods of Research)at the third stage .It is supposed that students have at least the basic steps and the main principles in writing a research.

Questionnaire and informal interviews are used to collect data from the sample of the study. The questionnaire covers the main parts of writing a research . The interview is carried out to identify the problems and reach critical solutions due to the aims of the study. In general the variables are divided and

categorized as, (Agree, Disagree, and Neutral). The study is intended to give answers for the following questions:-

- 1- What are the problems that face students in writing a research project?
- 2-What are the suggested techniques that may improve the undergraduate students in this stage to do well in writing research ?

5.Results and Discussions

According to the results of study Table (1), the postgraduate students had a reasonable level of difficulty in writing academic paper .These difficulties are arranged according to the scores of each item as follows:-

- 1.There was almost (80.83 %) of the participants reported that they had faced problems in methods of writing a research.
- 2- It was also found that (78.33 %)of the students had always encountered many difficulties in formating proposals and research project.
- 3-About (76.66%) face a difficulty related to lack of knowledge about the suggested topic.
- 4-Approximately (75.83 %) of them had linguistic challenges in writing a research.
- 5-(72.5%) of students didn't have interest in writing a research project which is regarded a real problem in this stage.

Writing a research project is not an easy duty; in fact, it is a very challenging project that requires a lot of corrective knowledge, research practice and writing experience. These issues are considered basic things in writing a research. Successful research also demands appropriate use of methods of research and linguistic ability .

The problems that face students are an inappropriate grammatical structures, unsuitable language and style, , weak form in paper organization, and content. Hence,these difficulties lead to writing problems.

Supervisors may play a positive role in writing a research by motivating students and encouraging them in acquiring in depth knowledge while conducting research projects .Supervisors may use a competition as a technique among students by giving awards for the best research proposals or projects.

Fareh (2010). states four different areas which include difficulties in writing a research.These areas are related to methods of writing a research, linguistic challenges; lack of knowledge and weakness in using of resources.

Table (1)
Percentage of Difficulties in Writing a Research Project among Students

No.	items	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	percentage
1.	Lack of knowledge of research methodology.	97	13	10	80.83%
2.	Difficulty in formatting research proposals and projects.	94	10	16	78.33%
3.	Having the ability of selecting research tools, data collection, and data analysis.	48	30	42	40%
4.	Not following research principles including plagiarism.	28	24	68	23.33%
5.	Facing problems in reporting the conclusion and results .	62	24	34	51.66%
6.	Having Linguistic challenges in writing.	91	20	9	75.83%
7.	Having the ability to quote from references.	40	42	38	33.33%
8.	The ability of using online references and resources.	62	28	30	51.66%
9.	Students don't have an interest in writing a research project.	87	23	10	72.5%
10.	Having knowledge of the well-known and modern references.	48	44	28	40%
11.	weak knowledge about the suggested topic .	92	9	19	76.66%

6.Conclusion

The present study demonstrated that the postgraduate students had difficulties in different parts of producing academic paper . Therefore, academic writing may be given a lot of concern in order to overtake these difficulties .Research project is an essential part of university programs. Thus ,postgraduate students need effective writing skills to enable their research writing .

Based on the analysis of students' views and the interviews of participants, the study found that the main challenges and difficulties students face while composing and writing proposals and research projects.The difficulties are arranged according to their percentage degree Table (2)

Table (2)

The Main Difficulties in Writing a Research Project

No.	Items	Percentage
1.	Lack of knowledge of research methodology.	80.83%
2.	Difficulty in formatting research proposals and projects.	78.33%
3.	Weak of knowledge about the suggested topic.	76.66%
4.	Facing Linguistic challenges in writing.	75.83%
5.	Students have weak interest in writing a research project.	72.5%

The most common challenges or difficulties students face while writing research. The broad challenges can be summarized as the following:-

1. Writing the research proposals and projects in English as Second Language deals with the methods of writing research principles and procedures.
2. Facing linguistic challenges related to the correct use of the grammatical structures in writing a research .
- 3.Lack of formatting proposals in writing a research.
4. Weak information about the suggested topic .
- 5.Lack of interest concerning writing a research project.

7.Suggestions and Recommendations

Writing a research project is a basic part for success .Thus,teachers' role is basic and essential in order to reduce the stress on students in writing a research project.Certain suggestions may be useful in this field as :-

- 1.Using different techniques,activities and workshops in order to make this task easier to students .
2. Group works or research groups may be suitable to make the participants less stressful in writing a research.
3. Motivating students may help and encourage students to do well in writing a research.
- 4.Supervisors may offer students good guide to improve students' writing proficiency .
5. Supervisors may suggest samples that agree with the fields of the students in order to supplement their basic knowledge of writing.

6. Creating recommendations may be useful by giving marks ,rewards and prizes as a technique in dealing with research project. 7. Training students at the third stage to write a simplified research project may help students in writing a real research project at the fourth stage.

As recommendations, Further research can be presented to find out the research challenges in each variable discussed in this study.

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Appendix No.1

A

Questionnaire submitted to student concerning Difficulties in Writing a Research Project

No,	items	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Notes
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1.	Lack of knowledge of research methodology.				
2.	Difficulty in formatting research proposals and projects.				
3.	Having the ability of selecting research tools, data collection, and data analysis.				
4.	Not following research principles including plagiarism.				
5.	Facing problems in reporting the conclusion and results.				
6.	Having Linguistic challenges in writing.				
7.	Having the ability to quote from references.				
8.	The ability of using online references and resources.				
9.	Students don't have an interest in writing a research project.				
10.	Having knowledge of the well-known and modern, references.				
11.	weak knowledge about the suggested topic .				