

**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Mouloud MAMMERY University of Tizi-Ouzou
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English**



**Master's Degree Program
Specialism:
Foreign Language Didactics**

Subject

**A Course in
Writing Academic Research**

Teaching Unit: Methodology

Course designed by
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2023-2024

Description of the Course

This advanced course in "Writing Academic Research" is meticulously designed for Master's level students who are in the process of writing their Master's dissertations. It aims to equip students with the essential writing skills and methodological expertise required to produce a well-structured and academically rigorous Master's dissertation. Beginning with an introduction to academic research writing, the course provides students with a solid foundation in the principles and nuances of scholarly communication. It then transitions into selecting a research topic and research design, where students learn to identify and formulate a research question with precision and academic relevance. Writing a well-structured research proposal is the crucial next step covered, followed by a comprehensive study of the APA referencing system. As students advance, they learn about the different moves of dissertations' general introductions, creating a strong opening that outlines the study's scope and significance. The course then shifts focus to the literature review chapter, where students learn how to synthesize existing research to set the stage for their work. The intricacies of detailing research design and methodology are explored, equipping students with the skills to convey their empirical study effectively. Writing the results chapter is tackled next, instructing students on the clear presentation of their findings. The subsequent discussion chapter is where students interpret their results within the broader academic conversation. At the end, students will acquire the ability to write comprehensive conclusions and abstracts for their dissertations. This encompasses drawing significant deductions, exploring broader implications. Mastering these skills will enable students to produce coherent, engaging, and scholarly dissertations.

Objectives of the Course

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to analyse research data effectively.
- Apply appropriate research methodologies to investigate a chosen topic.
- Critically evaluate existing literature to support research findings.
- Formulate clear and concise research questions for academic studies.
- Interpret research results accurately and draw meaningful conclusions.
- Justify the significance of research topics based on scholarly literature.
- Organize research findings logically in written academic reports.
- Synthesize information from various sources to support research arguments.
- Utilize the APA referencing system correctly in academic writing.
- Write comprehensive research proposals that outline research objectives and methodologies.

The Syllabus

- An Introduction to writing Academic Research
- Selecting a Research Topic and a Research Design
- Writing a Research Proposal
- A.P.A Referencing System
- Writing the General Introduction
- Writing the Review of the Literature Chapter
- Writing the Research Design and Methodology Chapter
- Writing the Results Chapter
- Writing the Discussion Chapter
- Writing the General Conclusion & the Abstract.
- Creative Vs Academic Writing

Recommended References

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An Introduction to Writing Academic Research

Objectives

This chapter provides students with an introduction to the field of writing academic research, offering foundational insights into the essential components and processes involved. After completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Distinguish between the processes of conducting research and writing research, highlighting their respective roles and importance.
- Identify and explain the characteristics and structure of a master's dissertation as a specific academic genre.
- Compare and contrast different types of dissertations.
- Analyse the specific requirements and guidelines provided by the Department of English for completing a master's dissertation.

1. Doing Research Vs. Writing Research

Engaging in research and putting that research into writing are two distinct yet closely related aspects of academic work. "Doing research" involves activities like conducting experiments, gathering data, and reviewing existing literature to address a specific question or topic. It's the phase where you gather all the necessary information and lay the groundwork for your study.

Conversely, "writing research" is the process of transforming the collected information into a well-structured document. This includes presenting your findings, creating a clear argument, and adhering to specific formatting and citation styles. Writing research is about making your work understandable and accessible to others.

To put it simply, doing research is the active exploration, and writing research is the thoughtful and organized presentation of what you've discovered. Both are crucial aspects of the research

process, each requiring its own set of skills, and together, they make up the complete journey of scholarly inquiry.

2. Master's Dissertation as a Genre

The terms 'thesis' and 'dissertation' are used differently in different countries. In most UK universities, a 'thesis' is written for the research degree of PhD while a 'dissertation' is written for a Master's degree. In many American universities, the two terms are reversed. This course uses the UK terms of a PhD thesis and a Master's dissertation.

Traditionally, the term **genre** was confined to describing literary texts named according to their forms such as poetry, prose, drama etc. However, in recent times, the term has transcended its traditional literary framework and gained widespread acceptance in broader contexts.

A genre may be defined as a class of spoken or written texts which share some sets of communicative purposes and display common textual features. According to Swales (1990, p.58), a genre is

a class of communicative events the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style.

Swales' definition underscores three critical criteria for delineating a target genre. These include:

- ***Communicative purpose(s)***: the most decisive factor in categorizing a genre. It serves as the primary determinant guiding our assessment of whether a text aligns with a specific genre. Swales argues that the agreed-upon communicative purpose should be established by the discourse community employing the genre

- ***Schematic structure:*** The "schematic structure of a genre" can be thought of as the blueprint or plan that a particular type of writing follows. It is like a template or a set of guidelines that writers use when creating a certain kind of document. Understanding the schematic structure helps writers organize their ideas and present information in a way that is clear and effective for readers.

Bhatia (1993) notes that the cognitive structuring or schematic structure in a genre is not an individual attribute but a property inherent in the genre itself, emerging from the "accumulated and conventionalized social knowledge available to a particular discourse or professional community" (1993, p.21).

- ***Content & style:*** Content refers to the information, ideas, and subject matter presented within a piece of writing. Different genres have distinct content expectations. For example, a news article will focus on reporting factual information, while a persuasive essay may emphasize arguments and evidence. Understanding the expected content is crucial for effectively conveying the intended message of a specific genre.

Style pertains to the manner in which ideas are expressed, including choices in language, tone, and overall writing technique. Each genre has a unique style that contributes to its distinctiveness. For instance, an academic research paper typically employs formal language and a neutral tone, whereas a creative short story may involve more expressive language and varied tones. Recognizing and adapting to the appropriate style enhances the effectiveness and appropriateness of the writing within a given genre.

While content addresses what is conveyed in a piece of writing, style focuses on how it is presented.

3. Types of Dissertations

In the field of academic research writing, scholars have explored how different types of theses are organized. Dudley-Evans (1999) categorizes the commonly used 'IMRAD' (introduction–

methods–results–discussion) type thesis as a 'traditional' thesis. Building on this, Thompson (1999) further classifies traditional theses into two categories: 'simple' and 'complex' organizational patterns.

A 'simple' traditional thesis typically reports on the findings of a single study. Its structure follows a conventional sequence, including:

- General Introduction
- Review of the literature
- Research design & methodology
- Results
- Discussion
- General conclusion.

This straightforward arrangement ensures a clear and logical presentation, making it easy for readers to follow the research's progression.

A thesis with a 'complex' internal structure is one that reports on more than one study. It typically commences with 'introduction' and 'review of the literature' sections, as with the simple traditional thesis. It might then have a 'general methods' section which is followed by a series of sections that report on each of the individual studies. The thesis ends with a general overall conclusions section

4. Requirements of the Department of English

The students must organize and present their research in a way that aligns with established conventions, ensuring a clear and straightforward approach to communicating their findings.

They are required to write a Master's dissertation following the **traditional simple model**. This entails adhering to a set of guidelines that dictate both the format and structure of the dissertation:

Format	Structure	Referencing System
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of pages: 50 (around 2000 words) - Font size: Times New Roman 12 (text) 14 (titles) - Line Spacing: double (text) , single (block quotations) - Margins: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Left 4 Cm Right 1 Cm Top 2.5 Cm Bottom 2.5 CM - Page numbering: Roman numerals for all content preceding the general introduction. Arabic numerals starting from page one of the general introduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Front page (doubled) - Dedication - Acknowledgements - Abstract - List of abbreviations, figures, tables, symbols etc. - Contents - General Introduction (around 5 pages) - Review of the literature (around 15 pages) - Methodology (around 5 pages) - Results (around 5 pages) - Discussion (around 15 pages) - General Conclusion (around 5 pages) - Reference List - Appendices 	<p>APA (either the 6th or the 7th edition)</p>

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Selecting a Research Topic & a Research Design

Objectives

This chapter outlines the systematic process students should follow to select a research topic for their master's dissertation. After completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Identify and select a relevant and feasible research topic.
- Evaluate and choose an appropriate research design methodology.
- Formulate and raise a clear and compelling research issue.
- Conduct a comprehensive literature survey and synthesize key findings.
- Develop clear and testable hypotheses based on the research issue and literature review.

1. Selection of a Research Topic

The starting point of a research is the selection of a research topic. Researchers choose topics that are of interest to them.

Before choosing a research topic, experienced and inexperienced researchers alike should keep the following points in mind.

- Topic should be suitable for research.
- The researcher should have interest in it.
- Topic should not be chosen by compulsion from someone else.

Where can an inexperienced researcher receive the inspiration for a good research topic?

Some sources of identification of a research topic are the following:

- Theory of One's Own Interest:

Sometimes, while reading academic literature or engaging in discussions, you may come across theories or concepts that resonate strongly with your interests or experiences. This personal connection can serve as a starting point for further exploration and research.

- Daily Problems:

Research topics can also stem from practical problems or challenges encountered in everyday life or professional settings. Addressing these issues through research not only offers solutions but also contributes to the advancement of knowledge in relevant fields.

- **Suggestions from Research Articles:**

The conclusion section of research articles often includes suggestions for future research directions or areas that warrant further investigation. Paying attention to these suggestions can provide valuable insights into potential research topics.

- **Technological Changes:**

Rapid advancements in technology often create new opportunities for research in various disciplines. Monitoring technological changes and their implications can inspire research topics that explore the impact, applications, or ethical considerations of emerging technologies.

- **Recent Trends:**

Keeping abreast of recent trends, developments, or controversies in your field can spark ideas for research topics that address current issues or gaps in knowledge. Researching these trends allows you to contribute to ongoing conversations and debates within your discipline.

- **Unexplored Areas:**

Exploring uncharted territory within your field can lead to innovative and impactful research. Identifying areas that have received limited attention or are under-researched provides opportunities to make original contributions and expand the boundaries of knowledge.

- **Discussion with Teachers, Friends, and Potential Supervisors:**

Engaging in discussions with educators, peers, and potential supervisors can offer valuable perspectives and insights into potential research topics. Their feedback and guidance can help you identify promising research avenues and refine your ideas.

- **Prior Research Results:**

Building on the findings of prior research allows you to contribute to existing knowledge by replicating or extending previous studies. Replication studies validate existing findings, while extension studies explore new aspects or implications of prior research, fostering cumulative knowledge growth.

Here are some criteria that can help in determining whether a research topic is good:

- Is it creative?
- Will the results make a valuable and significant contribution to the literature?

In order to answer these questions and to check the originality of the topic, we have to look through the existing literature. It is the next step of the planning phase.

2. Reading about the Topic

After choosing a topic, the researcher has to do literature survey connected with the issue in order to become familiar with the existing literature.

Literature survey can help guide the researcher in an appropriate direction by answering several questions related to the topic area:

- It is very essential to know whether the defined problem has already been solved.
- What do the results of previous studies suggest?
- What are the techniques that are useful to investigate the problem?
- Did previous researches encounter any unforeseen methodological difficulties?
- Does more research need to be conducted on this topic?

Literature survey helps us in

- Sharpening the Problem:

A literature survey allows researchers to delve into existing studies related to their topic of interest. By analysing previous research, researchers can identify gaps, inconsistencies, or areas needing further exploration, which helps refine the research problem. It may also lead to the

reformulation of the problem or the identification of closely related issues that warrant investigation.

- **Gaining Understanding of the Chosen Problem:**

Through a comprehensive literature survey, researchers gain a deeper understanding of the problem they have chosen to investigate. By examining prior studies, theoretical frameworks, and empirical findings, researchers can grasp the complexities, nuances, and contextual factors surrounding the chosen problem. This understanding provides a solid foundation for designing and conducting their own research.

- **Acquiring Theoretical and Practical Knowledge:**

Literature review provides researchers with access to a wealth of theoretical and practical knowledge relevant to their research problem. By synthesizing insights from existing literature, researchers acquire a robust understanding of theoretical frameworks, methodologies, and research techniques applicable to their study. This knowledge equips researchers with the tools and resources needed to effectively investigate the problem and contribute to the existing body of knowledge.

- **Establishing Contextual Links to Previous Studies:**

A literature survey enables researchers to establish connections between their chosen problem and previous research studies. By reviewing prior literature, researchers can identify key themes, trends, and debates in the field, demonstrating how their study fits within the broader context of existing scholarship. This contextualization helps situate the research within the relevant scholarly discourse and highlights its significance and relevance.

In summary, conducting a literature survey is an essential step in the research process that not only provides researchers with valuable insights and knowledge but also helps refine the research problem, gain a deeper understanding of the chosen topic, acquire necessary theoretical and practical knowledge, and establish contextual links to previous studies.

Literature survey is a collection of research publications, books and other documents related to the topic. It is time-consuming. Fortunately the development of comprehensive databases has facilitated the process of conducting literature reviews. One can survey

- the journals which publish abstracts of papers published in various journals,
- review articles related to the topic chosen,
- journals which publish research articles,
- proceedings of conferences, workshops, etc.,
- Master dissertations and PhD theses.

Through survey one can collect relevant information about the problem. Clarity of ideas can be acquired through study of literature. Apart from literature directly connected with the problem, the literature that is connected with similar problems is also useful. It helps formulate the problem in a clear-cut way. A review on past work helps us know the outcome of those investigations where similar problems were solved. It can help us design methodology for the present work. We can also explore the vital links with the various trends and phases in the chosen topic and familiarize with characteristic precepts, concepts and interpretations. Further, it can help us formulate a satisfactory structure of the research proposal.

3- Raising an issue

In research, the process of raising an issue involves identifying and articulating a specific problem or question that serves as the focal point of investigation. A well-formulated research problem is crucial as it lays the groundwork for the entire research endeavour. When raising an issue, researchers typically aim to meet three key criteria:

- Describing the Relationship between Variables:

A fundamental aspect of a research problem is its ability to describe the relationship between two or more variables. Variables are characteristics, properties, or attributes that can vary and are subject to investigation within a study. The research problem should clearly delineate the relationship between these variables, specifying how changes in one variable may influence another. This relationship forms the basis for hypothesis formulation and guides subsequent data collection and analysis.

- Taking the Form of a Question:

An effective research problem takes the form of a clear and precisely stated question. This question serves as the guiding inquiry that directs the research process and focuses the investigation on specific aspects of the problem. It should be phrased in a way that clearly identifies the variables under study and the nature of the relationship between them. By framing the research problem as a question, researchers provide a structured and focused approach to inquiry, facilitating systematic investigation and analysis.

- Being Capable of Empirical Testing:

Perhaps most importantly, a research problem must be capable of empirical testing, meaning that it can be evaluated through the collection and analysis of empirical data derived from direct observation or experimentation. The research problem should be answerable through the systematic gathering and analysis of relevant data, allowing researchers to draw meaningful conclusions and make empirical contributions to the field. This requires formulating research questions that are specific, measurable, and conducive to data collection methods appropriate for the research context.

In summary, raising an issue in research involves formulating a research problem that meets three essential criteria: describing the relationship between variables, taking the form of a question, and being capable of empirical testing. By adhering to these criteria, researchers can

ensure that their research problems are well-defined, focused, and conducive to systematic inquiry and analysis.

4. Selecting an Adequate Research Design

Selecting the appropriate research design is a critical step in the research process, laying the foundation for how data will be collected, analysed, and interpreted. Research design refers to the overall strategy or plan that guides the researcher in answering their research question or hypothesis. It serves as the roadmap for conducting the study, outlining the methods and procedures to be employed.

The students are provided with the opportunity to select from a range of research designs, each offering distinct methodologies and approaches for conducting their research:

- **Case Study Research**

Case study research involves the intensive and in-depth examination of a particular phenomenon, situation, or individual over a period of time within its natural context or setting. Researchers collect rich, qualitative data through methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. Case studies are valuable for exploring complex issues, understanding unique contexts, and generating rich, detailed insights. They provide a holistic understanding of the subject under investigation, allowing researchers to uncover patterns, relationships, and underlying processes.

- **Survey Research**

Survey research involves the systematic collection of data from a sample of individuals or groups using standardized questionnaires or interviews. Surveys are versatile tools that can be used for descriptive, exploratory, or explanatory research purposes. Researchers use surveys to gather information about people's preferences, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and characteristics. By employing random sampling techniques and ensuring survey validity and reliability,

researchers can generalize findings to larger populations and draw meaningful conclusions about trends, patterns, and relationships.

- **Interpretive Research**

Interpretive research is grounded in the belief that social reality is constructed and understood through human experiences and social contexts. This research paradigm emphasizes the subjective nature of reality and seeks to explore and interpret the meanings, symbols, and interpretations that individuals attach to their experiences. Researchers use qualitative methods such as interviews, participant observation, and textual analysis to uncover the diverse perspectives, values, and cultural contexts that shape social phenomena. Interpretive research aims to generate rich, nuanced understandings of complex social processes and interactions.

- **Experimental Research**

Experimental research is a rigorous research design used to establish causal relationships between variables by manipulating an independent variable and observing its effects on a dependent variable. In experimental studies, researchers control for extraneous variables through random assignment and use experimental and control groups to compare outcomes. This design allows researchers to draw causal inferences about the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Experimental research is often considered the "gold standard" because of its ability to establish cause-and-effect relationships and its high internal validity.

- **Quasi-experimental Design**

Quasi-experimental design is a research approach that resembles experimental design but lacks full control over the independent variable. It involves comparing groups that are not randomly assigned, making it useful for studying causal relationships when random assignment is impractical or unethical.

It can also involve working with a single group, often referred to as a pre-post design or a one-group pretest post-test design. In this approach, researchers measure the outcome variables both before and after the intervention or treatment is administered to the same group of participants. This design allows for the examination of changes within the group over time, but lacks a control group for comparison.

Practice

Activity #1

Consider the following fields of research:

ELT, Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics; Semiotics.

- 1. Select a field of study.

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- 2. Suggest a research topic.

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- 3. Think about an appropriate research design to investigate the suggested topic and justify your answer.

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2. Does the research question focus on a specific aspect of the topic?

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3. Is the research question relevant to the chosen topic and suitable for academic inquiry?

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4. Does the research question align with the research methodology used in the dissertation?

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5. Is the research question answerable through the data collected and analysed in the dissertation?

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Writing a Research Proposal

Objectives

This chapter aims at equipping MA students with the essential skills and knowledge required to design research proposal. By focusing on the fundamental components of a proposal, including the formulation of research questions, the construction of a literature review, and the development of a detailed methodology, students will gain the ability to articulate their research ideas clearly and persuasively. After completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Identify the key components of a research proposal by examining and analysing examples of successful proposals.
- Formulate clear and concise research questions and hypotheses that align with the proposed study's objectives.
- Construct a comprehensive literature review that critically evaluates existing research and identifies gaps that the proposed study will address.
- Develop a detailed methodology section that outlines the research design, data collection methods, and analysis techniques appropriate for the proposed study.

1. What is a Research Proposal?

Research proposals play an important part in the students' lives. It is the most important step in the whole process. It is often the key element to the successful thesis or dissertation. It informs your potential supervisor about your conceptualisation of the total research process that you propose to undertake so that they can examine its validity and appropriateness. You need to write a research proposal whether your research study is quantitative or qualitative and in both cases you use a similar structure.

A research proposal is an overall plan, scheme, structure and strategy designed to obtain answers to the research questions or problems that constitute your research project. A research

proposal should outline the various tasks you plan to undertake to fulfil your research objectives, test hypotheses (if any) or obtain answers to your research questions. It should also state your reasons for undertaking the study.

2. Sections of a Research Proposal

A good research proposal should:

- Present background information on the area of interest.
- Articulate the rationale for focusing on a specific aspect of the subject, aiming to convince your supervisor of its significance.
- Clearly state the overall goal of your research, defining what you aim to achieve.
- Provide an outline of your research methods, detailing how you plan to conduct your study.

2.1 Title

At this early stage, you need only provide a working title. You can decide on the exact wording for your title when you are nearer to completing your dissertation.

First of all, you need to pick a subject that interests you; then, you have to focus on some aspect of that subject which you think is worth researching. Suppose that you are a Master's student interested in choosing e-Learning as the subject of your dissertation. However, you cannot do a dissertation on the general subject of e-Learning: your proposal must be focused on a particular aspect of e-Learning. If you were keen to investigate how academic staff are being prepared to cope with the challenge of e-Learning in the university environment, then that would qualify as an example of a focused project.

2.2 Relevant Background Literature

When your supervisor asks 'Why do you want to study that area?' or 'What evidence is there that it is an area worthy of study?', your background reading becomes important. You can show that you have done some initial reading and explain why you think your proposal is a good idea.

For example, in the case of e-Learning, there might be different opinions in the literature. Some sources might be really excited about the growth of e-Learning in universities, saying it is great for teaching and that staff are fully on board. On the other hand, some sources might doubt these views, saying there is not enough solid evidence, and proper research is needed to understand how staff are getting ready for this new technological challenge.

Reading about the topic will help you demonstrate the relationship between the proposed study and what has already been done in the particular area including:

- What conclusions were reached in this previous research, by whom and when;
- Whether these conclusions are in agreement or conflict with each other;
- The main issues or controversies that surrounded the problem.
- How other scholars have written about your topic (in addition to what they have written).
- The range of theories scholars use to analyse their primary materials or data
- How other scholars connect their specific research topics to larger issues, questions, or practices within the field.
- The best methodologies and research techniques for your particular topic
- To indicate the gap that the study will fill.

2.3 Overall Aim & Individual Objectives

you need to clarify your overall research aim and the specific objectives that you require to meet in order to achieve your overall research aim. Your overall research aim will be a general statement. It tends to derive from your focus of study. In the e-Learning example, where the research focus is to investigate how academic staff are being prepared to cope with the challenge of e-Learning in the university environment, the research aim could be expressed as follows:

Research Focus: To investigate how academic staff are being prepared to cope with the challenge of e-Learning in the university environment.

Research Aim: The overall aim of this research is to advance an understanding of the impact of e-Learning in the university environment in relation to academic staff training preparation.

Follow these three simple steps to formulate an overall aim of your study:

Step 1: Think of one word to identify and represent your research area (e.g., e-learning).

Step 2: Include additional words to refine and clarify your research focus (e.g., teachers, attitudes, Algerian universities).

Step 3: Connect these words to construct a sentence describing your research focus. Then, incorporate the phrase 'overall aim' to articulate your formal research aim.

“the overall aim of this research is to explore the teachers’ attitudes towards the introduction of eLearning in Algerian universities”

- Note that the overall aim is a general statement to be found in the title of the dissertation.

You now have to decide what you need to do in order to realize your overall research aim. This means that you have to list your **individual objectives**, or mini-aims. Listed below are two examples of two individual objectives for the aforementioned overall aim:

Specifically, within the context of higher education, the objectives of this research are to:

- Examine the factors and analyse the challenges hindering the effective implementation of e-Learning programs.
- Evaluate critically models and frameworks essential for assisting academic staff in managing the complexities of e-Learning.
- Explore the attitudes and the practices of staff stakeholders regarding e-Learning readiness.

It is important that for your overall aim and individual objectives to incorporate keywords that indicate in-depth academic study. Keywords such as *identify*, *analyse*, *compare*, *evaluate critically*, *assess*, *explore*, *investigate*, *examine*, all imply an appropriate level of intellectual activity suitable for a Master’s dissertation.

2.4 Statement of the Problem

you need to clearly identify the problem or knowledge gap that your project is responding to. You need to provide an explicit statement of what the study will investigate by answering the question “What is the gap that needs to be filled?” and/or “What is the problem that needs to be solved?”

2.5 Research Methodology

This section is essential to most good research proposals. It includes a description of the general means through which the goals of the study will be achieved:

- Analytical Framework
- Data Collection Tools
- Data Analysis Tools

2.6 Significance of the Study

In a research proposal, the "significance of the study" refers to the importance and relevance of the research in the broader academic or practical context. It articulates why the proposed research is valuable and how it contributes to existing knowledge or addresses a gap in the literature. This section emphasizes the potential impact and implications of the study, both theoretically and practically. It outlines the reasons why the research question is worth investigating, highlighting its potential to advance understanding in the field, influence policy or practice, or contribute to academic discourse. Demonstrating the significance of the study is crucial for convincing readers, including potential supervisors, that the research is meaningful. This section essentially answers the question: "Why does this research matter, and what difference can it make?"

2.7 Key References

To provide detailed references and bibliographic support for the proposal.

Practice

Activity #1

Consider the following fields of research and do the tasks below

Motivation, Attitudes

a. Suggest a research topic for ONE field of research.

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b. Formulate a research problem.

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c. Suggest data collection and data analysis tools appropriate

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d. Identify two variables to be the focus of the study.

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Activity # 2

Your task is to develop the overall aim of the study and individual objectives for a research proposal in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching. To reach this objective , answer each of the following questions concisely and clearly :

1. Select a research topic in the field of EFL teaching

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2. What is the overarching goal or aim of your proposed research in EFL teaching?

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3. What specific, measurable objectives will you pursue to achieve this aim?

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4. Why are these objectives important for your research? Provide a brief rationale or justification for each objective.

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5. How do your objectives contribute to addressing the research problem or gap identified in your proposed study?

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APA Referencing System

Objectives

This chapter aims at equipping students with the essential skills and knowledge required to master the intricacies of the APA referencing system. As a foundational aspect of academic writing, proficiency in APA referencing is crucial for researchers, scholars, and students across diverse disciplines.

After completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Identify the key components of APA referencing, including in-text citations, reference lists, and formatting conventions.
- Apply APA referencing rules and guidelines to various types of sources, such as books, journal articles, websites, and multimedia materials.
- Demonstrate proficiency in formatting in-text citations and constructing reference entries according to APA style requirements.
- Analyse sample references and citations to identify common errors and inconsistencies, allowing them to refine their referencing skills and avoid plagiarism.
- Synthesize their understanding of APA referencing principles by incorporating citations and references effectively into their own academic writing, enhancing the clarity, credibility, and professionalism of their work.

Introduction

Referencing

Referencing is a crucial academic practice aimed at acknowledging the intellectual contributions of others and providing readers with the necessary information to locate the sources cited in your work. It involves systematically documenting all the sources you have consulted or utilized in your research, including books, journal articles, websites, and other types of publications. By including accurate and consistent references within your writing, you

demonstrate transparency, integrity, and respect for the ideas and efforts of fellow scholars. Proper referencing also enables readers to verify the information presented, follow your line of inquiry, and explore related literature in greater depth.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when an individual presents someone else's work, ideas, or creations as their own without properly acknowledging the original source through appropriate citations or references. It involves the unauthorized use, reproduction, or appropriation of intellectual property, including written text, ideas, images, and creative works. Plagiarism undermines the principles of academic integrity, honesty, and intellectual rigor by misleading readers about the true authorship of the content and violating the ethical standards of scholarly communication. To avoid plagiarism, it is essential to accurately attribute the sources of information and ideas used in your work and adhere to citation conventions prescribed by academic institutions and disciplinary guidelines.

Quotation

Quotation is a direct reproduction of a statement or passage from a source, presented verbatim and enclosed within quotation marks to indicate its exact wording. When incorporating quotations into your writing, it is essential to preserve the original language, punctuation, and formatting of the quoted text while providing a precise citation to identify the source. Quotations are typically used to lend authority, support arguments, provide evidence, or illustrate key points in your discussion. By including quotations judiciously and contextually, you can enrich your own analysis and engage with the ideas of other scholars in a meaningful and transparent manner.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing involves restating a statement, idea, or passage from a source in your own words and sentence structure while retaining the original meaning and intent. It allows you to rephrase

complex or technical content into clearer, more accessible language without altering the substance or significance of the original source. When paraphrasing, it is crucial to convey the author's ideas accurately and avoid distortion or misrepresentation. Additionally, proper citation is required to acknowledge the source of the paraphrased material and prevent plagiarism. Effective paraphrasing demonstrates your understanding of the source material and your ability to synthesize information in your own voice while maintaining academic integrity.

Summary

Summary involves providing a concise and condensed version of a longer statement, passage, or text, capturing the main points, arguments, or ideas while omitting detailed explanations or supporting evidence. Unlike paraphrasing, which focuses on restating individual sentences or paragraphs, summarizing entails synthesizing the essential information from multiple sections or sources into a brief overview. Summaries are useful for providing readers with an overview of complex topics, synthesizing multiple sources, or highlighting the key findings or insights of a particular study or argument. Like paraphrasing, summarizing requires proper citation to attribute the ideas or information to their original sources and avoid plagiarism.

1. Why is Referencing Important?

1.1 Academic Integrity: Proper Referencing and Acknowledgment

Academic integrity is a cornerstone of scholarly practice, emphasizing honesty, fairness, and responsibility in academic pursuits. Proper referencing plays a vital role in upholding academic integrity by ensuring that the original authors receive due credit for their intellectual contributions. By acknowledging the sources of information and ideas used in your research through accurate citations and references, you demonstrate respect for the scholarly community and adhere to ethical standards of attribution. This practice not only honors the intellectual property rights of others but also fosters a culture of collaboration, transparency, and accountability in academic discourse. Moreover, by crediting the original authors, referencing

reinforces the value of intellectual diversity and encourages engagement with a wide range of perspectives and voices within the academic community.

1.2 Avoiding Plagiarism: The Role of Referencing in Integrity

Plagiarism is a serious ethical breach that undermines the integrity and credibility of academic work. It occurs when individuals present someone else's ideas, words, or creations as their own without proper acknowledgment or attribution. Referencing serves as a critical safeguard against plagiarism by providing clear documentation of the sources consulted or utilized in your research. By citing the works of others accurately and comprehensively, you demonstrate your commitment to academic honesty and integrity. Referencing not only helps to avoid unintentional plagiarism resulting from improper attribution but also guards against deliberate attempts to pass off others' work as your own. Thus, conscientious referencing is essential for maintaining the trust, credibility, and reputation of academic scholarship and ensuring fairness and equity in the evaluation of scholarly contributions.

1.3 Building Credibility: Enhancing Research Quality through Referencing

Accurate referencing contributes to the credibility and quality of your research by demonstrating a thorough engagement with existing literature and scholarly discourse. By providing detailed references to relevant sources, you signal to readers that your work is grounded in a robust foundation of knowledge and informed by a comprehensive review of relevant literature. This not only enhances the credibility and reliability of your research findings but also facilitates transparency and reproducibility, allowing others to verify and build upon your work with confidence. Moreover, accurate referencing fosters a culture of academic rigor and accountability, encouraging researchers to uphold high standards of scholarship and intellectual honesty. Ultimately, by prioritizing proper referencing practices, you strengthen the integrity and impact of your research within the broader academic community.

2. APA Referencing System

The APA referencing system stands as a cornerstone in academic writing, offering a structured framework designed by the American Psychological Association (APA) to facilitate accurate and consistent citation of sources within the social sciences and beyond. This system comprises a comprehensive set of rules and guidelines meticulously crafted to assist researchers, scholars, and students in attributing credit to the sources they consult or incorporate into their academic endeavours. With its origins rooted in the field of psychology, the APA referencing system has evolved into a universally recognized and widely adopted method across diverse disciplines, including sociology, education, business, and the humanities.

It serves as a roadmap providing a standardized format for documenting and referencing various types of sources, such as books, journal articles, websites, and multimedia materials. By adhering to the guidelines outlined in the APA Publication Manual, writers can ensure the accuracy, clarity, and completeness of their reference lists, thereby enhancing the credibility and reliability of their research outputs.

By providing clear guidelines for citing both print and electronic sources, the APA system addresses the evolving nature of information sources in the digital age, ensuring that researchers can adapt their referencing practices to accommodate new technologies and modes of publication. By adhering to its guidelines, researchers and students can navigate the complexities of scholarly communication with confidence, ensuring that their work is recognized, respected, and valued within the broader academic community.

3. Basic Principles of APA Referencing

3.1 In-text Citations

- These are brief citations within the text that indicate the source of information.
- Author-Date Format: Include the author's last name and the publication year in parentheses (Smith, 2019).

- Page Numbers: When quoting directly, include the page number (Smith, 2019, p. 25). For multiple pages, use the abbreviation 'pp.' Include the full page range, i.e. '64-67'.

Example: Woolf (1929, pp. 64-67) observes that...

- You can include the author's name in a sentence, omitting it from the brackets.

Example: Austen (1813)

- When directly quoting from a source, you must include page number(s) and enclose the quote in double quotation marks.

Example: "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (Woolf, 1929, p. 6).

- When quoting fewer than 40 words, integrate the material into your paragraph and include the specific page number(s). Be sure to use quotation marks to denote the exact words from the source.
- When quoting 40 or more words, start the quoted material on a new line, indent it by 5 spaces (use the indent tool to maintain even indentation), and provide specific page number(s). Avoid using quotation marks. Ensure both your text and the indented quote are double-spaced. Preserve the exact wording of the quote as it was published.
- There are two primary approaches to incorporating in-text references. The first method focuses on the information derived from your source, known as 'information prominence.' The second method emphasizes the author, referred to as 'author prominence.'

Examples

Information Prominent	Author Prominent
<p><u>Original:</u> According to Smith (2018), climate change is a pressing global issue.</p> <p><u>Information Prominent:</u> Climate change is a pressing global issue (Smith, 2018).</p>	<p><u>Original:</u> A pressing global issue is climate change (Smith, 2018).</p> <p><u>Author Prominent:</u> Smith (2018) highlights the urgency of climate change as a global issue.</p>

3.2 Reference List

In the dissertation, it is imperative to include a comprehensive list of all sources cited, meticulously arranged alphabetically by the author's last name. This reference list serves as a testament to the breadth and depth of scholarly engagement undertaken during the research process. Moreover, to adhere to academic standards and ensure clarity and consistency, all references should exhibit a hanging indent format. This format entails that subsequent lines of each reference are indented, emphasizing the hierarchical structure of the citation and facilitating readability for readers and reviewers alike.

The following rules (selected from Taylor & Francis Journals Standard Reference Style) apply to the arrangement of entries in the section:

1. Reference entries are ordered alphabetically by their first authors' surnames.
2. Reference entries credited to first authors who share surnames are ordered alphabetically by the first authors' given-name initials.
3. Reference entries credited to the same first authors, with identical surnames and given-name initials, are ordered alphabetically by the subsequent authors' surnames and given-name initials.

4. Reference entries featuring the same full author lists are ordered chronologically by their publication dates (no date/“n.d.” entries, first; then, dated entries; finally, “in press” entries).

- 5. Reference entries featuring the same full author lists and the same publication dates are ordered alphabetically by their titles, with introductory articles ("A," "An," "The") ignored. Lowercase alphabetical designators ("a," "b," "c," etc.) are affixed to the publication years of entries in this subset of references.
- 6. Reference entries with organizational authors are ordered alphabetically among the other entries by the organizations' names. Introductory articles ("A," "An," "The") are ignored.
- 7. Reference entries with no credited authors are ordered alphabetically among the other entries by their titles. Introductory articles ("A," "An," "The") are ignored.

The list below illustrates application of these rules.

Dewey, J. (1997).

Dewey, J. (2015).

Freud, S. (1989a). Civilization and its discontents.

Freud, S. (1989b). New introductory lectures on psychoanalysis.

Goodwin, P. (Ed.). (2005).

Goodwin, W. (2005).

International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care & Pain & Policy Studies Group.

(2012).

Kariagina, T. D., & Ivanova, A. V. (2017).

The Qur'an (T. Khalidi, Trans.). (2009).

Stahl, J. (Writer), Frost, M. (Writer), Peyton, H. (Writer), Engels, R. (Writer), & Holland, T. (Director). (1990).

Young, C., Durham, P., Miller, M., Rasinski, T. V., & Lane, F. (2019).

Young, C., & Pellas, R. (2000).

All reference entries in the section are set with a hanging indent.

Some Models

- Books

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000). *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Lindsey, B., & Teles, S. M. (2017). *The captured economy: How the powerful enrich themselves, slow down growth, and increase inequality*. Oxford University Press.

Bale, T., Webb, P., & Poletti, M. (2020). *Footsoldiers: Political party membership in the 21st century*. Routledge.

Goodwin, P. (Ed.). (2005). *The literate classroom*. David Fulton.

Malici, A., & Smith, E. S. (Eds.). (2018). *Political science research in practice*. Routledge.

The Qur'an (T. Khalidi, Trans.). (2009). Penguin.

Saks Berman, J. (1995). *From Chicago to Rainbow Bridge: In search of changing woman*. In E. F. Williams (Ed.), *Voices of feminist therapy* (pp. 11–25). Harwood Academic Publishers.

- Journal Articles

Reference format

Author, A. A. (Year of publication). Title of article. Title of Journal, volume number (issue number), page range. <https://doi.org/DOI>

Reference example

Binnall, J. M. (2019). Jury diversity in the age of mass incarceration: An exploratory mock jury experiment examining felon-jurors' potential impacts on deliberations. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 25(4), 345–363. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2018.1528359>

Lawless, K. A., Brown, S. W., Mills, R., & Mayall, H. J. (2003). Knowledge, interest, recall and navigation: A look at hypertext processing. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 35(3), 911–934.

Machado, M. M., & Swank, J. M. (2019). Therapeutic gardening: A counseling approach for bereavement from suicide. *Death Studies*, 43(10), 629–633.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2018.1509908>

Prinzle, P., Stams, G. J. J. M., Deković, M., Reijntjes, A. H. A., & Belsky, J. (2009). The relations between parents' Big Five personality factors and parenting: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 97(2), 351–362.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015823>

Author-supplied English translation of non-English titles :

Reference format

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (yyyy). Title of the journal article in original language: Subtitle [English translation of the title]. *Journal Title*, ##(#), #####–#####.
<https://doi.org/DOI>

Reference example

Guzmán, F., Barros, J., Corti, P., & Pereira, M. (2019). El rito bautismal y las imágenes pintadas en la iglesia de Curahuara de Carangas [The baptismal rite and the images painted in the church of Curahuara de Carangas]. *Colonial Latin American Review*, 28(1), 81–105.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10609164.2019.1585084>

- Conference Proceedings

Reference format

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (yyyy). Title of the paper presentation: Subtitle.
Serial Proceedings/Journal Title, ##(#), #####–#####. <https://doi.org/DOI>

Reference example

Albright, M. (1991). The role of the United States in Central Europe. *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science*, 38(1), 71–84. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1173814>

- Dissertations & Theses

Reference format

Author, A. A. (yyyy). Title of the dissertation: Subtitle [Unpublished doctoral dissertation].

Institution Name.

Reference example

Zaragoza, K. (2005). A moral psychology of blame [Unpublished doctoral dissertation].

Princeton University.

Niraula, K. (2015). Addressing the neglect of local peacebuilding practices through documentaries: A case of everyday Gandhis [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Notre Dame.

Choppy, P. T. (2018). Attitudes to slavery and race in Seychellois Creole oral literature [Master's thesis, University of Birmingham]. University of Birmingham eTheses Repository. <http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/id/eprint/8082/7/Choppy18MARes.pdf>

- Newspaper Model

Reference format

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (yyyy, Month dd). Title of the newspaper article:

Subtitle. Newspaper Title, ###, ###.

Reference example

Lewis, A. E. (1972, June 18). 5 held in plot to bug Democrats' office here. *The Washington Post*, A1, A22.

Klein, J. (2018, May 8). How the father of computer science decoded nature's mysterious patterns. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/08/science/alan-turing-desalination.html>

- Web Models

Reference format

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (yyyy, Month dd). Title of the webpage: Subtitle.

Website Publisher Name. <https://URL>

Reference example

Harris, B., & Zucker, S. (2015, August 9). Haussmann the demolisher and the creation of modern Paris. Smarthistory. <https://smarthistory.org/haussmann-the-demolisher-and-the-creation-of-modern-paris>

Clement, T. (2019, September 30). Adopt-a-book activity. OER Commons. Retrieved October 4, 2019, from <https://www.oercommons.org/authoring/58499-adopt-a-book-activity/view>

Tweet

Reference format

Author, A. A. [@Handle]. (yyyy, Month dd). First 20 words of the tweet, including hashtags and emojis [Image attached|Video attached|Thumbnail with link attached] [Tweet].

Twitter. <https://URL>

Reference example

Singer, P. [@PeterSinger]. (2019, May 1). Why are animal rights activists the orphans of the left? Will Kymlicka offers some answers [Thumbnail with link attached] [Tweet]. Twitter.

<https://twitter.com/PeterSinger/status/1123555871198412800>

Facebook post

Reference format

Author, A. A. (yyyy, Month dd). First 20 words of the post, including hashtags and emojis

[Image attached|Video attached|Thumbnail with link attached]. Facebook. <https://URL>

Reference example

Thunberg, G. (2019, November 9). Climate strike is named 2019 word of the year!

#climatestrike [Thumbnail with link attached]. Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/gretathunbergsweden/posts/970039473363873>

Film

Reference format

Director, A. A. (Director). (yyyy). Title of the film: Subtitle [Film]. Production Company

Name_A; Production Company Name_B; Production Company Name_C.

Reference example

Bogdanovich, P. (Director). (1971). The last picture show [Film]. Columbia Pictures; BBS

Productions; Last Picture Show Productions.

Television series

Reference format

Producer, A. A., Producer, B. B., & Producer, C. C. (Executive Producers). (yyyy–yyyy). Title

of the television series [TV series]. Production Company Name_A; Production Company

Name_B; Production Company Name_C.

Reference example

Chibnall, C., & Featherstone, J. (Executive Producers). (2013–2017). Broadchurch [TV

series]. Kudos Film and Television; Imaginary Friends; ITV–Independent Television.

Song

Reference format

Artist, A. A. (yyyy) Title of the song: Subtitle [Song]. On Title of the album: Subtitle.

Production Company Name_A; Production Company Name_B; Production Company

Name_C.

Reference example

Monk, T. (1957). 'Round midnight [Song]. On Thelonious himself. Riverside.

Podcast episode

Reference format

Host, A. A. (Host). (yyyy, Month dd). Title of the podcast episode: Subtitle (No. #) [Audio podcast episode]. In Title of the podcast: Subtitle. Production Company Name_A; Production Company Name_B; Production Company Name_C. <https://URL>

Reference example

Giddens, R. (Host). (2019, January 23). Mozart's Queen of the Night: Outrage out of this world (No. 8) [Audio podcast episode]. In Aria code. The Metropolitan Opera; WQXR; WNYC Studios. <https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/aria-code/episodes/aria-code-mozart-magic-flute-kathryn-lewek>

4. Tools for APA Referencing

A. Citation Generators: Online tools that generate APA citations based on the information you input.

B. Reference Management Software: Programs like EndNote and Zotero can help organize and format references.

Conclusion

Mastering the APA referencing system is an essential skill for students and researchers. It does not only ensure proper attribution of ideas but also contributes to the overall quality and professionalism of academic writing. By following the guidelines outlined in the APA Publication Manual, students can navigate the complexities of citation and produce scholarly work that adheres to the highest standards of integrity and clarity.

Practice

Exercise # 1

Find the errors in the following citations and make the corrections.

Pryczak, F, & Bruce, R. (2014) Writing empirical research reports. (8th Ed.). Routledge. NY:NY.

Darling-Hammond, L., Wilhoit, G., & Pittenger, L. (2014). Accountability for college and career readiness: Developing a new paradigm. Education Policy Analysis Archives, 22(86). Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v22n86.2014>.

Donmoyer, R. (2000). Generalizability and the single-case study. In Gomm, R., Hammersley, M., and Foster, P. (eds.). Case study method (pp. 45–68). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A. (2002). Primal leadership: Realizing the power of emotional intelligence. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.

Patton, Michael Q. (2015). Qualitative evaluation and research methods (4th ed.). Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.

Palmer, P.J. (1999). Evoking the spirit in public education. Educational Leadership, 56(4), p 6–11.

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Exercise #2

Correct the following within text citations.

- In his article, Parker Palmer (1999) notes that “the spiritual is always present in public education” (p. 8)/ Patton (2015) in his book, Qualitative evaluation and research methods, cited Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman who said . . .

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Writing the General Introduction

Objectives

This chapter aims at equipping master's students with the necessary skills and insights to write a comprehensive and compelling general introduction for their dissertations, ensuring that they can effectively establish the context, significance, and objectives of their research within the broader academic landscape.

After completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Comprehend the significance of the general introduction in setting the stage for a master's dissertation.
- Identify the essential elements that constitute an effective general introduction in the context of a master's dissertation.
- Outline a structured approach to drafting a general introduction tailored to the requirements of a master's dissertation.
- Apply the appropriate academic writing techniques to articulate a compelling opening that grabs readers' attention and establishes the research's importance.
- Formulate clear objectives and hypotheses within the general introduction to guide the dissertation's focus and scope.
- Integrate relevant literature seamlessly into the general introduction to provide context and support for the research.
- Synthesize the research's significance and potential contributions to the field within the general introduction.
- Evaluate the final version of the general introduction against established criteria for quality and effectiveness in master's dissertations.

Introduction

Swales and Feak (1994) have argued that the dissertation introduction is of strategic importance. Its key role is to create a research space for the writer. It is in the introduction that the researcher makes claims of the centrality or significance of the research in question. The introduction is extremely important in positioning the researcher as having something to say that is worth publishing.

The general introduction ought to do a number of things:

- Provide preliminary background information (to place your study in context, are you interested in ESP, speaking etc.)
- Clarify your topic
- Specify your overall research aim and individual objectives
- Point out the value of your research.

1. How long should the introduction be?

Typically, the introductory chapter is one of the shortest chapters of the entire dissertation (4 to 5 pages).

2. The typical structure of the General introduction

The organisational structure of the introduction can be said to move from a fairly general overview of the research to the particular issues under investigation through three key-moves which capture the communicative purpose of the introduction (swales and feak, 1994):

- To establish a research territory
- To identify a niche or gap of the territory
- To occupy the niche.

Move 1: Establish a Research Territory

- a. By showing that the general research area is important, central, interesting, problematic, or relevant in some way (optional)

- b. by providing background information about the topic (optional)
- c. by introducing and reviewing items of previous research in the area (obligatory)
- d. by defining terms (optional)

the writer typically begins to carve out his/her own research space by indicating that the general area is in some way significant. This is often done through reviewing previous research in the field. In addition, the writer may choose to provide background information on the particular topic being investigated and may define key terms which are essential for the study.

The different moves in the Introduction tend to employ different tenses (Atkinson and Curtis 1998). Move 1a, which signals the importance of the general area of research, often uses verbs in either the **present tense** or the **present perfect tense** in the sentence which makes these claims to *centrality*

(Swales and Feak 1994).

The writer's use of the present tense suggests that the statement is a generally accepted truth. The use of the present perfect tense (i.e. has been) in the third sentence functions similarly to describe a state that continues up to the present moment.

Move 2 Establishing a niche (position, place, research gap, research space)

- a by indicating a gap in the previous research, raising a question about it, or extending previous knowledge in some way (obligatory)
- b by identifying a problem/need (optional)

In Move 2 of the framework, the writer typically establishes a niche by indicating a gap in the previous research or possibly extending a current research approach into a new area. It is through the review of prior research that the gap is established.

The language of 'gap statements', according to Atkinson and Curtis (1998: 63), is typically evaluative in a negative way.

Examples

- Our area of study has ***not received much attention*** in the use of English idioms by advanced learners to enhance their speaking skills

- Due to the complexity of the problems *there are few studies about the use of critical thinking skills by learners ...*

● Although it became accepted that the use of deductive and inductive approaches are useful in teaching grammar, no systematic analysis in using the inductive approach with the skill has been carried out.

There is a need to increase research knowledge in this area ...

The lists below, from Swales and Feak (1994: 187–189), contain examples of typical ‘gap statement’ words and phrases which may be useful for the nonnative English speaker.

Verbs

disregard neglect to consider fail to consider overestimate ignore overlook is limited to suffer from misinterpret underestimate

Adjectives

controversial questionable

incomplete unconvincing

inconclusive (no leading to a firm conclusion result) unsatisfactory

misguided

Noun phrase

Little information/attention/work/data/research

Few studies/investigations/researchers/attempts

No studies/data/calculations

None of these studies/findings/calculations

Other forms

However

It remains unclear

It would be of interest to

Pay attention not to attack previous researchers . the language to be used should be soft. It is not a matter of underestimating previous works, but

Move 3 Occupying the niche

- by outlining purposes/aims, or stating the nature of the present research or research questions/hypotheses (obligatory) the writer, by outlining the purposes of their own research, indicates to the reader how the proposed research will ‘fill’ the identified niche or gap. Overall aim and individual objectives. The objectives can be turned into questions
- by stating value of research (significance) you need to state why you think your research is important and worth doing. In what ways could your work add value. Think in terms of who will benefit from your work and in what ways it will shed light on specific research issues

examples: the research is important for a number of reasons; this research adds value to current research in a variety of ways

- by mentioning the theoretical position as well as the methods (optional)
- by including a review of the dissertation structure

examples : chapter one examines, Chapter 2 provides a theoretical and empirical framework; Chapter 3 explains the methods that have been used for conducting the; Chapters 4 and 5 present the results of interview; Chapter 5 reports results of interview; Chapter 6 summarises the research findings, draws conclusions from those findings, and indicates some of the implications of the findings. Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research in this field are considered.

The present dissertation follows the traditional simple model

Structure of the General Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Aims and Significance of the Study

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Techniques and Methodology

Structure of the Dissertation

Practice

Activity #1 :Analysing the Components of a Master's Dissertation

Introduction

Objective:

The objective of this assignment is to familiarize you with the structure and content of a master's dissertation introduction. By analysing and deconstructing various components of a general introduction, you will gain insight into the purpose and significance of each element in setting the stage for your research.

- Select a Master’s dissertation of interest from D-space.
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- Read the general introduction.
- Break down a general introduction into its constituent parts or "moves".

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- Reflect on the importance of a well-structured introduction in guiding the reader.
- Share your insights and perspectives with your classmates through class discussions or group discussions.

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Activity #2: Case Study Analysis

- Select a Master' s dissertation or a research article related to your field of study.

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- Identify and analyse the overall aim statements and objectives of the study.

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- Evaluate the clarity, specificity, and relevance of the aim statements and objectives in relation to the research conducted.

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Activity #3. Role-Play

- Divide students into groups and assign each group a different research topic.
- Ask each group to role-play as researchers presenting their proposed aim statements and objectives to a funding committee or academic panel.
- Encourage students to consider the audience's perspective and address questions or feedback from the "committee" during the role-play.

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Writing the Review of the Literature Chapter

Objectives

This chapter aims at equipping students with the essential skills and knowledge needed to write a comprehensive and a critical Review of the Literature chapter. By understanding the purpose and significance of this chapter, students will learn to critically engage with existing scholarship, synthesize diverse sources, and contextualise their research within the broader academic discourse.

After completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Understand the purpose and significance of the Review of the Literature chapter in academic research, elucidating its role in framing research questions and contextualizing findings.
- Identify and evaluate sources relevant to their research topic, demonstrating proficiency in accessing and discerning credible scholarly literature.
- Analyse existing literature critically, discerning key themes, theoretical frameworks, and methodological approaches that inform their research area.
- Synthesize findings from diverse sources into a coherent narrative, demonstrating the ability to integrate and organize reviewed literature effectively.
- Evaluate the credibility and relevance of sources, applying criteria such as authority, currency, and relevance to ensure the integrity of the literature review.
- Structure the Review of the Literature chapter effectively, employing organizational frameworks that align with the research objectives and thematic content.
- Integrate short and block quotations smoothly in their writing.

- Distinguish between a critical and descriptive review of the literature.

1. Purpose of the Chapter

Writing the background chapter is an important part of the thesis and dissertation writing process. It is where students ‘show what they know’ as well as what they ‘think about what they have read’. Students are expected not just to know the literature on their topic but also to critically evaluate it.

There are a number of purposes for reviewing the literature when writing a thesis or dissertation. One important purpose of a literature review is to contextualize the student’s research. This review focuses on background theory which is relevant to the project and previous research on the topic.

The review should describe, synthesize, and critically evaluate the major studies related to the topic of the research. It should also demonstrate the relationship between the student’s project and what else has been done in the particular area.

2. Writing Techniques

- **Paraphrasing:** Rewriting a passage or text in your own words while retaining the original meaning. It involves expressing the content in a different way without changing the main ideas.
- **Summarizing:** Condensing the main points, ideas, and key details of a text into a shorter version. Summaries provide a concise overview of the essential information in a larger piece of writing.
- **Reporting:** Presenting information or details from a source, often in a neutral and factual manner. Reporting involves conveying facts and events without adding personal interpretation or analysis.

- **Synthesizing:** Combining information from multiple sources to create a new understanding or perspective. Synthesizing involves integrating various ideas to generate a cohesive and original interpretation of a topic

3. Typical Tenses Used in the Literature Review

- **Simple present:** a generalization is being made. A reference is being made to the state of current knowledge previous findings are being presented/are accepted as facts

e.g. Brown (1989) shows that

- **Simple past:** a reference is being made to a single study, a specific piece of research and its findings are being referred to

e.g. Brown (1989) showed that

- **Present perfect:** a general area of investigation or inquiry is being referred to

e.g. Research has shown that

4. Reporting on Previous Studies

There are a number of ways a student can report on previous research. Three key ways in which this is often done are what are called *central*, *non-central* and *non-reporting* styles of reporting (Swales 1990, 2004). That is:

- an author is directly reported as being responsible for a particular finding or argument and placed in subject position in the sentence (central reporting);
- an author is reported as being responsible for a particular finding or argument but with their name being given less focus by being placed in brackets at the end of the relevant statement (non-central reporting);
- the results of a piece of research are presented with less focus being given to the author or the actual study and no 'reporting verbs' such as 'claim' or 'shown' are used (non-reporting).

Below are examples which demonstrate each of these styles:

- Central reporting: ‘Burke (1986) discovered that many students would like to become integrated into Australian society.’
- Non-central reporting: ‘It has been shown that students have often performed successfully in their own education system before they seek entry to the particular university (Ballard 1991).’
- Non-reporting: ‘Instead of motivation producing achievement, it may be that achievement produces motivation (Spolsky 1989).’

5. Some reporting Verbs

- Argue: The author argues that...
- State: Smith (2020) states that...
- Claim: Jones (2019) claims that...
- Suggest: Recent studies suggest that...
- Propose: Several researchers propose that...
- Conclude: The study concludes that...
- Find: The findings of the study indicate that...
- Demonstrate: The research demonstrates that...
- Assert: The author asserts that...
- Report: According to the report by...
- Identify: The researchers identify several key factors...
- Highlight: The study highlights the importance of...

- Emphasize: It is emphasized that...
- Maintain: The author maintains that...
- Illustrate: The case study illustrates...
- Reveal: The findings reveal that...
- Acknowledge: The researchers acknowledge the limitations...
- Concur: Other scholars concur with...
- Contradict: This view contradicts the findings of...
- Question: Some authors question the validity of...
- Discuss: The literature discusses various perspectives on...
- Describe: The study describes the phenomenon of...
- Examine: The research examines the relationship between...
- Evaluate: The authors evaluate the effectiveness of...
- Compare: Studies comparing X and Y show that...

6. Content of the Chapter

To determine the content of the chapter, relate your review to the title and the research objectives. So, a simple, but clever way to avoid writing about peripheral aspects of your topic is to create headings and sub-headings that link directly to your individual research objectives.

Example:

Topic: Investigating Teachers' Attitudes towards Blended Learning at the Department of English at MMUTO.

Content of Review of the Literature:

- Blended learning
- The integration of blended learning at MMUTO
- Attitudes of teachers (Analytical framework)

7. Structure of the Chapter

Introduction: The introduction sets the stage for the review of the literature by providing context and rationale for the study. It outlines the key themes, issues, and gaps in existing research that the review aims to address.

Headings & Sub-headings: Within the review of the literature chapter, various headings and sub-headings organize the discussion of relevant studies and theories. These headings guide the reader through the different sections of the literature review, ensuring a structured and coherent presentation of the material. Each sub-heading focuses on a specific aspect or theme related to the research topic, providing in-depth analysis and synthesis of relevant literature.

The last heading should be “Analytical Framework”: The final heading, "Analytical Framework," serves as a pivotal point in the literature review where theoretical concepts and empirical evidence converge to inform the development of an analytical framework. This section synthesizes the findings from the reviewed literature and establishes a theoretical basis for the subsequent analysis of data or phenomena in the research study. It outlines the theoretical perspectives, concepts, and variables that will guide the analysis and interpretation of research findings.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the review of the literature chapter plays a crucial role in shaping the theoretical foundation of the research study. It provides a comprehensive overview of existing knowledge, identifies gaps and areas for further inquiry, and establishes the analytical framework for the study. By synthesizing diverse sources and integrating theoretical insights,

the literature review informs the research design and contributes to the advancement of knowledge in the field.

Practice

Activity #1

1. Selection of Master’s Dissertation

Choose a Master’s dissertation, whether in paper or digital form, that is directly aligned with your research topic.

2. Review of the Literature Chapter

Thoroughly read the "Review of the Literature" chapter of the selected dissertation.

3. Outline Creation

Construct an outline for the "Review of the Literature" chapter based on your analysis of the dissertation. Identify the key sections and sub-sections.

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4. Analysis of References

Examine how the students have used the referencing system within the chapter. Evaluate both the relevance of the chosen references and the effectiveness of their formulation.

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5. Evaluation of Chapter

Assess the entire "Review of the Literature" chapter on two main aspects:

Format: Evaluate the organization and structure of the chapter.

Content: Examine the coherence of ideas presented in the chapter.

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Activity #2: Analysis Task

- Read the provided paragraph from a literature review below.
- Identify and underline the reporting verbs used in the paragraph.

- Consider the effectiveness of these reporting verbs in attributing ideas and findings to their original sources.

Sample Paragraph:

"Several studies have argued that climate change is a significant threat to global biodiversity. Smith (2018) claims that rising temperatures are causing shifts in species distributions, while Jones (2019) suggests that changes in precipitation patterns are impacting ecosystem stability. Furthermore, recent research by Johnson et al. (2020) demonstrates the link between habitat loss and declining biodiversity."

Activity #3: Reflection and Application

- Write a short paragraph summarizing a key finding or idea related to your research or a recent academic article you have read.
- Incorporate at least three different reporting verbs from the list provided in the lecture into your paragraph.

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Research Design & Methodology Chapter

Objectives

This chapter aims at enabling students to understand the structure, components, and importance of a research design chapter, and to develop the skills necessary to effectively write its different sections.

After completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Differentiate between various research paradigms (Survey studies, experimental studies, Interpretive studies etc.) and understand their implications for research design.
- Select appropriate research methodologies (data collection & data analysis) that best address the research questions and hypotheses.
- Describe the context of the empirical study.
- Describe the corpus and justify the sampling techniques adopted.
- Explain the data collection procedure.
- Outline the procedures for data analysis, including statistical and thematic analysis techniques, and understand their role in answering research questions.
- Identify ethical issues in research design and articulate strategies for ensuring ethical compliance in their study.
- Organize and structure the research design chapter logically, ensuring clarity and coherence in writing.
- Use appropriate academic language and style to present the research design chapter.

1. Purpose of Research Methodology Chapter

Students need to understand that one of the key functions of this research methodology chapter is to enable other researchers to replicate the study and this may account for the lengthier

Methodology components of research theses as opposed to the more terse research article (Swales 2004).

This chapter requires a detailed description of the research processes and procedures as well as an explanation of the reasons for doing so.

2. Content & Structure of the Chapter

2.1 Introduction

The introduction serves as the gateway to this chapter, providing a roadmap for what lies ahead and articulating the overarching purpose and structure of the chapter. It offers insight into the organization of the methodology chapter, outlining how each section contributes to the overall understanding of the research process.

2.2 Research Method & Design

In this section, students delve into the rationale behind their choice of research method and design. They not only explain the chosen approach (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods) but also justify why it is the most appropriate for addressing the research questions at hand. Moreover, students discuss the specific research design adopted (e.g., case study, experimental study, survey study, interpretive study) and elucidate how it aligns with the research objectives.

2.3 Data Collection Procedure

This section provides a detailed account of the data collection process, ensuring transparency and clarity regarding how data were gathered to address each research question.

2.3.1 Context of the Study: Where & When

Students contextualize their research by elucidating the geographical and temporal settings in which the study takes place, offering insights into the broader context shaping their investigation.

2.3.2 Participants: Population and Sample (Sampling Procedure)

Here, students outline the characteristics of the study population and describe the sampling procedure employed to select participants, thereby ensuring the representativeness and generalizability of the findings.

2.3.3 Description of the Corpus

Students provide an overview of the dataset or corpus under investigation, detailing its scope, composition, and relevance to the research objectives.

2.3.4 Data Collection Tools

This subsection elucidates the instruments utilized by the researcher to collect data, including questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations.

Questionnaire: Students define the questionnaire, describe its components, and discuss the process of piloting the questionnaire to ensure its validity and reliability.

Interview: The definition and description of interviews are provided, along with insights into the interview process.

Classroom Observation: Students define classroom observation and discuss the development of checklists or observation schemes used to systematically record classroom interactions and behaviours.

2.4 Data Analysis Procedure

This section outlines how the collected data were analyzed to address the research questions. Students provide a comprehensive overview of the analytical framework employed, drawing upon insights from the literature review to guide the data analysis process.

2.4.1 Quantitative Analysis: Descriptive & Inferential Statistics

Students detail the use of descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze quantitative data, offering insights into patterns, trends, and relationships within the dataset.

2.4.2 Qualitative Analysis: Content Analysis, Discourse Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis, Video Content Analysis, etc.

Here, students discuss various qualitative analysis techniques employed, such as content analysis, discourse analysis, and critical discourse analysis. They elucidate how these methods were utilized to interpret and make sense of qualitative data.

2.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the methodology employed in the collection and analysis of data. It serves as a foundation for the subsequent chapter, which will be devoted to the presentation of the empirical findings of the study.

Practice

Activity #1

In order to enhance your understanding of research design, examine the Research Design chapter of a doctorate thesis.

Here is a link to a doctorate thesis:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374287960 Algerian EFL Students' Reading Practices in the Digital Era A Sociocultural Approach](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374287960_Algerian_EFL_Students'_Reading_Practices_in_the_Digital_Era_A_Sociocultural_Approach)

Instructions:

- Read the Research Design chapter of the thesis.
- Develop an outline for the Research Design chapter, breaking it down into sections and sub-sections.
- For each section, provide a brief explanation of its aim.
- Discuss how the data collection procedures align with the overall research design and contribute to the study's objectives.
- Explore and summarize the methods employed for data analysis as presented in the thesis.
- Analyse how these data analysis procedures connect with the overall research design, supporting the research questions or hypotheses.

Advertisements: Case Study of Gender Representation in Algerian TV commercials

The task

- Suggest an appropriate research design
- Suggest a data collection tool
- Which sampling procedure do you think will fit the objectives of the study?
- write two paragraphs to describe the data collection and data analysis procedures.

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Writing Results & Discussion Chapter (s)

Objectives

This chapter aims at enabling students to understand the structure, components, and importance of the results and discussion chapters, and to develop the skills necessary to effectively write section of the dissertation.

After completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Distinguish between the results and discussion chapters and understand their individual purposes within a research project.
- Present research findings clearly and concisely using appropriate tables, graphs, charts as well as textual analysis and interpretation.
- Interpret and analyse research findings, linking them to the research questions or hypotheses.
- Discuss the implications of the research findings in the context of existing literature and theoretical frameworks.
- Identify limitations of the study and discuss their impact on the results and conclusions.
- Propose future research directions based on the findings and identified gaps.
- Use appropriate academic language and style to present the results and discussion chapters.
- Evaluate whether the research findings support or refute the initial hypotheses.
- Provide clear and justified conclusions based on the research findings in relation to the hypotheses set at the outset of the study.

Introduction

The two chapters Results & Discussion can be combined in one chapter “Results & Discussion” or treated as distinct chapters “Chapter 3 Results” then “Chapter 4 Discussion”, depending on the study's design.

Writing the Results and Discussion chapter in a Master's dissertation involves several key moves and steps. Below is a suggested framework that you can follow, along with a brief explanation of each move:

1. Chapter 3. Results

1.1 The Structure of the Chapter

Introduction

Present a brief overview of the purpose of the Results chapter. Provide a concise introduction to what the reader can expect in terms of findings.

Presentation of the Findings of each tool of data collection

Describe the main characteristics of your data. Provide descriptive and inferential statistics for quantitative results, and a textual presentation of qualitative data. Include visuals to enhance the presentation.

Conclusion

Write a short conclusion summarizing the main results and their implications and a transition to the next chapter.

1.2 A Concrete Example

Introduce your chapter by briefly reminding the reader of your research goals and how you'll present your findings. Also, provide context for your empirical research. For instance, if your data comes from a case study, give background info on the organization. Here's a simplified example:

[a] This chapter presents the empirical findings derived from an in-depth case study discussed in Chapter 3. Our examination revolves around two central cohorts: English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors within the English Language Department of a hypothetical university, and senior administrative figures influencing language education policies within the institution.

[b] Employing a systematic approach, we methodically organize the case study findings thematically, drawing insights primarily from EFL instructors. The utilization of a case study methodology affords us the opportunity to immerse ourselves in authentic teaching challenges within the university's language department. Prior to delving into the results, we provide a contextual overview of the university's language department to enhance the interpretive framework.

[c] The unfolding of our study occurs within the dynamic landscape of ongoing developments within the university's language department. This encompasses pedagogical shifts, faculty perceptions, and institutional aspirations. It is imperative to clarify that while contextualization is provided, the scope does not encompass a comprehensive delineation of the university's operational intricacies. Rather, the aim is to furnish a contextual backdrop facilitating a nuanced analysis.

[d] For reference purposes, transcripts of interviews conducted with EFL instructors are appended in Appendix B, while those involving senior administrators are annexed in Appendix C. This organizational structure streamlines access to primary evidence, reinforcing the analytical discourse underpinning our investigation.

2. Chapter 4. Discussion

2.1 A Suggested Structure of the Chapter

A recommended approach for structuring the discussion chapter is to organize the primary findings in alignment with the research questions.

Start the chapter with an introduction. Then, organise the chapter into headings and sub-headings following the research questions set in the general introduction.

Here is an example:

If first research question of your study is “what are the attitudes of students at the department of English toward online classes?”, the first heading of the Discussion would be as follows:

“4.1 Answer to Research Question #1: Attitudes of EFL Students”.

To effectively discuss the findings presented in the results chapter, it is important to follow a set of steps. Keep in mind that the ultimate goal of this discussion is to provide clear answers to the research questions. To guide you through this process, consider the following steps:

- Reformulate the results: Present your results in a logical and structured manner.
- Interpret the results: interpret each result in the context of your research questions or hypotheses, and the analytical framework. Relate the findings to the theoretical framework or conceptual model used in the study. Highlight unexpected outcomes.
- Compare Findings with Previous Research: Relate your results to existing literature. Compare and contrast your findings with relevant studies. Highlight similarities, differences, and potential explanations.
- Draw some conclusions and provide answer to the research questions and hypotheses: Clearly state how each research question has been answered based on the presented findings. Reinforce the connections between your results and the original research goals.

At the end of the chapter, write a conclusion providing a concise summary of the main findings discussed in the chapter. Highlight the most important results that directly address the research questions or objectives.

2.2 Structure of Discussion chapter in other contexts

Hopkins and Dudley-Evans (1988) looked at the structure of the Discussion chapters in master’s theses in the UK. They found a number of steps that often occur in Discussion sections, as shown below.

1 background information;

2 statement of results;

- 3 (un)expected outcome – i.e. whether the result is expected or not;
- 4 reference to previous research – comparison of results with previous research reported in the literature;
- 5 explanation of unexpected outcome – i.e. suggesting reasons for an unexpected result (if this is the case) or one different from those found in previous studies;
- 6 exemplification – providing examples to support the explanation given in step 5;
- 7 deduction or claim – making a more general claim arising from the results of the study, e.g. drawing a conclusion, stating an hypothesis;
- 8 support from previous research – quoting previous research to support the claim/s being made;
- 9 recommendation – making suggestions for future research;
- 10 justification for future research – arguing why the future research is recommended.

Samraj (2005) carried out a study in the United States where she looked at the Discussion chapters of master's theses in the area of linguistics and biology. She found the Discussion chapters she examined typically followed the steps outlined below.

- 1 background information;
- 2 report on results;
- 3 commentary on results
 - interpretation of results
 - comparison with other research
 - explanation for results
 - evaluation of results
- 4 summary of results;
- 5 evaluation of the study;

- limitations
- significance/advantage of the study
- evaluation of the methods

6 evaluation of the field;

7 deductions from the results;

- research deductions
- applied deductions.

Another option for organizing a Discussion chapter is Swales and Feak's (1994) list of 'points' (rather than 'facts') that are typically found in the Discussion section of theses and dissertations. These are outlined below.

Move 1 Points to consolidate the research space – i.e. interpretive points rather than descriptive facts or results.

For example:

- a reminder of the original purpose of the study;
- statement of results followed by a follow-up such as:
 - statement of the importance (or otherwise) of the results
 - examples from the data which illustrate the results
 - comparison with other work/previous research
 - review of the methodology
 - reference to the theory underpinning the study
 - conclusions that might be drawn
 - the strengths of the study
 - whether the results were expected or unexpected.

Move 2 Points to indicate the limitations of the study; what cannot be concluded from the research;

Move 3 Points to identify useful areas of further research.

2.3 Strategies for Writing the Discussion Section

Evans and Gruba (2002) suggest strategies for writing the Discussion section. The first thing they suggest students do is to write down all the things they know now that they didn't know when they started the research, a single sentence for each item. The next step is to sort these sentences into some sort of grouping. Now the student should give headings to each of these groups of sentences. These will form the basis for the section headings of the Discussion chapter. Finally, the sentences in each group should be given headings which will form the basis for sub headings for each of the sections of the chapter. All of this can then be used to provide a tentative framework for the writing of this chapter.

Practice

Exercise # 1: Results Presentation

- Consider these two research articles:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379831101_Multilingual_practices_of_Algerian_EFL_learners_in_digital_environments_A_functional_approach

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/378969735_Statistical_Literacy_Among_EFL_Master's_Students_Action_Research

- Write a summary of the results, highlighting key findings and trends observed in the data. Make sure that you are using appropriate language and terminology to convey the findings clearly and accurately.

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Exercise # 2: Discussion Chapter Analysis

- Consider the articles suggested in the previous exercise.
- Analyse the excerpts and identify the main components of the discussion, such as the interpretation of results, comparison with previous research, and implications for theory or practice.

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- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each discussion section, considering factors such as clarity, coherence, and depth of analysis.

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- Reflect on how they would approach writing a discussion section based on the insights gained from analysing the excerpts.

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Writing the General Conclusion and the Abstract

Objectives

This chapter aims at equipping the students with the skills to effectively write abstracts and general conclusions for their dissertations.

After completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Identify the key elements of a general conclusion, including summarizing the main findings, discussing the implications, and suggesting future research directions.
- Recognize the importance of a general conclusion in tying together the research and providing a final perspective to the reader.
- Organize a general conclusion into the typical sections: summary of main findings, discussion of implications, limitations of the study, and future research directions.
- Understand how to concisely summarize the key points of the research without introducing new information.
- Avoid common pitfalls, such as introducing new arguments or being overly repetitive.
- Summarize the main findings and contributions of the research in a clear and concise manner.
- Acknowledge the limitations of the study in a balanced and constructive manner.
- Identify the key elements of an abstract, including the purpose, methodology, results, and implications of the research.
- Recognize the importance of an abstract in summarizing the research and attracting readers.
- Organize an abstract into the typical sections: purpose, methodology, results, and implications.
- Understand how to concisely summarize the main points of the research in each section.

1. The General Conclusion

The general conclusion is a critical part of the master's dissertation as it provides the researcher with the opportunity to synthesize their findings, reflect on the research process, and offer insights for future work.

1.1 Purposes of Writing a General Conclusion

The Conclusion section is where students both summarize and 'wrap up' their work.

- Summarize Key Findings:

In the general conclusion, the researcher reminds the readers of the main results and contributions of their study. This is an opportunity to re-emphasize the significance of the work.

- Address Research Questions and Objectives:

The researcher explicitly revisits their research questions and objectives. They discuss how their research has addressed these questions and whether the objectives have been met.

- Reflect on Methodology:

It is in the general conclusion that the researcher discusses the strengths and limitations of their approach. They acknowledge any challenges faced and explain how they mitigated them. This reflection demonstrates the researcher's awareness of the research process.

1.2 The Typical Shape of a General Conclusion

Here is a suggested framework for a general conclusion:

- Start with an introductory restatement of aims, research questions.
- Synthesize the insights gained from your research. Show how the various components of your study come together to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic.
- Discuss Implications: Discuss the practical and theoretical implications of your findings. Explain how your results contribute to the existing body of knowledge and any impact they might have on the field or real-world applications.
- Limitations of the study: acknowledge the limitations of your study

- **Identify Areas for Future Research:** Suggest areas for future research. Identify unanswered questions or aspects of your topic that could be explored further. This demonstrates that your research opens up avenues for future scholars.

2. The Abstract

The abstract is a concise summary that provides readers with a quick overview of the entire dissertation. It should be written in a clear, coherent, and engaging manner while conveying the essential elements of the research.

Cooley and Lewkowicz (2003, p.112) give this advice on the Abstract:

[The Abstract] is written after the research has been completed and the writer knows exactly what is contained in the body of the text. It is a summary of the text and it informs readers of what can be found in the dissertation and in what order, functioning as an overall signpost for the reader. Although it is the last part of a dissertation to be written, it is generally one of the first a reader will look at. Indeed, if the Abstract is not well written, it may be the only part of the dissertation a reader will look at!

Typical Structure of the Abstract

The Abstract typically aims to provide an overview of the study which answers the following questions:

- What was the general purpose of the study?
- What was the particular aim of the study?
- Why was the study carried out?
- How was the study carried out?
- What did the study reveal?

The abstract opens by introducing the research context and articulating the primary problem or question addressed in the study. It outlines the research objectives and briefly describes the

methods employed, highlighting the key aspects of the research design, data collection, and analysis. The findings of the study are presented, emphasizing the significance of the results and their implications. The abstract concludes by recommending areas for future research and providing a list of keywords for easy identification.

The typical structure of an Abstract, then, is:

- aim of the study;
- overview of the study (the individual objectives);
- methodology used in the study;
- findings of the study.
- main conclusions and recommendations

Key terms

The abstract for a Master's dissertation is presented in a single-spaced, unindented paragraph. The abstract is written as one single-spaced long paragraph without indentation. Throughout the abstract, a mix of present simple, past simple, and present perfect tenses is strategically used to convey various facets of the research process.

Practice

Access the following links to download the PDFs of the chosen articles with clear and well-structured abstracts:

- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374287680_EFL_Learners'_Metacognitive_Awareness_when_Reading_Narrative_Texts_at_Mouloud_Mammeri_University#fullTextFileContent
- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368014489_Developing_Elementary_EFL_Learners'_Procedural_Knowledge_and_Strategic_Awareness_in_Reading_Classes_during_the_Covid-19_Pandemic_Algerian_Teachers'_Challenges

Creative Writing Vs. Academic Writing in Research

Objectives

This chapter aims at raising students' awareness and enhancing their academic writing skills by examining the distinctions between academic and creative writing, and applying advanced academic writing techniques to their dissertation projects.

After completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Analyse the structural and stylistic elements that distinguish academic writing from creative writing, with a focus on clarity, argumentation, and evidence.
- Compare academic writing and creative writing to understand their respective purposes and how they can inform each other.
- distinguish between academic and creative writing while focusing on mastering the skills necessary for successful academic writing in their dissertations.

1. Introduction

Academic writing includes technical aspects of writing relative to writing research papers because these are written by researchers and practicing tutors for the audience of researchers and practitioners. In general, academic speakers or writers are expected to articulate their arguments clearly, give support for their claims, and illustrate their arguments coherently and cogently.

Creative writing (CW) and academic writing (AW) have various styles. Creative writing has its origin in the thoughts, emotions, experiences, memories, and imagination of the writers. On the other hand, academic writing (AW) has rules, academic language, and requires critical thinking and analysis. Its emphasis is not on emotions but on analysis, rational, logical thinking, and evidence. A comparison of CW and AW shows three areas of differences. These are the purpose of writing, the language used in the writing and conventions of the writing, and, to some extent,

the writing components. Due to these differences, the lines between these two types of writing are well-defined due to the oppositional relationship between them.

1.1. Background of Creative Writing and Academic Writing

No matter what it is, the process of initiating writing is not done in the same way by everyone. Creative writers forge their stories with their own intention and purpose, as they think that these ideas are indispensable. From the brainstorming process to finishing the written work, they want to convey their own message across as motivation changes through time. Thus, the actual writing process is that they have an emotional relationship between themselves and the presences and actions of the characters. They want a timeline; however, words can bring forth life to the characters, as they depend on how they react to the situations or conflicts. In relation to academic writers who follow an academic standard, they don't need to forge their work with their own intention and purpose, as they think that these ideas are irrelevant, and the brainstorming process begins. They need a schedule that determines every step of the way from the topic to the final draft, as it depends on the type of paper.

Creative writing and academic writing are both creative processes. However, creative writing is done in a non-academic setting and is a way of digital storytelling or a method of personal storytelling through the use of characters, dialogue, and other techniques that give life to written works, including short stories and novels, poetry, songs, essays, and more. While academic writing is done in a school setting and is used to fulfil a requirement and contribute to a larger professional discourse. It is a way of communicating scientific work clearly and concisely, such as research and historical reports such as essays and articles, even abstracts, annotated bibliographies, reports, and proposals.

2. Key Differences between Creative Writing and Academic Writing

To begin with, creative writing uses colourful words and metaphors. It is used to make the readers think, view, feel, or have a clearer picture of an intended message without having to explain it in straightforward language. As a result, creative writing must be straightforward and bring precision to the audience. It is quite similar to academic writing, but with a focus on careful word choice. Usually, creative writing uses an informal and figurative way to bring out the accuracy of the piece one writes. On the other hand, when a writer is able to bring out the beauty of language in their writing, they will definitely have a deep and valuable emotional impact on the audience. They can also create story fantasies in a reader's mind while still distinguishing fact from fiction.

The two different types of writing, such as creative writing and academic writing, are creative in their own ways. They are intended for different audiences and designed to have different effects. Academic writing is idealized, clear, and to the point. It often uses more than two sources. Creative writing, on the other hand, is unique in tone and can be used in academic, private, and professional writing. It often includes elements of suspense and a climax, as well as a beginning and rising tension.

On the other hand, a scientific piece of writing follows a specific style such as organization and use of discipline-related terminology, not expressing the author's opinions as such, clearly stating the author's references, the use of graphs, tables, citations, etc., and following certain writing styles according to different journals. Academic writing adheres to traditions, demands clarity and objectivity, and is described in formal and unemotional language but with a large amount of scientific and technical jargon. It is the combination of objectivity, clarity, and precision that enables academic writing to explain complex theories simply and clearly. Consequently, writing research papers should reflect a sophisticated and formal style, using specialized vocabulary and evidence-based reasoning, which will contribute to the

comprehension of the text. The readers are accustomed to this kind of style, and the purpose is to help the reader better understand the content.

3. The Conventions of Language in Creative Writing and Academic Writing

It is clear that academic writing and creative writing have differences in the language and pattern of the text. A creative piece of writing may look very different from a scientific piece of writing, and creative writing acknowledges the variety, deviation, and ambiguity in language and reflects unusual choices and different arrangements of words, linguistic techniques, metaphors, sentences, and unusual construction of the sentence. The aim of creative writing is to entertain, persuade, amuse, or inform, and mental stimulation could be the primary effect, which can reflect the complicated psychological activities. Furthermore, creative writing makes significant connotations on individual expression, the content, the idea it conveys, and the form and structure.

4. Language and Structure

An overarching influence on the complexities of language structures in each field lies in the evolution of creative writing and academic writing. Each discourse comes from influences that vary greatly. This historical location is manifested in respective structural make-ups, with creative writing adhering to traits such as plot, characterization, and the narration of subjective storytelling. In doing so, authors also comment on human concerns and experiences in the write-up, something that has had an accelerated role in creative non-fiction writing. Academic writing, on the other hand, is largely used to represent scholarly thought. This writing reflects current findings or arguments and is persuasive in an argumentative context, framed by individual academic writing strategies. The structure in academic writing, therefore, adheres to what we refer to as a more specific context, not so much to entertain but to influence beliefs, attitudes, or behaviour.

5. Hedging

Hedging refers to the use of cautious or non-absolute language to convey uncertainty or to make statements less definitive. Hedging is a valuable tool in academic writing that helps convey the appropriate level of certainty, maintain objectivity, and respect the complexity of research topics. By using hedging thoughtfully, you can enhance the credibility and clarity of your work while acknowledging the nuances of your findings.

Here are some reasons why hedging is important and how it can be used effectively:

- **Accuracy:** Academic research often deals with complex and uncertain subjects. Hedging helps reflect the true nature of the findings, acknowledging limitations and avoiding overgeneralization.
- **Objectivity:** Hedged statements can help maintain an objective tone, showing that the writer is cautious and thoughtful about the evidence and its implications.
- **Politeness and Modesty:** In scholarly discourse, hedging can show respect for other researchers' work and opinions, and can indicate that the writer is open to other interpretations or findings.
- **Anticipating Counterarguments:** By hedging, writers can pre-empt potential criticisms by acknowledging the limitations or alternative perspectives related to their research.

Examples of Hedging Language

Modal verbs: may, might, could

Example: "This study may suggest a correlation between X and Y."

Adverbs of frequency: usually, often, sometimes

Example: "These results are often seen in similar studies."

Adverbs of degree: somewhat, slightly, relatively

Example: "The findings are somewhat consistent with previous research."

Qualifying phrases: in some cases, under certain conditions, to some extent

Example: "To some extent, these results support the hypothesis."

Effective Use of Hedging

Balance: Overuse of hedging can make your writing appear uncertain or weak, while underuse can make it seem overly assertive. Aim for a balance that reflects the evidence accurately.

Clarity: Ensure that hedging does not obscure the main message or findings of your research.

Even with cautious language, your arguments should remain clear and understandable.

Context-appropriate: Use hedging where appropriate based on the strength of the evidence and the conventions of your discipline. Some fields may value more definitive statements, while others prioritize caution.

Practice

Activity #1

Read the following paragraph and underline all the hedging words and phrases.

"Research indicates that regular physical exercise can enhance mental well-being. Several studies suggest that physical activity might reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety. It appears that exercise may also improve overall mood and cognitive function."

Activity # 2

Assertive Statements to Rewrite: Rewrite the following assertive statements using appropriate hedges.

1. "The data proves that meditation reduces stress."

2. "Eating vegetables guarantees better health."
3. "Social media is the main cause of decreased attention spans."

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Activity # 3: Caution in Academic Writing

Revise the following assertive statements to make them more cautious.

Assertive Statements to Revise:

1. "Artificial intelligence will replace all human jobs."
2. "Genetic modification is the key to solving world hunger."
3. "The internet is the primary cause of social isolation."

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Activity #4: Use of Hedges

Consider the following essay. Incorporate hedging language throughout the essay to express uncertainty, possibility, and to avoid overgeneralizations.

The Role of Technology in Education

Technology has become an integral part of modern education, with many educators and institutions increasingly incorporating various technological tools and resources into their teaching practices. The purpose of this essay is to explore the potential benefits and challenges associated with the use of technology in educational settings, as well as to consider differing perspectives on its overall effectiveness.

One of the most significant potential benefits of technology in education is that it may enhance student engagement and motivation. Interactive tools, such as educational apps and online learning platforms, appear to make learning more engaging and enjoyable for students. For instance, gamified learning platforms might increase students' interest in subjects that they previously found challenging. Additionally, technology could facilitate personalized learning experiences, allowing students to progress at their own pace and according to their individual learning needs. This customization of the learning process is likely to result in better academic outcomes for some students.

However, there are also several challenges and drawbacks to consider when integrating technology into educational settings. One major concern is that the reliance on technology might exacerbate existing inequalities among students. Not all students have equal access to digital devices and high-speed internet, which could potentially widen the gap between those who can take full advantage of technological resources and those who cannot. Moreover, the effectiveness of technology in education is often dependent on the quality of its implementation. Without proper training and support, teachers may struggle to effectively incorporate technology into their teaching practices, which could lead to suboptimal outcomes.

The effectiveness of technology in education is a topic of considerable debate among educators and researchers. Some studies suggest that technology-enhanced learning can lead to improved academic performance, particularly in subjects such as mathematics and science. However, other research indicates that the impact of technology on learning outcomes is not always clear-cut and may vary depending on several factors, including the specific context and the way in which technology is used. It is also important to consider that while technology might offer numerous benefits, it is unlikely to be a panacea for all educational challenges. The human element of teaching and the importance of face-to-face interactions should not be underestimated.

In conclusion, technology has the potential to significantly impact modern education in both positive and negative ways. While it may enhance student engagement and offer personalized learning opportunities, it could also exacerbate inequalities and present implementation challenges. The overall effectiveness of technology in education is likely to depend on various factors, and it is crucial to approach its integration thoughtfully and critically. As the debate continues, it seems that a balanced approach that combines technological tools with traditional teaching methods might be the most effective strategy for fostering educational success.

By practicing hedging language throughout this essay, students can learn to express their ideas with appropriate caution and nuance, which is essential for effective academic writing.

Appendices

Appendix A: Some Key answers

APA Referencing System

Exercise #1

Pryczak, F., & Bruce, R. (2014). *Writing empirical research reports* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Darling-Hammond, L., Wilhoit, G., & Pittenger, L. (2014). Accountability for college and career readiness: Developing a new paradigm. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 22(86). Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v22n86.2014>.

Donmoyer, R. (2000). Generalizability and the single-case study. In R. Gomm, M. Hammersley, & P. Foster (Eds.), *Case study method* (pp. 45–68). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A. (2002). *Primal leadership: Realizing the power of emotional intelligence*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.

Patton, M.Q. (2015). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (4th ed.). Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications.

Palmer, P.J. (1999). Evoking the spirit in public education. *Educational Leadership*, 56(4), 6–11.

Exercise #2. Within text citations.

- Palmer (1999) noted that, “The spiritual is always present in public education” (p. 8).
- Patton (2015) cited Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman who said . . . [Note: If Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman have been previously cited in the writing, then the sentence would read: Patten (2015) cited Locke et al. who said . . .]

Academic Writing Vs. Creative Writing

Activity #1.

Underlined Hedging Words/Phrases:

- "Research indicates that regular physical exercise can enhance mental well-being."
- "Several studies suggest that physical activity might reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety."
- "It appears that exercise may also improve overall mood and cognitive function."

Activity #2.

Rewritten Statements

4. "The data suggests that meditation may reduce stress."
5. "Eating vegetables is likely to lead to better health."
6. "Social media might be a significant factor in decreased attention spans."

Activity #3

1. "Artificial intelligence may replace some human jobs."
2. "Genetic modification could be a key factor in addressing world hunger."
3. "The internet might contribute to social isolation in certain contexts."

Template #2

Exam Item

Write a 25-line essay concisely outlining and explaining the traditional simple model of a Master's dissertation. Relate each part of the model to your research topic.

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All the best...