



Investigating the Problems and Difficulties Iraqi EFL Postgraduate Students Face in Writing Thesis at University of Wasit

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abstract

This study aims to identify the most prominent problems and difficulties faced by Iraqi graduate students while writing their theses at Wasit University. This is achieved through an analysis of the academic, administrative, linguistic, and psychological aspects related to the thesis preparation process. The study employs a descriptive-analytical approach, relying on a questionnaire distributed to a sample of Master's and PhD students across various disciplines. The results revealed that students suffer from a range of challenges, most notably: weak research and methodological skills, limited familiarity with scientific documentation methods, and difficulty accessing up-to-date sources. Furthermore, they encounter problems related to academic supervision, such as insufficient guidance or delayed feedback. The study also uncovered psychological and time pressures that impact academic achievement, along with some administrative and organizational obstacles within the university. The study recommends developing training programs to enhance students' scientific research skills, strengthening the role of academic supervisors, providing access to up-to-date scientific resources, and improving the research environment within Iraqi universities to contribute to raising the quality of theses.

Keywords: Graduate students, writing university theses, academic difficulties, Wasit University.

دراسة المشكلات والصعوبات التي يواجهها طلاب الدراسات العليا العراقيون في كتابة أطروحاتهم
بجامعة واسط

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المديرية العامة للتربية في واسط

مديرية التربية في الصويرة

مدرسة المزرة للبنين

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد أبرز المشكلات والصعوبات التي يواجهها طلاب الدراسات العليا العراقيون أثناء كتابة أطروحاتهم في جامعة واسط. ويتحقق ذلك من خلال تحليل الجوانب الأكاديمية والإدارية واللغوية والنفسية المتعلقة بعملية إعداد الأطروحة. وتعتمد الدراسة على المنهج الوصفي التحليلي، بالاعتماد على استبيان وُزِعَ على عينة من طلاب الماجستير والدكتوراه من مختلف التخصصات. وكشفت النتائج أن الطلاب يعانون من مجموعة من التحديات، أبرزها: ضعف مهارات البحث والمنهجية، ومحدودية الإلمام بأساليب التوثيق العلمي، وصعوبة الوصول إلى المصادر الحديثة. علاوة على ذلك، يواجهون مشكلات تتعلق بالإشراف الأكاديمي، مثل عدم كفاية التوجيه أو تأخر التغذية الراجعة. كشفت الدراسة أيضاً عن ضغوط نفسية وزمنية تؤثر على التحصيل الأكاديمي، إلى جانب بعض المعوقات الإدارية والتنظيمية داخل الجامعة. وتوصي الدراسة بتطوير برامج تدريبية لتعزيز مهارات البحث العلمي لدى الطلاب، وتدعيم دور



المشرفين الأكاديميين، وتوفير الوصول إلى أحدث المصادر العلمية، وتحسين بيئة البحث في الجامعات العراقية للمساهمة في رفع جودة الرسائل العلمية.
الكلمات المفتاحية: طلاب الدراسات العليا، كتابة الرسائل الجامعية، الصعوبات الأكاديمية، جامعة واسط.

Introduction

Proficiency in academic writing (henceforth AW) is frequently one of the most important predictors of success in post graduate-level EFL programs. However, students must write with high-level construction skills in a discipline course meant for postgraduate students. This requires them to integrate diverse ideas, synthesize views, and pay close attention to correctness, voice, and audience.

It's likely that students learning English as a second language may struggle to concentrate long enough to produce a paragraph, which is the foundation of writing proficiency. It implies that writing allows for the more accurate and liberated expression of any thought, emotion, or perception that arises in the mind.

The majority of a Master student's time is spent on thesis preparation during their second year at the Postgraduate level. This latter can be described as an official academic paper that a student creates and turns in as a component of fulfilling the requirements for earning a Master's degree. However, creating a master's thesis involves more than just writing (Brause, 1999); it also entails a variety of stages and phases, from choosing a researchable topic to the thesis's writing up at the very end.

Writing thesis successfully is a crucial skill. AW is crucial to the success of higher education programs (Al-Marwani, 2020). University students must develop their writing abilities because writing can be a difficult procedure. This is because well-structured theses are a requirement and must be accepted by the academic department (Ismail, 2011). Writing is an intricate communication process that involves "the generation, analysis, and synthesis of ideas; the organization of discourse; the control of sentence structure; the vocabulary, spelling, and mechanics" (Williams, 2007, p. 12). As a result, there are many different writing aspects where EFL students could make mistakes, including grammar, punctuation, and linguistic structures. However, even when they are free of grammatical problems, the writing assignments of EFL students would be highly unusual and anomalous to read, especially for native English speakers (Cai, 2011).

Students must complete a thesis as their final project as part of their academic training at universities. Writing a thesis should not take longer than a year. Since writing a thesis is not a simple task for the majority of students, there are still some who cannot complete it in time. It takes a long time and drains one's thoughts, energies, and emotions in the process. As a result, it's necessary to follow particular principles and procedures while writing for academic reasons. Researchers write in academic writing to share their findings and conclusions with audiences. What they write must be accessible to their readers community in a comprehensible manner. As a result, the goal of this study is to examine the



challenges and problems Iraqi EFL postgraduate students face when writing theses at University of Wasit .

Chapter Two

Overview

An overview of the recent studies on the notion of academic writing with its major types in the field of foreign language learning is given in the present chapter. Moreover, approaches and difficulties in writing master thesis are presented either in details.

2.1 The Notion of Academic Writing

Writing is one of the four fundamental abilities needed to study English as a second language or a foreign language. Writing plays a significant part within the framework of instructing foreign language learners in English. Writing, whether it be electronic or printed on paper, is a visual form of communication. Bowker (2007) states that academic writing is a unique genre of writing with its own set of guidelines and conventions. The written work in academic writing is centered on a thorough analysis of the source to produce pertinent results.

Writing is a form of problem-solving, according to White and Arndt (1991), which involves processes like idea generation, finding one's writing voice, goal-setting, planning, monitoring, and evaluation of both what will be written and what has already been written, as well as the search for the right words to convey the exact meaning. When writing, the author aims to communicate their ideas clearly and concisely utilizing grammatically sound language.

Writing is the consequence of using tactics to control the composing process, according to Hedge (2000). Setting objectives, collecting material, choosing acceptable language, creating a draft, reading and modifying it, and editing are just a few of the processes involved. The procedure is difficult. Writing can be viewed as a communication and interaction between the writer and the reader through the text. Writing is a key component of classroom instruction, a crucial language activity, and a useful way to reinforce both oral and written language material (Al- Mutawa & Kailani, 1989).

2.2 The Importance of Writing

Writing is now essential for success in university and college. One approach to communicate ideas or thoughts to others is through writing. Another crucial ability in learning English is writing, which requires a lot of work from the students. Writing is a sophisticated endeavor that calls for the use of one's creativity, emotions, mental condition, mood, and cognitive abilities in addition to the medium, context, and other components., according to Andrews (2001). According to Walsh (2010), writing is significant since it is widely employed in both the business and higher education. Students who lack the ability to articulate themselves in writing will find it difficult to interact effectively with peers, instructors, employers, and almost everyone else. A college student or successful graduate's everyday life involves a lot of written communication: projects, memos, reports, applications, preliminary interviews, emails, and more.



The writing process is divided into five stages, according to Jenks (2003) (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publication). Writing proficiency is a crucial skill for EFL students and a necessary component of learning a second language. Helping students develop the knowledge and skills necessary to generate written texts that resemble those that a well-educated individual would be expected to produce in his native tongue is the goal of writing instruction in Florida (Hunt & Timothy, 2009).

Myles (2002), who emphasizes that students writing in a second language must become proficient in language use as well as writing methods, approaches, and skills, confirms the significance of comprehending the writing process. She also stresses that students may have difficulties with the writing process itself. According to Ur (1999), the goal of writing is to articulate ideas and communicate a message to the reader; as a result, the ideas themselves take on a significant role in the writing.

EFL writing proficiency is important in Tchudi (1999) for a number of reasons: In the beginning, it makes thinking more clear and facilitates concept exploration. Furthermore, writing is much more than just putting thoughts on paper; composition is more than merely verbalizing ideas. It is an approach to cultivate and investigate morals and values, to delve into difficult issues, and to create meaningful and enduring social bonds. Furthermore, because it incorporates the majority of the language arts, writing could be considered the most essential of the liberal arts.. In Rao (2007) EFL writing is useful in two respects: First, it motivates students' thinking, organizing ideas, developing their ability to summarize, analyze and criticize. Second, it strengthens students' learning, thinking and reflecting on the English language.

Worthington (2002) mentions that the writing process makes students active recipients of knowledge, shapers and organizers of what they know. It requires the freedom to experiment without concern about negative consequences. Writing can be thought of as a more uniform system that requires specialized training to achieve. Participation in culture and education requires a significant requirement, which is mastery of this standard system. Since writing is more standardized than speech, there can be harsher penalties for deviations from the norm Grabowski (1995).

Chapter Three

Methodology

Overview

A correlation design comprising of one study question was developed in order to examine the problems and difficulties faced by EFL Iraqi learners in thesis writing at University of Wasit . This section introduces the participants as well as the instruments utilized to obtain the required data. Further explanations of the data collection and analysis procedures follow.



3.2 Participants

The current study population includes (20) Iraqi graduate students in English as a foreign language at the College of Education for Human Sciences, Wasit University. In order to collect the required data, using the Convenience Sampling Method, approximately (75) Iraqi EFL MA postgraduate students who are enrolled in TEFL program at University of Wasit has been participated during the academic years (2025-2026) .

3.3 Instruments

One questionnaire and interview were utilized and distributed in the present study to gather the necessary data:

3.3.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire is a technique of data collection is done by providing a set of questions or a written statement to the respondent to answer. The questionnaire is an efficient data collection techniques if researchers know for certain variables to be measured and know what can be expected from the respondents.

The questionnaire was adopted from Franco (2021). The questionnaire was submitted to some experts in the field of curriculum and instruction (TEFL) to confirm its validity. The author already ensured the reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha. The reliability coefficient was 0.88, which shows that the tool is reliable. The final questionnaire form involved the following proposed difficulties of writing:(1) Personality factors (1-19) items , socio-cultural factors(20-26) , linguistics factors (27-30).They were asked to tick either disagree or slightly agree or agree on the proposed difficulties they might face in thesis writing, (See Appendix 1).

3.3.2 Interview

The most widely used tool for collecting data in qualitative research is interviews. A semi-structured interview was conducted for (15) Iraqi male and female postgraduate students where the researcher visited the faculty and identified Iraqi postgraduate students and met them randomly in order to fulfill the target number of the sample.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

The employment of the questionnaire and the interview in the present study was used to collect the data for this quantitative correlational study. At the conclusion of the Autumn semester in 2025, a validated questionnaire and interview measuring EFL learners' problems and difficulties in writing thesis were distributed to respondents, who were then given instructions on how to fill the instruments. The participants were given some instructions on how to complete the tools to measure the study variables. One hour limits was given to participants to complete performing the tools. The responders received assurances regarding the privacy of the data they gave. All of the responders Iraqi EFL postgraduate students at the faculty of Persian literature and foreign languages at university of Wasit .



3.5 Data Analysis

The present study utilized a mixed – method type for collecting data . Descriptive Statistics and weighted means and percentiles were used to get the results of the study. To do so, the SPSS 22 program was utilized to get the results of the study.

3.6 Research Design

A mixed-methods research design was used for this study. Qualitative and quantitative data are combined in a single study using mixed-methods research. In order to produce an integrated, thorough understanding of the subject under study, mixed techniques take advantage of both the advantages and disadvantages of qualitative and quantitative procedures.

Chapter Four

Results

Overview

The purpose of the research was to analyze, assess, and clarify the challenges and difficulties encountered by Iraqi EFL postgraduate students while writing their theses at University of Wasit . The purpose of this research is to identify the elements that contribute to students' difficulties in writing their master thesis. This chapter outlines the research question in relation to the data analysis technique and the findings of the analyses. The results are described in full in the tables.

4.2 Tests of Normality of The Data

In order to evaluate the normality of distributions, descriptive statistics of the data were gathered and created from the Results for Proficiency Test Score. The two tests, Kolmogorov-Smirnova and Shapiro-Wilk, give descriptive statistics for the normality of distributions. The descriptive statistics of distribution normalcy are shown in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1

Tests of Normality

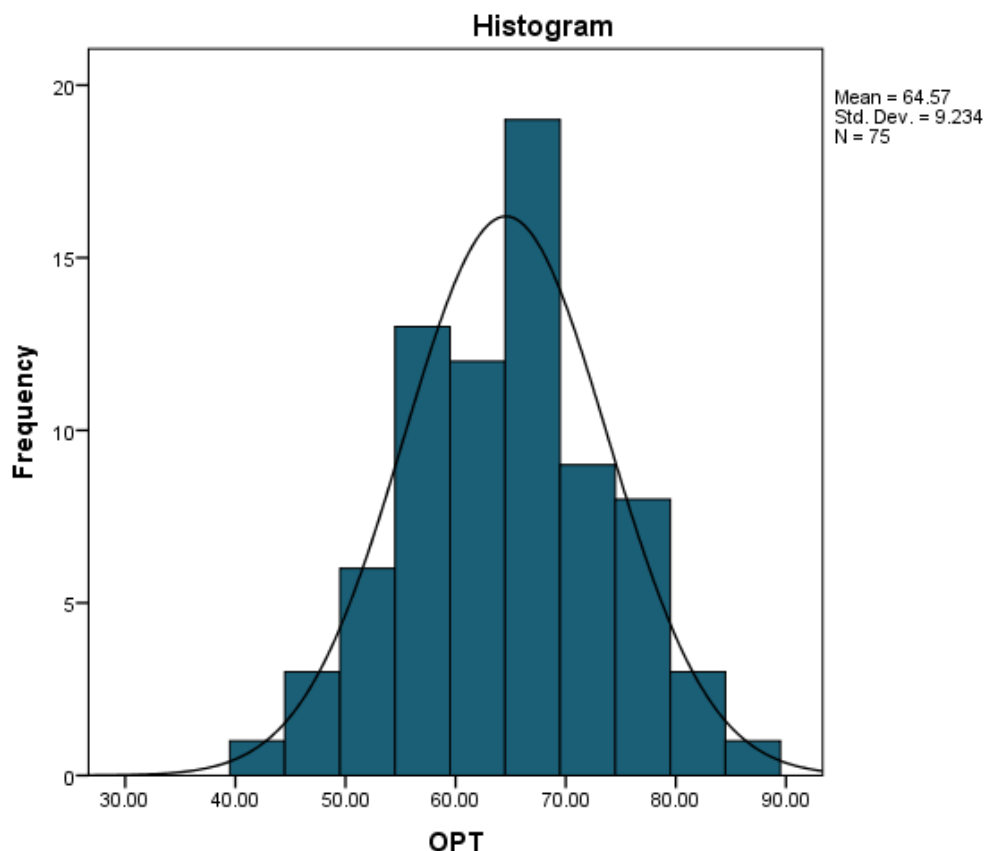
	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
		Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
OPT	75	-.043	.277	-.236	.548

Table 4.1 displays the results of the data normality checks. Both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and the Shapiro-Wilk tests were used to assess the data. The findings show that the participants' distributions are not normal, as demonstrated by the P values of the Shapiro-Wilk tests, which are all larger than .05. As a result, as seen in Figure 4.1, it may be determined that the data did not display a normal distribution

Figure 4.1



Normal Distribution of OPT Test



4.3 The Questionnaire Descriptive Statistics Results

This study's questionnaire was taken from Franco (2021). The tool addresses the challenges that students have when composing their theses. There are thirty items on the Likert scale in the questionnaire. Each individual item is assigned a score on a 5-point Likert-style answer scale, with values ranging from 1 to 5. The average score for the sample of 75 individuals was 103.12, with a standard deviation of 24.05. These results are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Descriptive Statistics for the Questionnaire

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Questionnaire	75	46	158	103.12	24.05

It may be deduced from the study's wide range of findings—which ranged from 46 to 158—that the participants experienced various degrees of the difficulties that students encounter when writing their theses. Table 4.2 presents the findings of the questionnaire.

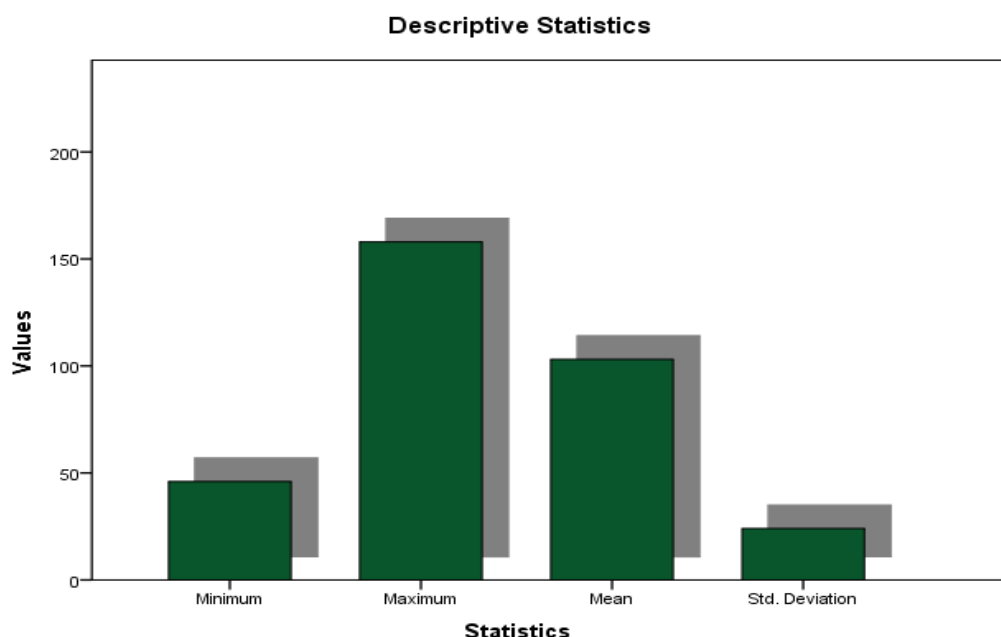
Figure 4.2

Analysis of Questionnaire Scores



4.4 Investigating the Study Research Question

In this section, the investigator presents the outcomes pertaining to the research



question: What are the problems and difficulties faced by Iraqi EFL postgraduate students in thesis writing at university of Wasit ?.

4.4.1 Students Difficulties in Personality Factors

Table 4.3 illustrates the challenges associated with writing a thesis in terms of personality factors. The majority of students concurred, according to the data, that they had issues with personality elements. The best indication, with a mean score of 2.98, is identifying the thesis title or topic. Probably the most frequent issue that many authors deal with is this one. The inability to identify their objective, on the other hand, had the lowest mean of 2.29 for this indication.

Table 4.3 Problems faced by graduate students at Wasit University in teaching English as a foreign language when writing their theses, based on personality factors.



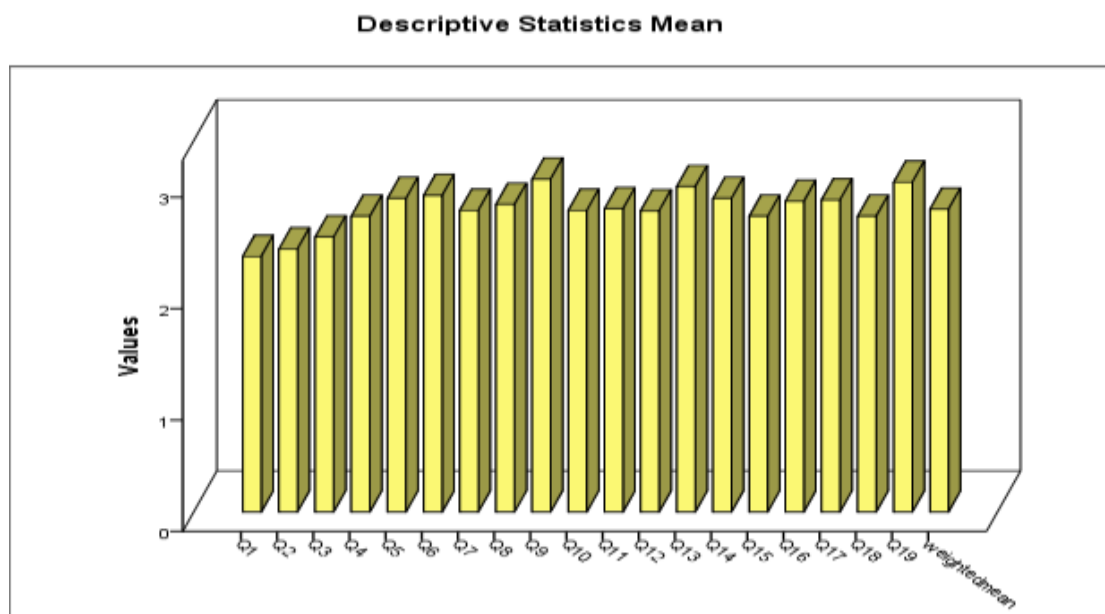
	N	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	frequency
1) I have difficulty in deciding the topic of my thesis	75	2.29	Agree	29
2) I have difficulty in deciding the title of my thesis	75	2.36	Agree	24
3) I have difficulty in having prior knowledge due to the thesis topic	75	2.46	Agree	30
4) I have difficulty in identifying and formulating the thesis problem	75	2.65	Agree	29
5) I have difficulty in identifying the thesis purposes	75	2.81	Disagree	23
6) I have difficulty in writing a proper literature review	75	2.84	Agree	22
7) I have difficulty in deciding the method I would like to use in my thesis writing	75	2.70	Agree	27
8) I have difficulty in gaining the data of my thesis	75	2.76	Agree	24
9) I have difficulty in writing the findings of my thesis	75	2.98	Agree	24
10) I have difficulty writing a good thesis.	75	2.70	Slightly agree	23
11) I have difficulty in thought due to a lot of ideas in writing my thesis	75	2.72	Agree	21
12) I have difficulty in financial during the thesis writing	74	2.70	Agree	26
13) I have difficulty in trying or to presentment to write a thesis	75	2.92	Disagree	24
14) I have difficulty being anxious in writing a thesis	75	2.81	Disagree	23
15) I have difficulty in being aware of the current issues toward my thesis writing	75	2.65	Agree	33
16) I have difficulty in identifying some issues related to the thesis writing	75	2.78	Slightly agree	30
17) I have difficulty being critical about some issues regarding the thesis writing	75	2.80	Slightly agree	28
18) I have difficulty having intrinsic motivation toward the thesis writing	75	2.65	Agree	24
19) I have difficulty having extrinsic motivation in writing a thesis	75	2.96	Slightly agree	25
Weighted mean	75	2.71		

Activat



The top four aspects were: finding it difficult to write my thesis' findings (2.98); finding it difficult to write a thesis with external motivation (2.96); finding it difficult to try or present the thesis (2.92); and finding it difficult to write an appropriate literature review (2.84). In the meantime, having trouble choosing my thesis's topic received the lowest mark (2.29).

Figure 4.3
Problems Related to Personality Factors



4.4.2 Difficulties faced by graduate students at Wasit University in the field of English as a foreign language in socio-cultural factors

Students' difficulties composing an MA thesis based on socio-cultural categories are shown in Table 4.4. The result shows how much the student believes that issues in the sociocultural category are impeding their ability to write. The questions address the issues with communication skills and social distance that students may encounter.



Table 4.4

Iraqi EFL Postgraduate Students' Problems in Writing the Thesis Based on Socio-Cultural Factors

	N	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	frequency
1) I have difficulty in discussing the thesis writing with other students	75	2.94	Disagree	18
2) I have difficulty in discussing the thesis writing with my thesis coordinator	75	2.81	Agree	22
3) I have difficulty in understanding the culture in the university standard format in thesis writing	75	3.09	Disagree	23
4) I have difficulty in knowing proper lexical items and linguistic units on the thesis writing	75	3.17	Disagree	24
5) I have difficulty connecting each sentence and forming it into a meaningful thesis	75	2.60	Slightly agree	24
6) I have difficulty in knowing the roles of the social context related to the study of thesis writing	75	2.94	Slightly agree	24
7) I have difficulty in sustaining communication through speech styles on the thesis writing	75	3.20	Disagree	26
Weighted mean	75	2.96		

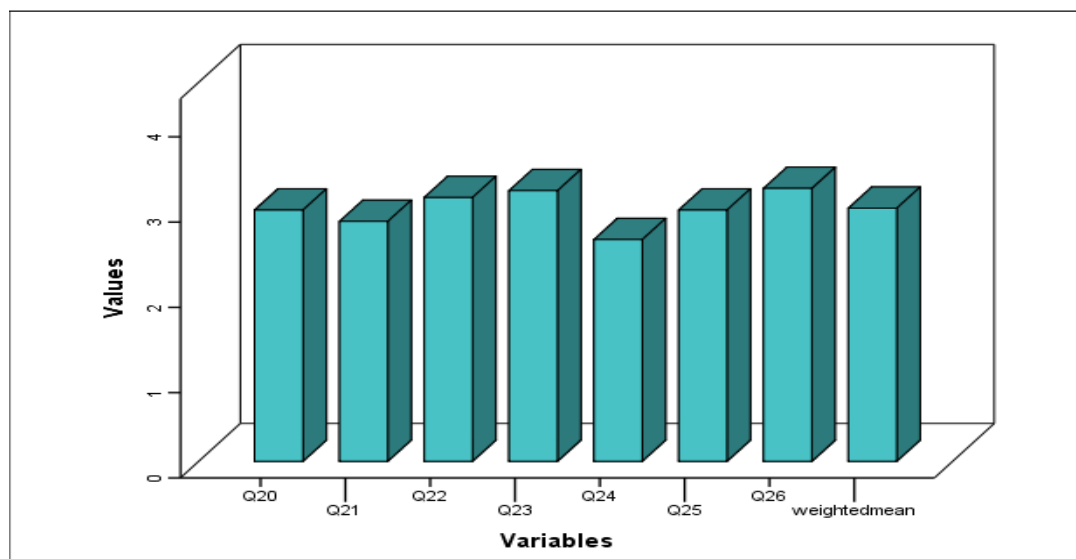
The highest score, as seen in the above table, is 3.17 for and shaping having trouble knowing the appropriate lexical words and linguistic units on the thesis. The category with the lowest results, however, is Having trouble making connections between sentences them into a coherent thesis (2.60).

Figure 4.4



Problems Related to Socio-Cultural Factors

Descriptive Statistics Mean



4.4.3 Difficulties of Wasit University students in English as a foreign language in linguistic factors

The language aspects are the final challenge. The outcomes of issues based on linguistic category are displayed in Table 4.5. This section has just four indicators. The top sign, "I have trouble deciding which set of linguistic units have to be deleted, replaced, supplied, and reordered on my thesis writing," received a mean score of 2.94. When authors are ignorant about the topic under discussion, it is difficult to grasp what they are writing about. The lowest signal, on the other hand, was that I had trouble paraphrasing ..



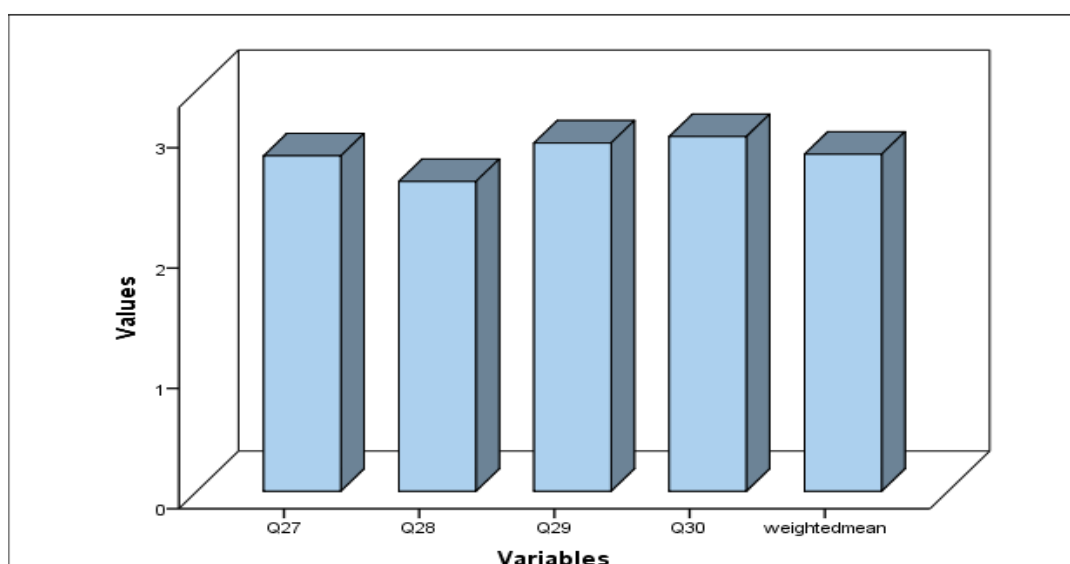
Table 4.5

Iraqi EFL Students' Problems in Writing the Thesis Based on Linguistic Factors

	N	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	frequency
1) I have difficulty in minimalizing the error of the grammar on my thesis writing	75	2.78	Agree	21
2) I have difficulty in paraphrasing sentences from the sources to my thesis writing	75	2.57	Strongly agree	20
3) I have difficulty in knowing which grammar use that supposed to be deleted, replaced, supplied, and reordered on my thesis writing	75	2.89	Agree	29
4) I have difficulty in deciding which set of linguistic units have to be deleted, replaced, supplied, and reordered on my thesis writing	75	2.94	Slightly agree	25
Weighted mean	75	2.80		

Figure 4.5 *Problems Related to Linguistic Factors*

Descriptive Statistics Mean





4.5 The Interview Analysis

Evidence from the open-ended surveys and interviews demonstrated that a variety of linguistic, personality, and sociocultural characteristics had a detrimental impact on the progress made by Iraqi EFL Postgraduate students in writing their master's theses. Students need to be proficient in a variety of areas in order to be ready to write their theses, including conducting research and composing the many thesis chaptersetc.

Student 1:

In my point of view , Many postgraduate students struggled with properly stating the problems, citing sources, providing justifications for choosing particular approaches, evaluating data, and breaking up their writing into a conclusion and summary.

Student 2 :

My problem with writing English thesis is that: 1. I can't formulate my hypotheses ; 2. I don't know how to collect my literature ; 3. I'm also weak at making results. For me the best suggestion to cope with these difficulties is to Offer classes that emphasize academic writing abilities and engaging in greater scholarly reading and writing.

Student: 3

I believe in the idea that to complete the thesis writing process, support from my supervisor is essential. Nevertheless, I think that my supervisors' help was insufficient.

Student 4:

The applicants' capacity to write was impeded by the demanding schedules of the family members.

Student 5:

One of the causes are the difficulties to find the reference and resources which is appropriate with the thesis, the limitation of books in the library which are not completed and available, the book has expensive price in the bookstore, and the sources from internet are not complete as well.

Student 6:

The majority of them, in my perspective, were more worried about their poor ability to articulate thoughts with sufficient logic and clarity as well as their incapacity to efficiently synthesize and summarize material. They exuded confidence in their ability to write in general.

Student 7:

I had trouble composing the different chapters as it was my first experience with the genre of research writing. For example writing the Literature Review was difficult for him. Furthermore, I was ignorant of the distinction between a theoretical and conceptual framework. Additionally, there was so much material in this chapter that I was at a loss for what to add. Furthermore, I was terrified of plagiarizing.



Student 8:

Most of my classmates and I were talking about how hard it was to choose between a mixed-method design, a quantitative approach, or a qualitative one. In order to choose the appropriate approach for my study, I revisited the class notes on methodology and checked out books on the subject from the library.

Student 9:

In my opinion, The data analysis was really challenging for me. I was told to use SPSS by my supervisor, but I had no idea what the program was or how to use it. Furthermore, I had no idea how to display the facts you knew using Microsoft because I found it difficult to create my own.

Student 10:

When it comes to writing an introductory chapter, I sometimes struggle to differentiate the difficulties from the thesis and to develop their thoughts and sentence structure due to a lack of vocabulary, poor syntax, and even incorrect tenses.

Student 11:

When writing the methodology chapter, students sometimes struggle to figure out the formula to compute the data's result. This is often because the content was not as thoroughly described in the lectures, which left the students with less knowledge of the chapter.

Student 12:

For me, I have low English language proficiency, inability to use mechanics of writing, and limited understanding of the essence of research process. Said argued: 'Some students have poor writing and lack the basic academic writing skills (i.e., writing well-formed sentences, using punctuation, paraphrasing, and well-organized paragraphs.)

Student 13:

I think it is difficult for me to arrange the components of the thesis together. Besides, I have really a problem in writing the results of the study. Reading more academic articles and having more writing practices would be sufficient to boost the students' writing skills.

Student 14 :

The challenges I encounter are related to my limited understanding of how concepts link, how ideas are expressed clearly, how well I can speak the language, the discussion section's substance, and how simple and dull their writing was.

Student 15 :

For the most part, for me, the postgraduate students had difficulties with data gathering techniques, data analysis, producing publishable research papers, oral presentation abilities.

The data, through the interview, was coding by recording the responses of participants. Then what was said in an interview recording was converted to text



manually by the researcher. The theme, based on the participants responses to the research questions, was characterized by the researcher.

Table 4.6 *Results of the Interview*

Questions	Results	Percentage s
What kind of problems did you encounter while writing your thesis?	1.Lack the basics of academic writing skills 2.Struggling with stating the problem, citing sources 3. Inability to paraphrase information 4.Writing literature review is difficult 5. Did not know how to formulate hypothesis	75%
Do you have any suggestion(s) to cope with the problems and improve the situation for future Iraqi EFL postgraduate students ?	1. Offering classes that emphasize academic writing abilities 2. Engaging in greater scholarly reading and writing	90%

Chapter Five

Discussion, Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications Overview

In the current chapter, the findings are explained and discussed in light of the body of existing literature. The chapter is divided into four sections: recommendations for additional research, a discussion of the findings, concluding remarks, and an explanation of the study's educational implications.

5.2 Discussion

Attempting to answer the research question, the researcher tried to examine the difficulties Iraqi EFL postgraduate students face while writing their theses at university of Wasit . To address this question, descriptive statistics of the data were gathered. The two tests, Kolmogorov-Smirnova and Shapiro-Wilk, give descriptive statistics for the normality of distributions are used to assess the data and to address the objective of the study. The results of analysis show that the majority of Iraqi EFL postgraduate students experience difficulties and problems when writing their academic thesis.

This outcome can be examined in light of certain other research projects. Bakhou and Bouhania, for instance (2020). The purpose of this qualitative study was to learn more about the thesis writing experiences of Master's students in Algeria, a noticeably understudied EFL context. The study specifically investigated how supervisors and students perceived the obstacles and difficulties that arise when



writing a thesis, with an emphasis on the non-linguistic elements that underlie this academic endeavor. Thirty students and six supervisors who were specifically chosen from the English departments of eight Algerian institutions were surveyed using semi-structured in-depth interviews supplemented by open-ended questionnaires. The results show that sociocultural obstacles and language barriers are the main reasons Algerian EFL Master students find thesis writing to be a tough and intimidating academic task.

This is corroborated by a research by Abu Alyan (2022) that addressed thesis writing difficulties among Palestinian master's students studying English as a foreign language (EFL) (MA). Comprehensive semi-structured interviews were used to gather data for a qualitative case study. Ten supervisors and eighteen MA students from the Islamic University of Gaza's English department took part. The study's primary conclusions included, among other things, choosing a relevant research topic, having insufficient training in research and methodology, lacking proficiency in language and academic writing, receiving insufficient feedback from supervisors and course instructors, and having limited access to online resources. The findings of this study corroborate those of past research about the challenges MA students may face when writing their theses. The study's participants identified a number of challenges, most of which pointed to shortcomings in pedagogical orientations, particularly in relation to research technique and training, academic writing skills, and feedback from supervisors and course instructors, as the results section makes evident.

5.3 Conclusions

Drawing from the study's objectives, it can be inferred that Iraqi EFL postgraduate students encountered certain challenges when writing their theses in the academic years 2022–2023. The results showed that Iraqi postgraduate students at Iranian universities struggle with a poor level of academic writing proficiency. These challenges include the postgraduates' incapacity to identify objectives, identify the thesis' title, and compose a literature review. Writing conclusions is sometimes a difficult and intimidating chore for them. Regarding the socio-cultural factor, the students have difficulties in having trouble knowing the appropriate lexical words and linguistic units on the thesis. Also, they have trouble making connections between sentences to form a coherent thesis. Based on linguistic factors, Iraqi EFL postgraduate students encounter difficulties in difficulty in deciding which set of linguistic units have to be deleted, replaced, supplied, and reordered on their thesis writing.

In view of the previously reported findings, many generalizations can be suggested as summarized below: In light of students' requirements and growing concerns, investigating these issues may assist supervisors in making well-informed judgments on more effective teaching methods. Teachers may assist students in developing the abilities, information, and experience necessary to effectively finish their theses by encouraging purposeful effort and taking appropriate professional considerations into account.



Interactive activities like small group discussions and research training workshops can be stimulated by academic writing skills and practical research teaching approach. Distinguished graduate MA students and seasoned thesis advisors discuss strategies for overcoming obstacles and their thesis writing experiences in these sessions.

5.4 Pedagogical Implications

In accordance with the present findings, various pedagogical implications can be conceived of. These are summarized below: The study's results can be used to identify obstacles that Iraqi postgraduate students face when writing their master's theses. These obstacles typically lead to postgraduate students giving up on writing their theses, failing to finish them in a timely manner, or producing theses of poor quality. The study's insights are used to better understand the issues faced by EFL postgraduate students and make adjustments to their programs in response to the voice or feedback from postgraduate students.

Based on the results of the study, university instructors modify their instructional strategies and the material covered in academic writing and methodology modules to better accommodate EFL students' demands when it comes to completing their theses. In order to adequately instruct and prepare Master students for writing their theses, universities and EFL English departments should provide training days and workshops on the various stages and facets, especially the more difficult ones, of writing the Master thesis.

Lastly, it is anticipated that the study's conclusions can be taken into account by further researchers who want to carry out research on students' difficulties with thesis writing.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Considering the outcomes, the following recommendations could be beneficial for EFL instructors. In order to address issues during instruction and offer remedial support to students, instructors must be able to identify the root causes of the challenges that their students face and reflect on them. Additionally, by recognizing the issues that students see as needing improvement in the academic English writing classroom, teachers might be encouraged to promote innovation in lesson plans, instructional strategies, and instructional resources. Standardizing the processes for assessing students' writing proficiency is another suggestion. To become more proficient writers of academic thesis, students must be aware of their present writing skills and shortcomings

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