



Mohamed Khider University of Biskra  
Faculty of Letters and Languages  
Department of Foreign Languages

## **MASTER THESIS**

Letters and Foreign Languages  
English Language  
Sciences of Language

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On:

### **The Role of Research Paper Assignment in the Development of EFL Learner's Academic Writing**

Case Study of Second Year Master EFL Students of Sciences of the Language at  
Biskra University

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to my family.

## Acknowledgment

First of all, this work could not have been accomplished without **God's** guidance and help, I am immensely thankful.

A special gratitude goes to my supervisor **Mrs. Bendahmane Messaouda** for her unlimited patience, guidance, support and sustained efforts until the end of this work.

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## **Abstract**

The present study aims to investigate the role of integrating research paper assignment as a technique to develop EFL learners' academic writing. It attempts to shed the lights on some of the raising problems encountered by EFL graduate students which affect the quality of their research writing in the division of English at Biskra University. This research is built on the hypothesis that if EFL students are assigned enough research papers, the quality of their academic writing will develop and so their scientific research skills. This investigation is descriptive in nature. It has been undertaken through the use of two data gathering tools: a questionnaire administrated to Master Two EFL students and an interview administrated to EFL teachers who are concerned with supervision process at the division of English at Biskra University. The research findings reveal that both EFL students and teachers have a positive attitude towards the use of research paper assignment as a teaching strategy. Research paper assignment is found to help students get more experience and improve their research and writing skills which will make their final graduation project easier to handle. At the end, some recommendations are drawn to teachers, students, and administration.

**Key words:** research paper assignment, academic writing, supervision, scientific reserach

## **List of Abbreviations**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**M2:** Master Two

**ICT:** Information Communication Technology

**Vs:** versus

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# **General Introduction**

## **1-Study Background**

Algerian learners who learn English as a foreign language find various difficulties in writing in general and in academic writing in particular. At advanced levels, learners are required to write dissertations which make the transition from being freshmen students to being graduate ones. The process of writing dissertation is not an easy task to go through. Rather, it is full of challenges and obstacles from choosing a theme until the viva's day for EFL students who get accustomed to the idea of learning only to get higher grades or to pass the academic year. For this reason, conducting research in general and writing a dissertation in particular are seen as the most difficult assignments especially if they are done for the first time.

## **2-Statement of the Problem**

Second year master (M2) EFL learners at Biskra University are supposed to submit a master dissertation as a final phase of the higher education system. This piece of writing is considered as the most important task that the students have undertaken during their years of study at the university. However, foreign language writing is a complex and challenging skill to be mastered by EFL learners, they find many difficulties in conducting the research projects for numerous reasons as it is their first time to compose an independent piece of research work. Therefore, this study will spot the lights on the different challenges M2 students face during their long journey of writing their dissertation and to what extent the research paper project can be effective in solving these problems.

## **3-Research Questions**

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- Why is delivering a dissertation important at university?
- What kind of challenges M2 students face during writing their master thesis?

- How can research paper assignments help in developing EFL academic writing skills?

#### **4-Research Hypothesis**

The researcher hypothesizes that the use of research paper may affect positively the quality of research in the division of English at the University of Biskra.

#### **5-Research Aims**

The general purpose of this study is to enhance learners' academic writing and to improve the quality of scientific research in the division of English at Biskra University.

More specifically, this study aims to:

- Spot the lights on the challenges learners encounter in the early stage of writing their dissertation and even after.
- Make teachers and students aware of the various challenges faced in their journey of writing a dissertation.
- Include research papers assignment in the teaching-learning context

#### **6-Research Significance**

This study is significant as it may have contribution on improving the EFL academic writing which will result in a good quality dissertation. It will also present the contribution of research paper as a significant tool in enhancing learners' academic writing and its role in developing the research skills. Furthermore, as mentioned previously dissertation writing is full of difficulties and challenges that would confuse learners. For this reason it is important to draw attention to such problems and their effects on students' written productions. Moreover, it contributes to figure out the main reasons behind the failure to complete a research work.

## **7-Research Methodology**

### **7.1. Research approach**

The present study makes use of the descriptive research under the mixed method approach since it describes two variables and how can research paper influence the quality of writing using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Also, it describes its effects on the ability of achieving a good level of research at Biskra University.

### **7.2. Population and Sample**

The sample of this research is selected from M2 sciences of the language students in the division of English at the University of Biskra. Since it is difficult to deal with the whole number of the population (165 students), only 45 students have been chosen randomly to represent the study sample. Also, 10 teachers who are concerned with the supervision process have been interviewed.

### **7.3. Data Gathering Tools**

For this study, two data collection methods are used: students' questionnaire and a teachers' interview to accomplish this research. Initially, the researcher has administered a questionnaire for students in order to collect their opinions and views about the importance of research papers and to identify the difficulties they face when doing research. Moreover, the questionnaire attempts to examine the students' current level in writing.

An interview has been administered to 8 teachers to check their opinions about scientific research in the division of English at Biskra University, as well as M2 dissertation writing difficulties and the role they play as supervisors. Furthermore, it aims to get their opinions and attitudes toward the common difficulties encountered by students in doing research and to what extent can research paper assignment be effective.

## **8-Structure of the Study**

The present study is divided into two main parts; the first part is devoted to give a theoretical background whereas the second part is devoted to the field work. The theoretical part consists of two chapters: the first chapter provides a general overview about writing skills and highlights academic writing specifically, its definition, its characteristics, as well as a discussion on plagiarism and academic integrity. Furthermore, the second chapter is divided into two sections, the first section deals with the term research in general whereas the second section focuses on research paper (assignment) definition, structure, components, types, steps of writing. This section eventually concludes with shedding the light on the different challenges encountered by students when writing research papers. Finally, the third chapter is dedicated to the field work and data analysis which are gathered from the tools used.

## **9-Limitation of the Study**

The researcher, in this study, encountered some obstacles that impeded the research progress. Initially, there was a lack in hard sources in the faculty library concerning research papers in addition to the unavailability of the free copies per net. Moreover, because of the current circumstances concerning the quarantine and the spread of covid-19 the process of gathering data was generally online. The interview, for example, took a while to collect teachers emails and wait for their responses which were not that detailed as a face to face ones. Besides, this study was intended to work with a sample from both specialties but the researcher could not get answers from Civilization and Literature M2 students. Consequently, the sample has been minimized to Science of Language specialty and the researcher has confirmed the validity of her hypotheses.

# **Chapter One:**

# **Academic Writing**

## **Introduction**

EFL learners are subjected to master four essential skills; among which writing is viewed as the most complex one. It takes more effort and practice to achieve a good level of proficiency. This chapter is devoted to tackle the writing skill in general and the notion of academic writing in particular. It attempts to provide a glimpse about the history of writing, its definition, its elements, and its importance. This chapter also provides an overview on the concept of academic writing including its definition, its characteristics, as well as a discussion on plagiarism and academic integrity. This part is concluded by highlighting the importance of academic writing and its contribution in research/dissertation writing process besides its different genres.

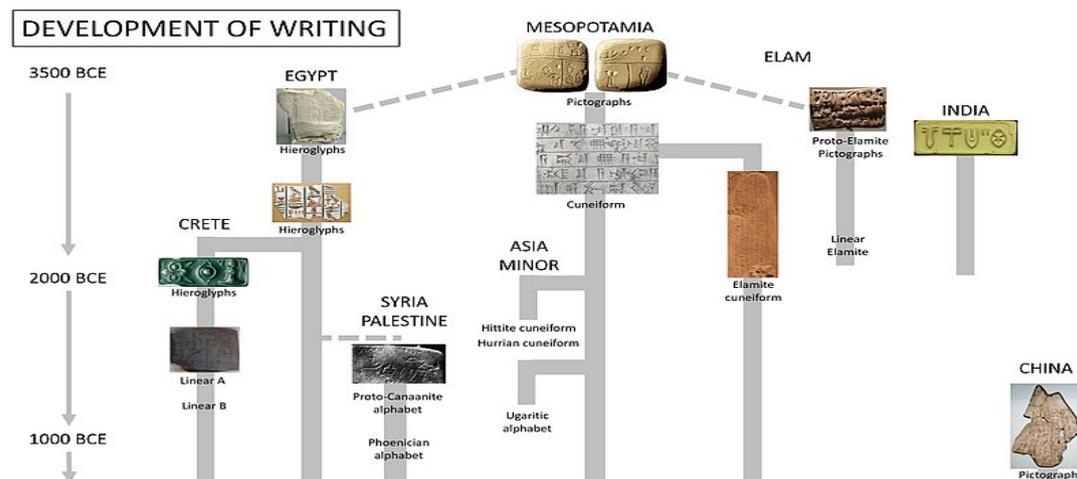
### **1.1 A Historical Overview on the Writing Skill**

Writing is definitely the most valuable invention that humans had ever developed. Its origins can be traced back to maybe 25,000 years old as evidenced by cave paintings in Lascaux, France to the lost Pueblo cultures of the American Southwest's images to the ancient aboriginal art of Australia (Graham & Hebert, 2010, p.1).

Mainly writing started in form of figures, symbols, and objects, which only reflect the mankind's desire to record his daily life for the reason that oral utterances would disappear easily by forgetting them or by the death of the speakers. However, the pictographs failed to represent the abstract concepts and the complex figures. Ghodbane (2010) summarized the forms of writing before it takes the modern one, from pictograms to ideograms to end with logograms. Consequently writing appeared as a stronger way of recording history and important incidents.

It is believed that writing origins can be traced to its first emergence in the earliest true writing systems where it spread throughout the world. According to language revelation website, the first emergence of writing was in Sumer by the ancient Sumerians of Mesopotamia (Cuneiform writing system between c. 3500-3000 BCE). After that, another writing system appeared in Egypt independently during (Hieroglyphs between c. 3200 – 3000 BCE) in which it was believed that it is a gift from an Egyptian God. Moreover, square forms have appeared in China (Chinese characters 1200 BCE) which is known to be the oldest writing system in Asia.

**Figure 1: Development of Writing. (Wu ,2019, p.4)**



## 1.2 Definition of Writing

Writing is a way of communication, in which one can express whatever he wants in a written form by putting letter or symbols together to form a word, then a sentence to a paragraph. Many scholars have defined writing in different ways. Rogers (2005) stated that "writing is the use of graphic marks to represent specific linguistic utterances" (p.2). This definition suggests that writing is a mean of communication that uses graphic symbols to produce a comprehensible text to be read. Moreover, these symbols should be organized well to move smoothly from a word to an essay.

However, writing is not only a matter of presenting symbols but it is a complex process which goes through different steps, accordingly, Harmer (2004) asserted that writing is a process that undergoes different stages. He listed four main stages that shape this process and lead to the production of a well-organized piece of writing. These stages include planning, drafting, editing, and final version. Furthermore, writing can be considered as a tool of communication to express one's feelings, thoughts, attitudes whether individual or by integrating them to social relations, as argued by Miller (1989, as cited in Zitouni, 2015, p.7) " even though the writing production is an expression of one's individuality and personality. It is important to remember that writing is endeavor, a way of communicating with people".

Overall, the idea that is drawn from the preview definitions is that writing is an essential tool of communication which is a product of what is known as the process of writing.

### **1.3 Elements of Effective Writing**

Writing requires some criteria that help the writer to achieve what is set out to be achieved, so that the intended message is clear and grasped. According to Starkey (2004), any effective piece of writing should include: organization, clarity, coherence, word choice, and mechanics. These elements increase the writing effectiveness that is the ideas are arranged and organized in a logical smooth flow which helps the readers to understand the meaning and take interest on the writing.

#### **1.3.1 Organization**

An effective piece of writing is a well-organized composition. The ideas are presented in a way that leads the reader to discover all the aspects of writing and understand them in a clear, related, and unified flow. Starkey (2004) suggested

effective methods to organize the material before starting the composition such as: outline, pyramid charts, and lists. Moreover, the use of prewriting techniques which includes free writing, brainstorming, webbing, and concept mapping, is effective in planning one's work.

In the same path, Shanon (2011) classified the types of techniques used to organize the written material into formal and informal ones. The formal technique represents the classic outline, whereas the informal one includes brainstorming, free writing, mind mapping.

### **1.3.2 Clarity**

One of the key elements of effective writing is clarity. It is an essential element in helping the audience to understand the message. Carroll (1990) indicated that "insufficient clarity may be due to vagueness, ambiguity or obscurity" (p.4).

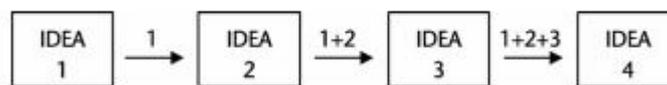
In the same sense, Starkey (2004) suggested some tips to follow in order to achieve clarity.

- Eliminating ambiguity: words or phrased that could have more than one meaning should be avoided. Also simple clear word order is preferable to convey the same intended meaning.
- Using powerful, precise adjectives and adverbs: vague phrases or words should be replaced by specific ones. It is advisable to use modifiers.
- Being concise: wordiness and repetition of unnecessary elements should be avoided to save time and space
- Using pronouns carefully: they are used only to refer to a clear and meaningful noun.

### 1.3.3 Coherence

Coherence is essential quality in any effective writing; it is considered as the logical bridge that connects words, sentences, and paragraphs. Accordingly, Carroll (1990) stated that "coherent writing has clear connections between ideas, between sentences, and between paragraphs" (p.7). Murray and Hughes (2008, p.45) defined coherence as sticking one's ideas as a chain, the connection become unclear if any link is missing.

**Figure 2: A Sequence of Ideas**



### 1.3.4 Word Choice

Careful word choice is crucial in any kind of writing because the words a writer chooses are the construction material from which he build any piece of writing. Starkey (2004) stated that there are two types of meaning that should be considered when making words choice: denotation and connotation. The first is the exact meaning or the literal meaning of a word whereas the latter is the implied meaning which involves emotion, suggestion, and cultural assumptions.

### 1.3.5 Mechanics

Effective writing requires a full understanding of the mechanics including, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and handwriting. According to Starkey (2004) "The majority of grammar, punctuation, and capitalization mistakes are just a few dozen common ones. If you learn these common errors and how to avoid or correct them, your writing will greatly improve" (p.39). In addition, the use of correct writing

mechanics guides the reader; it indicates where one thought ends and the next begins. Also, it clarifies and emphasizes.

To sum up, any effective piece of writing consists of five main elements that should be used in a correct way to help the reader understand the message.

#### **1.4 The Importance of Writing**

Since the dawn of civilization, mankind felt the necessity to write and express their thoughts, ideas, and daily activities. Rogers (2005) asserted that "[ writing allows us to record and convey information and stories beyond the immediate moment. Writing allows us to communicate at a distance either at a distant place or at a distant time" (p.1). He added that writing enable us to record longer texts that our memory would.

Nowadays, humanity relies on writing to a great extent. More communication takes place in the written mode having spread steadily over the use of technology and networking. In that perspective, Sharma (2018) insisted on the importance of writing in improving communication skills, sharing knowledge and experience via blogs in addition to its importance in getting a future job.

Learning a foreign language indicates indeed learning how to write using it. According to MacArthur, Graham, and Fitzgerald (2008) the importance of writing lies in its power; it allows maintaining personal relationship with others via distance in addition, it is a tool for persuading others and self-expression psychologically and physiologically.

Also, writing is an important skill in the field of learning/teaching foreign language in which termed as "Academic writing". As a common truth, most exams and evaluation require learners to give a written answer. In this aspect, Bacha (2002) highlighted writing importance in students' academic field as most examinations,

reports and research work depend on it. She added that writing process help students in improving their cognitive skills.

In the same vein, a good academic writing plays a critical role in the process of conducting a research work. Monippally and Pawar (2010) argued that:

Academic writing needs to fulfill certain requirements such as communicating the significance of research question, adequately describing the research process, describing the research outcome, and describing the implications of the research and research outcome. Because of such various requirements that academic writing needs to fulfill, academic writing itself becomes important in research. (p.29).

To sum up, "the pen is mightier than sword". One can deduce that, the importance of writing is not limited to one aspect; it is needed in every domain that people go through. Especially in the academic domain where is titled "Academic writing".

## **2.1 Academic Writing**

Academic writing is a formal type of writing, it follows certain principles and it is directed to a specific type of audience. Usually, it is used in education and higher studies contexts. Oshima and Hogue (2007) defined academic writing as "the kind of writing used in high school and college classes" (p.3). Similarly, Geyte (2013) maintained that academic writing is any kind of writing done by scholars to read. It takes different forms such as: journal, articles, textbooks, dissertations, group project reports.

Academic writing is distinguished from other types of writing by certain criteria. It initially relies on logic and provides evidences to support the writer's position

through the use of a specific approach as it mainly addresses a certain type of audience. Bailey (2003, p.3) highlighted different reasons for using academic writing:

- To report on a piece of research the writer has conducted
- To answer a question the writer has been given or chosen
- To discuss a subject of common interest and give the writer's view
- To synthesise research done by others on a topic.

Academic writing is , therefore, an essential skill that all higher education students should develop .Students who need to critically examine problems and work to find solutions for these problems are required to use academic writing to scientifically communicate their research findings.

## **2.2 Characteristics of Academic Writing**

Academic writing is characterized by specific features that distinguish it from other types of writing such as, structure, objectivity, evidence, citation, language, purpose and organization as suggested by Mathew (2016). These features should be taken into consideration when writing an academic task to make papers of good quality.

### **2.2.1 Structure**

All academic writing compositions follow a logical specific structure. Similarly, Gillet, Hammond and Martala (2009) asserted that academic writing is not a continuous piece of writing; instead it is divided into paragraphs in a meaningful way. That is, the composition starts by an introduction, body paragraph and conclusion, no matter the genre. The introduction provides background information and states the topic/ thesis statement. The body paragraph represents the part in which the writer supports his thesis. Finally, the conclusion wherein the writer summaries the main points. All the previous sections connected with appropriate transitions.

### **2.2.2 Objectivity**

Unlike personal forms of writing, academic writing focuses only on the main theme and provides arguments about it without incorporation of the writer's personal thoughts or emotion. The writer should avoid emotive language and personal tone. (Gillet et al., 2009).

### **2.2.3 Evidence**

Evidence is a distinctive feature of writing academically. Writers are expected to support their work with well-informed evidence and arguments. According to Mathew (2016) Evidence could be extracted from past researches, case studies or secondary sources. Moreover, evidence can be in form of facts, statistics, and scholars' opinions. It is a tool to increase the credibility of the writing.

### **2.2.4 Citation**

A significant feature of academic writing is citation or responsibility. The writer needs to acknowledge the sources and others' ideas appropriately while presenting his/her arguments and claims. Oxford University (n.d) noted that citation provides a solid theoretical basis for the evidence in addition to providing one's ideas with credence if the reference is a respected source. Furthermore, citations usually are in a specific format such as: MLA (Modern Language Association style) or APA (American Psychological Association style).

### **2.2.5 Purpose**

Any piece of writing is written according to a certain purpose depending on the topic chosen as well as the targeted audience. Harmer (2004) Stated that "Authors have to focus on the purpose of their writing (amongst other consideration) since this will affect what language they choose and how they use it" (p.15).

### **2.2.6 Language**

Academic writing language is an essential feature. Since it is the mean used to convey the message, it needs to be carefully chosen. According to (Gillet et al.,2009), academic language is characterized by the use of: formal vocabulary, multi-word verbs (phrasal verbs), use of the passive voice. They also added that academic writer should avoid the use of: questions, contracted forms, overuse of quotation, wordiness and non-complete sentences.

To sum up, academic writing has a variety of key specific features that distinguish it from other types of writing. These features need to be considered for writing quality composition.

## **2.3 Academic Dishonesty vs. Integrity**

Integrity is a crucial element that reflects honesty and responsibility in researching. Ensuring integrity for students can be challenging task since they show a failure in respecting the academic honesty. To demonstrate integrity, writers should distinguish between their point of view and others' by citing the source used (Geyte, 2013). Plagiarism is one of the common forms of academic dishonesty which can lead to serious consequences as eliminating students from university.

### **2.3.1 Definition of Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is considered as an academic theft simply by using another person's ideas as ones' own without acknowledging that person as being the source. According to Hellgeson and Eriksson (2014), plagiarism is the appropriation of other's work such as ideas, methods, data, results, or texts as one's own. Plagiarism is also known by: misappropriation, faulty citation, copyright infringement, literary theft, imitation, cheating, cribbing, and stealing (Marsh, 2007).

In fact, plagiarism is not intended in all the cases. It can be accidental or deliberate, as supported by Geyte (2013, p 106), "accidental plagiarism can happen because of a lack of proofreading... It can also occur because of lack of experience of the academic context... Deliberate plagiarism can be caused by a lack of confidence".

Bailey (2011) explained the reasons why students must avoid plagiarism:

- Copying the work of others will not help you develop your own understanding.
- To show that you understand the rules of the academic community.
- Plagiarism is easily detected by teachers and computer software.
- It may lead to failing a course or even having to leave college.

In this sense, several strategies are suggested to avoid falling into the trap of plagiarism namely, paraphrasing, quoting, summarizing.

### **2.3.1.1 Paraphrasing vs. Summarizing**

As previously mentioned, academic writing involves referring to other people's works whether by summarizing or paraphrasing. On one hand, paraphrasing is using your own words to report someone else writing maintaining academic style. On the other hand, summarizing can be defined as giving a brief account of the main points of some writing providing a correct citation to the source Jordan (1997). In other words they require a good understanding of the essence of text and an acceptable account of the vocabulary. Gillet et al, (2009, p.190) asserted that summarizing is a shortened version of a long text that should be written by one's own words including the main points only. Paraphrasing, however, is used in order to avoid over quotation; it is specific to short texts.

Furthermore, the writer should bear in mind that: the meaning is the same as the original, no copying from the original text, he use his own style of writing, the

length of the paraphrase is the same as the original , and most importantly the acknowledgement of other people’s work through appropriate referencing.

### **2.3.1.2 Quotation**

Another tool of referring to other's work is quotation which is basically to place the exact original words between quotation marks with identifying the source. According to Jordan (1997, p.102), quotations are incorporated in writing as a tool of:

- Supporting an argument as in 'X has observed...'
- Exemplification of the point being made as in 'thus for example...'
- Introduction of a point of view as in 'according to X'
- Making conclusions as in 'therefore, X concludes...'
- Explanation of a point as in: 'X explains it as follow...'

There are two types of quotation: short and long quotation, each of them has a specific citation format. It is advisable to not use long quotation frequently unless there is no room to summarize or the original words held a powerful meaning. Sharkey and Bilmont (2011) stated that "direct quotation should be kept to a minimum in formal writing" (p. 215).

In brief, academic writing emphasizes the acknowledgment of the sources and the use of appropriate citation. An appropriate citation grants one's work credibility and offers a chance for further reading to who is concerned.

## **2.4 Academic Writing as Part of Research Process**

At the end of any higher educational level, students are supposed to submit a final research project to practice what they have been learning during their journey of studying writing academic research process. According to Monipally and Pawar (2010), academic writing is a part of science as a way of generating and documenting knowledge which is presented in the outcomes of the research. That is, academic

writing is a tool of documenting and describing knowledge and based on it a researcher may find gaps on the existing knowledge what encourages him/her to research it. Thus, academic writing and research process are interrelated concepts.

## **2.6 Genres of Academic Writing**

College students are expected to write academically in different forms including essays, research papers, theses and dissertations. These forms, besides others, serve as basic academic writing genres for such an education level. However, academic writing genres in general range from an essay to a book. Each genre is specified by a purpose and a targeted audience.

### **2.5.1 Essays**

Essay is one of the common types of assignments in universities which is used in application exams, term-end exams, and as a part of the assessments. Gillet et al. (2009) stated that all essays share the same purpose of presenting a clear argument to the reader. They also provided some characteristics of the essay:

- It is supported with valid evidences.
- No headings and subheadings.
- Diagrams and tables are not normally used in essays.

There are different types of essays: exploratory, descriptive, narrative, compare and contrast and persuasive or argumentative. The choice of these types is dictated by the writer's motive.

### **2.5.2 Research Paper**

Research paper is a form of research used in the teaching/ learning context as an effective tool of assessment. In order to write a research paper, the writer needs to review the literature about his/her topic first, and then writes an essay in which s/he

draws conclusions about that topic (Rozakis, 2007). He added that a research paper presents and argues a thesis. Singh (2006, p.260) listed some of the advantages of research paper which goes :

- The new contribution in the specific area is disseminated among other research scholars.
- The repetition can be avoided so that others will not take up the same problem.
- It saves the time energy and money in the research area.
- A research worker is also known through the research papers that he is working in a particular field.
- The experts of the area may comment or suggest for the researcher to design further study.
- The research-worker learns and gains experience for writing good research paper.

### **2.5.3 Thesis and Dissertation**

A dissertation or a thesis is probably the longest piece of academic writing submitted by students as a part of their graduation program. Feather (2013) stated that:

[dissertation] is the most demanding because you will need to put in a lot of effort, work, time, and emotion into its preparation and construction. It is the most exciting because it allows you to show off all that you have learnt over the last three or four years of study, and because you get to pick the subject or topic you wish to research, rather than having the subject set for you. Finally, it is the most important, because it could influence the overall grade of your degree. (p.1)

The process of writing a dissertation is definitely an onerous task. Therefore, novice researchers should be wary of some practices that affect the work quality and adapt other practices that improve the research. Biggam (2008, p.199-204) summarized, through different stages of conducting research, the requirement of a good dissertation as shown in the table below:

**Table 1: Good and Bad Criteria of a Thesis (Biggam, 2008)**

The stage	Good practices	Bad practices
Dissertation Proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides an overview about the topic.</li> <li>▪ States the aims, objectives, significance, and methods clearly with justification.</li> <li>▪ Sets the duration of each phase.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Broad, over-ambitious topic.</li> <li>▪ No specified objectives and aims.</li> <li>▪ Unrealistic timescale.</li> </ul>
Abstract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identifies the investigated issues and the main findings as well as the researcher's recommendations.</li> <li>▪ It should be one block paragraph.</li> <li>▪ It is the last element to be written.</li> <li>▪ Outline the used research methods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is written without planning what to include.</li> <li>▪ Is written in essay form.</li> <li>▪ No sufficient information.</li> </ul>
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Summaries The main points that will be dealt with in the research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gives more attention to background reading and depends on supervisor's ideas rather than one's own.</li> </ul>
Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restate the study objectives</li> <li>▪ Use logical evidence and arguments</li> <li>▪ Appropriate citation of the distinct sources used.</li> <li>▪ Develop critical meaningful discussion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inappropriate structure and lack of continuity between sections.</li> <li>▪ Focuses on web sources.</li> <li>▪ Plagiarism and inappropriate citation.</li> <li>▪ Lack of evidence and absence of the writer reflection.</li> </ul>
Research Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Justifies the chosen methods, data gathering tools, and sample.</li> <li>▪ Explain data analysis framework.</li> <li>▪ State the study limitations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No justification for the methodology choice.</li> <li>▪ Misunderstanding and mixing between the nature of qualitative and</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ quantitative methods.</li> <li>▪ Lack of data management preparation.</li> </ul>
Findings and Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Compare study findings to literature review data.</li> <li>▪ Describe and summarize the findings.</li> <li>▪ Stick to the research findings</li> <li>▪ Place non-confidential evidence in appendices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of link between research findings and research objectives.</li> <li>▪ Inappropriate use of techniques or using inappropriate techniques for data analysis.</li> <li>▪ Lack of discussion evidence.</li> </ul>
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restates the study objectives.</li> <li>▪ Summarize the findings and the main points being tackled.</li> <li>▪ Offers the researcher recommendations and reflections.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fail to match research objectives or to provide research summary.</li> <li>▪ Abrupt endings and absence of recommendations.</li> </ul>

The above table attempts to summarize a number of bad practices that beginner researchers fall in during the process dissertation writing. Instead, it suggests alternative good practices to adopt. Moreover, Biggam (2008, p.199-204) tackled other dissertation phases highlighting good and bad practices such as presenting the work, the viva day, grammar, and plagiarism.

## Conclusion

Most of the students see writing as a complex skill because it is difficult to master; it takes time, effort and a lot of practice to achieve a good level. At higher level, students are required to develop their writing skill to a formal one in order to keep them up with their assignments and for future career. Therefore, learners are advised to write on different academic genres maintaining academic integrity in their process of gathering information. To conclude, this chapter attempts to give a clear

idea about the aspects of academic writing and prove its interrelated relationship with research.

# **Chapter Two:**

# **Research Papers**

## **Introduction**

To expand their knowledge and develop their research skills, students are assigned a research paper as part of the research studies they are supposed to undertake. For better clarifications, this chapter is devoted to introduce the term research and research paper; therefore, it is divided into two sections. The first section presents research definition, features, types, purpose and qualities of a good researcher whereas the second section discusses research paper definition, structure, components, types, steps of writing, and finally the different challenges of writing research paper faced by students.

### **2.1 Section One: General Overview on Research**

Research has abundant range of definitions, yet it is basically known as a scientific and systematic study undertaken for academic purposes; to increase the stock knowledge and find out the truth which has not being discovered yet. It is preferable for learners to practice the research process during their different learning phases in order to not face difficulties in their final graduation submission.

#### **2.1.1 Definition of Research**

Research in its general view is defined as a careful investigation of searching or solving research problems in any branch of knowledge. Initially, the term research is composed of two syllabuses; re (again and again) and search (to examine, to test, or to probe carefully), together, they form research which is described as a systematic study undertaken to establish facts in a specific field of knowledge (Chelli, 2017). As a matter of fact, research is a fundamental tool in human's life nowadays since it is the initial way to slake human curiosity. Dornyei (2007) asserted that research is a daily life activity that people do in order to learn more about their world, it is trying to find answers to questions.



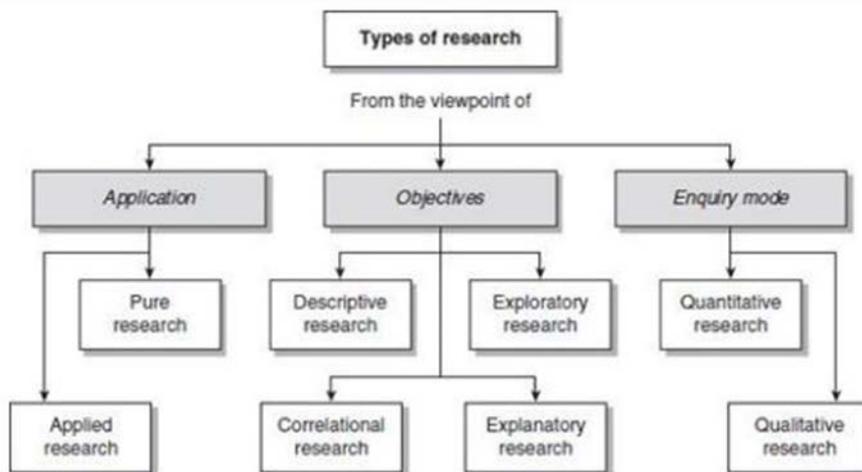
- It places emphasis upon the discovery of general principles.
- It is an exact systematic and accurate investigation.
- It uses valid data gathering devices and attempt to organize data in quantitative terms.
- It is logical and objective (eliminates personal feelings and preferences).
- The researcher resists the temptation to seek only the data that support his hypotheses.
- The researcher is willing to follow his procedures to the conclusions that may be unpopular and bring social disapproval.
- Research is carefully recorded and reported. Also it is a patient activity.
- Conclusions and generalizations are arrived at carefully and cautiously.

In fact, a good research is the longing aim of all researchers. One should ensure that his research meets the characteristics that make a reliable research to end up with a work of quality.

### **2.1.3 Types of Research**

Research has variety of kinds. Each type is characterized by certain features that are dictated by its specific nature, objectives, tools, and methodology. According to Kumar (2011), a research can be categorized on the basis of three main perspectives, namely application, objective and enquiry mode. He also added that one research project can be classified under more than only one perspective.

**Figure 4: Types of Research as Suggested by Kumar (2011, p. 9)**



The figure above shows that research can be looked at from three different perspectives:

- From the application perspective.
- From the objective perspective.
- From the mode of inquiry.

### 2.1.3.1 The Application Perspective

Under this perspective, there are two main types, pure and applied research.

#### 2.1.3.1.1 Pure Research

This type of research is also known as fundamental or basic research. One conducts a pure research to gain knowledge about a specific topic that may not have any application. Accordingly, Kumar (2011) insisted that pure research findings are not meant to be applied in the field. Gratton and Jones (2004) added that pure research seeks to obtain a better overall understanding for a particular concept or issue. Hence, pure research does not always add contribution to the existing knowledge.

### **2.1.3.1.2 Applied Research**

It is also known as action research; it is widely used in social sciences research. This type is done in order to solve a certain problem and provide answers to questions. More importantly, its conclusions are always applied in the field to obtain further knowledge (Kumar, 2011).

To sum up, pure research is done to gain a clear understanding and its findings are not applied, on the other hand applied research is done to solve specific problem that raises in certain field and its finding are always applied to enrich the knowledge.

### **2.1.3.2 The Objective Perspective**

It underlies four types of research:

#### **2.1.3.2.1 Descriptive Research**

It aims to describe a phenomenon systematically as it exists at present. Kothari (2004) indicated that in such a research the researcher has no control over the variables. In addition, he suggested that the methods used include survey methods and fact-finding enquiries. Thus, descriptive research focuses on manipulating uncontrolled variables.

#### **2.1.3.2.2 Correlational Research**

According to Kumar (2011), this type of research focuses, as its name denotes, on discovering the existence of relationship/association between two or more variables. Besides, Chelli (2017) suggested some methods to be used on correlational research; the observational method, the survey method, the archival method. Correlational research seeks to find the relationships between the variables in a situation and measures this relationship.

#### **2.1.3.2.3 Explanatory Research**

This kind of research attempts to clarify how and why there is a relationship between two or more variables as asserted by Kumar (2011). This type of research is somehow similar to correlational research in that both deals with studying relationships between variables with different focuses.

#### **2.1.3.2.4 Exploratory Research**

It is a type of research which is undertaken to explore an area where little is known or there is no prior knowledge about a certain topic. In addition, Kumar (2011) asserted that this type of study is a small scale one carried out to determine its feasibility. All in all, this type of study is conducted to test whether a specific area is worth to be studied or not.

In these perspectives, different types of research are involved each is characterized by its own objectives, methods and aims.

### **2.1.3.3 The Mode of Inquiry**

It refers to the process one adopts to find answers to the research questions, it underlies two types as stated by Kothari (2004, p.2):

#### **2.1.3.3.1 Quantitative Research (Structured Research)**

It is based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity.

#### **2.1.3.3.2 Qualitative Research (unstructured)**

It is concerned with qualitative phenomenon, i.e .phenomena relating to or involving quality or kind.

Research has many types, the above stated ones are considered to be the main kinds. According to the purpose of the research, the time required, or the research's environment, various variations can be extracted.

#### **2.1.3.4 Purposes of Research**

Any researcher, before getting through the research process, is without any doubt intending to prove something or to achieve a certain purpose. Generally, research is conducted to investigate and provide answers to some questions or solutions to existing problems or to gain new knowledge about a certain phenomenon through analysis. Furthermore, research is indeed done to create new effective systems or procedures.

Additionally, Newsome (2016) stated that research is conducted for three main reasons, to improve knowledge, to develop practical solutions for problems, and to improve the way implementation change understanding.

All in all, it is essential to have a purpose or aim before one starts to conduct any type of research because it sets the plan for the work.

#### **2.1.3.5 Characteristics of Good Researcher**

The research character needs to get some qualifications and characteristics that contribute in producing a good quality research. It is not a matter of the choosing good topic or collecting a wide range of references, but it is more a matter of proving to be able to carry out that research and deserving to be labeled a good researcher.

Dornyei (2007) explained some of the features that are unique to the good researchers. To begin, a good researcher is the one that feels a genuine curiosity toward his chosen topic; and is motivated to find answers for something that puzzles him. Then, a good common sense is an important criterion for the researcher who is engaged in the real world acting as normal human being. In addition to that, the good researcher bases his work on new and original ideas that are presented in a sophisticated style rather than focusing only on having a good method. Finally, it is important for the good researcher to have a sense of responsibility and discipline over

what to present for audience and how to communicate the research conclusion to them.

Additionally, a good researcher needs to know how to manage his time and organize it including the research outline by giving each part of the research paper a deadline. Furthermore, with the spread of internet and technology, researchers are required to develop their information communication technology (ICT) skills facilitate the process of analyzing and communicating data. In fact, personal qualities are crucial features of the good researcher including: self-confidence, motivation, critical thinking to keep the researcher interested in his work.

## **2.2 Section Two: Research Paper**

People engage themselves in the research process for two main reasons; to expand their learning and apply what they have learned or for graduating purposes through the use of different research paper kinds. For that reason, it is of vital importance to prepare learners for researching by helping them in practising it before conducting their final research papers.

### **2.2.1 Definition of Research Paper**

Research paper is a form of research used in teaching and learning settings. The concept of research paper has many definitions that share in common the fact of being an academic activity.

Generally speaking, the research paper may be defined as “a substantial piece of academic writing, usually done as a requirement for a class, in which the author does independent research into a topic and writes a description of the findings of that research” Your dictionary.com, 2020, para1.

Furthermore, Rozakis (2007) proposed that research paper involves with presenting a thesis with arguments in a form of an analytical essay to evaluate a

position and persuade the readers. He also distinguished between the term research paper and term paper that are often used interchangeably. The latter, however, differs in that it collects only facts without arguing them serving as a summary.

In the same path, Bhakar and Sikarwar (2014) argued that research paper is more than a collection of information or sources, but it analyzes a specific point and argues it. Indeed a research paper is an attempt to draw conclusion on the light of others' previous works.

Winkler and Metherell (2010) defined the research paper or library paper in a form of a process which involves the following steps; gathering information about a topic, taking a stand, and backing it with opinions of others. Research paper is a systematic process which deals with presenting your thoughts supported by others work.

Briefly, research paper is an academic tool of practice used in form of assignments in teaching learning contexts, besides it is used to improve learner's writing skills and present their ideas supported by different views and works.

### **2.2.2 Structure of Research Paper**

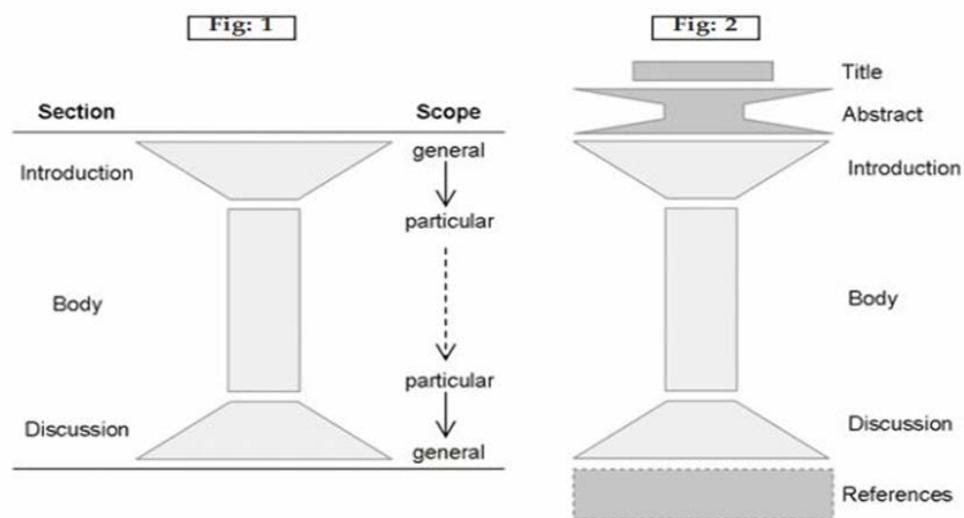
Research paper has different types, purposes as well as different formats. It may be, to some extent, a difficult task to decide about the organization format especially for novice researchers. However all research papers share one common layout composed of three main parts namely: introduction, body, and discussion. Accordingly, Bhakar and Sikawar (2014) asserted that the three mentioned sections follows a general pattern known as “hourglass model” as illustrated below.

To start, the introduction provides a broad overview about the subject and the questions to be answered in the body section. Moreover, the content of the paper, methods, results are to be presented in details in the body section. Finally the

discussion section which is devoted to, as the name suggests, to the discussion of the study results and findings.

However, there are additional parts as important as the previous three ones. These parts are the title, the abstract and the references which are presented in the extended hourglass model, “King model” as shown in the figure bellow.

**Figure 5: Fig.1 and 2, The Hourglass Model (left) and the King Model (right) of Paper Structure (Bhakar & Sikawar, 2014).**



All the parts of a paper flow logically from general to very specific till the conclusion. By reaching the conclusion, the opening starts again.

### 2.2.3 Elements of Research Paper

As illustrated in the previous section, the king model presents the five research paper elements ranging from the title to the references. All the components should be presented in a clear way.

#### 2.2.3.1 The Title

It is the first element to catch the reader's eye before reading any piece of writing. A good title should be informatics, catchy, not too long or too short. According to Nair and Nair (2014, p.14) good research title should:

- Contain few words as possible and easily understood.
- Describe the contents of the paper accurately.
- Avoid abbreviations, formulas, jargon, verbs, and law impact words.
- Report the subject of the research rather than the results, and Follow the style preference of the target journal.

Jarvinen (2010, p.3) noted that it is inappropriate to use artificial but uninformative titles.

To conclude it is important to select an appropriate title for the reason that it contributes in drawing the first image of the research.

### **2.2.3.2 Abstract**

It is a summary of the conducted research that comprises of one block paragraph. Day (1983, as cited in Derntl, 2014) stated that there are two types of abstracts: informative and descriptive abstracts. The informative abstract concentrates on everything relevant of the paper and serves as a replacement to the full paper. On the other hand, the descriptive abstract only describes the content and therefore cannot serve as a substitute to the paper but only as an outline.

Bhakar and Sikawar (2014) asserted that a useful abstract should contain the following elements: motivation, problem, solution, results, and implication that do exist within the paper. That is, new information, literature and citation are examples of what should not be included in the abstract.

### **2.2.3.3 Introduction**

It is an explanation of the topic of the paper introduced in a careful smooth way. A good introduction should follow these rules suggested by Day (2012, p.34): The introduction should clearly present the scope of the problem investigate.

- It should briefly review the pertinent literature to orient the reader.

- It should state the method of investigation and reasons for choosing it as well.
- It states the principal results of investigation and it should state the conclusions suggested by results.

The introduction is a crucial element in that it attracts the reader and helps in understanding the topic and the reasons behind choosing it.

#### **2.2.3.4 The Body**

This element reports the details of the study; in other words, what is done in order to answer the question posed on the introduction. It comprises several sections and subsections. The structure, organization, and content of the body are chosen according to the type of the paper (Dees, 1997 as cited in Derntl, 2014, p.112). The research paper body usually answers two main questions the component of the research paper besides the method used while the second part is mainly about the results.

Briefly, the body of the paper is the core of the research where all information will be presented; therefore, it should receive much emphasis.

#### **2.2.3.5 The Discussion**

It refers to the conclusion section; it leads the reader from too specific results to more general conclusions. According to Day (1983) and Swales (1993 as cited in Derntl, 2014), the discussion part includes the followings:

- The aims and the information background of the study.
- A brief summary of the result in form of discussion.
- Comparison of the results with previous studies.
- Stating the hypotheses and provide a brief summary for the conclusion drawn from the result.
- Proposed follow-up research questions and outlook on further work

### 2.2.3.5 References

It refers to all the sources used during the research process including books, articles, lectures...etc. Depending on the author's style, the references are cited in different ways on the basis of various citation formats.

To sum up, research paper consists of a number of elements that are presented in the hourglass model and king model. Novice researchers should take into account these elements to contribute in their research quality.

### 2.2.4 Types of Research Paper

There are many kinds of research papers depending on their objectives, length, content, and form. Slade (1997, pp.26-28) listed the main research papers' types as follow:

**Academic Research Paper:** an academic research paper is specific for academic undergraduate courses and graduate projects. It is a common requirement for learners to write research papers often to support their views with other's works and research taking into consideration that, it is time, energy, and focus consuming (Carlock, Eberhardt, Horst & Kolenich, 2017).

**Report Research Paper:** A report refers to the description of results or the summary of an experience of a study. The report information should be presented objectively to let the readers make their own judgments.

**Term Paper:** refers to a project that is assigned to students in order to be conducted and submitted within a term or semester. It measures the development of certain issue during a term and reports it.

**Review Article:** denotes a presentation of secondary sources which are organized, evaluated and analyzed to inform the reader about the current state of the research.

**Thesis:** this term generally refer to a substantial research project that defends a specific perspective through arguments based on other's research. It might also refer to a doctoral graduate work; but, in USA, it refers to a Master paper.

**Dissertation:** refers to the work submitted for a doctoral degree. It requires more effort and time than a master thesis. In fact, both terms can be used interchangeably depending on the field or institution.

To sum up, many types of research paper are conducted in the academic field. Understanding the topic and the purpose of the research is way to facilitate the choice of the research paper to be used.

### **2.2.5 Steps for Writing an Effective Research Paper**

Writing an effective research paper requires the researcher to follow specific steps. Edwards (2008) stated that writing a research paper is primarily as writing an extended essay but differs in that the first requires an abstract and reference list.

Shewan (2000, p.2) summarized the main steps that one should follow when writing a research paper, which are not necessarily used in the same order, as below:

- Select an appropriate topic.
- Gather initial resources and preparing a “list of reference”.
- Determine the thesis statement, targeted audience and a general outline.
- Conduct detailed library research by reading and taking notes.
- Prepare a detailed outline from note cards and write the first draft.
- Make further research if necessary then start writing a second draft.
- Type the paper then proofread it checking if there are mistakes.
- Produce the final draft.

A good research paper is of a good writing; therefore, novice researchers need to take into consideration the steps of wring an effective research paper.

## 2.2.6 Characteristics of Effective Research Papers

Research paper is characterized by a number of features that contribute on its quality. A typical research paper is well organized, precise and concise.

Knowing the research characteristics is crucial for researchers. Bowen (2003) presented some of these characteristics as follow:

- Follow the APA format (American Psychological association).
- Free from grammatical and spelling errors, typos, non-sentences.
- Complete and systematic response to the assigned task.
- Show evidence of being well-thought out and unhurried process.
- Simple and clear for the audience understanding.
- Well supported by systematic arguments.
- Are enjoyable and interesting for the readers.

From what shown above, a good research paper is characterized by being organized, clear, original, objective, well supported, and follow a specific format. The researcher should take these characteristics into account to write a successful research paper.

## 2.2.7 Challenges in Writing a Research Paper

Learners who learn English as a foreign language find various challenges in writing, in general, and in academic research paper writing, in particular. EFL learners may find many difficulties in conducting the research projects for numerous reasons as it is their first time to compose an independent piece of research work.

In the same path, Paltridge and Starfield (2007) have classified the challenges that students may face when writing a research paper into four main categories:

- **Psycho-affective Issues "Imposter Syndrome"**: these factors include lack of confidence, fear of failure, and rejection which all lead to the writer's block.

Besides, the anxiety about errors and fear of supervisors and their feedbacks on the students' works have a negative effect on learners' writing performance. Paltridge and Starfield (2007) proposed that supervisors are advised to encourage a welcoming climate for discussing research feedback with their students by following Traditional Feedback Sandwich, starting by good news then giving suggestions and concluding it with a note of encouragement. It is also advisable for students to use tape recording for students who are orally competent.

- **Behavioral Issues:** Edwards (2008) indicated that the difficulty of writing a research paper lies on the fact that most students find the writing process hard to master due to their unfamiliarity with the academic and scientific structure especially that they lack adequate practice as most of them write only when they are asked to. Students need to be encouraged to practice the process of writing and to develop a writing habit from early stages. Writing should be encouraged to become a habit through writing regularly (Zerubavel, 1999, as cited in Paltridge & Starfield, 2007 p. 45). That is, students' regular practice is believed to help in developing their writing skill.
- **Rhetorical Issues:** a significant number of students fail to use their collected knowledge in a correct way to justify other ideas and claims. Similarly, Rambo (2016) claimed that poor support and development of ideas would affect the quality of research. What matter is to produce a clear, interesting and well justified piece of writing. Paltridge and Starfield (2007) asserted that students need to focus not only on the content but also on the academic writing features and how to persuade the reader with arguments and logic.

- **Social Issues:** students face a number of social issues while writing their research paper. Isolated students who do not make use of peer or group supports and feedback find difficulties in their research work. Hence, engaging in public discussion about writing can help learners overcome their isolation and anxiety.

Furthermore, most students encounter other types of problems on the level of linguistic aspects. Including grammatical problems at the sentence level, as subject-verb agreement, word order, and tenses, in addition to the misplacement of punctuation marks, capitalization and spelling which can affect the overall meaning.

All in all, writing a research paper proved to be a hard task. Novice researchers need to practice research writing process early and often.

## **Conclusion**

Research is a crucial element in higher education studies. At Biskra University, students are given lectures and theories about research as a concept as a part of preparing them to conduct a final graduation dissertation. However, what students really need is a proper training on how to write an academic standard research paper with all the needed requirements as a sample of research work. This chapter was an attempt to provide background on the term research and research paper. In the first part, the chapter presented an overview about research definition, features, types, purpose and qualities of a good researcher. In the second part, the researcher shed the light on different aspects of research paper including its definition, structure, components, types, steps of writing, concluding with the different challenges of writing research paper that may be encountered by novice researcher.

# **Chapter Three:**

## **Field Work**

## **Introduction**

This chapter attempts to analyze the data collected to investigate the role of research paper assignment in enhancing students' academic writing level. The findings of this study were collected by means of an interview administrated to teachers and a questionnaire administrated to Master Two EFL students at Biskra University. The chapter includes the approach, sample, and data gathering tool used for this study followed by the analysis of the data collected from both teachers and students including the aim, administration, and the interpretation of the results.

### **3.1. Review of Research Methodology**

Each research requires specific methods and techniques to be used for collecting data and reaching final conclusions.

#### **3.1.1 Research Approach and Method**

According to (Rajasekar et al., 2013, p.1), research approach is defined as "a science of studying how research is to be carried out. Essentially, the procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena are called research methodology". In fact, research approach consists of three main types: qualitative approach, quantitative approach, mixed method approach. The latter is defined as the type of research in which quantitative and qualitative research approach's elements are combined to produce a new approach (Johnson et al., 2007).

The current study adopted the mixed method approach since it will describe the relationship between two variables: academic writing and research paper (how can one variable enhance the other). Besides, this research approach is suitable in determining both the nature of the relationship between the two variables, and the role the research paper plays in developing EFL learners' academic writing skills.

### **3.1.2 Sampling and Population**

As a representative sample, this study dealt with EFL students and teachers to collect data that would help in answering this research questions.

#### **➤ Students**

This study dealt with Master Two (M2) students Science of Language specialty at Biskra University since they are concerned with conducting an important writing genre (dissertation). From a population of (165) students only (45) have been chosen randomly to avoid bias.

#### **➤ Teachers**

From about (33) teachers involved in the process of supervising M2 students at Biskra University, Seven (7) teachers were randomly chosen to answer an online interview.

### **3.1.3 Data Collection Methods**

In this study, two data collection methods have been employed: A questionnaire for M2 EFL students; and an interview for EFL teachers.

#### **3.1.3.1 Students' Questionnaire**

The main tool that the researcher used for her study was a semi-structured questionnaire in attempt to understand the views and the attitudes of EFL students towards research and academic writing. Moreover, it aims to obtain their opinions and feedback on using research paper as a technique to improve their academic writing. it also aimed to provide a clearer understanding of EFL students' attitudes towards research in general and the common deficiencies they face when writing academically. Additionally, it attempted to check the current status of academic

writing course and students' level as it tried to collect students' thoughts on the use of research paper as a tool to enhance students' academic writing.

#### **3.1.3.1.1 Administration of Students' Questionnaire**

This questionnaire was distributed online through social media "facebook.com" in 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2020. We have received about (45) responses from Master Two Science of Language students at the University of Biskra. It took a week and half to receive enough information from 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2020 to 5<sup>th</sup> may, 2020. In fact, using Facebook helped receiving complete and clear answers that may enrich the current study with valuable data.

#### **3.1.3.1.2 Description of the Questionnaire**

This questionnaire is composed of three main sections which include different types of questions: close ended questions, open ended questions, and multiple choices.

**Section One:** background information (Q1-Q3): contains three items. It attempts to gather personal information about the student regarding gender, years of study at Biskra University, and whether studying master degree at university was a personal choice or not.

**Section Two:** Students' Deficiencies in Writing a Research Paper (Q4- Q11): includes 8 questions, generally focused on scientific research. The first questions aim to investigate students' attitudes toward research and their experience on conducting research at university. Then, the questions turned to ask students about the kind of difficulties they faced during their research journey and at which phase. At last, some questions estimated to collect students' opinions on the use of research paper assignment to enhance research skills and academic writing.

**Section Three:** Academic writing (Q12-Q23): consists of 12 elements focusing on academic writing. This section seeks to gather information about students' thoughts

and performance on the course of academic writing as well as the difficulties they face while they write.

### 3.1.3.1.3 Analysis and Discussion of the Questionnaire

**Section One:** Background Information (Q1-Q3):

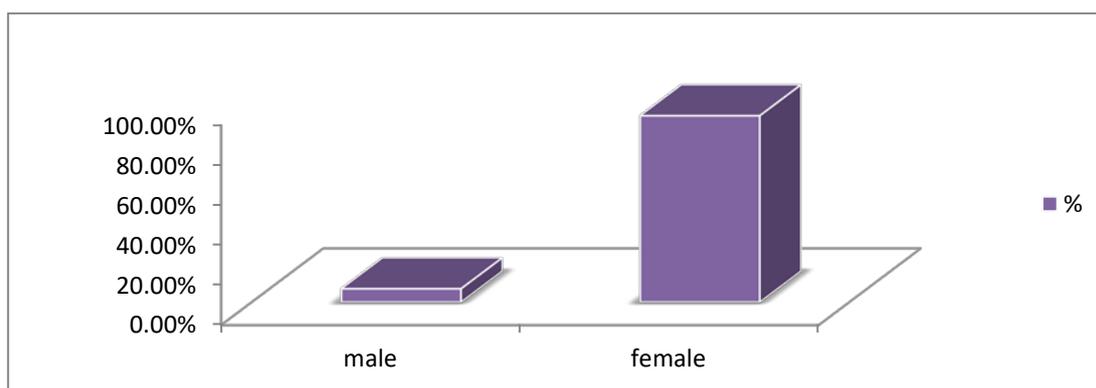
#### Item 01: Specify your gender?

This item illustrates students' gender distribution.

**Table 2: Respondents Gender Distribution**

Option	Number	Percentage %
<b>Female</b>	42	93.3%
<b>Male</b>	3	6.7%

**Graph 1: Respondents Gender Distribution**



As can be seen from the figure above, which represent the distribution of students' gender, the majority of the respondents from Science of Language branch are female. It is observable that females represent (93.3%) of the sample whereas males represent only (6.7%). The preview results means that females are more interested in learning English as a forging language at master level than males in the University of Biskra.

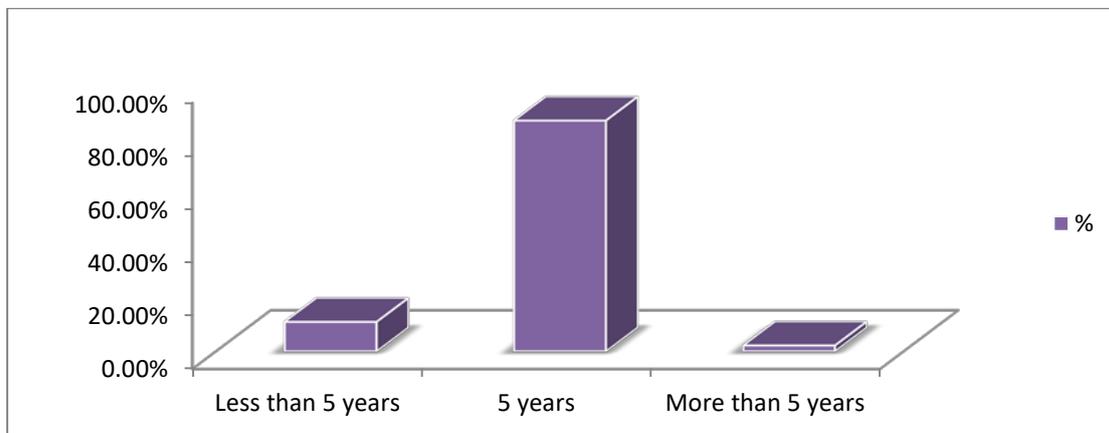
#### Item 02: How long have you been studying English at Biskra University?

**Table 3: Period of Studying English at Biskra University**

Option	Number	Percentage %
<b>Less than 5 years</b>	5	11.1%
<b>5 years</b>	39	86.7%

<b>More than 5 years</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.2%</b>
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**Graph 2: Period of Studying English at Biskra University**



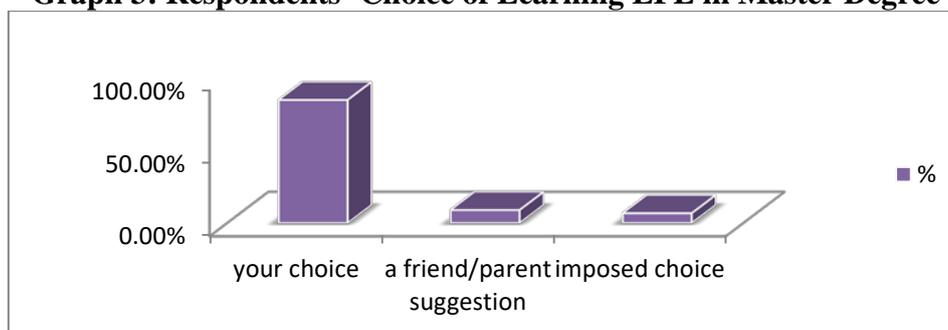
As observed, about (86.7%) of the respondents have been studying English at Biskra University for five years while (11.1%) of them spent less time (2 years) which is a master degree period. In addition, (2.2%) of the sample have spent more time which indicates that they may be repetitive of previous years.

**Item 03: Respondents' choice of learning EFL in master degree**

**Table 4: Respondents' Choice of Learning EFL in Master Degree**

Option	Number	Percentage %
<b>Your choice</b>	38	84.4%
<b>A friend/parent suggestion</b>	4	8.9%
<b>Imposed choice</b>	3	6.7%

**Graph 3: Respondents' Choice of Learning EFL in Master Degree**



As noticed from the result above, about (84.4%) of Science of Language participants applied for master degree as their personal choice, while (8.9%) of the respondents applied for the degree based on a friend or parent suggestion. One can also see that only 3 participants were obliged to apply. Hence, the majority of Master Two English applications at Biskra University were of students' personal choice.

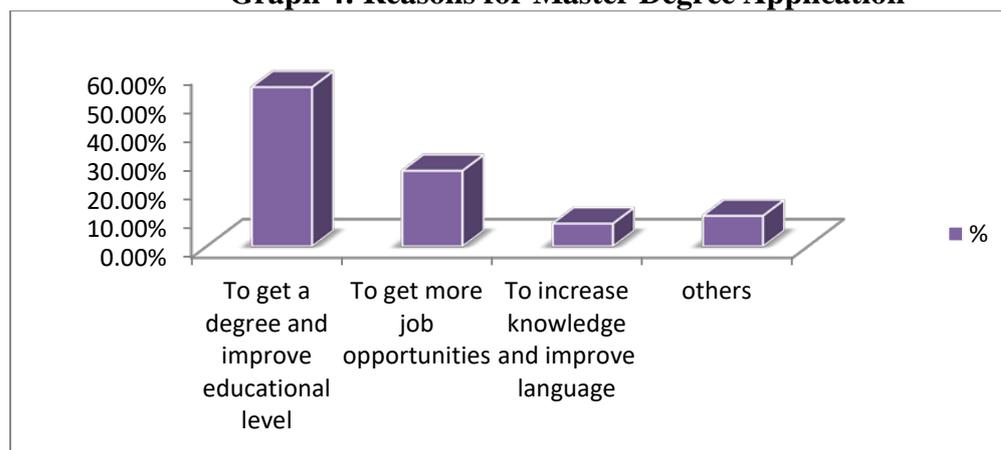
➤ **Respondents' justifications:**

Respondents who have been answered "your choice" were asked to justify their answers.

**Table 5: Reasons for Master Degree Application**

Option	Number	Percentage%
To get a degree and improve educational level	21	55.2%
To get more job opportunities	10	26.3%
To increase knowledge and improve language	3	7.9%
others	4	10.6%

**Graph 4: Reasons for Master Degree Application**



➤ **Respondents' Justification of 'your choice'**

As shown in the table above, the results indicate that the majority of students (55.2%) applied for master degree to get a higher degree and to improve their

educational level, whereas a percentage of (26.3%) claimed that carrying out a master degree increases their chances to get more job opportunities as their application reason. While (7.9%) of the respondents applied for increasing their stock of knowledge and improve language while the rest (10.6%) asserted that there are other reasons out of the mentioned ones, which vary from personal preference to a social necessity. Hence, the majorities of master two students in the division of English at Biskra University have applied for mater degree for personal interest such as improving their educational level and raising their opportunities to get a career.

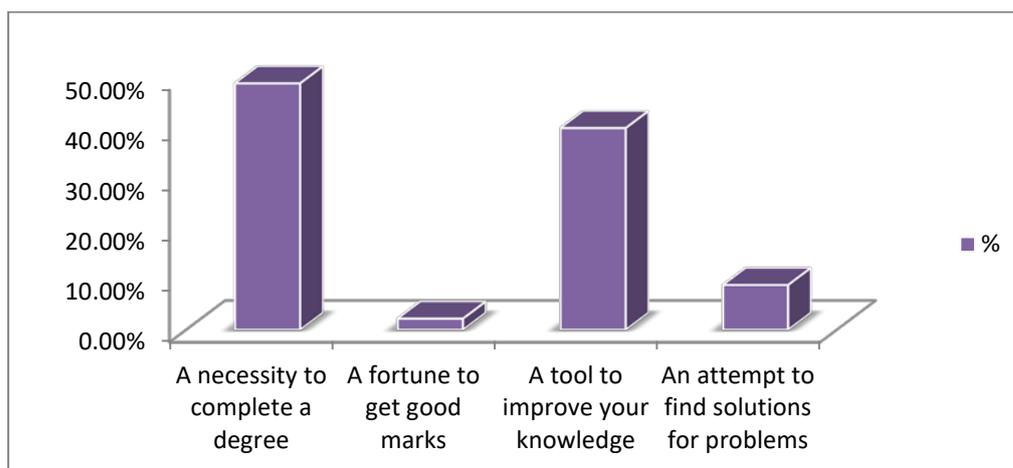
### **Section Two: Students' Deficiencies in Writing a Research Paper (Q4-Q11)**

In this section, the focus was more on the variable of research paper. It aimed to collect participants' ideas about the meaning and process of research'. Furthermore, it attempted to know the students attitudes towards research, the difficulties they encounter during conducting it and at which phase. Moreover, it sought to determine the effectiveness of the research methodology course and what it needs to be improved.

#### **Item04: What is research to you?**

**Table 6: Meaning of Research According to EFL Students**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage%</b>
<b>A necessity to complete a degree</b>	22	48.9%
<b>A fortune to get good marks</b>	1	2.2%
<b>A tool to improve your knowledge</b>	18	40%
<b>An attempt to find solutions for problems</b>	4	8.9%

**Graph 5: Meaning of Research According to EFL Students**

As it can be seen from the data in the histogram above, the highest percentage (48.9%) represents those who look at research as an important tool to complete and raise a degree whereas (40%) conduct research to improve their personal knowledge. A percentage of (8.9%) pointed that they consider research as an effective way in solving problems and finding a practical solutions. One can also note that (2.2%) refer to those who see research only as a tool of getting good marks and pass the academic year.

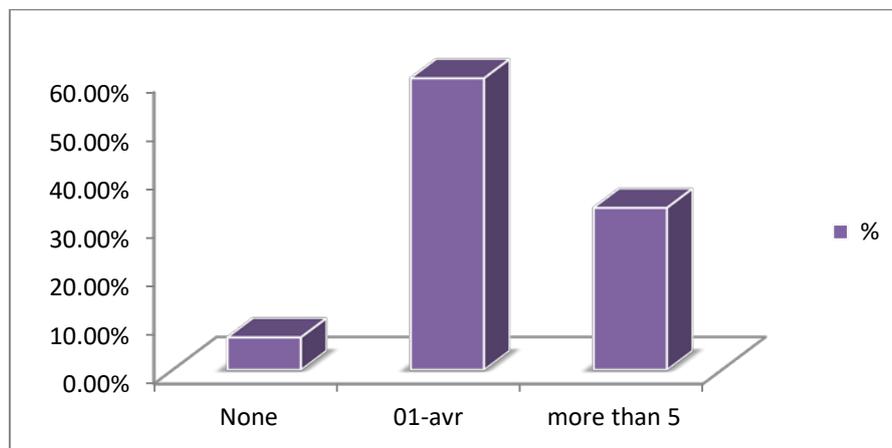
As a result, the majority of M2 EFL students at Biskra University consider research as a tool to achieve personal interests as getting a degree or improving their knowledge, yet students ignore the most important reason research are conducted in the first place; to solve problems and answer questions.

**Item 05: How many researches have you conducted during your university studies?**

**Table 7: Number of Research Conducted during the Period of Studying at Biskra University**

Option	Number	percentage%
None	3	6.7%
1-4	27	60%
More than 5	15	33.3%

**Graph 6: Number of Research Conducted during the Period of Studying at Biskra University**



As noticed in the table above, (51.1%) of M2 EFL students have conducted at most three research including the dissertation, during the period of their study which is almost five years, as some respondents noted, these research were only at master degree. However, (33.3%) have conducted more than 5 researches during this period while (6.7%) had no experience with research at all.

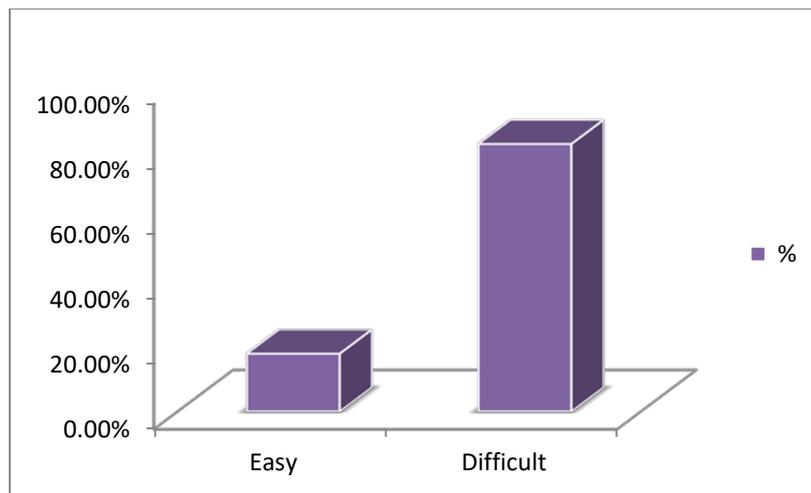
Hence, EFL students at Biskra University are not familiar with the notion and the experience of scientific research to a great extent which may be due to the focus of research methodology course on theories rather than practice. In other words, students need to practice research process to improve their skills and knowledge.

**Item 06: How do you find the research process?**

**Table 8: Students' Attitudes towards Research**

Option	Number	%
Easy	8	17.8%
Difficult	37	82.2%

**Graph 7: Students' Attitudes towards Research**



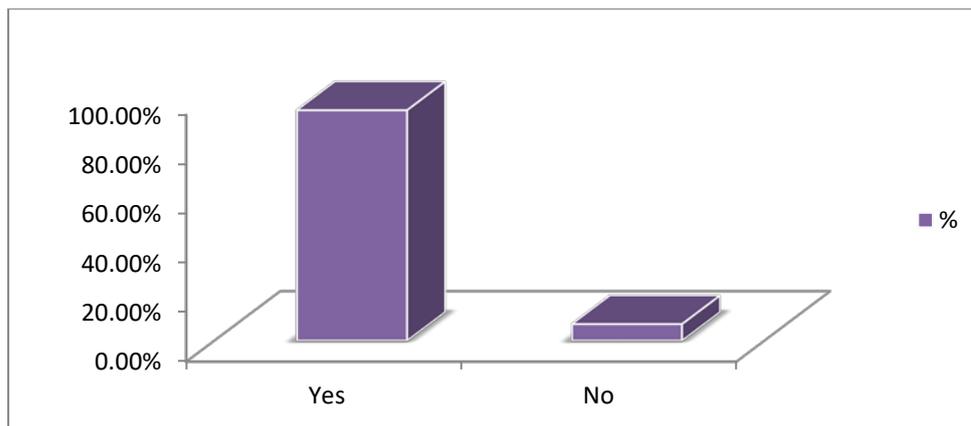
As the results in the table and table reveal, the highest percentage of the respondents (82.2%) considered research to be a hard and difficult process. while only 8 respondents agreed that research is easy to conduct. Consequently, the above results indicate that M2 EFL students are not familiar with research steps; they need more good study skills and a better guidance.

**Item07: Have you encountered any problems when conducting your research?**

**Table 9: Students' Agreement about Problems' Existence**

Option	Number	%
Yes	42	93.3%
No	3	6.7%

**Graph 8: Students' Agreement about Problems' Existence**



As shown in the above table, it is clear that only 3 participants who have not faced any problems during their research process. However, the majority of students (93.3%) have encountered challenges that impeded them from writing an appropriate academic research work. In the same path, the respondents were asked about the kinds of challenges they have faced, and they provided the following answers.

**Table 10: The Types of Problems Faced by M2 Students**

Option	number	%
Proficiency level at English	6	13.3%
Time management and research skills	31	68.9%
Lack of sources	25	55.6%
Insufficient knowledge of research methodology	27	60%
Supervision process.	21	46.7%
Insufficient mastery of academic writing process.	8	17.8%

To simplify what is illustrated on the table above, the highest percentage (68.9%) of the respondents considered time management and research skills to be the most challenging issue. Whereas (60%) of the participants claimed that research methodology knowledge and how research should be done is not sufficient. (55.6%) pointed out that they suffer from lack of sources and inability to find enough

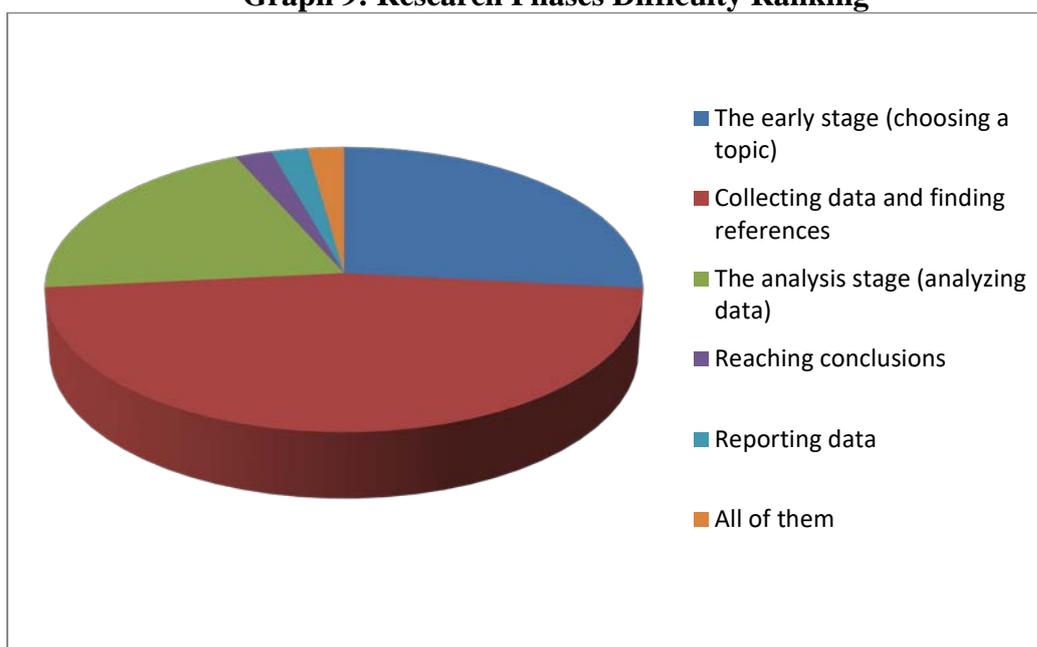
appropriate sources. What comes next is about supervision process, a percentage of (46.7%) claimed that they faced problems concerning that issue, which impeded them from carrying out their research. However, (17.8%) of the participants noted that their academic writing skill is not of an acceptable level. While (13.3%) have problems at the level of English language proficiency. Furthermore, two participants added that they have another types of challenges including having difficulties working with others and having research character issues such as: lack of self-esteem.

**Item 08: In which research phase/s you faced more difficulties?**

**Table 11: Research Phases Difficulty Ranking**

option	Number	%
The early stage (choosing a topic)	12	26.7%
Collecting data and finding references	21	46.7%
The analysis stage (analyzing data)	9	20%
Reaching conclusions	1	2.2%
Reporting data	1	2.2%
All of them	1	2.2%

**Graph 9: Research Phases Difficulty Ranking**



The table above shows that the majority of respondents find difficulties when learning at university. A percentage of (46.7%) faced difficulties when collecting data and finding appropriate sources. While (26.7%) indicated that choosing a topic at the early stage and paving the way is a nightmare of most students at Biskra University since it is the starting point of the whole work. A percentage of (20%) claimed that they suffer during the analysis of data. The rest which consist of three respondents have selected the other mentioned options that includes, reaching conclusions, reporting data and all the mentioned above. Hence, students face difficulties from the very start of their work till the final step, which is initially due to the unfamiliarity with research steps and methodology.

➤ **Respondents' Justification of Their Answers**

In this question, respondents were asked to provide valuable explanations for their answers. To start with, those who have selected that the early stage is the most difficult stage noted that finding and narrowing down an interesting and researchable topic is indeed a challenging task. They argued that with no previous experience, they felt lost and did not know where to start their research from generally because it is an open door. Additionally, the respondents claimed that a good topic choice takes time, effort and a strong confidence to not change it later. The first step is always the hardest; students have no clear vision on how to start and what topic should be undertaken.

On the other hand, most of students who answered with having problems collecting data and finding appropriate references justified their answers saying that they had faced difficulties finding and collecting reliable sources for two main reasons: First, the research topic is a new one therefore there is no enough available sources. Second, finding resources can be a difficult task due to the lack of

accessibility to a lot of valuable information, for instance, some websites stipulate purchasing the data to view it. So, according to our respondents finding enough appropriate data can be also a challenging task for EFL students in their research journey.

Students who have difficulties analyzing the data noted that they find problems when they examine the data using research approaches because of the lack in methodology practice. Additionally, field work consumes time, effort, practice and research skills. Hence, analyzing data is difficult as most of the students are doing this for the first time in their academic career. Moreover, the respondents also claimed that transforming data and numbers into relevant conclusions represents another serious problem

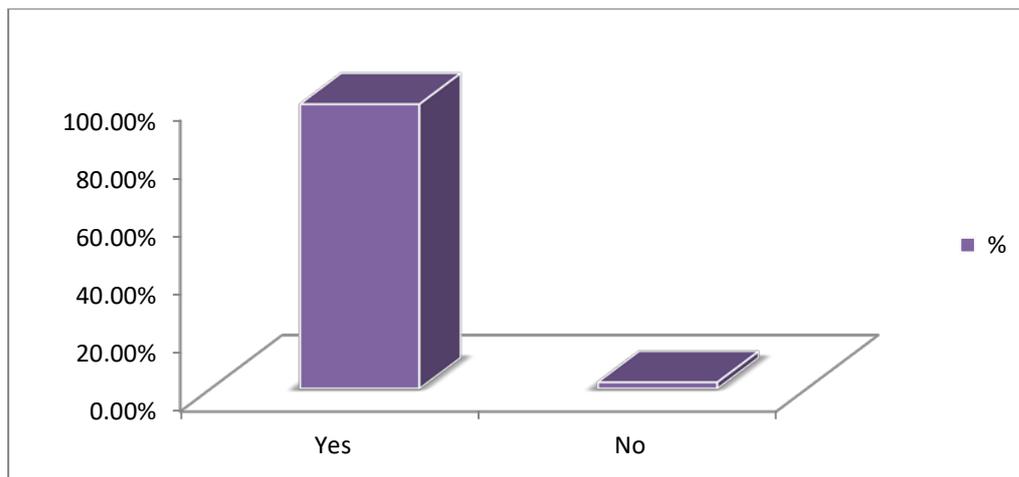
Consequently, students need to focus more on practicing the methodology of research in order to be gain familiarity and to avoid many problems during the process of wring their final dissertations.

**Item 09: Do you think that assigning research papers in the course of Academic Writing can be an effective teaching strategy for developing your research skills?**

**Table 12: Students' Attitudes towards Integrating Research Assignment as a Teaching technique**

Option	Number	Percentage %
Yes	44	97.8%
No	1	2.2%

**Graph 10: Students' Attitudes towards Integrating Research Assignment as a Teaching technique**



From the results in the table above, the highest percentage of the respondents (97.8%) agreed that research paper assignment can be an effective teaching strategy to develop EFL students' research skills. However, only one respondent claimed that research paper is not that beneficial tool to improve one's research skills. Hence, according to the majority of students, applying research paper is an important mean to improve students' research skills.

#### ➤ **Respondents Justifications of their Answers**

The respondent were asked to justify their answers on how can research papers assignment enhance EFL students research skills. The only respondent who answered with "no" claimed that academic writing course is initially concerned with improving writing skills and it should make use of tools that facilitate this task for both teachers and students .However, research skills should be taught in a course devoted only for them. Therefore, there is no integration of research paper in the course of academic writing.

The majority of respondents argued that the more research papers one conducts, the more experience s/he gains, and the easier the research process becomes. They emphasized the incessant practice and training to refine research skills

and methodology. Additionally, they agreed that practicing research paper would train students at many levels such as reading, analyzing, searching, citing references, typing in computer, and using the internet properly. Thus, students need to be assigned research papers regularly in various modules in order to facilitate their final research project.

Furthermore, some respondents pointed that practicing research papers enables them to improve their writing style academically; the more they write the more they get familiar to the process of writing and overcome the errors and mistakes they used to make. Eventually, they will not find that much of difficulty writing a dissertation.

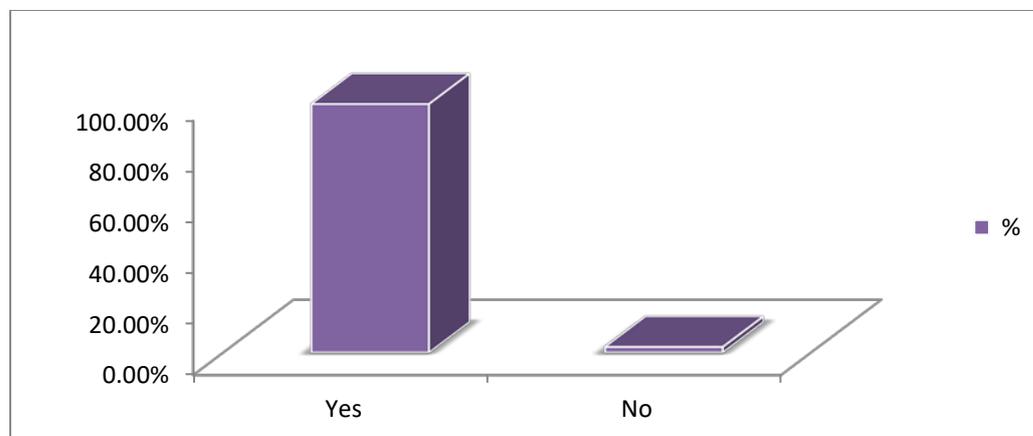
Thus, assigning research papers is an important tool in teaching EFL students especially at master level since it offers students the chance to grow their research experience, improve their academic writing skills and learn more about methodology.

**Item 10: Are you satisfied with the way the research methodology course is being taught?**

**Table 13: Students' Satisfaction towards the Research Course**

Option	Number	percentage%
No	44	97.8%
Yes	1	2.2%

**Graph 11: Students' Satisfaction towards the Research Course**



As the results in the above table reveal, most master EFL students are not satisfied with the way research methodology course is being taught.

When students were asked about the main reasons behind their dissatisfaction, they provided the answers summarized in the table below:

**Table 14: Students' Reasons of Dissatisfaction**

<b>Cause of Dissatisfaction</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>percentage%</b>
<b>Research course is not equipped with modern methods of research.</b>	21	46.7%
<b>Data analysis tools are not included in the program of research course</b>	20	44.4%
<b>Research course focus more on the theoretical part</b>	31	68.9%
<b>Qualitative and quantitative approaches in research methodologies are not fully covered</b>	26	57.8%
<b>There is no conventional methodology respected by all teachers.</b>	22	48.9%
<b>There is no adoption of a specific writing genre (research paper, dissertation) in the curriculum</b>	16	35.6%

The majority of M2 students agreed that research course is based on theories more than practice. It can also be noticed that the students find difficulties on research process because research methodology approaches are not fully covered (e.g., qualitative and quantitative approaches). Moreover, as can be recognized from the table, the respondents consider the absence of a unified conventional methodology among teachers (supervisors) as one of the main problems they encounter besides the lack of employing modern research methods and tools. Most importantly, data analysis programs, and technologies are not included in research methodology course

for example most students are unfamiliar with the use of SPSS and other similar statistical programs. The lowest percentage is concerned with the respondents who have selected the inexistence of a specific writing genre format as research paper and dissertation in the course curriculum.

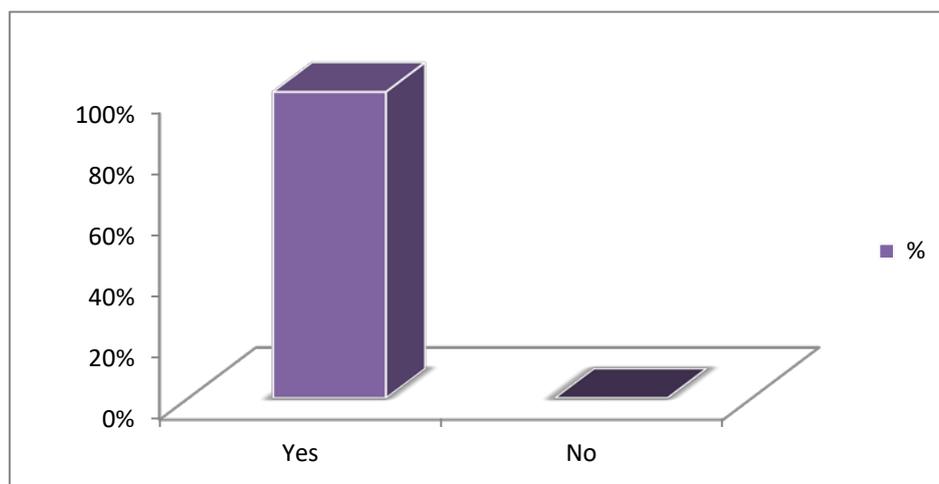
Hence, there are different factors that affect the course of methodology which hinder students from producing a successful graduation project.

**Item11: Do you think that there is a relationship between research and writing?**

**Table 15: Students' Agreement about the Existing Relation between Research and Writing**

Option	Number	Percentage%
Yes	100%	45
No	0%	0

**Graph 12: Students' Agreement about the Existing Relation between Research and Writing**



As shown in the table above, all the respondents agreed that there is an absolute relationship between research and writing skill.

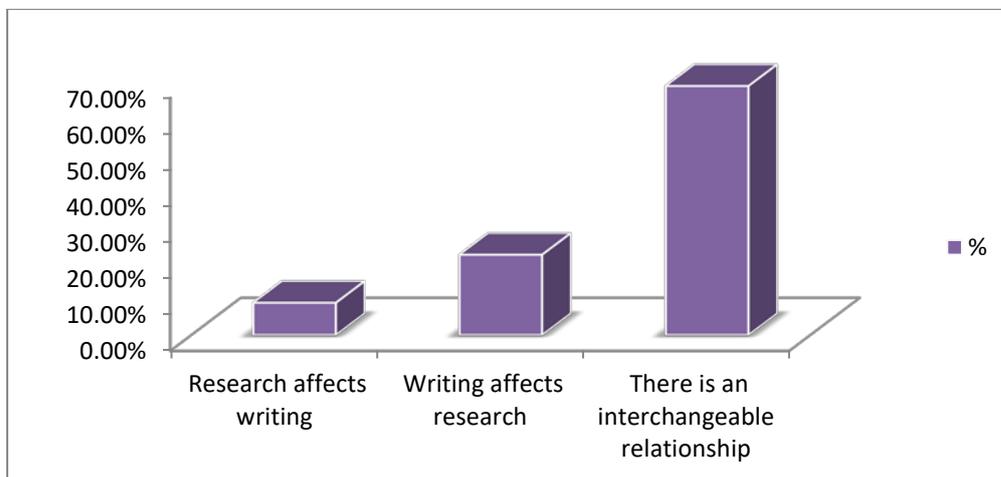
➤ **Respondents' Justification for the 'Yes' Answer**

**Table 16: Students' Opinion about the Relation between Research and Writing**

Option	Number	Percentage%
Research affects writing	4	8.9%
Writing affects research	10	22.2%
There is an	31	68.9%

**interchangeable  
relationship**

**Graph 13: Students' Opinion about the Relation between Research and Writing**



As the result in the table indicates, the highest percentage of students (68.9%) found that there is an interchangeable relationship between research and writing skill. (22.2%) of the respondents claimed that writing affect research since it is the main tool used to report research findings and questions. Whereas only (8.9%) noted that research affect writing. Academic writing is developed to meet the requirements of research and scientific style.

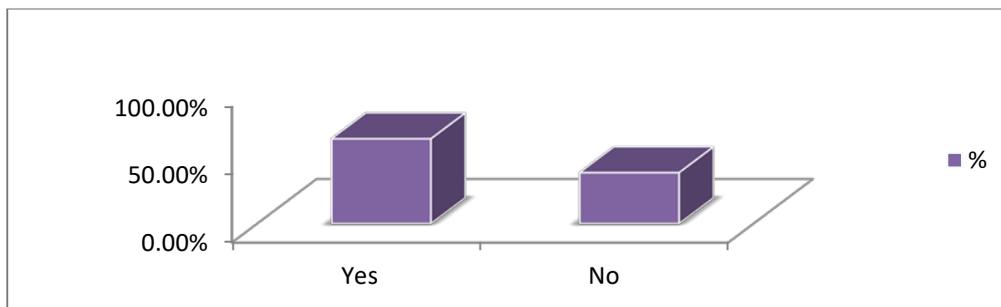
### Section Three: Academic Writing

**Item 12: Is writing in a second language an easy task for you to learn?**

**Table 17: The Difficulty of Writing**

Option	Number	Percentage%
Yes	28	62.3%
No	17	37.7%

**Graph 14: The Difficulty of Writing**



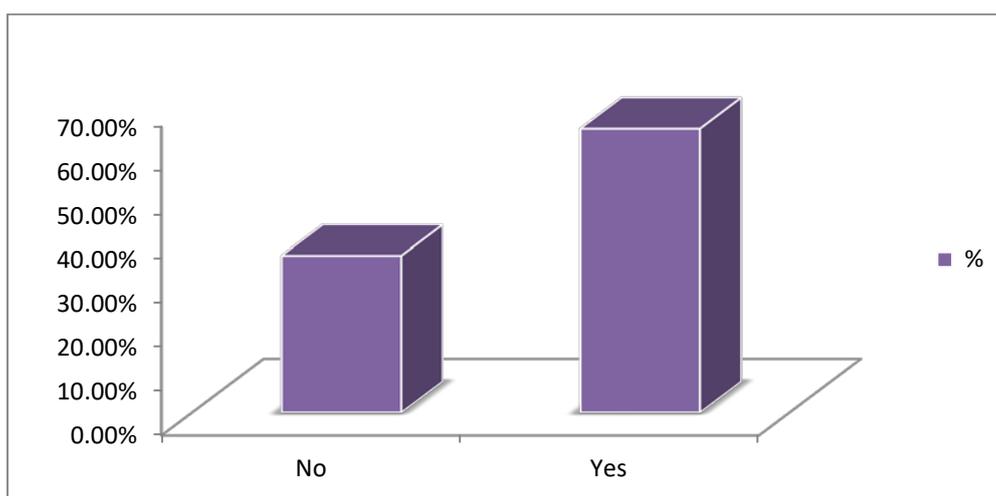
The results in the table above demonstrates that a percentage of (62.3%) find writing an easy task whereas (37.7%) consider it to be a difficult task. Hence, a big number of M2 EFL students at Biskra University are struggling to improve their writing skill. They need to make intensified practice in order to get familiar with writing process and procedures.

### Item 13: Are you motivated to write academically in English?

**Table 18: Students Attitudes towards Academic Writing**

Option	Number	Percentage%
No	16	35.6%
Yes	29	64.4%

**Graph 15: Students Attitudes towards Academic Writing**



The table above shows that a percentage of (35.6%) are not motivated to write for the following reasons:

- Uninteresting topics and insufficient time.

- The writing process itself is difficult.
- Lack of guidance and encouragement from the teachers.
- Fear of making mistakes.

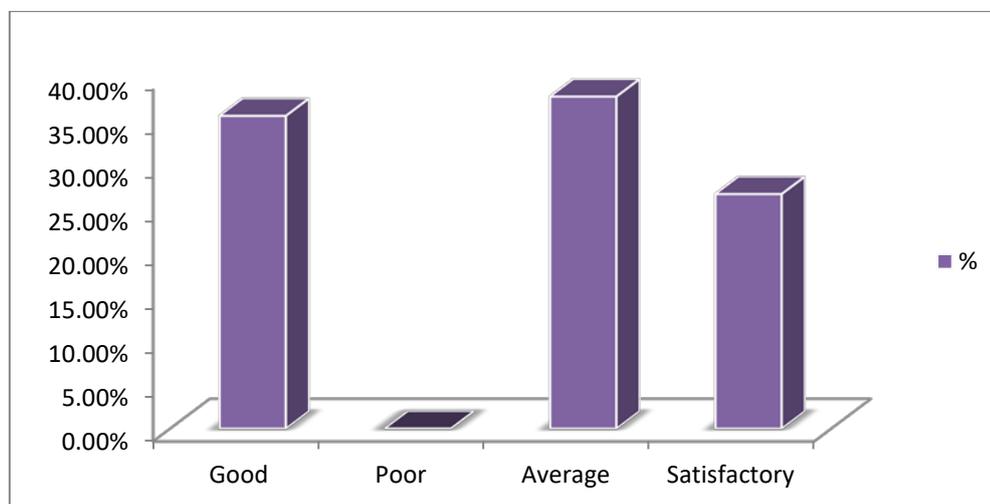
However, (64.4%) answered that they are motivated to write academically in English for the reason that academic writing is an important tool in the academic field and for research aspects.

#### Item 14: How do you evaluate your writing abilities?

**Table 19: Students' Level in Writing**

Option	Number	Percentage%
<b>Good</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>35.6%</b>
<b>Poor</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>37.8%</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>26.7%</b>

**Graph 16: Students' Level in Writing**



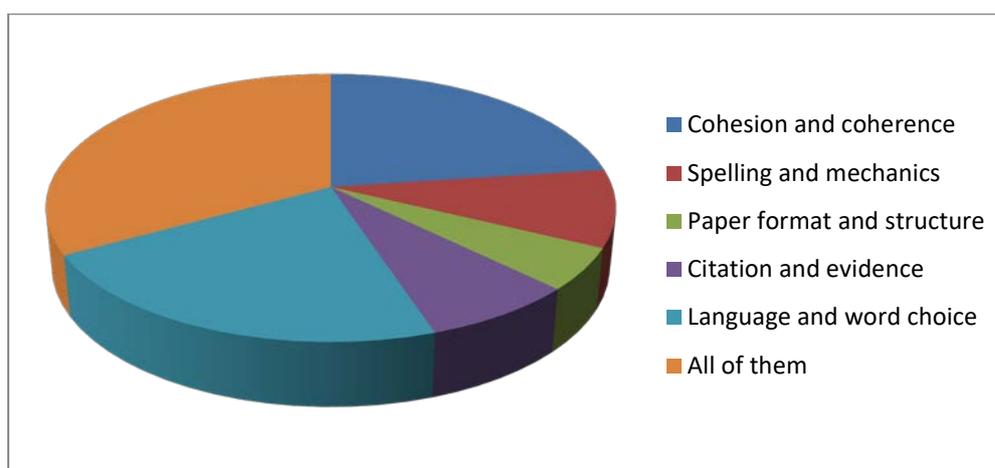
The data in the table shows that the majority of the respondents (37.8%) affirm that their level in writing is average, while an approximate percentage (35.6%) noted that their level is a good one. The least percentage (26.7%) answered that their level is satisfactory. That is to say, the overall level of students is considered to be average and acceptable to some extents, yet students need to practice more.

**Item 15: Which of the following writing aspects, you think, is/are more important?**

**Table 20: The Most Important Aspects of Writing**

Option	Number	Percentage%
Cohesion and coherence	27	60%
Spelling and mechanics	11	24.4%
Paper format and structure	6	13.3%
Citation and evidence	9	20%
Language and word choice	26	57.8%
All of them	39	86.6%

**Graph 17: The Most Important Aspects of Writing**



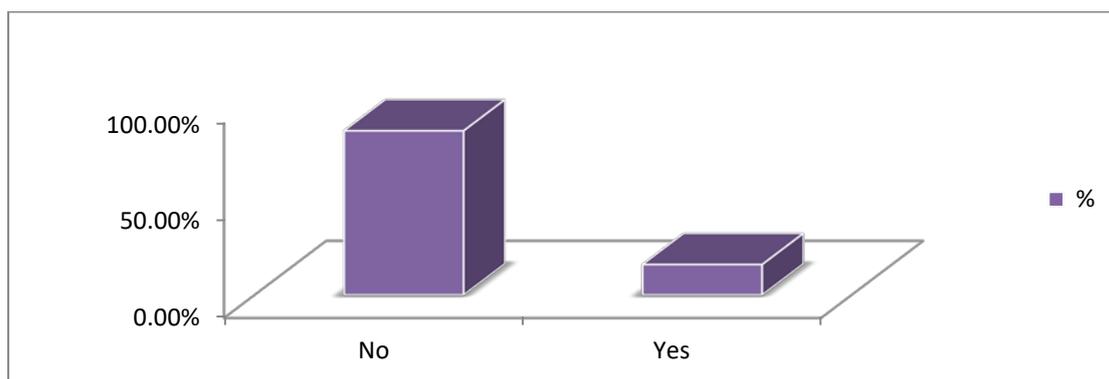
According to the data demonstrated in the table, the majority of the students agreed that all writing aspects are of equal importance and complete each other in writing a successful academic piece of writing. What can be recognized from the table is that the highest percentages are for cohesion and coherence followed by language and words. While, the other options namely, spelling and mechanics, citation and evidence and paper format and structure have been selected the least by the respondents. Hence, in order to create a complete correct piece of writing, students need to consider all the writing aspects without ignoring any one of them.

**Item 16. Do you think the time allocated for teaching academic writing is sufficient?**

**Table 21: Time Allocated to Teaching Writing**

Option	Number	Percentage%
No	38	84.4%
Yes	7	15.6%

**Graph 18: Time Allocated to Teaching Writing**



As it is clearly shown in the table above, the majority of master two students (84.4%) agreed that the time allocated for academic writing course is not sufficient. On the other hand, (15.6%) claimed that the time allocated is sufficient.

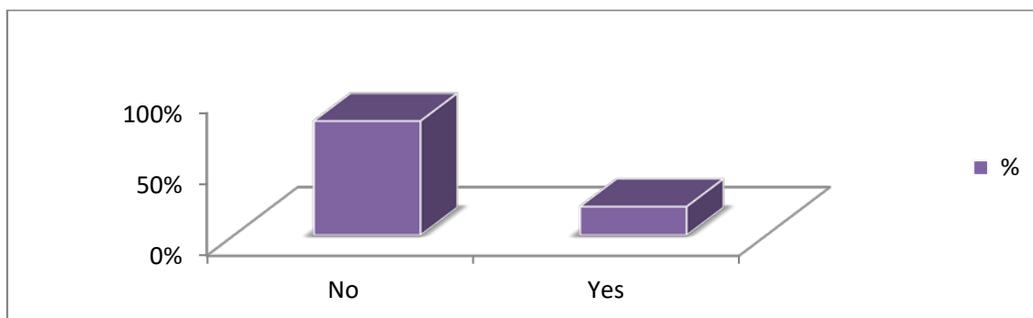
At Biskra University, generally academic writing course take two sessions per week which cannot be considered enough for teachers to cover all the aspects of this field as it needs more practice and therefore more time.

**Item 17: Are you satisfied with the way the academic writing course is being taught?**

**Table 22: Students' Satisfaction towards Academic Writing Course**

Option	Number	Percentage%
No	36	80%
Yes	9	20%

**Graph 19: Students' Satisfaction towards Academic Writing Course**



The above table reveals that (20%) expressed their satisfaction toward the writing course whereas a great deal of respondents (80%) affirmed that they are not satisfied with the way academic writing course is being taught.

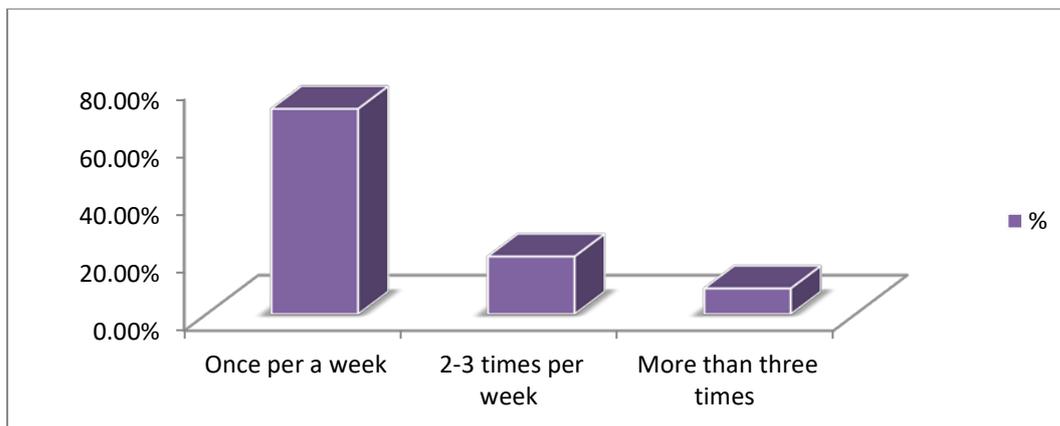
According to students' justification, this dissatisfaction is mainly due to the lack of practice because teachers focus more on the theoretical part since time is not enough without providing sufficient feedback.

**Item 18: How often do you write during the course per week?**

**Table 23: Writing Frequency**

Option	Number	Percentage%
Once per a week	32	71.1%
2-3 times per week	9	20%
More than three times	4	8.9%

**Graph 20: Writing Frequency**



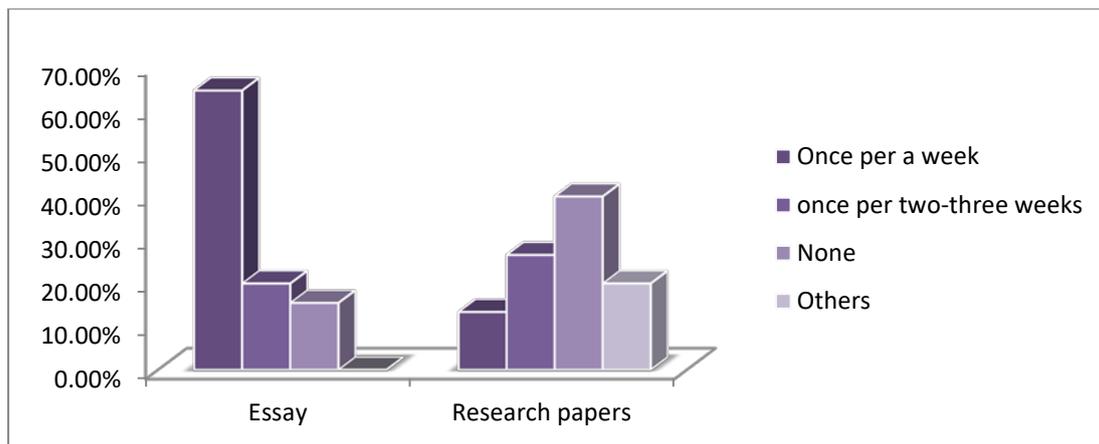
According to the results in the table above, the majority of the respondents (71.1%) noted that they write only once per one week which is not sufficient considering the time and the importance of this skill in learning English as a foreign language. Besides, (20%) agreed that they write from two to three times per a week whereas only (8.9%) claimed that they write more than three time a week. Writing is a skill that is learned and taught through practice and time, EFL students need to practice extensively outside and inside the class.

**Item 19: specify how often you write the following genres: essay, research paper?**

**Table 24: The Frequency of Writing Essays/Research Papers**

Option	Frequency	Number	Percentage%
<b>Essay</b>	Once per a week	29	64.5%
	once per two-three weeks	9	20%
	None	7	15.5%
<b>Research paper</b>	Once per a week	6	13.4%
	once per two-three weeks	12	26.6%
	None	18	40%
	Others	9	20%

**Graph 21: The Frequency of Writing Essays/Research Papers**



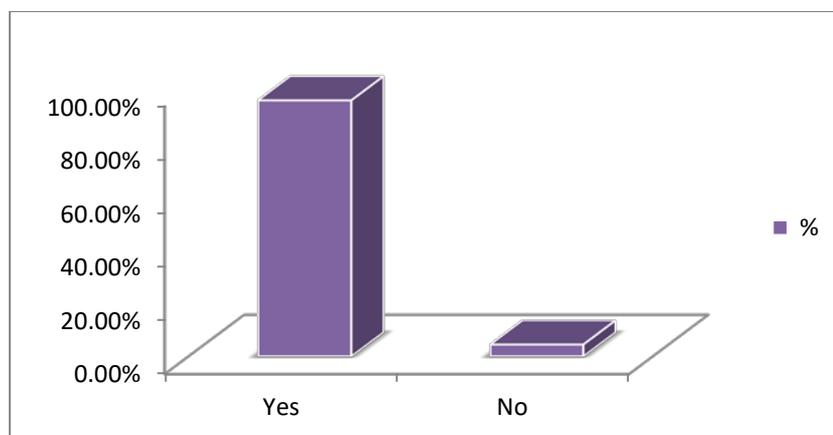
The table above represents the frequency of writing some academic genres concerning research paper and essays, on the first hand, the majority of students (64.5%) write essays regularly each week while a percentage of (20%) claimed that each two or three weeks they write one essay. Besides, (15.5%) argued that they do not write essays at all. Thus, essay is an important unit of writing which is needed to be given more focus and practice. However, the highest percentage concerning research paper (40%) belongs to those who answered that they do not write such a genre at all. (26.6%) claimed to write at least one research paper per two or three weeks whilst (13.4) affirmed to submit one research paper each week. Besides, (20%) of the respondents claimed to have conducted one research paper in every module per semester which is usually based on the teacher's requirements.

Doing research papers help students become competent in writing and researching, teachers needs to integrate it even more in the academic writing course.

**Item 20: Do you face any difficulties when writing?**

**Table 25: Writing Difficulties**

Option	Number	Percentage%
<b>Yes</b>	43	95.6%
<b>No</b>	2	4.4%

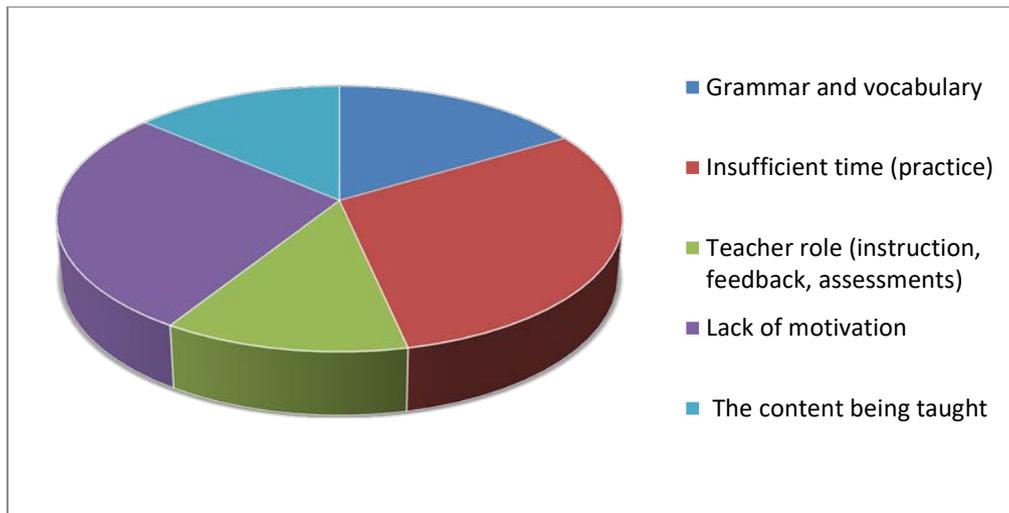
**Graph 22: Writing Difficulties**

As the results in the table above demonstrates, a great deal of the respondents find difficulties in the writing process, while only two respondents claimed that they face no difficulties while writing. The table below summarizes those difficulties:

**Table 26: Types of Writing Difficulties**

Option	Number	Percentage%
<b>Grammar and vocabulary</b>	12	26.7%
<b>Insufficient time (practice)</b>	22	48.9%
<b>Teacher role (instruction, feedback, assessments)</b>	9	20%
<b>Lack of motivation</b>	20	44.4%
<b>The content being taught</b>	10	22.2%

**Graph 23: Types of Writing Difficulties**



To sum up the above yielded data, an acceptable percentage (48.9%) insisted on the importance of practice which has a great impact on the development of writing. Also, (44.4%) find difficulties in writing for the reason; they are not motivated to write. Teachers need to encourage their students to write by providing more feedback. Besides, the remaining responses include:

- Lack of language mastery (grammar and vocabulary).
- The content taught by the teachers is repeated each year or it is another lesson of methodology.
- Teachers do not provide students with enough feedback, no clear instruction and no regular assessment.

Thus, it is important to specify the problems students encounter while writing and think of different ways to overcome these problems in order to improve one's own writing style.

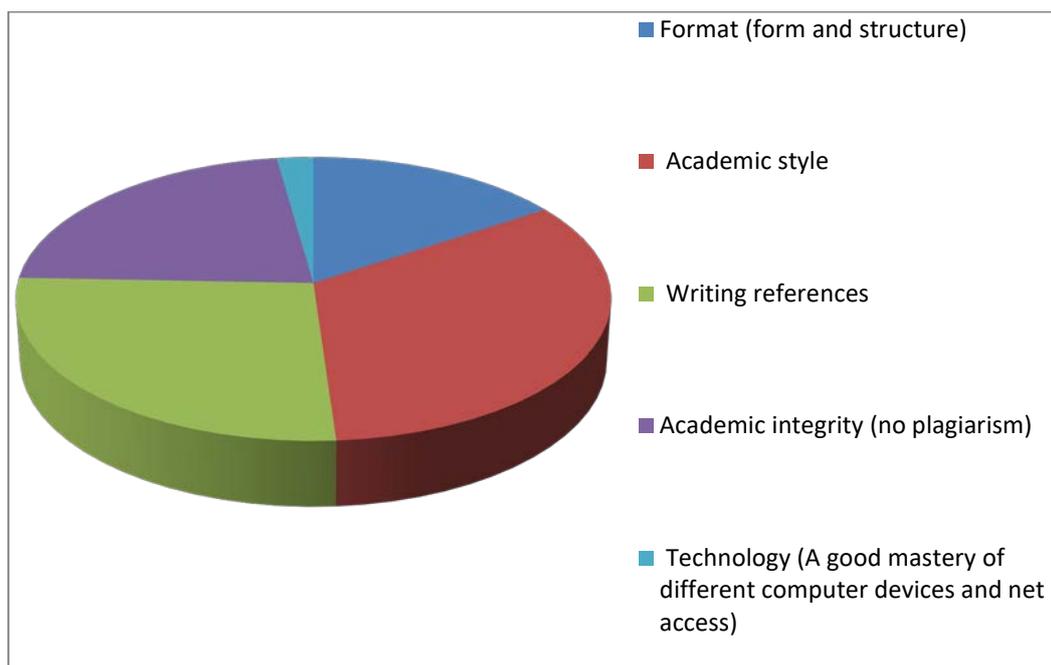
**Item 21: Which of the following academic writing aspects you find difficult to deal with?**

**Table 27: The Reasons behind Students' Weaknesses in Writing**

Option	Number	Percentage%
Format (form and structure)	7	15.6%
Academic style	15	33.3%

<b>Writing references</b>	12	26.7%
<b>Academic integrity (no plagiarism)</b>	10	22.2%
<b>Technology (A good mastery of different computer devices and net access)</b>	1	2.2%

**Graph 24: The Reasons behind Students' Weaknesses in Writing**



As can be seen from results in the table above a significant number of students (33.3%) affirmed that the main problems students face in writing is acquiring and maintaining an academic style. Whereas, others (26.7%) asserted that dealing with references in writing is such a challenge to them. Moreover, a percentage of (22.2%) indicated that maintain an academic integrity is a difficult task to them, they are cautious of falling into plagiarism. (15.6%) of the respondents related their writing difficulties to the structure mainly, creating a well formed piece of writing. However, only one respondent have selected technological problems including net access and computing mastery as a difficult task that may impede one from writing.

M2 students face many difficulties even though they have been studying English for five years including the writing module; Therefore, they need to focus on their weaknesses and improve their level.

#### **3.1.3.1.4 Discussion of the Results**

This questionnaire has been used in attempt to collect data from M2 EFL students at Biskra University. The analysis of the findings helped in providing valuable information. Initially, the results shed light on the various difficulties learners encounter while conducting research in the different research steps. To mention some, insufficient research methodology knowledge, lack of sources and time management, lack of academic writing mastery. In fact, most methodology and academic writing courses were found to focus more on the theoretical part rather than the practical one due to time limitation .

The students' answers revealed that they are struggling in different writing aspects what hinder them from acquiring an academic competence in writing and research due to the lack of practice whether inside the classroom or outside. As a matter of fact, the more EFL students practise, the more they learn and develop their writing skills .

More importantly, students expressed salient agreement on integrating research paper assignment in their academic writing course as a strategy to enhance their research writing skills. Moreover, research papers were found to play a vital role in improving learners' academic style, making learners familiar with methodology and data analysis, and improving their autonomy. The questionnaire findings emphasize the effectiveness of research papers in developing learners' research writing. For that reason, the students need to be assigned research papers regularly with guidance and feedback from teachers .

### **3.1.3.2 Teachers' Interview**

The second tool the researcher used for her research was an unstructured interview which was designed as an attempt to obtain the attitudes and opinions of EFL teachers at Biskra University, who are involved in the supervision process, about the use of research paper as a teaching technique to improve EFL students' academic writing skills. Next to that, it tries to collect the supervisor's attitudes and feedback on their experience with their candidates concerning the research process.

#### **3.1.3.2.1 Administration of Teachers' Interview**

This interview was distributed online through "Gmail" to teachers who are concerned with supervising M2 students in the Division of English at Biskra University during the academic year 2019/2020. It was administrated to eight teachers who provided varied answers between too specific ones and detailed rich answers. Additionally, it took more than a month for the researcher to collect the needed number of responses for the reasons that teachers were not available or maybe due to other reasons.

#### **3.1.3.2.2 Description of the Interview**

The under-investigated study interview contains (11) clear direct questions about both terms academic writing and research paper. The questions aimed to check teachers' opinions on the actual level of their students in writing. Also, it tries to spot the light on the difficulties they do face in the latter process and what do teacher use to improve their learners writing level. Furthermore, the researcher attempted to gather supervisors' feedback on what kind of challenges their candidates face and how do they as supervisors do to help them. Finally, the researcher tried to get teachers' advice to M2 students to improve their research writing .

### 3.1.3.2.3 Analysis and Interpretation of Teachers' Interview

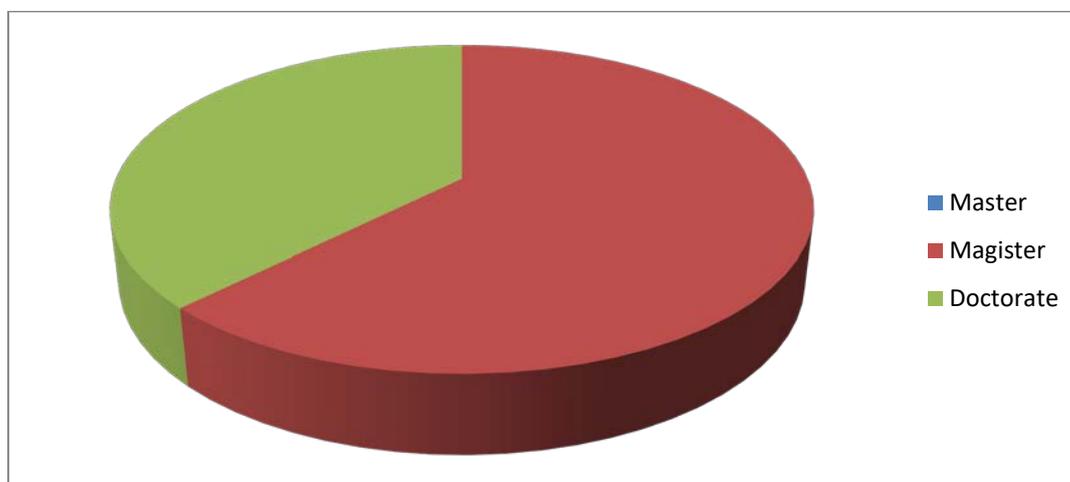
#### Item 01: Would you specify your degree?

This item estimated to know supervisors' degrees (master, magister, or doctorate).

**Table 28: Teachers' Degree**

Option	Number	Percentage%
Master	0	0%
Magister	5	62.5%
Doctorate	3	37.5%

**Graph 25: Teachers' Degree**



It is observable from the table above that the majority of teachers (62.5%) hold a Magister degree whereas (37.5%) have a doctorate degree. However, none of the respondents have master degree. Hence, the interviewed teachers generally have high degrees which will reflect varied and rich data .

#### Item 02: How long have you been supervising the EFL master dissertation at university?

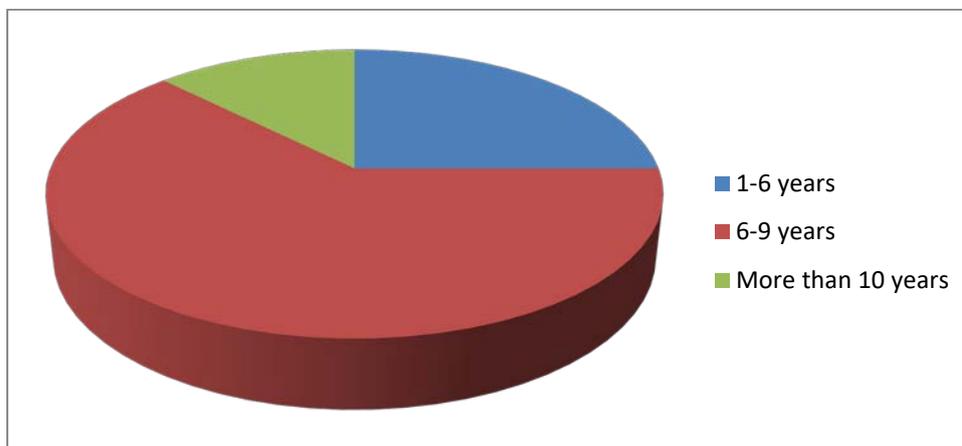
This item aimed to know how long teachers have been supervising EFL learners' dissertations at Biskra University.

**Table 29: Teachers' Experience in Supervision**

Option	Number	Percentage%
1-5 years	2	25%

<b>6-9 years</b>	2	62.5%
<b>More than 10 years</b>	5	12.5%

**Graph 26: Teachers' Experience in Supervision**



The data illustrated in the table above indicated that the highest percentage of teachers have taught EFL learners for 6-9 years, while (25%) have taught them for 1-5 years, the rest (12.5%) have taught EFL students for more than 10 years. The varieties of teachers' experiences give more chances to gather beneficial data concerning the supervision process and research .

**Item 03: What do you think of the actual level of most of your students in writing in general and in academic writing in particular?**

Through this item, the researcher estimates to collect teachers' opinions towards the actual level of their students in writing and academic writing in particular .

**Table 30: Teachers' Evaluation of their Students' Critical Thinking**

<b>Interviewees</b>	<b>Answers</b>
<b>Teacher 1</b>	Good for some, average for others
<b>Teacher 02</b>	Some of them are good at writing in general, but the problem is in the mastery of academic writing skills. I think our students should read more about this.
<b>Teacher 03</b>	Unfortunately, a considerable number of

	students do not master writing techniques and mechanisms. They commit serious errors related to grammar, spelling and style.
<b>Teacher 04</b>	My students' level in writing is not homogeneous. It fluctuates from excellent to a very low level.
<b>Teacher 05</b>	Some students are almost effective writers, but others need more practice.
<b>Teacher 06</b>	Below average.
<b>Teacher 07</b>	Overall, their level is satisfactory but they need improvement in terms of writing accuracy and formality level.
<b>Teacher 08</b>	Average level

Through this question, the researcher aimed to get an overview about teachers' opinions concerning their students' level on writing. From their answers, the researcher inferred that the overall level of EFL students at Biskra University is average as the answers above indicate that the learners' level vary from below average to effective writers. This is related to the inability of learners to master academic writing techniques and mechanics (as mentioned by teachers 2, 3, 7). Teacher 5, on the other hand, insisted on the need to practice for more improvements .

The aforementioned responses indicate that M2 students at Biskra University need to practice more in order to master academic writing skill and develop their average level into homogeneous effective writing. Teachers should act as guiders to motivate their students and keep them up with feedbacks .

**Item 04: Do you think that the time allocated to teach Academic Writing is sufficient to cover most of the aspects needed to develop learners' writing skills?**

Through this question, the researcher aimed to check whether the time allocated to teach academic writing course is sufficient to cover all the aspects needed to master this skill.

**Table 31: Time Allocated to Teaching Writing**

Interviewees	Answers
<b>Teacher 01</b>	No idea.
<b>Teacher 02</b>	We need more time for practice.
<b>Teacher 03</b>	I didn't have the chance to teach this course before, but I can argue that regardless of the amount of instruction they receive in the classroom, our students should work autonomously on themselves to develop their writing competence and performance.
<b>Teacher 04</b>	Yes. The problem is in fact that time is not sufficient for practice and providing feedback as the number of students is big.
<b>Teacher 05</b>	No
<b>Teacher 06</b>	No, it is not. More practice and workshops are needed
<b>Teacher 07</b>	No, I think there must be extra sessions devoted typically for practice and feedback.
<b>Teacher 08.</b>	Of course not we need to teach it at least two years

The purpose of this question is to know if it is possible to cover all academic writing aspects in the current timing allocated for the writing course. Five teachers (2,5,6,7,8) agreed that this module needs more time in order to have a better outcome by extensive practice and extra workshops. However, only one teacher claimed that time is sufficient yet there would be no room for practice and teacher's feedback since the number of students per classroom is big. It is somehow similar to what the first mentioned teacher assured .

Moreover, (teacher 01) asserted that he has no answer for that question as he has no idea, similarly, (teacher 3) ,who got no experience in teaching that course,

claimed that the improvement of one's academic writing level depends on his autonomous work aside of what s/he receive in the classroom.

As a result extracted from the interviewed teachers, academic writing course needs to have extra workshops for practicing and receiving feedback, however EFL students should not only rely on what teachers provide during the course but work and practice autonomously .

**Item 05: What do you think about the student's attitude toward research?**

The purpose of this item is to collect teachers' ideas about the students' attitudes toward research.

**Table 32: Teachers' Opinions about Students' Attitudes toward Research**

Interviewees	Answers
<b>Teacher 01</b>	Very few students (certainly the excellent ones) have very positive attitude toward research. In fact, they think that research is integral means to acquire and exchange knowledge. As for the majority, they regard it as a means to get marks and graduate.
<b>Teacher 02</b>	They do not know how to research academically.
<b>Teacher 03</b>	Some are enthusiastic about it
<b>Teacher 04</b>	I see that they lack knowledge and the skill of course that's why they usually experience confusion, frustration and lack of patience. That is very normal by the way; however, they need to adapt to this process through adopting significant research skills and creating a more positive mindset. This is never possible without reading.
<b>Teacher 05</b>	Many students have a rather negative attitude towards research because of the fear of the serious challenge they are undertaking. They feel lost and stressed despite the fact that they want to achieve something good. On the other hand, good level students have a positive attitude and feel themselves confident, motivated, engaged and ready to do the work. Those

	are not afraid of challenges and obstacles. They opt for working on new topics to show their competence.
<b>Teacher 06</b>	Many students at first worry much about how to begin their research but eventually they ended up interested to carry out more experiences
<b>Teacher 07</b>	Most of them are not interested in research; they do it as a compulsory step in their learning process.
<b>Teacher 08</b>	Generally they conduct it for the degree not because they are motivated

This question was asked to find out how students deal with research from teachers point of view. According to teachers' answers a very few number of students who have positive attitude toward research are really enthusiastic about the research process; however, the majority of EFL learners have a negative attitude toward research and consider it only as a tool to get marks and graduate (teachers 1,3,5, 7, 8). In fact, there are other reasons why M2 students would have a negative attitude towards research, as it is their first time conducting this type of academic works they experience confusion, frustration and inability to know how to start or from where, generally this is due to the lack of methodology knowledge and research skills (teachers 2,4,6).

All in all, one can say that M2 students at Biskra University should deal with research as a mean to acquire knowledge and find solutions to problems rather than just a means of getting marks. Hence, developing learners' research skills and attitude is based on making them familiar with the research process and methodology techniques .

**Item 06: What do you think about the student's attitude toward research?**

Through this item the researcher tried to have an idea whether the students face difficulties when composing or not, and what type of difficulties.

**Table 33: Writing Difficulties**

Interviewees	Answers
<b>Teacher 01</b>	Most of students are still struggling with the basics of English grammar (spelling, tense, punctuation, sentence writing, paragraphing, etc.) and style.
<b>Teacher 02</b>	Difficulties such as using the correct vocabulary and grammar.
<b>Teacher 03</b>	Sentence structure.
<b>Teacher 04</b>	Difficulties in writing clearly and precisely, in organizing ideas, in citing (sometimes), and more importantly in following a unified writing style and writer voice ( I usually feel that the paper consists of more than one voice)
<b>Teacher 05</b>	Yes, they do .There are problems of organizing ideas and going logically from an idea into another. They tend to put a series citation without any introduction or explanation. Others have difficulties with paraphrasing. In fact, in their trial to avoid plagiarism, they try to reformulate but lose meaning and intention. There is also the problem of punctuation. Students whether misuse, overuse or miss punctuation completely which results in long sentences or meaningless ones. Another major difficulty is with spelling and good word choice. This is the cause of a lack of revision and editing or a total skip of them
<b>Teacher 06</b>	Yes. The main ones are related to lexical choice and formal-informal style.
<b>Teacher 07</b>	Yes. Generally, most of their weaknesses are language-related (spelling, word choice, word form, expression of ideas...).
<b>Teacher 08</b>	Most of the time their mistakes are grammatical

From teachers' responses, it is extracted that all teachers agreed that M2 students struggle with different types of problems while composing, initially with the grammatical aspects as (teachers 1, 2, 3, 8) affirmed, teacher 1 explained those grammatical aspects which are spelling, tense, punctuation, sentence writing,

paragraphing, etc. He also noted that learners cannot maintain a unified academic writing style to which (teachers 4,6) highlighted too. Besides, flowing smoothly from one idea to another using the appropriate words (words choice) seems to be a great challenge to students (teachers 4, 5). Accordingly, M2 students encounter problems with anxious plagiarism; that is they have difficulties paraphrasing a text and they lack sufficient knowledge on how to cite a source.

Thereupon, M2 at Biskra University are struggling with different types of writing difficulties which are serious regarding their level as master two students. These difficulties concern: grammatical issue, vocabulary and methodological area. Teachers should give them tasks focusing on these areas to overcome these problems.

**Item 07: What do you do to improve your students' writing skill?**

The purpose of this item is to get teachers' techniques that are used in order to improve the EFL learners' writing skills.

**Table 34: Teachers' Strategies for their Students' Writing Improvements**

Interviewees	Answers
<b>Teacher 01</b>	Students need to be exposed to different types of basic academic writing and encouraged to do more guided and autonomous practice in terms of quality and quantity.
<b>Teacher 02</b>	I give them more practice
<b>Teacher 03</b>	Tell them to review their grammar. Also enrich their vocabulary
<b>Teacher 04</b>	As a supervisor, I advise them to read an intensive amount of previous studies before start writing. -for all levels in general: make them practice: inside and more often outside class. - encourage them to read extensively. - assign regular essays to write. - assign research papers to do
<b>Teacher 05</b>	Concerning master candidates, I encourage them to read a lot, follow former theses and dissertations and use them as modals, use educational blogs as watch educational videos, attend study

	days, use online plagiarism checkers, use online revision programs like rammarly, provide continuous feedback.
<b>Teacher 06</b>	I recommend more reading and free writing
<b>Teacher 07</b>	As a supervisor, I do my best to attract their attention to most of their weaknesses so that they can polish their dissertations before final drafts submission.
<b>Teacher 08</b>	as a supervisor, I can correct their mistakes

According to the teachers' answers, they suggested different strategies to develop their students writing as supervisors. One of the suggested strategies is to read more about previews dissertation works to get a clear idea on the latter term (teachers 3, 4, 5, 6), students would adopt a writing style, enrich their vocabulary and take a modal to follow. In addition, teacher 5 suggested different tools concerning: watching educational videos, attend study days, use online plagiarism checkers and online revisions programs. Moreover, it is suggested to give them tasks to practice as essays, research papers regularly without forgetting to provide them with feedbacks on their work (teachers1, 2, 4, 8).

As a result, EFL teachers suggested different strategies to deal with their students writing deficiencies which require more training and application in the teaching contexts. Additionally, the suggestion of teacher 4 that insists on the use of research paper as a tool to improve students writing is of a great support to the researcher hypothesis .

**Item 08: Do your candidates face problems when conducting their research?  
What kind of difficulties, please specify?**

This question was designed to find out the frequent difficulties EFL students encounter while conducting their graduation research .

**Table 35: Candidates' Difficulties in Research**

Interviewees	Answers
<b>Teacher 01</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Difficulty to find references about the topic.</li> <li>-Lack of competence in using references.</li> <li>-Plagiarism: copy-paste from internet and books.</li> <li>-Some points are too much developed ( adding needless details) while other important points are not enough explained/ developed.</li> <li>-Lack of expertise, deep analysis of data, and critical thinking.</li> <li>- Lack of competence in academic writing.</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher 02</b>	<p>The part where they struggle the most is data analysis part and again the main reason is the lack of knowledge, skill and clarity at the very beginning of the research process.</p>
<b>Teacher 03</b>	<p>Of course, they face difficulties as any researcher. As novice researchers, in addition to their problems with language, they have serious problems with research methodology</p>
<b>Teacher 04</b>	<p>The major obstacles that my students face when conducting research are: luck of consistency, lack of the appropriate linguistic means to express their ideas, unconscious plagiarism, and inability to select the most suitable research methods.</p>
<b>Teacher 05</b>	<p>Yes. Their difficulties include: Finding a topic, Making a proper research outline, writing a proposal (literature review in particular), analyzing and discussing results.</p>
<b>Teacher 06</b>	<p>Writing correctly, not plagiarizing.</p>
<b>Teacher 07</b>	<p>There are so many difficulties in every step: identifying the problem, developing hypotheses, choosing the methodology and treating</p>

fieldwork data.
<b>Teacher 08</b> A lack of references and the good use of methodology.

From what the teachers demonstrated above, each research step is characterized by specific challenges; the first issue that the students may encounter is finding the appropriate topic (teacher 5). An interesting, researchable, new topic is the aim of all students because it is the first step that all the research would be built upon. Another challenge is gathering the appropriate references and using them in a correct way (teachers 1, 7, 8) many novice researchers struggle to find references about their topics for different reasons whether they do not know how to research or the topic of their study is relatively new. However, even in case the learners collect enough references still, they fall in the trap of plagiarism (teachers 1, 4, 6). Moreover, most of the teachers agreed that EFL students have difficulties in the correct use of research methodology roles which will result in other problems namely: inability to select the appropriate research approach, data gathering tools and inability to analyze data deeply (teachers 1, 2,3,4, 5;7;8). Few teachers pointed to language related problems. That is, students find difficulties in expressing their ideas in a correct writing form as teacher 4 asserted "lack of the appropriate linguistic means to express their ideas."

Hence, there are many challenges that make the research process a difficult task for learners such as identifying a topic, gathering reference, maintaining academic integrity, good use of research methodology, and having an academic style .

**Item 09: As a supervisor, what do you do to help your candidates to overcome these problems?**

This item was asked to shed the lights on the teachers strategies used regarding the research challenges encountered by their students.

**Table 36: Supervisors' Strategies to Help their Candidates in their Research Challenges**

Interviewees	Answers
<b>Teacher 01</b>	As mentioned in Q7, I advise them to read a lot and follow good former dissertations. - Revise well their work and use online checkers.
<b>Teacher 02</b>	I try to give some guidelines, but not direct help. I try to highlight their mistakes or maybe gaps so that they can adjust or improve or perhaps look at their work from another angle
<b>Teacher 03</b>	I advise them to consult the APA style guide for referencing problems.
<b>Teacher 04</b>	I always try to make an extra effort in trying to draw their attention to the flaws mentioned above and suggest solutions and ways to overcome them.
<b>Teacher 05</b>	I often discuss with them and try to find out their vision and understand their interests. I also help them with references and guidebooks of research methodology.
<b>Teacher 06</b>	Sit with them in working sessions, show them their mistakes in what they have written and tell them why and how these are mistakes, and how to avoid them.
<b>Teacher 07</b>	my role encompasses direction and correction
<b>Teacher 08</b>	I generally ask them to read others' works to have an idea about their writing styles.

The answers for this question was somehow similar to the question number seven. Teachers as supervisors' role is initially to guide their candidates and correct their mistakes indirectly teacher 7 as teacher 2 explained " I try to highlight their mistakes or maybe gaps so that they can adjust or improve or perhaps look at their work from another angle." Similarly, teacher 6 insisted on the importance of supervision sessions wherein the teacher provide detailed feedback on his students mistakes and solutions of how to avoid them. In the same sense teacher number 4

opens discussion with his candidates on how to overcome the difficulties mentioned on the previous question .

Concerning referencing problems, it is advisable to use APA manual and read extensively about research methodology books to enrich one's knowledge (teachers 3,5) while teachers (1, 8) suggested reading previous dissertations to have an idea about this work.

All in all, supervisors should guide their students throughout the research journey by providing them regular feedback on their works and advise them with some books recommendations however students need to work autonomously in order to have successful results .

**Item 10: Do you think that using research paper as assignments for students to complete during their Academic Writing course could improve their writing skills?**

This item aimed to get teachers personal views on using research paper as a teaching assignment to enhance their academic writing skills.

**Table 37: Teachers' Attitudes toward Using Research Paper Techniques in Improving EFL Learners Writing Skills**

Interviewees	Answers
<b>Teacher 01</b>	Yes because this would oblige them to practice writing and follow the rules and conventions. It is a good way for them to read, search for information from different sources, use internet. It helps them to know how to analyze findings, think critically, and solve problems....
<b>Teacher 02</b>	Absolutely yes, yes and yes, but it always depends on the learner performance and attitude. For example, if the learner made a serious attempt to learn and to fulfill the task effectively, then, he will certainly learn and evolve; however, if they overlooked the task and didn't put much effort on it, the results will not be that much.
<b>Teacher 03</b>	Somehow.

<b>Teacher 04</b>	Yes, I do
<b>Teacher 05</b>	Definitely
<b>Teacher 06</b>	Assigning research work encourages students to be autonomous and self-relied. It is crucial for candidates to be more autonomous and rely less on their supervisors because sole students wait from their supervisors to provide references, revise their work word by word ...
<b>Teacher 07</b>	Yes, it greatly does
<b>Teacher 08</b>	Well through my experience research papers are no longer credible because of plagiarism.

From the interviewed teachers answers, all of them agreed upon that research paper effectiveness in enhancing EFL learners' academic writing. According to teacher 2, it is not a matter of using such a tool but it depends mainly on the student attitude; if there is effort and seriousness certainly this technique will benefit students writing skills. Moreover, teacher 1 noted that conducting research paper is somehow similar to conducting a research in the sense that both need extensive reading, methodology knowledge, analyzing findings, thinking critically, and solving problems. However, teacher 8 discount the credibility of research paper since the students conduct them only for marks with no real efforts which results in a plagiarized content.

Research paper is an effective teaching tool; it helps learners to have sort of an overview on how to research and encourage them to work autonomously.

**Item 11: Based on your experience, what pieces of advice can you give to students in order to help them improve their research writing?**

This item is sought to open a door for teachers' suggestions and advices for post-graduation students.

**Table 38: Teachers' Advice concerning Research Writing**

Interviewees	Answers
<b>Teacher 01</b>	I already mentioned them
<b>Teacher 02</b>	They need to read a lot so that to develop their vocabulary knowledge and know about different writing styles
<b>Teacher 03</b>	The most important thing is that they accumulate and be familiar with basic knowledge about the major components of academic writing, and then move a sort of gradual process of practice of research writing, i.e. from the simple to the more sophisticated.
<b>Teacher 04</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-do a lot of research works.</li> <li>-follow teachers' and supervisors' advice and feedback.</li> <li>-use online checkers and revising programs.</li> <li>-read extensively.</li> <li>- use good theses as modals</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher 05</b>	First, they need to research a topic of their own interests and be enthusiastic about it. They have to be also patient and organized. Reading published papers and reviewing them can help a lot.
<b>Teacher 06</b>	Do a lot of reading, particularly academic writing material (articles, dissertations, etc.)
<b>Teacher 07</b>	Extensive Reading is the real input to train learners in comprehension and in writing. The more students read academic writing, they build a store of academic expressions, words and structures naturally and perfectly
<b>Teacher 08</b>	They have to read a lot and write about their readings

From teachers' responses, it is observable that the major advice is to read and read in order to enrich one's vocabulary and knowledge about research methodology and writing styles. In fact, reading a lot about academic material will serve as a model for the students so that they would have an idea about writing and its aspects concerning those materials .

### **3.1.3.2.3 Discussion of the Results**

This interview was a useful tool for gathering feedback from teachers at Biskra University about students' common difficulties in academic writing and research process, in addition, to estimating their attitudes toward the use of research paper as a teaching tool in enhancing students' academic writing. From teachers' responses, it has been found that the actual level of learners in academic writing is dissatisfactory; they need more practice and time both outside and inside the classroom. Also, supervisors showed that the main difficulties encountered by the learners in the researching process are mainly lack of methodology knowledge, lack of reliable sources, and lack of one's academic style. Hence, they suggested a number of strategies for students to use in order to overcome research writing deficiencies such as having more practice of writing different genres (research paper in particular), more reading of academic materials, using online plagiarism/grammar checker.

Conducting research papers was one of the teachers' suggestions which go with the researcher's hypothesis. It is an effective tool in training students and fostering their researching skills, moreover it promotes learner autonomy. In fact, from teachers' responses, it can be observed that teachers have a positive attitude towards using research paper as a teaching approach in academic writing course which would be beneficial in improving their average level in writing .

### **3.1.3.4 Summary of the Results**

To sum up, both of the study gathering tools namely: a questionnaire administrated to M2 students and an interview administrated to teachers concerned with supervision process were beneficial in collecting teachers and students attitudes toward research, the main problems faced by the students while conducting the

graduation project, and the effectiveness of research paper as a tool in enhancing learners academic writing .

In one hand, students' questionnaire results revealed that they are facing various challenges in writing their graduation dissertation which are according to them a result of their unfamiliarity to the research process as well as lack of knowledge about academic writing aspects and limited practice with almost no feedback from teachers. This unfamiliarity with the research process writing at advanced level proves that there is a gap in methodology and academic writing courses concerning theories and practice. Moreover, the students agreed upon the vital role of research paper in developing students research experience and methodology therefore developing their writing skills and increasing their chance to practice. Furthermore, the finding of the interview proved that research and academic writing have an interchangeable relationship; the research is enhanced by the quality of the writing and vice versa .

On the other hand, the results of the interview indicated that the weak level of M2 students' at Biskra University at this advanced level is a result of different problems. The majority of learners consider research only as a tool of getting marks; they do not make extra efforts outside the classroom to enrich their knowledge or practice in addition to the extensive reading. According to teachers, they do their best in providing their candidates with the needed correction and as they suggested extra workshop for practice would be beneficial for students who are willing to conduct research for the sake of increasing his/her own stock of knowledge. More importantly, teachers agreed on the effectiveness of adopting research paper as a teaching technique in the academic writing course to enhance students' awareness of the research process.

All in all, the data gathered from both teachers and students was beneficial and support the researcher hypothesis; the suggested technique of assigning research paper can be helpful for students in the sense that it helps to raise students autonomy, raises learners chances of practice, enhances learners methodology and research familiarity, and improves students' academic writing. However, both sides need to play their roles in a complete correct way to reach the needed results in the appropriate conditions .

## **Conclusion**

This chapter was devoted to the field work of the study which was an attempt to test the hypothesis of the research; whether the use of research papers as a teaching technique could enhance students' academic writing from both teachers and students views in which a students' questionnaire and teachers interview were used. The collected data supported the researcher hypothesis of using research paper assignment as a teaching strategy.

## General Conclusion

The present study is an attempt to confirm the hypothesis which tended to investigate the effectiveness of research paper assignments on developing EFL learners' academic writing skills. It sheds the light on different challenges faced by M2 learners at Biskra University while preparing their graduation dissertation in addition to teachers' attitudes toward these challenges.

This research is composed of three main chapters, two initial theoretical chapters and one chapter for the field work. The first chapter is devoted to writing in general and academic writing and its various aspects in particular. To be precise, the chapter consists of two sections; the first one provided an overview about the writing history, its definition, its elements, and its importance. While the second section dealt with academic writing, its definition, its characteristics, a discussion on plagiarism, and academic integrity as well as the academic writing genres.

The second chapter comprises of two sections, research and research paper. The research section allowed us to shed the light on the main aspects of research as the research definition, features, types, purpose and qualities of a good researcher. The second section discussed research paper; its definition, structure, components, types, steps of writing, and the different challenges faced by students while writing a research paper.

The third chapter, which is concerned with field work, contains two main data gathering tools, learners' questionnaire and teachers' interview which were administrated in Biskra University at the division of English. The results from both instruments showed that writing is a difficult skill that students are struggling with. Their negative attitude toward research affected their writing product therefore their actual level. Moreover, the results proved that teachers and students both have

positive attitude toward integrating research paper assignment as a teaching strategy to develop EFL learners' academic writing skill finding that it deserved to be adopted. Hence, the more students are assigned research papers, the more they practise and this will improve their research skills. Furthermore, students suffer from insufficient time to practice what they have been taught as they only receive theoretical information. For that, it is important to join theory to practice especially in courses like academic writing and research methodology .

All in all, using research paper proved to be an effective technique in raising learners' research writing levels. It helps students to be autonomous responsible learners trained in conducting research.

## **Recommendations**

Depending on the study findings, the following suggestions and recommendations are addressed to students, teachers, and administrators in the division of English at Biskra University.

- Students need to be engaged in the process of learning.
- Students should be autonomous and they need to show their commitment and seriousness toward their learning .
- The majority of EFL learners were not satisfied with the way the research and writing course are being taught, according to them there is a huge gap between theories and practice. Therefore, it is preferable to focus more on practice .
- It is highly recommended for learners to attend seminars that would open a chance for them to have an idea about the current common issues and topics.
- Because of EFL students' unfamiliarity with research process it is recommended that in each module, a research paper would be assigned to them since first year .
- It is recommended to impose students to practice inside and outside the classroom by assigning them home works and make workshops for correcting them.
- The academic writing course at master two level should be reviewed since it is just another lecture of methodology. They need to be taught how to report research finding academically .
- Research methodology course needs to be reviewed in terms of content, time allocated, and the way it is taught.
- The administration need to specify a special budget to the library facilities in order to supply the needed sources for conducting research.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Students' Questionnaire

Dear students:

You are kindly invited to answer this questionnaire which is an attempt to collect data for the accomplishment of a master dissertation entitled "The Role of Research Paper Assignment in the Development of EFL Learner's Academic Writing". We would be so grateful if you could sincerely provide us with precise, clear, and complete responses. Please tick (√) your answer(s) in the corresponding box(es) and write full statements whenever necessary. Be sure that your answers will remain anonymous and will only be used for this study

### Section One: Student Profile

1. Specify your gender:

a. Male  b. Female

2. How long have you been studying English at Biskra University?

a. Less than 5 years

b. 5 years

c. More than 5 years

3. Applying for master degree was:

a. Your choice

b. a friend/ parents suggestion

c. imposed choice

Please justify the reason if it was your choice:

.....  
.....

**Section Two: M2 Students' Deficiencies in Writing a Research Paper**

4. What is research to you?

a. Necessity to complete a degree

b. A fortune to get good mark

c. A tool to improve your knowledge

d. An attempt to find problem solution

5. How many research have you conducted during your university studies?

a. None

b. 1-4

c. More than 5

6. How do you find research process?

a. Easy

b. Difficult

7. Have you encountered any problems when conducting your research? (you may tick more than one option)

a. Yes

b. No

If yes, are they related to?

a. proficiency level at English

b. Time management and research skills

c. Lack of sources

d. insufficient knowledge of research methodology

e. Supervision process

f. Insufficient mastery of academic writing process

If others, give examples please:

.....  
.....

8. In which research phase/s you faced more difficulties?

- a. The early stage (choosing a topic)
- b. Collecting data and finding references
- c. The analysis stage (analyzing data)
- d. Reaching conclusions
- e. Reporting data
- f. all of them

Please explain.

.....  
.....

9. Do you think that assigning research papers in the course of Academic Writing can be an effective teaching strategy for developing your research skills?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Please justify both cases,

.....  
.....

10. Are you satisfied with the way the research writing course is being taught?

.....

If no, is that because: (you may tick more than one option)

- a. Research course is not equipped with modern methods of research
- b. Data analysis tools are not included in the program of research course
- c. Research course focus more on the theoretical part.
- d. Qualitative and quantitative approaches in research methodologies

are not fully covered

e. There is no conventional methodology respected by all teachers

f. There is no adoption of a specific writing genre (research paper, dissertation) in the curriculum

g. Others (you can suggest)

.....

.....

11. Do you think that there is a relationship between research and writing?

a. Yes

b. No

If yes, is it a relation in which:

a. Research affects writing

b. Writing affects research

c. There is an interchangeable relationship

### Section Two: Academic Writing

12. Writing in a second language is an easy task for you to learn?

a. Yes

b. No

13. Are you motivated to write academically in English?

a. Yes

b. No

Please explain,

.....

.....

14. How do you evaluate your writing abilities?

a. Good

b. Poor

c. Average

d. satisfactory

15. Which of the following writing aspect, you think, is more important?

a. Cohesion and coherence

b. Spelling and mechanics

c. Paper format and structure

d. Citation and evidence

e. Language and word choice

If others, please specify

.....  
.....

16. Do you think time allocated for teaching academic writing is sufficient?

a. Yes

b. No

17. Are you satisfied with the way academic writing course is being taught?

a. Yes

b. No

Please justify;

.....  
.....

18. How often do you write during the course per week?

a. Once per a week.

b. 2-3 times per week

c. More than three times

19. Please specify how often you write the following genres.

Essays:

Once per a week

once per two-three weeks

None

Research paper:

.....

20. Do you face difficulties when writing?

a. Yes

b. No

If yes, the problem is:

a. Grammar and vocabulary

b. Insufficient time (practice)

c. Teacher role(instruction,  
feedback, assessments)

d. Lack of motivation

The content being taught

21. Which of the following academic writing aspects you find difficult to deal with?

a. Format (form and structure)

b. Academic style

c. Writing references

d. Academic integrity (no plagiarism)

e. Technology (A good mastery of

different computer devices and net access)

We would really appreciate any suggestions or comments from your part. Please feel

Free.

.....

.....

.....

Again, my gratitude and thanks go to you for your time and collaboration

## Appendix 2: Teachers' Interview

Dear teacher,

This interview is an attempt to collect data for the accomplishment of a master dissertation entitled "The Role of Research Paper Assignment in the Development of EFL Learner's Academic Writing". We would be so grateful if you could sincerely provide us with precise, clear, and complete responses. Be sure that your answers will remain anonymous and will only be used for this study purposes.

Thank you for your collaboration.

Q1. Would you specify your degree?

a) Master

b) Magister

c) Doctorate

Q2. How long have you been supervising EFL master dissertation at university?

a) 1-5 years

b) 6-9 years

c) More than 10 years

Q3. What do you think of the actual level of most of your students in writing in general and in academic writing in particular?

.....

.....

.....  
.....  
Q4. Do you think that the time allocated to teach Academic Writing is sufficient to cover most of the aspects needed to develop learners' writing skills?

.....  
.....  
.....

Q5. What do you think about student's attitude toward research?

.....  
.....  
.....

Q6. Do your students face difficulties when composing (writing)? What kind of difficulties?

.....  
.....  
.....

Q7. What do you do to improve your students' writing skill?

.....  
.....  
.....

Q8. Do your candidates face problems when conducting their research? What kind of difficulties, please specify?

.....  
.....  
.....

Q9. As a supervisor, what do you do to help your candidates to overcome these problems?

.....  
.....  
.....

Q8. Do you think that using research paper as assignments for students to complete during their Academic Writing course could improve their writing skill?

.....  
.....  
.....

Q11. Based on your experience, what pieces of advice can you give to students in order to help them improve their research writing?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

If you would like to add any suggestions or comments, please feel free

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Thank you for your cooperation.