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Submitted by: BOUZIDI Mohamed

**English writing for academic purposes: Exploring
postgraduate students' difficulties in writing academic research
articles**

A Dissertation submitted to Mohamed KHEIDER University of BISKRA in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Language Sciences.

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Declaration

I, **BOUZIDI Mohamed**, do hereby solemnly declare that the work I presented in this thesis is my own, and has not been submitted before to any other institution or university for a degree.

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Dedication

To our beloved and ever-loving parents for their unconditional support throughout our lives. Thank you for giving me the strength to chase our dreams.

To my sisters and brothers who deserve our wholehearted thanks too.

To all our friends, thank you for sharing with us the good and bad moments; thank you for your encouragement and support. Your friendship made a wonderful journey of our lives. We cannot list names but you are always in our minds.

To all those who love us.

Acknowledgment

«Praise to Allah, who has guided us to this; and we would never have been guided if Allah had not guided us»

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Abstract

Higher education standards nowadays require from learners to acquire certain level of language skills, especially writing. Research articles' writing has become a prerequisite for postgraduates. Nevertheless they are finding this task quite challenging and a barrier in their way of getting their degree, knowingly that writing and publishing demand having advanced academic writing skills. This study aims to explore the English academic writing' difficulties for postgraduates when writing research articles. To reach this end, a qualitative method was used to approach the problem via collecting data using an online questionnaire addressed to 22 doctorate students, a were used to analyze data. The findings show that the respondents' main problems with English academic writing are related to the form rather the content, and the major difficulties they reported are related to grammar, vocabulary and sentences structure. Thus they have had difficulties writing articles, especially with the literature review and the discussion sections.

Keywords: Academic writing, Postgraduate/ doctorate students, Research articles, English for Academic purposes.

List of Abbreviation and Acronyms

EAP: English for Academic Purposes

EFL: English as a foreign language

ESP: English for Specific Purposes

EOP: English for Occupational Purposes

JEAP: Journal of English for Academic Purposes

TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers from Other Languages

SFL: Systematic Functional linguistics

LCT: Legitimization Code Theory

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General introduction

Introduction

At postgraduate level, success often depends on the ability to produce quality academic writing. Good academic writing is Writing that meets the audience's expectations Maslach and Leiter, 2008.

Writing is one of the important skills the learners need to major especially in higher studies. It has a fundamental role in the learner's study, and research. In many cases it is substantial factor that decides if the learner can move from one level to another level of learning. PhD and Masters degree are tow examples in which high level of academic writing is imperative. In the domain of academia teachers and policy makers try to suggest new techniques to enhance academic writing proficiency. Unfortunately those techniques can not be applied similarly due to the different circumstances controlling the learning process. However the more universities and institutions can provide suitable courses the better learner can achieve their academic expectations. The course of English for academic purposes presents a chance to enhance students' skills including writing in order to achieve better results in their academic career.

Ferguson, 2007 (as cited in Alexander, 2012) states that English for academic purposes focuses on academic literacy represented in different skills; writing, reading and listening. The curriculum of EAP is composed of courses designed to enhance those skills, insuring the collaboration between all skills in order to guarantee that the learners successfully accomplish their tasks in their academic setting, (Richards,2006; Savignon,2007;Thompson 1996) state that EAP emphasizes on teaching English particularly to ease learner's study or research. EAP motivates learners to participate in activities that involve academic context communication. The aim of it is to develop their communicative

abilities (as cited in Alexander, 2012).

The present study explores the English academic writing difficulties that encounter postgraduate students when writing research articles, in order to understand the challenges and limitation that stands in the way of publishing their articles.

1. Statement of the problem

What is more convenient to test student's scientific interest more than engaging them in a real research. Writing articles, journals, thesis is a critical element in the career of PhD students, yet postgraduates find it so challenging and time consuming task. writing science for publication in a second language is more time consuming than writing in a first language (Curry & Lillis, 2007; Englander & Corcoran, 2019)., considering the standards in the university or the journal student wants to submit his work to where the article is reviewed by professional reviewers. The quality of writing and the content presented by the student's academic papers , it is how to attract and retain the attention of the reader. Writing a doctoral thesis or publishing an article in a doctoral study is a highly sophisticated task using the first language, so if speaking on writing in a second language, the task is even harder specially if they were instructed in mother tongue. Recently in Algeria doctoral students are required to write and publish articles specifically using English, because it became the international language for academic research, and most scientific database worldwide is provided in English. If not to say it became a necessity to publish in English to ensure international exposure, though writing and publishing in English has not been an easy task for students since they were not previously prepared for this assignment due to their poor background in English, and the different instruction language they were exposed to, also the lack of training in English academic writing because it is different from Arabic or French. According to the

latter we aim to explore the difficulties faced by postgraduates in the writing of their research articles.

2. Significance of the study

The present study will be valuable for non-EFL postgraduates and teachers, through exploring the main weakness points of doctoral students when writing articles or scientific papers. It involves studying the incapability of writing articles among students from different angles, which may help in the future to design convenient courses for the enhancement of their English academic writing competency, in order to have more chances to publish their articles.

3. Limitation of the study

We are wary that this research may have some limitations, which may affect the results of the study.

- Conducting an exploratory study is due to the time limitation
- The issues related to covid-19 and social distancing.
- The results of the study would be more convenient if other data collection tools were used.

4. Research Aims

The overall aim of the study is to discover and identify the main difficulties of non-EFL doctoral students in writing articles specially those related to academic writing. In addition to point out the importance of focusing on student's academic writing at university level.

5. Research questions

- What are the academic writing difficulties, and their types faced by non-EFL

postgraduates in writing articles?

- How does poor writing performance affect non-EFL postgraduates' articles writing?

6. Research hypothesis

According to the previous questions, we can put the following hypotheses:

- Students are aware of the importance of English academic writing; they need just to ameliorate their knowledge and performance towards it.
- The types of writing difficulties may be related to both form and content
- Poor English academic writing may effect negatively the non-EFL postgraduates research article writing.

7. Research Methodology

7.1. Research approach and data collection method

In order to investigate English academic writing problems faced by postgraduates in the process of writing and publishing articles. This study opted for qualitative approach due to the exploratory nature of the study. The data will be collected through, a questionnaire addressed to doctoral students.

7.2. Population and sample

The most fitting population for this study are doctoral student from second year till the final year of the PhD program since they are already facing problems with writing articles. The sample will be selected randomly form the population.

8. The structure of the study

The present study is consisted of four chapters. The first chapter is entitled 'literature review/theoretical background' it attempts to clarify the relation between the variables and discuss some aspects of English for academic purposes (EAP) and definition and features of

academic writing. The second chapter is devoted to methodology it explains the choices of the researcher in conducting this study, as the research approach and research design and the data collection tools and procedures, etc. The third chapter named 'analysis of results' in which the data retrieved from the questionnaire were analyzed. The last chapter discussed the interpretation and discussion of results. In which the main finding of the study were presented and interpreted.

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Section 1: Introduction to EAP

Introduction

English for academic purposes (EAP) witnessed a rapid growth in the past two decades. From a branch of English for specific purposes (ESP) to being an important part of English language teaching, and research worldwide. Gaining its success from different theories and a disciplined research-based language education. The expansion of EAP was related the development of universities in multiple countries , added to the augmentation of international students taking their post-secondary education in English. Thus EAP is now in an advanced place in both theoretical and practical development in teaching English as a second language. Ken Hyland (2006)

EAP is described as "any teaching that relates to a study purpose" Dudley-Evan and St Jhone,(1998, p. 34). Flowerdew and Peacocke (2001) state that EAP teaching has a definite purpose to aid learners in relation to study and research conducting purposes, in addition to teaching in that language. (EAP) English for Academic Purposes is a sub-field of (ESP) English for specific purposes, its relevance increased due to the demands of English in academic research. EAP is interested in teaching English for language users in order to achieve their academic tasks. It is generally established at universities, and among non-native speakers Paltridge and Starfield, (2013).

1.1. EAP Background and development

The 1970s was the decade when English for specific purposes (ESP) appeared. Stevens (1977) described it as the teaching where "the content and the aim of teaching are determined by the requirements of the learner rather than by external factors, such as general educational criteria" (p. 146). In the same context Robinson (1980) stated that ESP "is purposeful and is aimed at successful performance of occupational or educational roles" (p. 13). (As cited in Ding, Bruce, 2017). What was later termed as English for

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occupational purposes (EOP) and English for academic purposes (EAP). The concept (EAP) was English for academic purposes introduced at first as title of a published papers of the SELMOUS (special English language materials for overseas university students) seminar in 1975 at Birmingham University . Making the development of study skills a Factor identifying this distinct ESP subfield. Jordan (1997, p. 1)

1.1.1. SELMOUS

The SELMOUS conferences of 1985 and 1987 reflected the attention of the UK EAP circle. The UK EAP community started to center its attention on broader matters attached to the development of EAP student. The themes of the conferences were about, *Individualization and Autonomy in Language Learning* and *Socio-cultural issues in English For Academic Purposes*. Although the focus of those conferences seems to be wide-ranging, the published works in the 1980s and followed to the 1990s had a large focus on study skills evolution. The most important works were the Cambridge publications *Study Listening* by Lynch 1983 and *study writing* by Hamp-Lyons and Heasley (1987). (Ding and Bruce, 2017)

1.1.2. BALEAP

SELMOUS name was modified in 1989 to BALEAP *British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes*. Throughout the 1990s the BALEAP started a routine of *Professional Issues Meetings* (PIMs); a yearly seminar in which researchers present topics with special interest to them. In The summary of group discussions at Essex University in December 1995 organized by Jo McDonough. He pointed out to the need to upgrade EAP status saying :

There was seen to be a need for the upgrading of the status of EAP and a raising of the profile of the EAP professional.... However, the raising of our status as EAP professionals must also be linked with how we perceive

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ourselves. It is possible that EAP needs to move away from seeing itself as a 'service' or 'support' facility and look towards perceiving itself as a subject in its own right, possessing its own genres and discourses.

(McDonough, 1995)

The first decade of the twenty-first century have seen multiple new advancements in EAP, the most prominent of which was the founding of the Journal of English for Academic Purposes (JEAP) in 2002. The journal's first editorial, *EAP: Issues and Directions*, has become more of a roadmap for the recently emerging discipline, discussing issues such as academic literacy, disciplinarity, discourse culture, multimedia literacies, and academic text generation in a growing English-using academic environment. Ding and Bruce, (2017). The status and role of EAP in universities was one the concerns of this journal, Hyland & Hamp- Lyons, (2002) state that :

An important role of this journal must be to strengthen the understandings which make EAP teaching a profession. Part of this involves disabusing administrators of the view that the acquisition of academic literacy involves a few hours of fixing up grammar in the language center.

Administrators must come to realize the complexities of this profession. (p.

6)

Looking to this history of ongoing development the link between EAP and study is still unbreakable, the work on developing teaching materials and syllabuses is always in progress. Since "The first requirement of students will be the development of study skills to an appropriate level for the subject(s) to be studied, in conjunction with the development of language proficiency (Jordan, 1997).

1.1.3. Study skills

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Ritchards and Platt, J and Platt, H. 1992. As cited in Hyland, 2006 define study skills as follow:

Abilities, techniques and strategies which are used when reading, writing, or listening for study purposes. For example, study skills needed by university students studying from English language textbooks include: adjusting reading speeds according to the type of material being read, using the dictionary, guessing word meanings from context, interpreting graphs, diagrams, and symbols, note taking and summarizing.

What is essential about the approach is learners can not rely just on linguistic knowledge in their studies, they need to focus on fulfilling a set of tasks. Hyland and shaw, 2016 say that The term "skills" applies in different ways to " research skills," including referencing skills and bibliography, or to the "four language skills": reading, writing, listening, and speaking. All are linked to reading and writing as they rely on the desire to understand, as free of meaning and as easy to switch between contexts.

1.1.4. Needs analysis

Jordan, (1997) States that needs analysis is broadly defined as:

The process of determining the needs for which a learner or group of learners requires a language and arranging the needs according to priorities ... [it] makes use of both subjective and objective information (Richards et al. 1992).

Chambers, 1980 (as cited in Basturkman, 2010) indicate that needs analysis have to give a concern to achieving the learner's communicative need, which come from analyzing the communication in the target situation. In other words accommodating the learner's communication according to the target situation. Berwick, 1989 (as cited in Hyland, 2006). State that "needs analysis is sometimes seen as kind of educational

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technology designed to measure goals with precision and accountability. The accuracy of the collected data depends mostly on the selection of relevant data collection techniques in the analysis of need, except if course designers or teachers who perform needs analysis, have a large amount of time they have to be fastidious on what kind of information to gather. A variety of ways to collect data include questionnaires, assessments, interaction observations and language usage analysis for the target situation, performance tests and monitoring of ESP learner doing activities similar to those in the target situation. Basturkman, (2010).

Based on needs analysis many other strategies or methods emerged, such as: target-situation analysis, present-situation analysis, deficiency analysis, strategy analysis, means analysis, language audit and constraints. Those analysis involve necessities, demands, wants, likes, lacks, deficiencies, goals, aims, purposes and objectives (Jordan, 1997).

To understand the needs analysis we need to differentiate between two terms the target needs and learning needs. Hutchinson and Waters, (1987) make a distinction between target needs and learning needs saying that: target analysis is "what the learner need to do in the target situation", and learning needs are "what the learner need to do in order to learn".

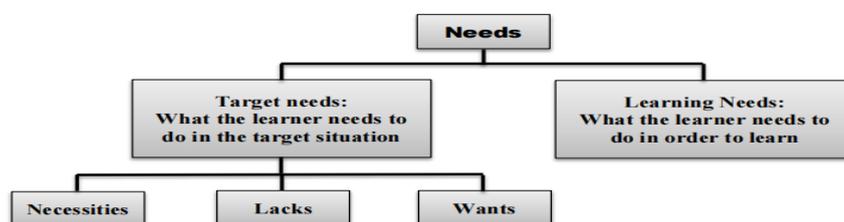


Figure 1. Hutchinson and Water's (1987) classification of Needs analysis

Section 2: Challenges of EAP

EAP's expanding job was not totally easy and free of troubles. Much EAP courses

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kept lacking analytical or study rations and textbooks mostly rely not on empirical research but on the writer's experiences and instincts (Hyland, 2006).

The organization of the teaching and learning environment in an EAP setting presents certain challenges some of which are described in Charles and Pecorari's (2016) book introducing English for Academic purposes. The EAP's policy and its role inside the university are some of these challenges, while others include students, instructor and the language teaching (Guardado and Light, 2020).

The students' different backgrounds might be considered as one of the challenges that face EAP teaching. Basturkmen, (2010) declares that:

In some cases learners are already working or studying, or have already worked or studied in their target workplaces or disciplines, and thus have knowledge of their specific ways of working. In other cases, learners may not have entered their targeted communities and have little understanding of what work or study in these communities involves. (p. 12)

1.2. The knowledge base of EAP

Ding and Bruce, 2017 defined the knowledge base of EAP as The knowledge base of EAP is described here as the theories and research that are used in the syllabus design, course development, material production, and pedagogy implementation in the area of EAP. It is critical to provide an overview of this wide and complex body of information. Also provides a foundation for future discussions of how the area differs from TESOL, as well as for further building of arguments that EAP is a "theory- framed", " research-led" educational discipline, and that its practitioners are interested in something more than "fixing up grammar in the language center" (Hyland & Hamp- Lyons, 2002, p. 6).

The complexity of the general objective leads to a comparable degree of complexity in the framework and research that provides the EAP knowledge base. The JEAP in the

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editorial of its first issue confirmed the complexity and the multifaceted nature of this field, in which the issue stated that EAP:

refers to language research and instruction that focuses on the specific communicative needs and practices of particular groups in academic contexts. It means grounding instruction in an understanding of the *cognitive, social and linguistic demands of specific academic disciplines*.

[emphasis added] (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002, p. 2)

Articles in JEAP, for instance, that seek to educate the EAP knowledge base have relied on the theoretical and methodological traditions of ESP genre theory, corpus linguistics, systemic functional linguistics (SFL), Academic Literacies, and the North American tradition of rhetorical genre studies as established in Writing Across the Curriculum/Writing in the Disciplines (WAC/WID), among others (Ding and Bruce, 2017).

1.3. Theories of EAP

These set of theories contributed to the development of EAP as an independent approach. As it had a significant role in the enhancement of EAP concerning syllabus design, pedagogy and classroom materials.

1.3.1. Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic Language Functional (SFL) is a theory that emphasizes the connection between language, text and meaning. Its spectrum is broad as it aims to clarify how people make sense by language and other semiotic tools and to understand the connection between language and society. As in "Applicable Linguistics" (Halliday, 2007) is organized as a strategic mechanism and action guide, a way for reacting to social, technical and academic settings, language issues. Scholarly Academic learning is among contexts to which it is related.

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Hyland and shaw, (2016) state that the text scope of SFL shows the advantages and limitations on the significance of various EAP teaching/learning technologies and methods. SFL enables the preference of various semiotic structures to be integrated on the basis of image conceptualizations (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996/2005), gesture (Martinec 2004) and other structures. Multimodal study is expanding quickly, mostly in educational settings, (Humphrey, this volume).

Part of SFL studies contribution to the EAP knowledge presented in Halliday's Studies (1990/2002, pp.169–173) about nominalisation and causal relations that allow " the clause to function effectively in constructing knowledge and value." SFL partnership in legitimization code theory (LCT) sociology of education (Maton2014). One of the important findings for tertiary EAP is the need for teachers not just to unpack and objectively repackage the formality and grammatical meaning of textbooks and lectures, we must repack them. That is to say we can not, leave students there as we analogize or clarify technological meanings in daily language. We must direct them back to the use of their specialized knowledge and language of their fields of study (Hayland and shaw, 2016 P. 195-197).

1.3.2. Genre theory

A genre is a particular form of communication event, recognized by users or the discourse culture for a specific communication intent. The description relevance is ensured for the particular situation and participants by focusing specific genres as an object of linguistic study (especially where members of the discourse community are consulted as a part of the analysis). Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001. (Swales, 1981. P.10. as cited in Jordan, 1989) defines genre as " a more or less standardized communicative event with a goal or set of goals mutually understood by the participants in that event and occurring within a functional rather than a social or personal setting."

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According to Ding and Bruce,(2017) the theory of the genre here applies to the various methods used for classification and analysis of text such as the styles of texts to be written by EAP students. Among the other theories Genre theory had a significant importance in influencing EAP knowledge base .The ESP approach to genre had the most impact on EAP and classroom practitioner awareness. ESP genre analysis often focuses on classifying texts from scholarly and technical domains, often restricting their analysis to one or more segments of texts from these genres (such as the Introductions of research articles).

More recently, genre analysis has been further expended. Any scholars are no longer content to use members of the discourse culture as expert informants to validate the primary objective of the study's linguistic interpretation. Discourse members are now the main subject of the analysis, equivalent, or have more importance than the text itself. Flowerdew and peacock, (2001).

1.3.3. Corpus Linguistics

According to Hyland, (2006) a corpus is that in some field it signifies the language experience of a speaker. This enables one to research the characteristics of academic genres in a more precise way so that students can learn to use them more efficiently. This is the optimal approach. Teachers can selectively analyze very large quantities of text by using one or more commercially available, comparatively cheap, text analysis programs(concordance), to complement their intuitions, not to confirms whether anything is probable or not, instead to illustrate if something is recurring or not. Ding and Bruce, 2017 indicate that corpus linguistics is based on analytical techniques involving wide collections of naturally occurring, written texts (Corpora) or transcriptions of spoken discourse, assisted with computer software. The frequency of occurrence of such linguistic objects in a corpus can be revealed using corpus. According to Hamp-Lyons,

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(2001) the use of corpus language approaches in analyzing EAP oral and written discourses is very important, and in the past decade academic language corpora have become a significant instrument of genre analysts. As shown by, for example, the interesting, valuable corpus analysis of swales writing by compared to other texts (2008b) done by Hayland whose works been highly influenced by corpora and his slightly more distanced yet equally trying to engage academic studies as "humble servants of the discipline." (2001). The macrostructures, referencing techniques and usage of modal verbs of Thompson (2001) were barely possible before the introduction of corpus technology. In other words, the introduction of corpus technology facilitated the process of analyzing learners works in order to detect their errors in an attempt to prevent them from reoccurring.

1.3.4. Academic Literacies

Recently Academic literacies become interested in a group of skills not only in relation to writing and reading, which are necessary to achieve a successful academic communication in all levels of education. It is often found out of English language teaching . Maxims and critical linguistics are the main foundation of academic literacies. Despite starting from different context it serves the main purpose as EAP Which is to provide suitable and successful education (Hyland and Hamp-lyons, 2002). Lea and Street (1998) define the framework of their theoretical approach stating that:

[t]his approach sees literacies as social practices.... It views student writing and learning as issues at the level of epistemology and identities rather than skill or socialization. An academic literacies approach views the institutions in which academic practices take place as constituted in, and as sites of, discourse and power. It sees the literacy demands of the curriculum as involving a variety of communicative practices, including

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genres, fields and disciplines. (p. 159)

Furthermore Lea and Street argue what can literacies offer as an approach saying that Academic literacy is a fundamental mechanism by which, students research new topics and develop their own knowledge about new fields of study. The cultural and historical aspect of writing and reading experiences was taken into account in a practice approach to literacy, and this has significant consequences for the comprehension of student learning.

Lillis and Tuck, (2016) say that, although the little attention given to academic literacies theory in academic writing theoretical and pedagogical aspects, still it made a major contribution to different areas interested in academic writing such as EAP.

1.4. Academic writing definition

Academic writing revolves around questions and issues that interest the academic community. It must meet the needs of a specific audience on a clearly defined topic. In planning a text, writers need to consider its purpose, audience and topic (PAT). The writing typically reflects an attitude or a way using language in a particular discipline. McGarrell and Brillinger,(2008). Monippally and Pawar, 2010 indicate that "Academic writing broadly defined is for communicating scientific knowledge. it is generally addressed to scholars and other knowledgeable readers who are familiar with that branch of knowledge. The most rigorous academic writing is found in scientific journals and doctoral dissertations in which scholars share with fellow scholars their research findings, leading to advances in knowledge in different disciplines". (p. 77).

Moreover Thaiss and Zawacki, 2006 define Academic writing as any writing that serves the purpose of education in an academic setting (university or college), and which corresponds to assignment that train students and researchers.

1.4.1. Features of Academic writing

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Academic writing in English is linear, this means that each component is a primary factor contributing to the mainline of the argument, without digressions or repetitions. That is due to its goal which is to apprise instead of entertain. In order to be highly organized and informative academic writing has a number of distinctive features or standards to insure that.

1.4.2. Formality

Professional language is the most important feature that differentiates Academic writing from other types of writing. What distinguishes academic writing from other types of writing is the high level of formality unlike other types that have less formality. In order to achieve formal style in writing students should prevent the use of:

a) Contractions: Gillet, Hammond, and Martala (2009) declare that “contracted words such as ‘don’t’, ‘can’t’, ‘shouldn’t’ are informal and should normally not be used when writing in an academic context (unless they are quotations which cannot be changed)” (p.96).

b) Colloquial language: student should avoid colloquial language (e.g. *kid*, *buddy*, *grab a bite*). Samingullina, (2018). (Faigley, Carey, and Munoz, 2018 as cited in Liardét, Black, and Bardetta, (2019). Explain that avoiding colloquialisms do not mean it can be replaced with “pretentious or wordy” language, and argue that “effective writing conveys information clearly and precisely”(p. 219).

1.4.3. Cautious language (hedging)

Gillet et al (2009) indicate that having a stance on a particular subject is crucial in any kind of academic writing. The writer has to be sure of the strength of claims he is making. He has to be cautious about making sweeping statements that do not accept exceptions, that is why cautious language is a requirement in academic writing. Furthermore, Hayland, 1994 assert that "Academics are crucially concerned with

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varieties of cognition, and cognition is inevitably "hedged." (p. 240). Which means that the writer is not completely committed to the certainty of the information provided. Hedging involves the use of modal verbs for example: *may*, *might* and *could*, adjectival, adverbial and nominal modal expressions (*possible*, *perhaps*, *probability*), modal lexical verbs (*believe*, *assume*).

1.4.4. Citations

One of the features of academic writing is to be well cited in order to give credibility to the work by acknowledging its source. ("Academic Writing handbook" 2013-14) defines a citation as:

A way of properly acknowledging where you make use of the work of others. "Citing" means giving such an acknowledgement within the main body of a piece of work, while "referencing" is a broader term which covers both in-text citations and the more extensive information about your source material which should be presented at the end of your work. As well as allowing any of your readers to consult your references, this also gives authority to your work by demonstrating the breadth of your research (p. 9).

Robillard, 2006 state that citing functions to:

- Help the reader to locate the source of the information discussed
- Present arguments for the writer's claims
- Attract the readers' attention to other little-known scholars
- An evidence of writers sense of debt and ownership, through acknowledgments he makes.
- Demonstrate the writers' respect to authors whose work contributed to his.

1.4.5. Critical writing

Academic writing involves the development of ideas which are supported by

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arguments and examples, in order to achieve that the writer needs to be critical in his writing. According to Teesside University, 2020 critical writing is to question; the writer need to approach the topic as an outsider, asking why would something be done in a certain way, and provide arguments to support his stance rather than just be descriptive.

Furthermore Birmingham University, 2015 say that critical writing is more complex and requires further discussion, analysis, and evaluation which involves:

- employing evidence
- having an open mind and objective vision
- giving an alternative approach
- writing with caution and humility when apposing established positions (e. g. "it could be argued that" ...).

1.4.6. Footnotes and Notes

Jordan, (1980) defines footnotes as " a note at the bottom (or foot) of a page in a book or journal: it is used to explain a word or other item, or to add some special information or a reference. Sometimes footnotes appear at the end of the essay or article, or even at the back of a book. A small number is written above the word or item in the text. The explanation of the item is then given the same number". (p. 103).

Footnotes has the same function as references, the difference is that footnotes are more detailed. Footnotes are found more often in the journals of humanities than in science journals. However we can also find footnotes in the end of a chapter or the end of a book (Hartley, 2008).

1.4.7. Punctuation Marks

In academic writing punctuation is very essential to the well understanding of the reader. A miss placed comma or the absence of it may change the intended meaning and cause a confusion to the reader. (Monippally and Pawar, 2010).

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Monippally and Pawar, 2010 emphasize that there are rules about when to use punctuation, such as capital letters, italics and boldface. If the writer is writing a paper to be published in a journal he should make sure to follow any special instructions it has on how to use punctuation in a journal. (Hinkel, 2004) also points to the rules of using punctuation saying that punctuation norms create a strict standards making academic text with incorrect use of punctuation to be ungrammatical even though it is written in correct English structure. (Murphy, 2010, p. 9-10) suggest that the important punctuation marks are full stop, comma, semi-colon, and colon.

- **The full stop** primarily marks the end of a sentence. A full stop is used after an abbreviation where the final letter of the word is not the final word of the abbreviation e.g. in Enc. Enclosure.

- **The comma** is primarily used to separate parts of a sentence so that the meaning is clearer for the reader.

(I) A comma separates words in a list e.g. He brought coal, kindling, matches and turf.

(II) A comma separates sub-clauses within a complex sentence where two separate sentences are not required

- **The semi-colon** has two common uses. Firstly, it is used to separate items in a list after a colon. Secondly, it is used to indicate a certain relationship between two parts of a sentence.

- **The colon** can be used before a list, as in the example for the semi-colon above. It can also be used before the lines of a quotation.

- **The dash** is used in two contexts, as follows:

First, and commonly, it is used to enclose a word group in a sentence where a list of items is separated by commas. Second, but less commonly, a dash can be used

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to divide element of a sentence where there is a shift in tone or emphasis.

- **Parentheses/brackets** are used to enclose information of minor importance in a sentence.
- **The hyphen** is used within compound words such as on-going, co-ordinator, two-thirds, three-weeks holidays, inner-city streets, student-centered.
- **Italics** are used for titles of books, plays, films etc. and some names such as house names or names of ships etc.
- **Capital letters** are used for names and titles, the first word in a sentence and for acronyms, e.g. NQAI.
- **Numbers** numbers less than one-hundred are generally spelled out, a number as the first word of a sentence is spelled out regardless of its size, hyphens are used when numbers are spelled out e.g. twenty-nine, street numbers are given in figures e.g. 12 Upper Mount Street, a number is used in a date e.g. January 14, time is written in numbers e.g. 12.30p.m., dates such as 1990s have an 's' added with no apostrophe.
- **An apostrophe** the apostrophe is used for two main purposes, namely, to show ownership and to indicate that a letter or letters have been left out.

1.5. Rhetorical Features of Academic Writing

Academic writing requires from the student to construct cohesive texts that insure that the reader understands the flow of ideas in the text. To achieve that the learners needs to rely on rhetorical features, such as cohesion and coherence, which are essential qualities for science writing. In general terms (Carrell, 1982; Chafe, 1994; Scollon & Scollon, 2001) state that cohesion refers to the relation between sentences in a text, or the ways of bonding sentences and paragraphs into a one unit of meaning. On the other hand coherence refers to the logical organization of all elements of discourse. For example an

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essay containing an introduction, a thesis statement, rhetorical support and a conclusion might be considered coherent, but it does not make it always cohesive (as cited in Hinkel, 2004).

1.5.1. Coherence

Hylland, 2006 say that coherence is "The ways a text makes sense to readers through the relevance and accessibility of its configuration of concepts, ideas and theories". (p. 311). Coherence is how the writer connect his ideas together so each idea can lead to another and so forth. In academic writing such as in essays or articles the flow of ideas is smoothly presented, even in sometimes the reader can predict the next idea. (Murray, 2012).

1.5.2. Cohesion

(Hylland, 2006 p. 311) indicates the cohesion is "The grammatical and lexical relationship between the different elements of a text which hold it together". Cohesion means the linguistic devices with the help of which the writer makes the text coherent. The strongest cohesive devices include pronominal references (e.g., she/ he, them, it) and conjunctions (e.g. and, but). (Csölle and Kormos, 2000).

Hinkel, 2004 suggest techniques the student can follow to improve cohesion of their writing :

- Provide known information with new information introduced at the end of the sentence, normally repeated lexical items, or substituted lexical items in the first part of the sentence. The new data from a single sentence is described in the following sentence as old or known detail.
- Students can use enumerative nouns such as (*aspect, characteristic, issue*) to avoid redundancy.
- Students should avoid rhetorical questions and presupposition markers (e.g. *obvious,*

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obviously, of cours) in their academic writing.

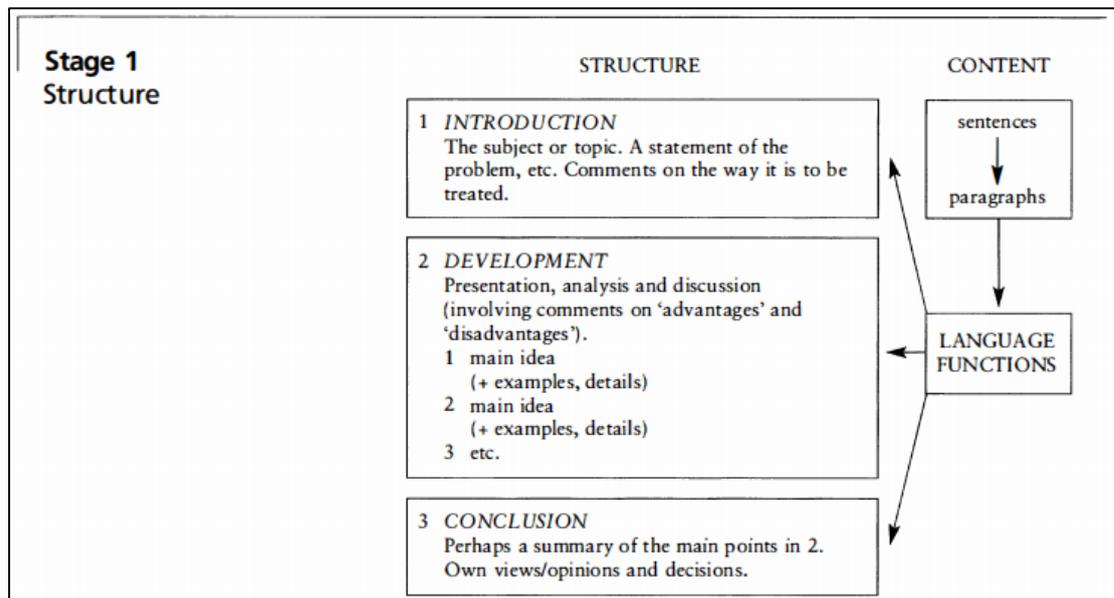


Figure 2. Cohesion in the text.

1.6. Previous studies on academic writing problems

Many studies tried to identify the problems confronting postgraduates when writing research articles in English. Flowerdew, (1999) studied a group of problems facing Chinese scholars in Hong Kong when writing for publication in English. To obtain results in-depth interviews were conducted, the results showed that non-natives (NNSs) suffer from less facility of expression, less rich vocabulary, and the introductions and discussions to academic articles are the main problematic parts. In other words the NNSs are less able to claim the right amount of force for their study due to their poor English writing. In a study involved Arab postgraduates. Abdulkareem, (2013) investigated academic writing problems confronted by Arab postgraduates from different Arab countries including Algeria at University Technology Malaysia (UTM). The findings showed student had difficulties with sentence structure, vocabulary and expressing ideas. AL-Khasawneh (2010) conducted study investigating the academic writing problems of

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Arab postgraduates of the college of business University Utara Malaysia, the data was collected by face to face interviews of postgraduates of the academic year 2008-2009. The findings of the study showed that students encountered difficulties related to vocabulary register, organization of ideas, grammar, spelling, and referencing. Another study among Malaysian postgraduate students enrolled in master and PhD program using interviews revealed that academic writing is the major difficulty they face. The students claimed that they had problems transforming ideas to writing, sentences structure, building arguments, and lack of writing skills along with other non language-related issues (Mohd Isa & Ahmad, 2018). Almost the same problems encounter the postgraduate students previous studies with some differences. The results obtain were acceptable depending on how the researcher approached the problem the tools available for him.

Al Fadda, (2012) conducted a study to identify the difficulties that encounter King Saud University when learning to write academic English. The sample consisted of 50 postgraduate students enrolled in King Saud University during the academic year 2009-2010. The findings showed that English as a second language (ESL) students face many difficulties and stresses in their academic writing, such as difficulty distinguishing between spoken and written English, making an outline before writing a draft, identifying the skills needed for successful writing, and avoiding plague words and phrases.

Lan, (2015) conducted a case study to explore difficulties in academic writing of three Chinese postgraduate students studying in UK academic environment. The study were carried out based on extended academic essay assignment feedback of three British lecturers on a Postgraduate Masters course in Human Resource Management. By using research method of qualitative analysis. The findings were, It contains lack of criticality; lack of voice; unreferenced sources, unsubstantiated statements, plagiarism;

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inappropriate referencing conventions; lack of clear relevance and focus; inappropriate academic style; unclear expression (language concerns) and cohesive and structural weaknesses. And then, it has been concluded that the pedagogical implications of such research are far-reaching. The students themselves require a far greater understanding not only of what is expected of them, but also of how to meet these expectations in practice and trainers need to focus on the development of the schemata.

An Iranian study conducted by R. Khany and R. Abdol-Nejadian, (2010) where a corpus study was established to analyze the rejected articles of Iranian postgraduate students using an evaluation checklist to identify their main challenges. Moreover, a sample consisted of 180 students answered a questionnaire, which includes in-depth characteristics on the basic functions of writing a research paper. The analysis of the rejected articles showed that the most difficulties the writers had the most difficulty in writing the research articles' literature review. The outcome of the questionnaire divulged that writing the Discussion section is the main concern in the process of research writing. Similarities and differences were identified in both results of the questionnaire and the analysis of the corpus. As a result the participants showed a medium level of awareness towards the research articles' structure and maxims.

Furthermore, to determine the challenges faced by non-native English doctoral students in writing and publishing. Huang (2010) studies the learning and writing skills and publishing practices of non-native English-speaking PhD students, the study sample involved eleven PhD / post Doc students, and three professors in scientific disciplines, both students and professors from different institutions, data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Findings revealed that that students are discouraged due to their limited English proficiency, students thought that English plays a secondary role in scientific research, lack of confidence in the writing curricula, the imbalanced power

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relations with their advisers from their perspective. This framework provides an important insight: the unwillingness of non-native English doctoral students to learn to write and publish is affected by many factors rather than perceived language ability.

(Hanauer, Sheridan, and Englander, 2019) investigated the pressure of writing articles in English as a second language compared to L1 science writing of a Taiwanese and Mexican researchers. A sample of 148 Mexican and 236 Taiwanese researchers responded to a survey about academic writing. Findings revealed a notable differences between their writing in L2 and L1, with an increase of an average of 24% of difficulty and 10% of dissatisfaction, and 22% in anxiety. As a result the study found that writing in L2 is a burden that functions as a barrier', in addition to a linguistic injustice to writing science.

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Conclusion

As far as the current chapter is concerned, the background and development of EAP was demonstrated. It also given insights concerning study skills and needs analysis along with challenges of EAP, and the theories contributed to the knowledge of EAP. The next section demonstrated academic writing definition and features, also some previous studies related to academic writing problems faced by postgraduate students.

Chapter Two: Research

Methodology

Chapter Two: Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to demonstrate and explain the research design and the data collection procedures implemented in this study. The methodology chapter starts with an explanation of the research approach adopted in the study. It also describes the research sample and data gathering instruments and procedures. In addition, the chapter involves ethical consideration and limitations of the study. Analyzing the finding will be shown in the third chapter.

2.1. Research design

The objective of this research is to explore the problems encountered by postgraduate students while producing academic articles in English. The study is principally a qualitative research since no numerical data were generated as Dornyei (2007, p. 24) maintains "qualitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended, non-numerical data which is then analyzed primarily by non-statistical method". It is, therefore, opted because it corresponds to the principals of the inductive research and interpretivism research paradigm, and it is ideal for in-depth knowledge on a particular phenomenon and allows for a more accurate interpretation of the collected data. Willis (2007) describes interpretivism as a method used by researchers to synthesize data that are mostly collected from secondary sources and are qualitative in origin. He also adds that one of interpretivism's hallmarks is that these facts are abstract in nature and are regulated by a number of intangible and not easy to measure elements. These might include economic, social, and cultural determinants.

In our case, qualitative research design allows us to collect information from doctoral students about their perception of the problems they face in writing articles in English. A

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questionnaire was used as a data gathering tool, which generated rich and useful data from the doctoral students, that showed their attitudes and opinions towards writing articles in English and helped extracting some inferential data out of their responses to the questions asked to them.

2.2. Participants: population and sampling

The target population of this research is doctoral students of different study disciplines. The sample consists of 22 postgraduates from different departments at Biskra University and other Algerian Universities to create diversity of participants. The doctoral students were selected starting from second year to the last year of their study Because this category of students is required to write articles in English and publish them in peer-reviewed journals as a requirement for the final viva.

2.3.Data gathering tools

This study used a questionnaire addressed to PhD students as the main tool in order to gather information from the respondents.

2.3.1. Questionnaire

Following McLeod (2018) a questionnaire is a common research tool that consists of a series of questions designed to elicit data from respondents. Considering questionnaires to be a kind of written interview, they may be conducted in person, over the phone, through computer, or by mail. Questionnaires are an inexpensive, rapid, and effective method of eliciting significant quantities of data from a wide sample of individuals. The researcher can gather data very rapidly since the surveys do not need to be completed in person. This is advantageous for big populations when in-person interviews are impractical.

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2.3.2. Description of the questionnaire

The aim of the questionnaire addressed to the students is to explore the English academic writing difficulties faced when writing research articles. We designed a questionnaire in order to have their viewpoints concerning those academic challenges.

The questionnaire is divided into two sections, and consisted of fifteen questions of different types: close ended, open ended, multiple choice, and Scale statements.

The first section consists of seven questions designed to get basic information about the respondents as well as their English background. (Q1) is asked to know how many years students have been studying in PhD program. (Q2) is intended to know the field or the discipline of the students. (Q3) aims to know if the students are studying English currently and what type of course they have. (Q4) is suggested to know the students' interest in studying English and the reason of this interest. (Q5) is designed to check the status of English writing skill in the student's departments. (Q6) is to specify which type of writing is generally used by the students. (Q7) is asked to know the student's writing level.

The second section of the questionnaire consists of questions on the factors that make writing difficult for students in general and writing research papers in particular. Besides, questions asked in this section seeks to reveal participants' frequency of receiving feedback on their articles and the sort of feedback they receive from their teachers. In addition, certain statements are given in the form of a grid of agreement. Participants are supposed to indicate their stand (agreement, disagreement, neutrality).

Mostly all the contacts with the sample members was done online through email or Facebook because it was less time consuming, plus the unavailability of doctoral students. After taking their consent, most respondents were sent an online version of the questionnaire,

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while few others were handed the paper version.

2.4. Method of data analysis

This study used thematic analysis due to the small number of respondents and the different answers possibilities, also because of the qualitative nature of this research. The data were analyzed manually, without depending on any software. The results of the questionnaire were demonstrated in the form of tables and charts.

2.5. Ethical considerations

This research took several ethical considerations into account. The participants were informed about the study's objective before giving their consent. In addition, their identities and names were maintained in complete confidence and will be used only for academic purposes, in accordance with the University's code of ethics.

2.6. Problems and Limitations

We experienced a number of challenges and obstacles while conducting the present research to accomplish this dissertation.

The first problem was securing a sufficient number of participants for the study, because of the unavailability of PhD students. Secondly, time restrictions imposed on the research determined the use of the questionnaire instead of other time consuming methods, like interviews or corpus study. The research would have more convenient results if other tools were used, interview or corpus study.

Conclusion

This chapter described and explained the methodology used to conduct the research for this dissertation, as well as its validity. Due to the nature of the study, the researcher used a qualitative design guided by an interpretivist perspective. The questionnaire was the

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primary study instrument. Due to the small size of the sample, the data were manually analyzed. The dissertation's primary findings and results are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Three: Analysis of results

Chapter Three : Analysis of results

Introduction

After the treatment of the questionnaire, this chapter is concerned with the analysis of the data collected from the students. Not only does the questionnaire results provide valuable insight into the students' profiles, but they also reveal students' writing limitations and requirements. Additionally, the participant's responses indicated an increase in language awareness in terms of clear attitudes toward learning English for the purpose of academic research.

3.1. Results of the questionnaire

Section one: background information:

Question 1: How long have you been a PhD student?

Table 1. Student's study duration in the PhD program.

Responses	(N)	percentages
2 years	02	9.1%
3 years	07	31.81%
4 years	04	18.18%
5 years	06	27.27%
6 years	02	9.1%
10 years	01	4.54%

Chapter Three : Analysis of results

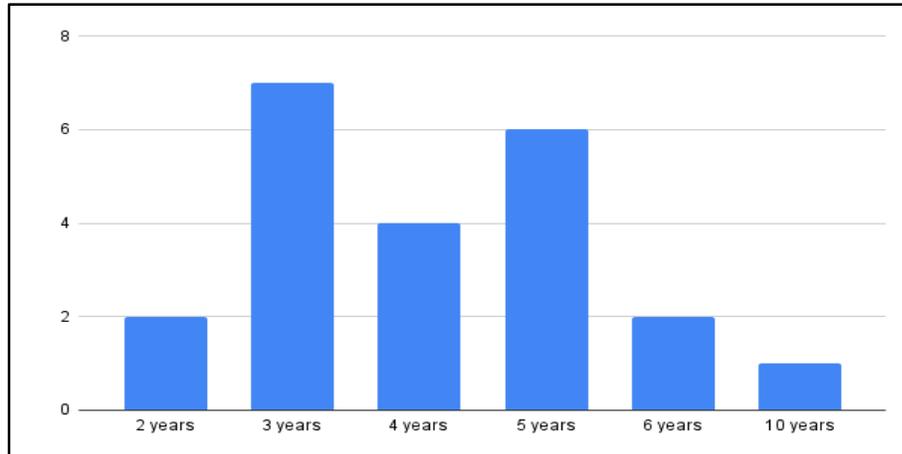


Figure 3. Student's study duration in PhD program

This question demonstrated the period of time students have spent studying for PhD program. As showed in the table 1 above two students declared that they have been studying for 2 years which constitutes 9.1 % of the total number of respondents, seven other students said that they are studying in third year which constitutes 31.81 % of respondents number, four students said that they are studying in the fourth year which constitutes 18.18 % of the respondents number, six students said that they are studying in the fifth year which constitutes 27.27 % of the respondents number, two students said that they are studying in the sixth year which constitutes 9.1 % of the respondents number, one student said that this is his tenth year carrying his PhD study which constitutes 4.54 % of the respondents number.

Question 2: would you please precise your field of study/ research?

We had a variety of answers for this question most of the students were from scientific discipline (20 precisely students). Four students from the field of computer science, and three from civil engineering field, two from pharmaceuticals field. The other students were from different scientific research fields (11 students). Two other students were from Human sciences field.

Chapter Three : Analysis of results

Question 3: do you have a course of English in your PhD program ?

Table 2. the existence of the English course in the PhD program.

responses	(N)	Percentages
yes	14	63.6 %
No	08	36.4%

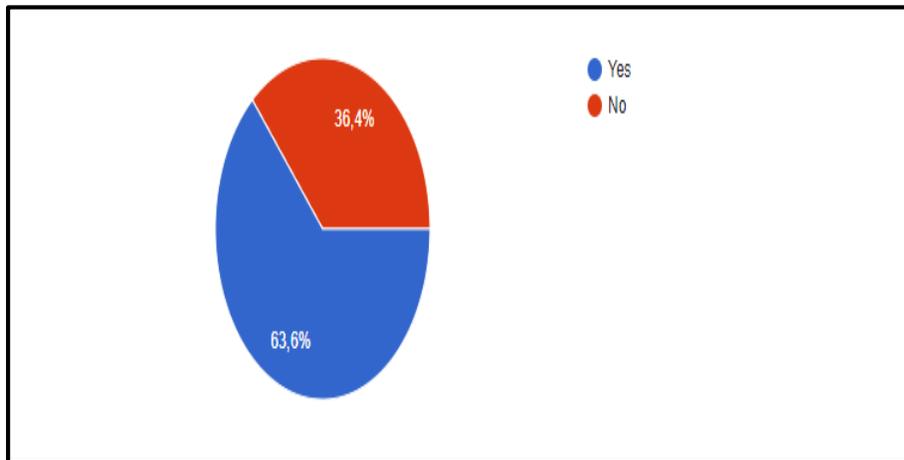


Figure 4: Students having a course of English in their PhD program

This question aims to identify whether the students have or not an English course in their PhD program. The majority of respondents (63.6 %) declared that they have an English course in their program (14 students), whereas 36.4 % of the respondents said that they do not have an English course in their program (08 students).

Chapter Three : Analysis of results

Question 3.1: if yes what is its focus?

Table 3. The focus of the student's English course

responses	(N)	Percentages
Technical English	5	31.25%
General English	5	31.25 %
English for Specific Purposes	2	12.5 %
English for Academic Purposes	4	25 %
Total	16	100 %

This sub-question was designed to obtain more information about what is the focus of the English course studied by PhD students. Five students (31.25 %) of the respondents answers (who have English courses in their program) said that the course focus on general English, other five students (31.25 %) said that the focus of the course is technical English, four students 25 % said that the course focus on English for Academic Purposes, two students 12.5% said that the focus of the course is on English for Specific Purposes.

Chapter Three : Analysis of results

Question 04: How interested are you in the English course? whatever your answer please justify.

Table 4. Student's interest in the English course.

Response	(N)	Percentages
Very interested	14	63.6 %
Fairly interested	05	22.7 %
Uninterested	03	13.6 %

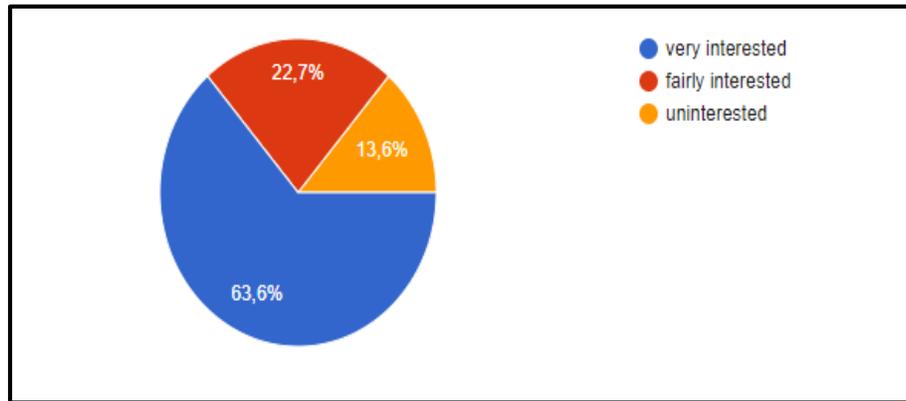


Figure 5. Student's interest in the English module

This question aims to determine the interest of the students in the English course. The table above reveals that the majority of the respondents 63.6 % are very interested in the English course (14 students), 22.7 % of the respondents said that they are fairly interested in the course (05 students), whereas 13.6 % of respondents said that they are uninterested in the course (03 students). This implies that PhD students give a significant importance to the English course in their PhD study. We can summarize student's justification into two parts.

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First the students who are very interested or fairly interested in the English course, most of their answers were:

- English course helps them in writing articles and academic research.
- English is important in the field of science.
- Because most of articles and papers and written in English (sources).

The Second students that are uninterested in the English course, their answers were :

- It takes much time to learn
- Because they did not have the English course at all.

Question 05: Is writing in English a requirement of instruction in your PhD program?

Table 5. Is writing in English a requirement of instruction in the PhD program.

Response	(N)	Percentages
Yes	17	77.3 %
No	05	22.7 %

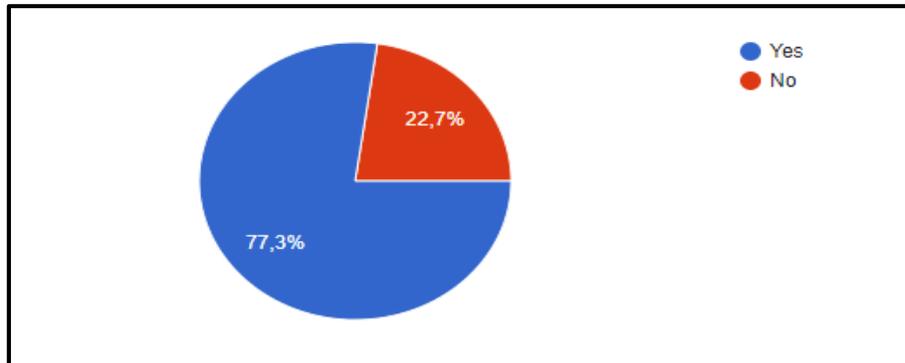


Figure 6. Writing in English as a requirement of instruction in the PhD program.

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As shown in the table above the majority of respondents 77.3 % said "Yes" i.e. writing in English is a requirement of instruction in their PhD Program, against 22.7 % who said "No" writing in English is not a requirement in their PhD program.

Question 5.1: if yes, how often do you write in English?

Table 5.1: The frequency of writing in English of the PhD students.

Responses	(N)	Percentages
Always	02	11.8 %
Often	07	41.2 %
Sometimes	08	47.1 %
Rarely	00	00 %

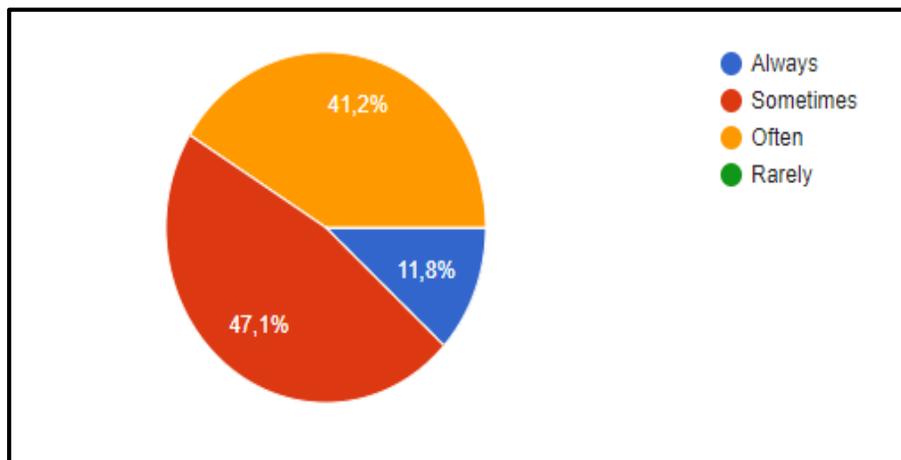


Figure 7. PhD student's frequency of writing in English .

47.1 % of the respondents that said "Yes" revealed that they sometimes write in English, other 41.2 % revealed that they often write in English, 11.8 % revealed that they

Chapter Three : Analysis of results

always write in English.

Question 06: What types of writing do you often write? (you may pick more than one answer).

Table 6: Types of writing for PhD students

Responses	Frequencies	percentages	Percentages of cases
Taking notes/lessons	07	15.2 %	31,8 %
Paragraphs/essays	10	21.7 %	45,5 %
Assignments/reports	02	4.34 %	9,1 %
Tests/examinations	01	2.17 %	4,5 %
Research papers	11	23.9 %	50 %
Articles for publication/seminars	12	26.08 %	54,5 %
All of them	03	6.52 %	13,6 %
Total	46	100	/

The table above shows that 54.5 % of the responses said that they write articles for publication/seminars, 50 % of the respondents who said they write research papers, 45.5 % of the respondents said that they write paragraphs/essays, 31.8 % of the respondents said that they write notes/ lessons, 13.6 % of the respondents said that they write all of them, 9.1 % of the respondents said that they write assignments/reports, 4.5 % of the respondents said

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that they write in texts/examinations. "percentages do not add up to 100% due to multiple choices."

Question 07: how would you rate your English writing level ?

Table 7: student's English writing level

Responses	(N)	Percentages
Elementary	04	18.2 %
Intermediate	17	77.3 %
Advanced	01	4.5 %

The results indicate that the majority of respondents 77.3 % have claimed to have an intermediate level of writing in English, whether 18.2 % said that they have an elementary level of writing in English, just 4.5 % of respondents said that they have advanced level of writing in English.

Section two: Academic writing and writing articles

Question 08: As a PhD student do you have problems with writing in English?

Table 8: Student's having problems with writing in English

Respondents	(N)	Percentages
Yes	18	81.8 %
No	04	18.2 %

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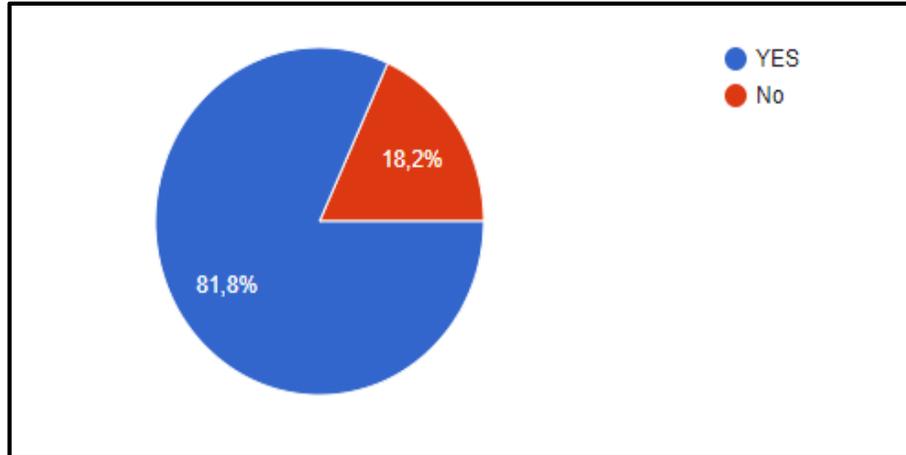


Figure 8. Student's having problems with writing in English

As shown in the table, the majority of respondents 81.8 % said "Yes" they have problems with writing in English, against 18.2 % that said "No" they do not have problems with writing in English.

Question 8.1: If yes, in what aspect you face the most difficulty?

Table 8.1: The types of difficulties faced by PhD students in English writing.

Choices	Frequencies	percentages	Percentages of cases
Grammar	13	30.95%	59 %
Vocabulary	10	23.8 %	45.5 %
Sentence structure	08	19.04 %	36.4 %
Punctuation	03	7.14 %	13.6 %
References	00	00 %	00 %
Organization of ideas	05	11.9 %	22.7 %
All of them	03	7.14 %	13.6 %
Total	42	100	/

Chapter Three : Analysis of results

The results in the table above show that the majority of the responses (59 %) said that 'Grammar' is the most difficult aspect in English writing, (45.5 %) of the respondents said that 'vocabulary' is the most occurring difficulty they faced in English writing (36.4 %) of the respondents said that 'sentence structure' is the most difficult aspect they faced in English writing , (22.7 %) of respondents said that 'organization of ideas' is the most dominant difficulty they faced in English writing, (13.6 %) of respondents said that the most prevailing difficulty they faced is 'punctuation', other (13.6 %) of respondents said that they had difficulty in all of them. That implies that the most students lack grammar when they attempt to write in English.

Question 09: What is the factor (s) limiting student's academic writing level in your opinion?. you can pick more than one factor.

Table 9. Factors limiting student's academic writing level.

Choices	Frequencies	percentages	Percentage of cases
Teacher's competence	6	13.33 %	27.3 %
Insufficient time for the course	8	17.8 %	36.3 %
The content of the syllabus	2	4.44 %	9.1 %
Student's lack of practice	15	33.33 %	68.2 %
The poor previous background	14	31.1 %	63.6 %
All of them	00	00 %	00 %
Total	45	100 %	/

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The table above indicates that the majority of responses with a percentage of 68.2% and 63.6 % respectively emphasize the poor previous background and student's lack of practice as the main factors limiting student's English writing level, 36.3 % of responses said that insufficient time for the course as a factor limiting student's English writing, 27.3 % said that teacher's competence is a factor limiting their English writing, 9.1 of responses said it is the content of the syllabus limiting student's English writing.

Question 10: Have you ever written an article in English?

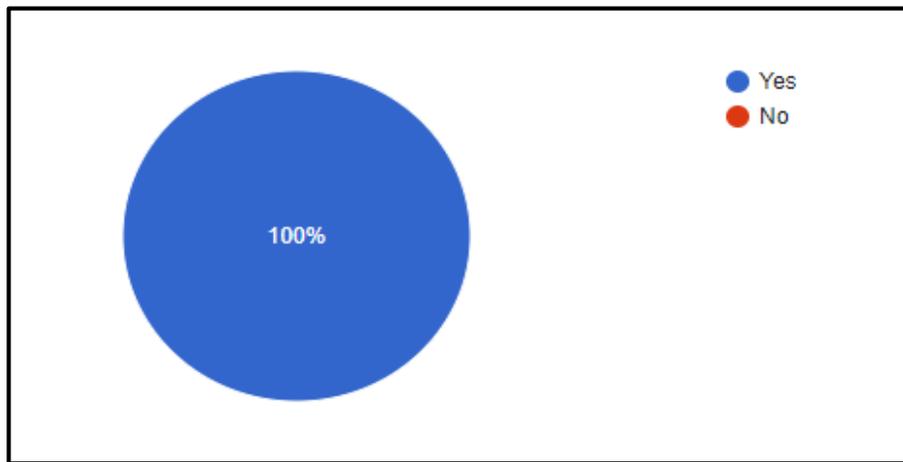


Figure 9. Student's and writing articles

This question was asked to see if the respondents had an experience with writing articles. The sample of 22 PhD students all had written an article with a percentage of 100%. That implies that students are already involved in writing articles starting from second year, despite having just two students of second year in the sample.

Question 11: How was your experience with writing articles in English?

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Table 10. Student's experience with writing articles in English

Choices	(N)	Percentages
Very difficult	01	4.5 %
Difficult	16	72.7 %
Easy	05	22.7 %
Very easy	00	00 %

The results in the table show that the majority of students, (72.7 %) of them said that their experience with writing articles in English was difficult, against (22.7 %) of respondents who said that they had an easy experience with writing articles in English, (4.5 %) of respondents said it was very difficult to write articles in English. That implies that writing articles in English is a difficult task for PhD students.

Question 11.1: Which part of the article you find most difficult?

Table 11: The most difficult parts of article for students

Choices	(N)	Percentages
The abstract	00	00%
The literature review	09	40.9 %
The method	02	9.1 %

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Analysis of results	02	9.1 %
Discussion	06	27.3 %
The content of the research article	03	13.6 %
Others	00	00 %

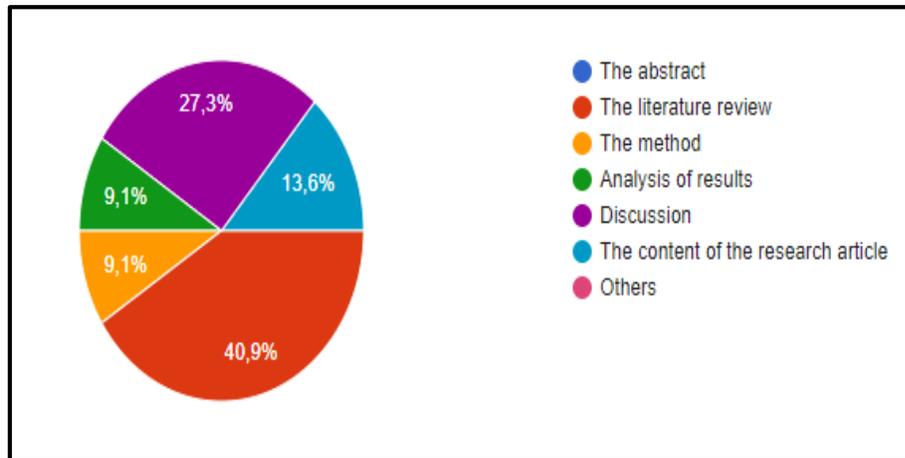


Figure 10. The most difficult parts of article for students

The results in the table above show that the majority of respondents with percentage of 40.9 % said that they find the most difficulty in writing the literature review, 27.3 % said that they face the most difficulty in discussion part, 13.6 % said that they face the most difficulty with the content of the research article, 9.1 % said that they face the most difficulty with the method of the research, other 9.1 % of respondents said that they face the most difficulty with analysis of results.

Question 12: Have you ever submitted for publication an article in English?

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Table 12: Students submission of articles in English.

Choices	(N)	Percentages
Yes	18	81.8 %
No	04	18.2 %

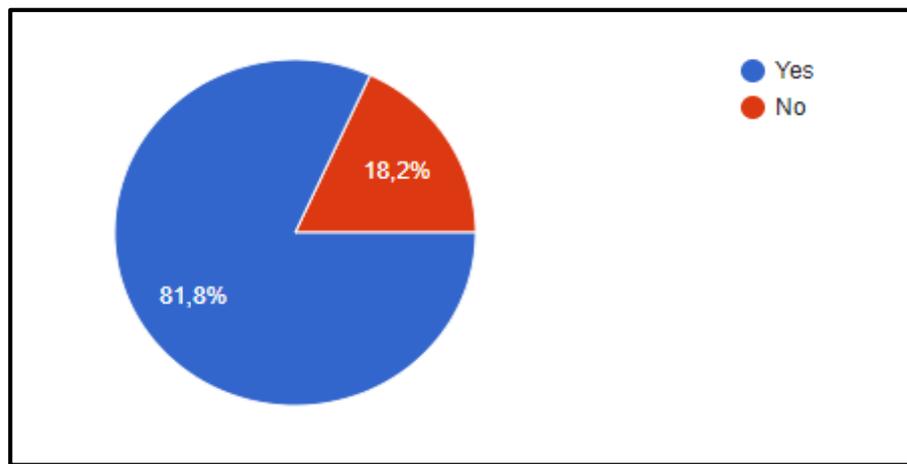


Figure 11. Students' submission of articles in English

As shown in the table above 18 respondents with percentage of 81.8 % said they have submitted an article for publication, while 4 respondents with percentage of 18.2 % said that they did not submit any article for publication.

Question 12.1: If yes, did you receive comments on your writing?

Table 12.1: students receiving comments on their writing.

Choices	(N)	Percentages
Yes	10	55.6 %
No	08	44.4 %

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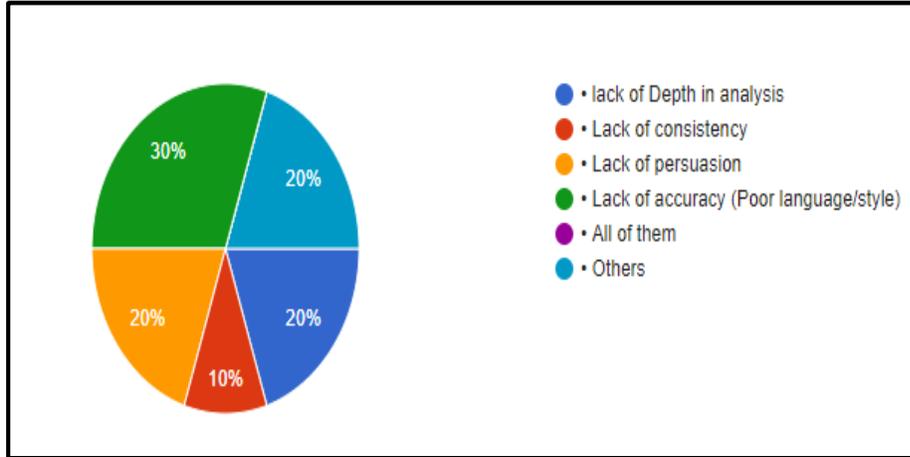


Figure 12. Students receiving comments on their writing.

The table above shows that the majority of respondents (N= 18) received comments on their writing with a percentage of 55.6 %, while 44.4 % of the respondents said that they did receive comments on their writing.

Question 13: Are the comments you received on your article related to? (for those who submitted their articles).

Table 13: The received comments on student's articles.

Choices	(N)	percentages
lack of Depth in analysis	02	20 %
Lack of consistency	01	10 %
Lack of persuasion	02	20 %
Lack of accuracy (Poor language/style)	03	30 %
All of them	00	00 %
Others	02	20 %

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Figure 13. The received comments on students' articles.

The responses to this question show that 30 % of the respondents received comments about lack of accuracy, the same percentages of 20 % recorded for received comments about lack of depth in analysis, lack of persuasion and others option, 10 % of respondents said they received comments about lack of consistency.

Question 14: Your article to be accepted for publication needs: (rank from 1-6)

Table 14. The rank of publication requirements.

Responses	Rank 1	Rank2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6
good choice of vocabulary	1	2	6	1	3	9
Academic style	6	4	1	4	5	2
Coherence	2	6	3	4	7	0
Cohesion	1	3	6	5	2	5
corresponding Paper form to the journal instructions	8	3	1	6	4	0
appealing and authentic content	4	4	5	2	1	6

Responses	Total	Rank
Good choice of vocabulary	58	6
Academic style	84	2
Coherence	80	3
Cohesion	69	5

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corresponding Paper form to the journal instructions	93	1
appealing and authentic content	78	4

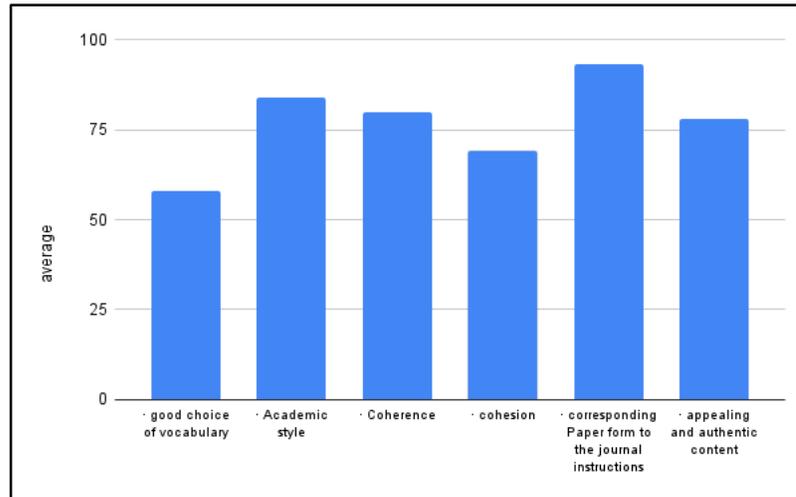


Figure 14. The rank of publication requirements.

From the results in the table above the first important feature that the respondents think they need to focus on to publish their articles is corresponding paper form to the journal instructions, while the second important feature to the respondents is academic style, the third important feature is coherence, the fourth important feature is appealing to authentic content, the fifth important feature is cohesion, the least important feature to the respondents was the good choice of vocabulary. That implies that PhD students give importance to the form over the content of their articles.

Question 15: Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the statements below.

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Table 15. Student's agreement about the suggested statements.

Recommendations	Agree	Disagree	Agree %	Disagree %
PhD students must have a certified level in English as a requirement to pursue a PhD program.	10	12	45.5 %	54.5 %
Academic writing workshops must be integrated as a part of your PhD program.	21	1	95.5 %	4.5 %
PhD students must have a preparatory year to learn English	16	6	72.7 %	27.3 %
Article published in English to be a Viva requirement	19	3	86.4 %	6.6 %
Medium of instruction shifts from French/Arabic to English .	18	4	81.8 %	18.2 %
Integrating research in English module at your department starting form graduate levels	21	1	95.5 %	4.5 %

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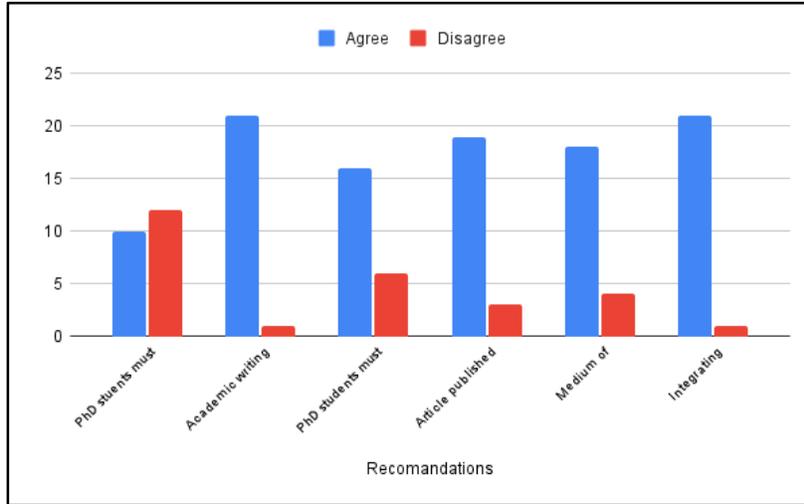


Figure 15. Student's agreement about the suggested statements.

As shown in the table above 45.5 % agreed against 54.5 % of respondents who disagreed with the recommendation that PhD students must have a certified level in English as a requirement to pursue a PhD program. Concerning the recommendation of Academic writing workshops must be integrated as a part of your PhD program 95.5 % agreed against 4.5 % of respondents who disagreed. About the recommendation of PhD students must have a preparatory year to learn English 72.7 % agreed against 27.3 % who disagreed. Relating to the recommendation of Article published in English to be a Viva requirement 86.4 % agreed against 6.6 % who disagreed. Regarding the recommendation of shifting the Medium of instruction from French/Arabic to English 81.8 % agreed against 18.2 % who disagreed. As to Integrating research in English module at your student's departments starting form graduate levels 95.5 % agreed against 4.5 % who disagreed.

Chapter Three : Analysis of results

Conclusion:

The results of the questionnaire were convenient to the study. It produced helpful information about the PhD student's profiles. It also displayed the student's difficulties concerning English academic writing in general, specifically writing articles, in addition to displaying students opinions about some recommendations to enhance their English learning experience, and achieve their academic goals.

Chapter Four: Interpretation and Discussion of results

Chapter Four : Results Discussion

Introduction

The results of the analysis of the questionnaire are discussed in this chapter, the discussion involves the researcher interpretation of the questionnaire responses, namely the ones related to the challenges faced by students, and their perceptions to those challenges, in addition to their views to the suggestions made by the researcher.

Despite their considerably advanced academic level, non- native Postgraduate students still find it challenging to write English academic research articles, compared to the quality of articles published by natives. That may be due to many reasons, some of them were tackled in chapter three, like student's lack of practice and their poor previous background. The results of the study have to some extent answered the research questions asked in the beginning of this research.

The findings of the study indicate that doctorate students face considerable difficulties in writing academic research articles in English. The findings might be categorized into a category related to difficulties with English academic writing and another category related to student's challenges with writing articles in English. As far as their difficulties with academic writing are concerned, the results were mainly related to their previous background with writing academically and their attitude towards academic writing and the aspects of academic writing they lack, in addition to the factors limiting their academic writing level. As to the difficulties with writing articles in English, the main findings are linked to the experience of Doctorate students with writing articles and the parts of the articles which are the most challenging for them. Also, the research findings are attached to the factors which they give the most importance when writing and submitting research articles.

Chapter Four : Results Discussion

4.1. Summary of the findings

The first research question seeks to determine the academic writing difficulties faced by non-EFL postgraduates in writing articles. The results from the questionnaire reveals that 63. % of the students said that they are very interested in the English course as it is shown in table 4. As a general finding, it may be explained with the raised awareness for Doctorate students towards this particular course, due to its significance for them according to their justifications to the question 4.

Secondly, in relation to the attitude of doctorate students towards academic writing, It was found that 47.1 % of the students said that they sometimes write in English, which may be due to the fact that the focus of the English course is not writing, as 33. 1% of them said that they are just studying general English as shown in table 3, which does not support their academic objectives, whereas 54.5 % of students said that most of their writing is for articles for publication/ seminars as shown in table 6. In other words, the focus of the course affected negatively the writing performance of the students.

Moreover, the majority of (81.8 %) of respondents said to have problems with writing in English. Although most of them claimed to have intermediate level in writing in English. This might be explained by saying that scientific/academic writing is different and more difficult than every day writing, students might need a lot of practice and develop a number of skills to master it. The study discovered that the majority of Doctorate students said to have the most difficulties in grammar (59 %), and vocabulary (45.5 %) then sentence structure, organization of ideas, punctuation- This might be due to students' belief that writing in English is just associated with knowing the vocabulary and applying the grammar rules, and this also might be due to the influence of the course focus on general English.

Chapter Four : Results Discussion

The factors limiting their English writing level said by the majority of students is student's lack of practice and the poor previous language background. In other words, this result is the outcome of the lack of the frequent practice of writing in English, and the lack of exposure to English in the previous phases of the Doctorate students' learning, which might be related to the dominance of French and/or Arabic as mediums of instruction.

As to the second question, which seeks to identify how poor writing performance affects non-EFL postgraduates article writing. In line with the difficulties of English academic writing among Doctorate students the results showed that the majority of them (72.7%) had a difficult experience with writing articles in English. One of the possible interpretation to that is lack of English academic writing, which is more than necessary in the stage of writing research articles. From all the parts of the article, literature review is more likely to be the most difficult part to write for doctorate students, then the discussion part, that could be due to the amount of analytical writing in those two parts which require a high level of academic English which they do not have.

55% of the doctorate students who successfully submitted their articles received comments on their articles in which 30 % of those comments were about lack of accuracy (poor language/ style), while others comments split 20 % for each of the following reasons: lack of depth in analysis and lack of persuasion. The obtained results point out that most of comments were language related, and about poor writing performance not because of the students' lack of knowledge about their specialty. From the results, it appeared that Doctorate students focus on the corresponding paper form to the journal instructions more than other features like academic style, coherence, cohesion and appealing and authentic content as it is shown in table **14**. Corresponding to the form of the paper to the journal is the minimum requirement, which might be explained that students are doing the minimum effort by trying

Chapter Four : Results Discussion

to fit their articles to the conditions of the journal thinking that corresponding to the form of the journal will maximize their chance of the publication of their articles. This factor might be the reason why most of the submitted articles are rejected, considering that form does not mean the article is worthy of publication.

In the end of the questionnaire, the students were asked to show their agreement with some statements that present some suggestions that may help improve their level of academic writing. The majority of students saw that those options may improve their condition towards learning academic writing as they agreed with most of the suggestions, except for the statement that suggests that doctorate students must have a certified level in English as a requirement to pursue a doctorate program. This might carry different interpretations as that doctorate students think that it is difficult to be certified regarding their current level of English, or afraid that the process of getting certified may be time consuming. Although that most of them agreed on having a preparatory year in English, which leads us to a conclusion that the first reason is the correct one, and time is not the factor preventing them from being certified but it is the difficulties they face in academic English writing.

4.2. Comparing findings with previous studies

The set hypotheses for this study was that the type of writing difficulties may be related to both form and content. In a study done by Abdulkareem, (2013), it was found that postgraduates had difficulties with sentence structure, vocabulary and expressing ideas. In another study done by AL-Khasawneh (2010) on the academic writing problems of Arab postgraduates of the college of Business University Utara Malaysia it was found that students encountered difficulties related to vocabulary register organization of ideas, grammar, spelling, and referencing. In yet another study, it showed that postgraduate students that

Chapter Four : Results Discussion

they had problems transforming ideas to writing, sentences structure, building arguments, and lack of writing skills (Mohd Isa & Ahmad, 2018). The early mentioned studies appeared to confirm the hypothesis.

The results from this study seem consistent with previous study done on similar subjects (Doctorate students). In a recent study done by Lan (2015) it was found that postgraduate students lack of criticality; lack of voice; unreferenced sources, unsubstantiated statements, plagiarism; inappropriate referencing conventions; lack of clear relevance and focus; inappropriate academic style; unclear expression (language concerns) and cohesive and structural weaknesses.

In another study by Flowerdew (1999) it was found that that non- natives (NNSs) suffer from less facility of expression, less rich vocabulary, and the introductions and discussions to academic articles are the main problematic parts. Yet in another study conducted by Khany and Abdol-Nejadian, (2010), it was found that the writers had the most difficulty in writing the research articles' literature review, writing the discussion section, which constitute the main problems in the process of research writing. In line with the previously mentioned studies, the current study found that literature review and discussion are the most difficult parts for postgraduates when writing research articles.

4.3. Limitations of the study

This study was limited by time what hindered us from doing deeper research. This study saw a limited access to interviewing students; it was impossible to do interviews with doctorate students because of their unavailability and the time the process would take. The study did not get enough questionnaire responses, and some respondents gave unclear responses because it was addressed to non-EFL students.

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4.5. Calling for further research work

Undoubtedly, using a single data gathering tool in the present study, that is the questionnaire alone may not be too representative of the students' problems with academic writing. Further studies should conduct interviews with the students and their English teachers to deeply understand their challenges concerning writing articles. Interviewing journal editors and reviewers would give insights into the real causes behind articles' rejection, especially the causes related to language and style of writing. Researchers also should collect a number of articles written by the students that may be rejected and conduct a corpus analysis on them, to reveal the real mistakes of students.

4.6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations could be outlined for both students and teachers alike.

4.6.1. Recommendations to students

- In an endeavor to overcoming the challenges they face when writing their research articles, postgraduates are recommended to practice formal writing through exposure to authentic materials in order to acquire a correct language structures and accurate style.
- Non-EFL students who do not have English course in their program are recommended to attend online courses, or in the language teaching centers.
- Postgraduates are highly recommended to devote time to reading to enrich their lexical knowledge and improve their word choice.

4.6.2. Recommendations to Teachers

- Teachers are recommended to integrate Academic writing workshops as a part of Doctorate programs; this will give students experience in writing academic papers.

Chapter Four : Results Discussion

- Teachers are recommended to put publishing an article in English as a Viva requirement. That will help give attention to the importance of writing articles in English in Doctorate level.
- Teachers are recommended to integrate research in English course starting from graduate levels. This is to prevent the student from struggling with the language in his Doctorate study, and make him familiar with the academic writing standards.

Conclusion

This research aims to explore the English academic writing difficulties when writing and publishing research articles. A questionnaire was administered to collect data from Doctorate students. The interpreted results of the questionnaire revealed that Doctorate students have difficulties with English academic writing particularly with grammar, vocabulary and sentences structure. The students' poor writing performance has affected their articles' writing. Results showed that they had challenges writing the literature review and the discussion sections as they see them as the most difficult sections. The students declared that these difficulties are due to student's lack of practice and the poor previous language background.

General Conclusion

Writing academically is one of the hardest skills to master even for students in advanced levels. Moreover, writing research articles in English is challenging for non- EFL postgraduates and even for natives. So, the challenge for postgraduates is to be productive in science research which is already complex using a foreign language (English).

The present study highlighted the academic writing problems encountered by non-EFL postgraduates, when writing articles. Therefore, this study tried to answer two research questions; (1) what are the academic writing difficulties and their categories faced by non-EFL postgraduates in writing articles? and (2) how does poor writing performance affect non-EFL postgraduates articles' writing and publishing? In an attempt to answer these questions, this study opted for a questionnaire addressed to Doctorate students, in order to identify the main weaknesses, concerning English academic writing for research articles.

The current study is entitled "English writing for academic purposes: Exploring postgraduate students' difficulties in writing academic research articles ". It consists of four chapters. The first chapter presented the literature review and the relation between variables, it provided information about English for Academic Purposes (EAP), its background and development, along with some theories related to study skills. In addition to the notion of academic writing, its definition, its features and previous studies about academic writing problems. The second chapter was devoted to methodology. It discussed the research approach, the data collection tools and procedures. Furthermore, the third chapter dealt with the qualitative analysis of results retrieved from the questionnaire. The fourth chapter dealt with the discussion and the interpretation of the findings.

Seeking to answer the research questions, the findings of the study indicated that non-EFL postgraduates' main problems with English academic writing are related to grammar, vocabulary and structure of sentences. This lack in academic writing led to struggles with writing and consequently publishing research articles. The findings also revealed that discussion and literature review were the most prominent parts of the article to trouble postgraduates. The Doctorate students claim that these difficulties are caused by student's lack of practice and the poor previous linguistic background.

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Appendices

Questionnaire for PhD students

This questionnaire is part of a study conducted to explore the difficulties facing PhD Students in academic writing, namely writing articles. You are kindly asked to answer the questions below by ticking the appropriate box or writing a full answer if required.

All the information you provide will be kept confidential and will be used only for academic purposes.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation to answer this questionnaire.

Section 1: students background

Email:

1. How long have you been a PhD student?years

2. Would you please precise your field of study/research?

.....
3. Do you have a course of English in your PhD study program?

Yes No

If yes, what is its focus

- Technical English
- General English
- English for specific purposes (English related to your discipline)
- English for academic purposes (English related to study skills)

4. How interested you are in the course of English?

Very interested fairly interested uninterested

Whatever your answer, please justify.

.....
5. Is writing in English a requirement of instruction in your PhD program?

Yes No

If yes, how often do you write in English?

Always Often sometimes Rarely

6. What types of writing do you often write? (you may pick more than one answer).

- Taking notes/lessons
- Paragraphs/essays
- Assignments/reports
- Tests/examinations
- Research papers
- Articles for publication/seminars
- All of them

7. How would rate your English writing' level?

Elementary intermediate advanced

Section 2: academic writing and writing articles

8. As a PhD student do you have problems with writing in English?

Yes No

If yes, in what aspect you face the most difficulty?

- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Sentence structure
- Punctuation
- Referencing
- Organization of ideas
- All of them
- Others

9. What is the factor (s) limiting student's academic writing level in your opinion? you can pick more than one factor.

- Teacher's competence
- Insufficient time for the course
- The content of the syllabus
- Student's lack of practice
- The poor previous background
- All of them

10. Have you ever written an article in English ?

Yes No

11. How was your experience with writing articles in English ?

Very difficult Difficult easy very easy

In which part of the article you find the most difficulty?

- The abstract
- The literature review
- The method
- Analysis of results
- Discussion
- The content of the research article
- Others

12. Have you ever submitted for publication an article in English?

Yes No

If yes, did you receive comments on your writing?

Yes No

13. Are the comments you received on your article related to? (for those who submitted their articles)

- lack of Depth in analysis
- Lack of consistency
- Lack of persuasion
- Lack of accuracy (Poor language/style)
- All of them
- Others

14. Your article to be accepted for publication needs: (rank from 1-6)

- good choice of vocabulary
- Academic style
- Coherence
- cohesion
- corresponding Paper form to the journal instructions
- appealing and authentic content

15. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the statements below.

Recommendations	Agree	Disagree
PhD students must have a certified level in English as a requirement to pursue a PhD program.		
Academic writing workshops must be integrated as A part of your PhD program.		
PhD students must have a preparatory year to learn English		
Article published in English to be a Viva requirement		
Medium of instruction shifts from French/Arabic to English		
Integrating research in English module at your departement starting form graduate levels		

الملخص

تتطلب معايير التعليم العالي في الوقت الحاضر من المتعلمين اكتساب مستوى معين من المهارات الانكليزية، وخاصة الكتابة. اصبحت كتابة المقالات البحثية شرطا أساسيا لطلبة ما بعد التخرج. ومع ذلك، فإن يجدون هذه المهمة صعبة جدا وعائق في طريقهم للحصول على شهادتهم، عن علم أن الكتابة والنشر تتطلب أن الطلاب لديهم مهارات متقدمة في الكتابة الأكاديمية. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف مشاكل الكتابة الأكاديمية الإنكليزية لمرحلة ما بعد التخرج عند كتابة المقالات البحثية. وقد جمعت البيانات باستخدام استبيان موجه إلى 22 طالبا من طلبة الدكتوراه، واستخدمت طريقة نوعية لتحليل البيانات. وتظهر النتائج أن المشاكل الرئيسية التي يواجهها المجيبون في الكتابة الأكاديمية الإنكليزية تتعلق بالقواعد والمفردات وتراكيب الجمل. نتيجة لذلك واجهوا صعوبات في كتابة المقالات خصوصا فيما يتعلق بفروع مراجعة المؤلفات والمناقشة.