RESEARCH PROJECT IN TESOL/TEFL

For Mater's Degree Students (Curriculum & Instruction of TESOL/TEFL)

Compiled By

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PREFACE

Research is the cornerstone of academic inquiry, shaping the trajectory of educational progress and influencing teaching methodologies. This textbook, Research Project in TESOL/TEFL, has been specifically designed for master's degree students majoring in Curriculum and Instruction of TESOL/TEFL. It aims to provide a clear, comprehensive, and practical guide for conducting educational research within the field of English language instruction.

The need for this textbook arose from the growing demand for well-structured research training for TESOL/TEFL graduate students. As educators, we are tasked with not only disseminating knowledge but also with generating new insights and evidence-based practices that enhance the teaching and learning experience. This textbook is crafted to walk students through the multifaceted process of designing, conducting, and presenting research in TESOL/TEFL. By demystifying the complexities of research methodology and offering practical examples, it seeks to empower students to embark on their research journey with confidence and clarity.

This book is structured to provide both theoretical knowledge and hands-on applications. It begins by introducing the foundational principles of research in Chapter One, ensuring that students understand the importance and relevance of research in improving language teaching practices and informing educational policy. From there, the textbook delves into the identification of research problems, guiding students to formulate clear research questions and objectives in Chapter Two.

A significant portion of the textbook is dedicated to equipping students with the tools they need to navigate the vast landscape of existing literature. Chapter Three provides a robust framework for conducting a literature review, helping students to synthesize existing research and position their work within the broader academic discourse.

In Chapter Four, the focus shifts to research design and methodology, where students are introduced to various research approaches, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Detailed discussions on selecting the appropriate research design, data collection tools, and analytical methods are provided to support students in making informed decisions as they progress through their projects.

Chapters Five and Six emphasize the importance of presenting research findings in a coherent, rigorous, and engaging manner. Practical guidance is provided on how to write up results, critically analyse data, and draw meaningful conclusions that contribute to the field of TESOL/TEFL.

Throughout the textbook, students are encouraged to reflect on their roles as both consumers and producers of research. They are prompted to critically engage with existing knowledge while also contributing their own insights through action research and innovative practices.

In conclusion, Research Project in TESOL/TEFL is not just a textbook but a roadmap for aspiring researchers. It equips them with the necessary skills to conduct high-quality research, grounded in both theory and practice, and aims to foster a culture of inquiry, reflection, and continuous improvement in the field of English language education. As educators and researchers, it is our hope that this book will serve as an invaluable resource for master's students as they embark on their academic journey, guiding them to make meaningful contributions to the ever-evolving landscape of TESOL/TEFL research.

Dr Mahmoud M. S. Abdallah (10 September 2024)

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to Research in English Language Teaching/Learning

Welcome to the exciting world of research in TESOL/TEFL! This chapter introduces the importance of research in the field and provides you with a foundational understanding of key concepts and terminologies that will guide you throughout this course.

1.1 Why Research Matters in TESOL/TEFL

In the field of TESOL/TEFL, we constantly strive to improve our teaching practices to facilitate effective language learning for our students. Research is a critical tool that allows us to achieve this goal. ***But what exactly is research?***

- In its simplest form, research is a systematic investigation designed to discover new knowledge or to confirm or refute existing knowledge.
- It is a cyclical process of asking questions, collecting and analysing data, and drawing conclusions based on the evidence gathered.

Research in TESOL/TEFL is particularly important for several reasons:

1-***Understanding Language Learning***: Through research, we gain valuable insights into the complexities of second language acquisition (SLA). Research helps us to answer questions about how people learn languages, what factors influence their success, and what challenges they face. This knowledge is crucial for developing effective teaching methodologies and creating supportive learning environments that cater to diverse learners' needs.

2-***Improving Teaching Practices***: Research provides evidence-based practices that can significantly enhance the quality of our teaching. By studying different teaching methods, materials, and assessment techniques, we can identify what works best for whom, and under what circumstances. This leads to more

effective teaching strategies and improved learning outcomes for our students.

3-*Informing Educational Policies*: Research plays a vital role in shaping language education policies at various levels. Large-scale studies can provide policymakers with the evidence they need to make informed decisions about curriculum design, language assessment, teacher training, and resource allocation.

1.2 Navigating Different Research Approaches

There are various research approaches used in TESOL/TEFL, each with its strengths and limitations. Understanding the different approaches will help you select the most appropriate methods for your research questions.

1-Qualitative Research

Qualitative research aims to explore the richness and complexity of human experiences and perspectives. Instead of focusing on numerical data, qualitative research gathers data through in-depth interviews, observations, and analysis of texts and documents. It helps us understand the 'why' and 'how' behind certain phenomena rather than just the 'what'.

Qualitative research is particularly valuable in TESOL/TEFL for:

- Exploring learners' and teachers' lived experiences, beliefs, and attitudes towards language learning and teaching.
- Investigating classroom dynamics, interaction patterns, and the influence of social and cultural factors on language learning.
- Analysing language use in authentic settings to gain a deeper understanding of communication strategies and challenges.

Examples of Qualitative Research Methods in TESOL/TEFL:

Ethnography: Originating in anthropology, ethnography involves immersing oneself in a particular cultural group or setting to understand their practices,

beliefs, and values related to language and communication. Ethnographic studies often involve extended observations, interviews with key informants, and the collection of artifacts (e.g., student work, and classroom materials).

Case Studies: Case studies provide a detailed, in-depth analysis of a single individual, group, or situation. For example, a case study might focus on the language development of a single learner over time or the implementation of a new teaching methodology in a specific classroom.

Discourse Analysis: Discourse analysis focuses on how language is used in real-world contexts to create meaning. Researchers examine spoken or written language (e.g., classroom interactions, textbooks, online forums) to identify patterns, structures, and underlying social or cultural norms.

2-Quantitative Research

Quantitative research, in contrast to qualitative research, involves collecting and analysing numerical data to identify patterns, relationships, and trends. It is useful for testing hypotheses, making predictions, and generalising findings to larger populations.

Examples of Quantitative Research Methods in TESOL/TEFL:

Experimental Research: Experimental research aims to establish cause-and-effect relationships by manipulating one or more variables while controlling for others. For example, a researcher might investigate the effectiveness of a new vocabulary teaching method by comparing the performance of two groups of learners – one group receiving the new method and the other a traditional method.

Quasi-experimental Research: Quasi-experimental research is similar to experimental research but involves less control over variables, often due to real-world constraints. For instance, a researcher might study the impact of a new language learning software programme on students' proficiency scores,

but they may not be able to randomly assign students to different groups due to existing class schedules or school policies.

Survey Research: Survey research uses questionnaires or structured interviews to gather data from a large sample of individuals. Researchers analyse this data to understand trends, opinions, and attitudes. In TESOL/TEFL, surveys are commonly used to investigate learners' motivations, learning strategies, or perceptions of their language learning experiences.

3-Mixed Methods Research

As research questions become more complex, there's a growing trend towards using mixed methods, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This allows for a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

For example, a researcher studying the impact of a new teacher training programme on classroom practices might collect both quantitative data (e.g., pre- and post-programme observations of teaching behaviours) and qualitative data (e.g., interviews with teachers about their experiences and perceived changes).

4. Action Research

Action research is a highly practical approach in which teachers become researchers in their own classrooms. It involves identifying a specific problem or area for improvement, developing and implementing an intervention strategy, collecting data to monitor the effects, and reflecting on the findings to refine their practices.

Action research is cyclical and iterative, meaning that the findings from one cycle inform the next, leading to ongoing professional development and improvement.

1.3 Research Terminology: Speaking the Language of Research

As you embark on your journey into research, it is essential to familiarise yourself with some key terminologies:

Variables: A variable is anything that can vary or change within a study. **Independent variables** are those that the researcher manipulates or changes to observe their effect. **Dependent variables** are the outcomes or effects that are measured.

 For example, in a study investigating the impact of using authentic materials on students' speaking fluency, the independent variable would be the type of materials (authentic vs. textbook-based), while the dependent variable would be speaking fluency.

Hypotheses: In quantitative research, hypotheses are testable statements that predict a relationship between variables. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference or relationship between variables, while the alternative hypothesis proposes that a difference or relationship does exist.

Researchers use statistical analyses to determine whether there is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis and support the alternative hypothesis.

Data: Data refers to the information that researchers collect during their study. Qualitative data are non-numerical and are often in the form of text, audio, or video recordings. Quantitative data, on the other hand, consists of numbers that can be statistically analysed.

Reliability and Validity:

Reliability refers to the consistency of research findings. A reliable research instrument or method will yield similar results if the study were to be repeated under similar conditions.

Validity pertains to the accuracy of the findings. A valid research instrument measures what it is intended to measure. For example, a valid speaking test

will accurately assess a learner's speaking ability, rather than their reading or writing skills.

Generalisability: Generalisability refers to the extent to which research findings can be applied beyond the specific context or participants of the study. It is important to consider factors like sample size, participant characteristics, and the research setting when evaluating the generalisability of research findings.

1.4 The Research Process: A Journey of Inquiry

The research process is not a linear path but rather an iterative and cyclical one, involving several interconnected stages.

1. Identifying a Research Problem: The first step is to identify a problem or area of interest that you want to investigate. This could stem from your own teaching experiences, gaps in the existing literature, or current issues within the field of TESOL/TEFL.

2. Reviewing Existing Literature: Before you begin your own research, it is crucial to conduct a thorough review of existing literature on your chosen topic. This involves searching for, critically evaluating, and synthesising relevant research articles, books, and other scholarly sources. This step helps you to understand what is already known, identify gaps and inconsistencies, and refine your research questions.

3. Formulating Research Questions: Once you have a good understanding of the existing research, you need to formulate clear, focused, and researchable questions that will guide your study. These questions should be specific enough to be answerable within the scope of your research.

4. Choosing a Research Design: The research design refers to the overall plan or structure of your study. It outlines how you will collect, analyse, and interpret your data. The choice of design depends on the nature of your research questions, the type of data you need to collect, and the resources available to you.

5. **Collecting Data**: Data collection is the process of gathering information to answer your research questions. The methods you choose will depend on your research design and the type of data you need. Common data collection methods in TESOL/TEFL research include observations, interviews, questionnaires, tests, and document analysis.

6. **Analysing Data**: Once you have collected your data, you need to analyse it to identify patterns, trends, and relationships. The methods used for data analysis vary depending on whether you are working with qualitative or quantitative data.

Qualitative data analysis often involves coding and categorising data to identify themes, patterns, and emerging insights.

Quantitative data analysis uses statistical techniques to summarise and interpret numerical data.

7. **Interpreting Findings**: Data analysis provides you with results, but research goes beyond simply presenting numbers or descriptions. Interpretation involves making sense of those findings in relation to your research questions, the existing literature, and the broader context of your study. This is where you draw connections, discuss implications, and offer explanations for what you have found.

8. **Writing the Research Report**: The final stage of the research process involves communicating your findings in a clear, concise, and engaging manner. Research reports typically follow a structured format, including an introduction, literature review, methodology section, results section, discussion, and conclusion.

1.5 Embracing Research as a TESOL/TEFL Professional

Research is not just for academics working in universities; it is an essential tool for all TESOL/TEFL professionals who are committed to ongoing learning,

reflection, and improvement. By understanding the principles of research, you can:

1. Become a more informed consumer of research: You will be able to critically evaluate research articles, identify potential biases, and determine the relevance of findings to your own teaching context.
2. Engage in action research in your classroom: You can apply research methods to address specific challenges or explore areas for improvement in your own teaching.
3. Contribute to the growing body of knowledge in TESOL/TEFL: As you gain experience and confidence, you might even consider presenting your research findings at conferences or publishing in academic journals.

As you progress through this course, we encourage you to embrace research not just as a requirement for a degree, but as an integral part of your professional identity as a TESOL/TEFL educator. By approaching research with curiosity, critical thinking, and a commitment to improving language teaching and learning, you will make a valuable contribution to the field.

1.6 Selecting a Research Topic in TESOL/TEFL: A Guide for Educational Researchers

The selection of an appropriate research topic is a critical step in the research process for educational researchers in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) or Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). This decision shapes the entire trajectory of the research project and can significantly impact its ultimate value and contribution to the field. This guide outlines key considerations and criteria for selecting a research topic in TESOL/TEFL.

Criteria for Topic Selection

1. Relevance to the Field

The chosen topic should address current issues, trends, or gaps in TESOL/TEFL research. It should contribute to the existing body of knowledge and have potential implications for teaching practices, curriculum development, or language policy.

2. Originality

While building upon existing research is important, the topic should offer a novel perspective, approach, or application. This could involve:

- Exploring an under-researched area
- Applying new methodologies to existing problems
- Investigating emerging technologies or pedagogical approaches in language teaching

3. Feasibility

Consider the practical aspects of conducting the research:

- Access to necessary resources and participants
- Time constraints
- Ethical considerations
- Methodological viability

4. Personal Interest and Expertise

The researcher's genuine interest in the topic and relevant background knowledge can sustain motivation throughout the research process and enhance the quality of the work.

5. Potential Impact

Evaluate the potential significance of the research outcomes:

- Practical applications for language teachers
- Influence on educational policies

- Contribution to theoretical frameworks in second language acquisition

6. Alignment with Current Educational Contexts

The topic should reflect contemporary educational landscapes, considering factors such as:

- Technological advancements in language learning
- Changing demographics of language learners
- Evolving global communication needs

7. Interdisciplinary Potential

Consider topics that intersect with other fields (e.g., psychology, sociology, technology) to broaden the scope and applicability of the research.

Process of Topic Selection

1. Literature Review: Conduct a comprehensive review of current literature to identify gaps and trends in TESOL/TEFL research.
2. Consultation: Engage with advisors, colleagues, and practitioners in the field to refine ideas and gain diverse perspectives.
3. Reflection on Personal Experience: Draw upon personal teaching experiences or observed challenges in language education settings.
4. Consideration of Funding Opportunities: Align the research topic with potential funding sources or institutional priorities, if applicable.
5. Pilot Study: Consider conducting a small-scale pilot study to test the viability and interest of the proposed topic.

Conclusion

Selecting an appropriate research topic in TESOL/TEFL requires careful consideration of multiple factors. By evaluating potential topics against the criteria outlined above and following a structured selection process, researchers can identify topics that are not only academically rigorous but also practically relevant and impactful in the field of language education.

1.7 Writing a Research Project in Education (TESOL/TEFL)

A **research project** in education, particularly in TESOL/TEFL, is a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge about language teaching and learning. It typically involves:

- Identifying a specific problem or question in the field of language education
- Collecting and analysing data using appropriate research methodologies
- Interpreting findings to draw conclusions and make recommendations.

Research projects and theses, while both are forms of academic inquiry, they differ significantly in their scope, depth, and purpose within the realm of TESOL/TEFL studies. A research **project** typically represents a more focused and time-bound investigation, often addressing a specific problem or question in language education, and is commonly undertaken at the undergraduate or master's level. In contrast, a **thesis**, particularly at the doctoral level, embodies a far more comprehensive and original contribution to the field, demanding years of intensive study and supervision. The distinctions extend beyond mere length; a thesis requires a substantial original contribution to knowledge, often challenging or extending existing theoretical frameworks, whereas a research project may apply established theories to new contexts or explore practical issues in TESOL/TEFL. Furthermore, the rigorous methodology and extensive literature review characteristic of a thesis far surpasses the requirements of most research projects. This difference in depth is reflected in the expected outcomes: while a research project aims to provide valuable insights or solve specific problems in language teaching, a thesis is expected to significantly advance the theoretical or methodological landscape of TESOL/TEFL. Ultimately, the choice between a research project and a thesis depends on the academic level, career goals, and the nature of the contribution one aims to make to the field of English language teaching and learning.

Planning a research project in TESOL/TEFL is a critical process that demands meticulous attention to detail and a strategic approach to ensure the study's success and relevance. The journey begins with the crucial task of identifying a pertinent research topic, which necessitates a thorough examination of current trends and gaps in language education research, coupled with a reflection on personal interests and experiences. This initial step should not be rushed, as it lays the foundation for the entire project.

Once a topic is selected, conducting a preliminary literature review becomes imperative, as it not only familiarizes the researcher with existing knowledge but also helps in refining the research questions and hypotheses. These questions must be carefully formulated to be clear, focused, and answerable within the project's scope and timeline. The development of a comprehensive research proposal follows, outlining the problem statement, methodology, and timeline, which serves as a roadmap for the entire project. Ethical considerations cannot be overlooked, requiring researchers to obtain necessary permissions and ensure participant confidentiality.

Creating a realistic timeline and identifying required resources are equally vital steps, as they prevent delays and resource shortages that could derail the project. The data collection and analysis phases require careful planning, including the design of appropriate instruments and the selection of analysis methods. Establishing a writing schedule and planning for the dissemination of findings are often underestimated aspects of project planning, yet they are crucial for ensuring timely completion and maximizing the impact of the research. By approaching each of these planning steps with diligence and foresight, TESOL/TEFL researchers can significantly enhance the quality and impact of their studies, contributing meaningfully to the field of language education.

1.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, Chapter One has laid a solid foundation for understanding the pivotal role of research in TESOL/TEFL. We began by exploring the importance of research in enhancing teaching practices, informing educational policies, and deepening our understanding of language learning processes. The chapter then navigated through various research approaches, including qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, and action research, each offering unique insights and methodologies suited to different research questions.

We also delved into essential research terminologies, ensuring that readers are well-equipped to engage with the language of research. The chapter emphasised the cyclical and iterative nature of the research process, highlighting key stages from identifying a research problem to interpreting findings and writing the research report.

By embracing research as an integral part of their professional identity, TESOL/TEFL educators can become more informed consumers and producers of knowledge, ultimately contributing to the continuous improvement of language education. As we move forward, this foundational understanding will serve as a roadmap, guiding readers through the complexities and rewarding journey of educational research.

CHAPTER TWO

Identifying Research Problem and Formulating Questions & Objectives

In any educational research, the process of identifying a research problem and formulating clear research questions and objectives is crucial to setting the foundation for a rigorous and meaningful inquiry. The ability to pinpoint a relevant, researchable problem reflects a deep understanding of the field, as well as an awareness of the current gaps in knowledge that require exploration. This chapter aims to guide master's students through the systematic process of identifying a research problem that is both significant and manageable within the scope of their academic pursuit. Furthermore, it delves into the art of crafting research questions and objectives that are aligned with the identified problem, ensuring that the research is focused, coherent, and capable of contributing valuable insights to the educational community. Through practical examples and theoretical frameworks, this chapter provides students with the tools needed to navigate the complexities of early-stage research design and set a solid trajectory for their studies.

Therefore, this chapter focuses on two crucial early stages of the research process: identifying a research problem and formulating clear research questions and objectives. These stages are crucial for setting the direction of your inquiry and providing a framework for subsequent decisions regarding methodology and data analysis. In the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) or Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), the ability to identify significant research problems and formulate clear research questions and objectives is crucial for conducting meaningful and impactful studies. This guide aims to provide educational researchers with a structured approach to this critical phase of the research process.

2.1 Identifying a Research Problem

A research problem is a gap in current knowledge or understanding that your study aims to address. It is not merely a lack of information but a situation where existing knowledge is insufficient or inconclusive to address a particular issue. Identifying a research problem requires careful consideration of your interests, a thorough review of existing literature, and an awareness of practical and theoretical considerations.

1-Start with Your Interests: Begin by considering your academic interests and any specific areas within your field that you find particularly intriguing or problematic. This could be a topic you've encountered in your coursework, an issue you've observed in your professional practice, or a question that has emerged from your personal reflections.

2-Explore Existing Literature: Once you have a broad area of interest, immerse yourself in the relevant literature. Read widely and critically, paying attention to the key findings, debates, and theoretical frameworks that have shaped the current understanding of your chosen topic. As you engage with the literature, consider these guiding questions:

- What are the key issues and debates surrounding this topic?
- What are the dominant theories and perspectives used to understand this issue?
- What research methods have been employed, and what are their strengths and limitations?
- What are the most significant findings and conclusions, and are there any inconsistencies or contradictions?

3-Identify Gaps and Inconsistencies: The process of reviewing existing literature should reveal areas where knowledge is lacking, where existing research is inconclusive or contradictory, or where new perspectives are needed. These gaps and inconsistencies form the basis of your research problem.

4-Assess Feasibility and Significance: Not all research problems are equally feasible or significant. Consider the practicalities of your research project. Do you have the necessary resources, time, and access to data to conduct this research effectively? Additionally, consider the potential significance of your research. Will addressing this problem contribute meaningfully to the field, and does it align with your research interests and goals?

Practical tips and applications:

Identifying and formulating a research problem in education, particularly in TESOL/TEFL, requires careful consideration and a structured approach. Here are some practical tips to guide you through the process:

1. Start with Broad Reading

   - Tip: Read widely in your area of interest to identify existing gaps in knowledge. In TESOL/TEFL, this could include topics such as language acquisition, teaching methodologies, assessment practices, or curriculum development.

   - Application: Explore recent journal articles, books, and conference papers. Focus on sections discussing limitations or future research directions to find potential research problems.

2. Narrow Down to a Specific Context

   - Tip: Once you have a general area, narrow your focus to a specific context that interests you. This might be a particular age group (e.g., secondary school students), a language skill (e.g., speaking or listening), or a pedagogical approach (e.g., task-based learning).

   - Application: For example, in TESOL, you might focus on how authentic materials impact listening comprehension among high school students in non-English-speaking countries.

3. Identify Gaps or Challenges in Practice

- Tip: Speak with practitioners, educators, and stakeholders to understand real-world challenges. Practical problems often reveal gaps between theoretical understanding and classroom realities.

- Application: You may find that many TESOL teachers struggle to implement technology in low-resource settings, suggesting a gap in understanding how to integrate digital tools effectively in such environments.

4. Review Past Research

- Tip: Analyse previous studies to identify unresolved issues or limitations. Many research problems are found in the "limitations" or "future directions" sections of academic papers.

- Application: If past studies on the flipped classroom model in TESOL have focused primarily on higher education, consider exploring its impact in secondary education or in under-researched geographical areas.

5. Ensure Practical and Theoretical Relevance

- Tip: Your research problem should not only address a practical issue but also contribute to the theoretical knowledge base of the field. Make sure it advances both theory and practice.

- Application: A problem like "How can dynamic assessment foster autonomy in EFL learners?" touches both practical classroom issues and theoretical debates on learner autonomy and assessment.

6. Use the "So What?" Test

- Tip: After identifying a potential research problem, ask yourself: "So what?" Ensure the problem is significant enough to warrant investigation. It should have implications for improving practice or informing policy.

- Application: Investigating the effect of storytelling in TESOL is interesting, but asking "So what?" might reveal that the problem could lead to better strategies for enhancing cultural literacy in language learners.

7. Align with Your Resources and Capabilities

   - Tip: Ensure that the research problem is manageable within your resources (time, access to data, participants, etc.) and your methodological expertise.

   - Application: If you have limited access to large groups of learners, focus on a case study or small-scale research problem, such as the influence of peer feedback on oral proficiency in a specific group of students.

8. Frame the Problem as a Question

   - Tip: Once you've identified a research problem, formulate it into a question that reflects the focus of your study. The question should be clear, concise, and researchable.

   - Application: Instead of "EFL learners struggle with pronunciation," frame it as, "How does the use of phonetic software impact pronunciation accuracy in EFL learners?"

9. Seek Feedback Early

   - Tip: Share your initial research problem ideas with peers, supervisors, or colleagues to get constructive feedback. Early input can help refine your problem and ensure it is feasible and relevant.

   - Application: Discussing your proposed research on how TESOL student teachers develop cultural competence with peers might reveal alternative angles or more refined questions you hadn't considered.

By following these practical steps, you will be able to identify a meaningful and researchable problem that can contribute to both theoretical understanding and educational practice in TESOL/TEFL.

2.2 Writing Research Questions & Objectives

Once you have identified a clear research problem, you need to articulate specific **research questions** and **objectives** that will guide your investigation.

Research questions are the central questions that your study seeks to answer. They should be:

1. *Clear and Concise*: Formulated in a way that is easily understandable and avoids ambiguity.

2. *Focused and Specific*: Addressing a particular aspect of your research problem rather than being overly broad.

3. *Researchable*: Framed in a way that allows for data collection and analysis to provide answers.

4. *Interconnected*: Relating to each other in a logical and coherent manner, forming the core of your research project.

5. *Original*: Offering a new perspective or building upon existing knowledge in a meaningful way.

For example, if your research problem is the lack of understanding regarding how English language learners perceive the effectiveness of online learning platforms, your research questions might include:

- How do English language learners perceive the effectiveness of online learning platforms for language acquisition?
- What factors influence English language learners' perceptions of online learning platforms?
- To what extent do these perceptions align with actual learning outcomes in online environments?

Types of Research Questions

Descriptive: What are the characteristics of...? Example: "What are the features of effective online English language teaching for adult learners?"

Comparative: What are the differences between...? Example: "How do task-based and content-based instruction methods differ in their impact on English language proficiency among secondary school students?"

Relationship-based: What is the relationship between...? Example: "What is the relationship between L1 literacy skills and L2 writing proficiency in adult ESL learners?"

Causal: What effect does X have on Y? Example: "What effect does the use of authentic materials have on the development of intercultural communicative competence in EFL learners?"

Evaluative: How effective is...? Example: "How effective are mobile language learning applications in improving vocabulary acquisition among beginner-level English learners

Research objectives outline the specific goals that you aim to achieve through your research. They should be:

1. *Action-Oriented*: Using verbs that indicate specific actions, such as "explore," "investigate," "analyse", "compare," or "evaluate."
2. *Measurable*: Defined in a way that allows for the assessment of whether the objectives have been achieved.
3. *Attainable*: Realistic and achievable within the constraints of your research project.
4. *Relevant*: Directly addressing the research problem and contributing to the overall goals of the study.
5. *Time-Bound*: Specifying a timeframe within which the objectives are expected to be met.

Using the previous example, your research objectives might be:

- To explore the perceptions of English language learners regarding the effectiveness of online learning platforms.
- To identify the key factors that shape English language learners' perceptions of online learning platforms.
- To compare the perceptions of effectiveness with actual learning outcomes in online language learning environments.

2.3 Aligning Research Problem, Questions, and Objectives

The research problem, questions, and objectives are interconnected and should form a coherent whole. The research problem provides the overarching context for the study, the research questions articulate the specific inquiries, and the research objectives outline the steps that will be taken to address those inquiries. This alignment ensures that your research project is focused, purposeful, and contributes meaningfully to the field of study.

Thus, identifying research problems and formulating clear research questions and objectives are foundational steps in conducting meaningful research in TESOL/TEFL. By following a systematic approach to problem identification and adhering to the principles of effective question and objective formulation, researchers can ensure that their studies are well-directed, significant, and contribute valuable insights to the field of language education.

CHAPTER THREE

Theoretical Background & Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

A comprehensive and well-executed literature review is not merely a descriptive summary of previous works, but rather a critical examination that establishes the context, significance, and originality of your research. It requires a deep engagement with existing scholarship to demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the field and to effectively position your own research within this landscape. A strong theoretical background and a well-executed literature review are interconnected components of a robust research foundation. They are not separate entities, but rather, should be interwoven to create a coherent and persuasive narrative. This chapter provides a detailed roadmap for constructing a robust theoretical foundation and literature review, crucial for any high-quality research, particularly in education and TESOL/TESOL MA studies.

3.2 Importance of Theoretical Background & Literature Review

A literature review is not simply a perfunctory task or a descriptive summary of prior works, but rather a strategic and analytical process that establishes the foundation and justifies the need for the research being undertaken. A comprehensive literature review not only demonstrates a researcher's command of the field but also illuminates the path for their own investigation.

A primary function of the literature review is to situate your research within the existing body of knowledge. This involves identifying the key concepts, theories, and methods that are relevant to your research topic and demonstrating an understanding of how these elements have been explored in previous studies. By analysing and synthesizing this prior work, researchers can articulate the current state of knowledge, identify areas of agreement or disagreement, and pinpoint gaps, inconsistencies, or limitations that their own research seeks to

address. This process of positioning your research within the existing literature is essential for establishing the context and significance of your study, as well as for demonstrating its originality and potential contribution to the field.

Beyond demonstrating a command of the field, the literature review has a vital role in shaping the direction of your research. By critically evaluating previous studies, researchers can identify areas where further investigation is needed, refine their research questions, and develop testable hypotheses. The literature review helps to illuminate the methodological landscape of your research area by showcasing the strengths and weaknesses of different research designs and analytical approaches. For instance, a review might reveal that a particular research method, while widely used, has inherent limitations that your study seeks to overcome by employing a more robust or innovative approach. This careful analysis of prior research methods provides a strong justification for the methodological choices made in your own study.

A high-quality literature review is not merely descriptive but critically engaging. Researchers must go beyond summarizing findings to critically evaluate the quality and relevance of prior studies. This involves carefully considering the theoretical frameworks employed, scrutinizing the methodologies used, and assessing the validity and reliability of the findings. Identifying potential biases, limitations, or conflicting results in previous studies can help researchers strengthen their own research design and ensure the robustness of their findings. For example, a literature review might reveal that previous studies on a particular topic have relied on small, homogeneous samples, potentially limiting the generalizability of their findings. Recognizing this limitation, researchers can design their own study to include a larger, more diverse sample, thus enhancing the validity and generalizability of their results.

A well-structured literature review guides the reader through the landscape of existing knowledge, leading to a clear articulation of the research gap or problem that the study aims to address. The sources offer helpful strategies for organizing the literature review, including a thematic approach, where studies

are grouped around key concepts, theories, or research questions. This thematic organization enables researchers to draw meaningful connections between studies, highlight areas of consensus or debate, and provide a coherent narrative that leads to the rationale for their own research.

3.3 Goals & Purposes

A literature review serves multiple vital purposes. First and foremost, it showcases your familiarity with the existing research on your chosen topic, demonstrating that you are well-versed in the key concepts, theories, methods, and findings relevant to your study. This is not achieved through a mere listing of sources but through a synthesis of knowledge, where you identify connections, contradictions, and potential gaps in the existing literature.

Second, a literature review establishes the context and significance of your research. By analyzing previous studies, you can identify the key questions that have been addressed, the methodologies employed, and the conclusions drawn. This allows you to position your own research within this broader conversation, highlighting how your study builds upon, extends, or challenges existing knowledge.

Third, a literature review plays a crucial role in shaping your research question and justifying your methodological choices. By identifying gaps in the literature, highlighting areas of debate or controversy, and analysing the strengths and weaknesses of previous research designs, you can articulate the need for your specific study and provide a rationale for your chosen approach.

3.4 Writing a Theoretical Background

Define Your Territory: Clearly articulate the theoretical framework underpinning your research. This involves identifying the key concepts, theories, and models directly relevant to your study. This framework serves as the compass guiding your research questions, methodology, and data analysis.

Illustrative Example: If your research explores the impact of teacher feedback on EFL learners' writing, your theoretical framework might encompass Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, focusing on the zone of proximal development, and Hattie's Visible Learning principles, emphasizing the importance of effective feedback strategies.

3.5 How to Write a Literature Review

1-**Synthesizing Existing Knowledge**: A literature review critically analyses and synthesizes existing research on your topic, demonstrating a nuanced understanding of the field.

2-**Structure and Rigour**: Ensure your literature review is well-structured, logically progressing from broad overviews to specific studies directly relevant to your research. Adopt a critical lens, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of different studies, comparing and contrasting varying perspectives, and pinpointing any gaps or controversies in the literature. This not only showcases your grasp of the subject but also highlights the significance and originality of your research.

3-**Prioritize Primary Sources**: While secondary sources provide context, prioritize the analysis of landmark primary studies, recent publications, and influential papers within your field.

4-**Stay Abreast of Current Research**: Utilize keywords related to your research area to search databases like Google Scholar for the latest publications, ensuring your literature review reflects the most up-to-date knowledge.

Practical Strategies for a Compelling Literature Review

1-**Thematic Organization**: Organize your literature review thematically, clustering studies around key themes or concepts directly related to your research question. This enhances clarity and allows for a more focused analysis.

For example, if your research examines the use of technology in promoting EFL learners' speaking skills, potential themes could include: Technology and Second Language Acquisition, Computer-Mediated Communication and Oral Fluency Development, and Teacher and Learner Perceptions of Technology-Enhanced Speaking Activities.

2-**Critical Evaluation**: Avoid merely summarizing sources. Instead, delve into their strengths and weaknesses, juxtapose different viewpoints, and identify any research gaps or limitations.

For instance, when discussing the effectiveness of a particular language learning app, critically evaluate its pedagogical underpinnings, research evidence, and potential limitations in terms of learner diversity and context.

3-**Synthesis and Connection**: Draw meaningful connections between different studies, highlighting the interplay between various theories and concepts. Clearly articulate how the reviewed literature leads to and substantiates your research questions.

For example, you might connect the increasing prevalence of mobile-assisted language learning to the growing body of research on its effectiveness in fostering vocabulary acquisition, ultimately leading to your research question on the impact of a specific app on EFL learners' lexical development.

4-**Identify Research Gaps**: Analyse the literature to pinpoint gaps, limitations, or unanswered questions that your research aims to address. This underscores the need and originality of your study.

Aligning Theory and Practice

1-**Connecting the Dots**: Establish a transparent link between your theoretical framework and the chosen research methodology. Explain how the methodology will allow you to effectively investigate your research questions through the lens of your theoretical framework.

For instance, if your theoretical framework emphasizes the social and collaborative nature of language learning, and your research explores the effectiveness of pair and group work in EFL classrooms, explain how your chosen methodology, perhaps classroom observation or interviews, will allow you to gather data on student interaction patterns, language production, and learning outcomes.

Writing Style: Clarity and Coherence

1-**Clarity is King**: Present your theoretical background and literature review in a clear, concise, and well-organized manner. Utilize appropriate headings and subheadings to guide the reader, and maintain a logical flow of ideas.

2-**Consider using the "inverted triangle" approach**, starting with broader concepts and progressively narrowing your focus to specific studies and findings, ultimately culminating in a clear articulation of your research questions or hypotheses.

3-**Effective Signposting**: Guide your reader through your chapter using clear signposting. Phrases like "This chapter will explore...", "The literature suggests...", "However, other studies contend...", and "The following section will analyse..." enhance the flow and coherence of your writing.

4-**Referencing**: Maintaining Academic Integrity

5-**Accuracy is Paramount**: Consistently and meticulously reference all sources using a recognized style guide, such as APA, ensuring academic integrity and providing appropriate credit to the authors.

By following these guidelines, you can construct a robust and insightful literature review chapter, setting the stage for a compelling and impactful research project. Remember, your theoretical background and literature review are not merely boxes to be ticked but rather essential components that ground your research in existing knowledge and pave the way for original contributions to your field.

CHAPTER FOUR

Research Methodology & Design

4.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the crucial aspects of research methodology and design, guiding TESOL/TEFL researchers in making informed decisions to execute rigorous and impactful studies. Chapter 3 of an educational academic thesis is where you describe the research methodology and procedures you used to conduct your study. The purpose of this chapter is to explain how you designed and implemented your research, what data collection and analysis methods you employed, and how you ensured the validity and reliability of your results.

4.2 Selecting the Right Methodology & Research Design

Research **methodology** refers to the theoretical **framework** and philosophical assumptions that underpin your study, influencing how you approach the research problem, the types of questions you ask, and the methods you use to collect and analyse data. It encompasses the overall plan and structure of your research, outlining the steps involved in addressing your research questions or hypotheses.

The **choice of methodology** is paramount, as it determines the nature and scope of your research and the type of knowledge you aim to generate. Common methodologies in TESOL/TEFL research include:

Quantitative Research: This approach emphasizes objective measurements and statistical analysis of numerical data to test hypotheses and establish generalizable patterns. Experiments, surveys, and statistical analysis of large-scale datasets are common methods employed in quantitative research.

Example: A researcher might conduct an experiment to investigate the effectiveness of a new vocabulary teaching method compared to a traditional method, measuring vocabulary growth in both groups using

standardized tests and statistically analysing the results to determine if the new method leads to significant improvements.

Qualitative Research: This approach explores complex social phenomena through in-depth data collection and analysis of textual or visual data, focusing on understanding experiences, perspectives, and meanings. Common methods include interviews, focus groups, observations, case studies, and analysis of documents or discourse.

Example: A researcher might conduct interviews with English language learners to explore their experiences and challenges in developing writing skills, analysing the interview transcripts to identify recurring themes and patterns related to their learning processes, strategies, and perceptions.

Mixed Methods Research: This approach combines both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. For instance, a study might use a survey to collect quantitative data on language learning strategies used by a large sample of students, followed by qualitative interviews with a smaller group of students to explore their experiences with these strategies in more depth.

Key Considerations When Selecting a Methodology

Research Questions: The nature of your research questions should guide your choice of methodology. If your questions explore the effectiveness of an intervention or seek to establish relationships between variables, a quantitative approach might be appropriate. If your questions aim to understand experiences, perspectives, or the processes underlying a phenomenon, a qualitative approach might be more suitable.

Research Goals: Consider the type of knowledge you aim to generate. If your goal is to produce generalizable findings that can be applied to a wider population, a quantitative approach might be preferable. If your goal is to

gain a rich, nuanced understanding of a particular context or group, a qualitative approach may be more fitting.

Resources and Time Constraints: The resources available to you, including time, funding, and access to participants, can also influence your methodological choices. Quantitative studies often require larger sample sizes and standardized data collection instruments, which can be more resource-intensive. Qualitative studies, while often less resource-intensive in terms of sample size, demand significant time for data collection, transcription, and analysis.

Ethical Considerations: Ethical considerations are paramount in any research study, and the chosen methodology should minimize any potential harm to participants. Ensure that your research plan adheres to ethical guidelines and principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity, particularly when collecting data from human subjects.

4.3 Research Design: Planning Your Study

Once you have selected a methodology, you need to develop a detailed research design. A well-structured research design ensures that your study is:

Feasible: Given your resources and time constraints.

Ethical: Protects the rights and well-being of participants.

Rigorous: Yields valid and reliable data to answer your research questions.

Essential Elements of a Robust Research Design

Research Questions or Hypotheses: Clearly state the specific research questions or hypotheses your study aims to address.

Participants: Define your target population and describe the sampling method used to select participants. Provide a rationale for your sampling choices, addressing issues such as sample size, representativeness, and generalizability. Example: If you are investigating the effectiveness of a new pronunciation

activity for EFL learners, you need to specify the age, proficiency level, and linguistic background of your target population. You also need to describe how you will select participants for your study. Will you use random sampling, purposive sampling, or a combination of methods? Each sampling method has implications for the generalizability of your findings.

Data Collection Instruments: Describe the tools and techniques used to collect data, such as questionnaires, interviews, observations, or tests. Justify your selection of instruments, highlighting their strengths and limitations for your specific research context. Detail how you will ensure the validity and reliability of your data. Example: If you are using questionnaires, describe the types of questions used (e.g., multiple-choice, Likert-scale, open-ended) and how you will ensure their clarity, relevance, and cultural appropriateness. If you are conducting interviews, outline the interview protocol, including the key questions and probes you will use to elicit rich, detailed responses from your participants.

Data Analysis Procedures: Describe the methods used to analyse your data. Quantitative data analysis might involve statistical techniques such as t-tests, ANOVA, or regression analysis. Qualitative data analysis might involve techniques such as thematic analysis, discourse analysis, or grounded theory. Explain how your chosen analytical approach aligns with your research questions and the type of data collected.

Ethical Considerations: Address ethical considerations related to your research design and data collection procedures. Describe how you will obtain informed consent from participants, ensure confidentiality and anonymity, and minimize any potential risks or harm.

Timeline: Create a realistic timeline for completing the different stages of your research

4.4 Structure of the Research Methodology Chapter

The structure of this chapter may vary depending on your discipline, research questions, and chosen methodology, but it typically includes the following sections:

- **Introduction**: This section provides an overview of the chapter and its main objectives. It also briefly summarizes the research problem, questions, and hypotheses that guide your study.

- **Research Design**: This section describes the overall approach and rationale of your research. It explains what type of research you conducted (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods, etc.), why you chose this design, and how it aligns with your research questions and hypotheses.

- **Research Context**: This section provides the background and setting of your study. It describes where, when, and how you conducted your research, who were your participants or sample, and what ethical issues or challenges you faced or addressed.

- **Data Collection Methods**: This section details the specific methods and tools you used to collect your data. It explains what data sources you used (e.g., surveys, interviews, observations, documents, etc.), how you selected them, how you accessed them, how you prepared them for analysis, and how you ensured their quality and credibility.

- **Data Analysis Methods**: This section describes the techniques and procedures you used to analyse your data. It explains what analytical methods you applied (e.g., descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, thematic analysis, content analysis, etc.), how you performed them, what software or tools you used, and how you interpreted and presented your findings.

- **Summary**: This section concludes the chapter by highlighting the main points and implications of your research methodology and procedures. It also

discusses the limitations and delimitations of your study, as well as the ethical considerations and potential biases that may affect your results.

4.5 Components & Procedures

Chapter 3 of an academic thesis, often titled "Research Methodology & Procedures," is a critical section where you outline the research methods you employed to address your research questions or objectives. This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the approach you adopted to collect data, analyse it, and draw conclusions. Here are some detailed and useful tips to help you write Chapter 3 effectively:

1. Start with an Introduction:

Begin the chapter with a brief introduction that highlights the purpose of the research methodology chapter. Explain why the chosen research methods are appropriate for answering the research questions or achieving the research objectives.

2. Provide a Research Design Overview:

Describe the overall research design you employed. Discuss whether your study is quantitative, qualitative, or a combination of both (mixed methods). Justify your choice based on the nature of the research questions and the data required to answer them effectively.

3. Describe the Research Approach:

Explain whether your research follows an inductive or deductive approach. Inductive research involves deriving general conclusions from specific observations, while deductive research starts with a hypothesis and tests it against empirical evidence. Clarify why you chose a particular approach and how it aligns with your research objectives.

4. Explain the Sampling Technique:

Detail the sampling technique used to select participants or data sources. Provide a rationale for your sampling method (e.g., probability sampling, purposive sampling, convenience sampling) and explain how it supports the generalizability and validity of your findings. Discuss any limitations or potential biases associated with your chosen sampling technique.

5. *Describe Data Collection Procedures*:

Explain how you collected data for your study. If using surveys, interviews, observations, or experiments, provide a step-by-step description of the procedures followed. Include information about the data collection tools used (questionnaires, interview guides, etc.) and any modifications made to existing instruments. Address issues of reliability and validity and discuss measures taken to ensure data quality.

6. *Present Data Analysis Techniques*:

Discuss the analytical techniques employed to process and interpret the collected data. If using quantitative methods, specify the statistical tests, software, and procedures utilized. For qualitative research, describe the process of coding, categorizing, and analysing textual or visual data. Justify your choices by explaining how they align with your research questions and data characteristics.

7. *Address Ethical Considerations*:

Describe any ethical considerations or potential risks associated with your research. If human subjects were involved, explain how informed consent was obtained and how confidentiality and privacy were ensured. If using secondary data, discuss the sources' credibility and any copyright issues. Demonstrate that your research complies with ethical standards and review board guidelines.

8. *Discuss Data Limitations*:

Acknowledge any limitations of your data collection or analysis methods. Address potential biases, sample size constraints, and any other factors that might affect the generalizability or validity of your findings. Demonstrate your awareness of these limitations and their potential impact on the study's outcomes.

9. *Provide a Summary*:

Conclude the chapter by summarizing the key elements discussed, emphasizing the strengths of your chosen research methodology, and how it aligns with your research goals. Briefly mention how the methodology chapter sets the stage for the subsequent analysis and interpretation of the data.

10. *Maintain Clarity and Coherence*:

Throughout the chapter, ensure that your writing is clear, concise, and well-structured. Use headings and subheadings to organize the content and guide the reader. Clearly explain technical terms and provide definitions or examples where necessary. Use appropriate citations to support your choices of research methods and techniques.

Remember that these tips are general guidelines, and the specific requirements of your academic institution or discipline may vary. Always consult your supervisor or department guidelines for any specific instructions or preferences for writing Chapter 3 of your thesis.

Methodology Chapter is the core of any thesis. you discuss how you performed the study in great detail. It should be written like a recipe so that anyone could adopt your techniques and replicate your investigation.

It outlines specific methods chosen by a researcher to investigate a problem. Besides, you need to explain the chosen methods and justify them, describe the research setting, and give a detailed explanation of how you applied those methods in your study.

Research Design and Methodology consists of three parts: (1) Purpose of the study and research design, (2) Methods, and (3) Statistical Data analysis procedure.

Part one, Purpose of the study and Research Design, relates the purpose of the study and describes the research design and the variables used in this study.

Part two, Methods, describes the participants, the data-gathering materials and the research procedure used in the study. You need to explain what techniques were used for data collection and provide an analysis of the results to answer your research question.

Part three, statistical data analysis procedures, reports the procedure for scoring and the statistical analysis used to interpret the hypothesis.

Example of outline for chapter 3

Introduction, stating the purpose of the part, introducing the methods, and outlining the section's organization.

Research questions, hypothesis, and variables.

Research design – describe the investigation approach and justify specific chosen methods, citing relevant literature.

Study setting – describe the role of the researcher in gathering data.

Study participants and data sources – explain criteria and strategies used when selecting participants and describe systems used for collecting and storing information.

Procedures and instruments – demonstrate methods and state each step for performing the study in detail.

Data analysis – discuss statistical tools and methods applied to analyse information and measures to increase validity.

Summary of the key points: eventually, If you make a mistake in explaining your research methods, it can make your findings invalid.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive overview of research methodology and design, equipping TESOL/TEFL researchers with the knowledge and tools to conduct rigorous and meaningful studies. By carefully considering your research questions, selecting an appropriate methodology, and developing a detailed research design, you can ensure that your study effectively addresses the research problem and contributes valuable insights to the field. Remember that research is an iterative process, and your research design should be flexible enough to adapt to unexpected challenges or new discoveries that arise during the research journey.

CHAPTER FIVE

Research Results & Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter guides you through the crucial stages of presenting and interpreting your research findings, enabling you to communicate your research effectively to the TESOL/TEFL community. The chapter emphasises the importance of a clear, concise, and compelling presentation of results, whether derived from quantitative or qualitative analyses. It explores the significance of grounding your discussion in the research literature, critically evaluating your findings, and highlighting their implications for theory, research, and practice.

The analysis and presentation of research data are not merely technical exercises but integral aspects of the research process that demand rigour, transparency, and intellectual honesty. Researchers have an ethical responsibility to ensure that their data analysis is thorough and accurate, avoiding selective or misleading interpretations. The chapter provides practical guidance on how to organise and present your findings in a way that is accessible, engaging, and informative for your target audience. It underscores the importance of using visual aids, such as tables and figures, effectively to present complex data in a clear and concise manner.

Furthermore, this chapter emphasises that the discussion section is not merely a summary of findings but a space for critical analysis, interpretation, and synthesis. You should engage with the existing research literature, comparing and contrasting your findings with previous studies and highlighting the unique contributions your research makes to the field. It's important to acknowledge the limitations of your study and address any unexpected findings, offering plausible explanations and suggesting avenues for future research. The chapter concludes by reiterating the importance of drawing meaningful conclusions that stem directly from your findings, highlighting their practical

implications for TESOL/TEFL practitioners and outlining potential avenues for further investigation.

5.2 General Tips & Guidelines

1. Start with a clear introduction that summarizes the main findings and contributions of your research. Explain how your research questions and hypotheses were addressed and answered by your data analysis.

2. Organize your results and discussion into logical sections that correspond to your research objectives or sub-questions. Use headings and subheadings to guide the reader through your chapter.

3. Present your results using appropriate tables, figures, charts, graphs, or other visual aids. Make sure to label and caption them properly and refer to them in the text. Explain what each result means and how it relates to your research question or hypothesis.

4. Discuss the implications and significance of your results in relation to the existing literature and theory. Compare and contrast your findings with those of other studies and explain any similarities or differences. Highlight any new insights or contributions that your research provides to the field of study.

5. Address any limitations or challenges that may affect the validity or reliability of your results. Acknowledge any potential sources of bias, error, or uncertainty in your data collection or analysis. Explain how you dealt with them or how they could be overcome in future research.

6. End with a concise conclusion that summarizes the main points of your chapter and links them to the next chapter. Provide a clear answer to your main research question and state the main implications and recommendations of your research.

5.3 Specific Tips & Procedures

Writing Chapter 4, the Research Results & Discussion, in an educational academic thesis requires a systematic and comprehensive approach. This chapter plays a crucial role in presenting and interpreting the findings of your

research. Here are some detailed and useful tips to help you write an effective Chapter 4 in your thesis:

1. Structure your chapter:

- Start with an introduction: Begin the chapter by providing a brief overview of the research objectives and restate the research questions or hypotheses.
- Present the results: Present your research findings in a logical and organized manner. Use clear headings and subheadings to guide the reader through the different sections of the chapter.
- Analyse and interpret the results: After presenting the results, provide an analysis and interpretation of the data. Explain the significance of the findings and relate them to your research questions or hypotheses.
- Compare your results with previous research: Discuss how your results align or differ from previous studies in the field. Identify any inconsistencies or contradictions and explain potential reasons for these variations.
- Discuss limitations: Acknowledge the limitations of your research and explain how they may have affected the results. This demonstrates a critical understanding of your study's scope and helps establish the need for further research.
- Summarize the key findings: End the chapter by summarizing the main findings of your study. Connect these findings back to your research questions or hypotheses and provide a sense of closure.

2. Use appropriate visuals: Incorporate tables, charts, graphs, or figures to enhance the presentation of your results. Visual representations can make complex data more accessible and facilitate a better understanding for your readers. Ensure that all visuals are clearly labelled, referenced in the text, and properly explained.

3. Provide detailed explanations: When discussing your findings, offer detailed explanations for each result. Avoid merely presenting the data without analysis. Describe the patterns, trends, or relationships that emerge from your research and provide relevant supporting evidence or examples.

4. Support your claims with evidence: Use specific examples or quotations from your data to support the claims you make during the discussion. Referencing the data directly helps strengthen the credibility of your arguments and allows readers to evaluate the validity of your interpretations.

5. Be objective and balanced: Present your findings objectively, even if they contradict your initial expectations or hypotheses. Acknowledge any unexpected or negative results and offer possible explanations for them. It is essential to maintain a balanced and unbiased perspective throughout the chapter.

6. Relate your findings to existing theories or literature: Situate your findings within the existing body of knowledge. Discuss how your results align or diverge from previous theories or studies. Identify any gaps in the literature that your research addresses and highlight the contributions of your study to the field.

7. Address alternative explanations: Consider alternative interpretations or explanations for your results. Discuss any potential confounding variables or limitations that might affect the validity of your findings. By acknowledging and addressing alternative explanations, you demonstrate a thorough analysis of your research.

8. Be concise and focused: While it's crucial to provide sufficient detail, avoid unnecessary repetition or excessive data presentation. Keep your discussion focused on the research questions or hypotheses and stay within the scope of your study. Use clear and concise language to convey your ideas effectively.

9. Use citations and references: Support your analysis and interpretation with relevant citations and references to the existing literature. Cite the sources you

used to inform your research design and methodology, as well as studies that support or challenge your findings. Follow the appropriate citation style (e.g., APA, MLA) as required by your institution.

10. Seek feedback and revisions: After completing your initial draft, seek feedback from your advisor, committee members, or other experts in your field. Incorporate their suggestions and revise your chapter accordingly. Iterative revisions and feedback will enhance the clarity and coherence of your research results and discussion.

Remember, Chapter 4 is a critical section of your educational academic thesis, as it presents and interprets the findings of your research. By following these tips, you can effectively communicate the results of your study and contribute to the existing knowledge in your field.

5.4 Conclusion

Chapter 4 of an educational academic thesis is typically where the researcher presents the results of their study and discusses their implications. This is a critical chapter, as it is where the researcher demonstrates the value of their work and provides evidence to support their conclusions.

Here are some final tips on how to write a strong Chapter 4:

- Start by re-stating the purpose of your study and the research questions you were trying to answer. This will help to orient the reader and provide context for the results that you are about to present.
- Present your results in a clear and concise way. Use tables, figures, and other visuals to help illustrate your findings. Be sure to label all of your tables and figures clearly and provide a brief explanation of what they show.
- Discuss the implications of your results. How do your findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge? What are the practical implications of your research?

- Compare your results to the findings of other studies. This will help to contextualize your findings and demonstrate the extent to which they are consistent with or diverge from previous research.

- Consider the limitations of your study. What factors could have influenced your results? What are some areas for future research?

- Write in a clear and concise style. Avoid using jargon or technical language that your reader may not understand.

- Proofread your work carefully before submitting it. Make sure that there are no errors in grammar or spelling.

- Here are some additional tips that are specific to educational research:

- Use educational theories and frameworks to frame your discussion. This will help to demonstrate the relevance of your findings to the field of education.

- Consider the implications of your findings for educational practice. How can your findings be used to improve teaching and learning?

- References: Cite all of the sources that you used in your research. This will help to demonstrate the rigor of your work and provide your reader with a starting point for further research.

By following these tips, you can write a Chapter 4 that is clear, concise, and informative. This will help you to make a strong case for the value of your research and contribute to the field of educational research.

CHAPTER SIX

Academic Writing

6.1 Introduction

Generally, writing is a language skill, an everyday practice, a form of literacy, a communicative activity, and sometimes a means through which learners can be assessed, especially within the Egyptian context. As a method of communication, for example, writing can be used to establish and maintain contact with others, transmit information, express thoughts, feelings, and reactions, entertain, and persuade. As a personal or private activity, it can be a powerful tool for learning and remembering. It can be used to explore and refine ideas, organise thoughts, and record information. At school, learners are usually asked to use writing to display what they know, and thus, writing becomes the medium through which pupil learning is measured (Browne, 1999: p2).

Therefore, people write for different reasons and in a wide range of contexts. They normally write in order to:

- ❖ Get their message across;
- ❖ Convey important information and facts to others;
- ❖ Communicate their own intentions and purposes;
- ❖ Help and support others;
- ❖ Prove that they have mastered something;
- ❖ Put ideas on paper so that they are not lost;
- ❖ Plan for doing something by creating a schedule or timetable;
- ❖ Guide and direct others;
- ❖ Succeed in life and pass tests;
- ❖ Modify and re-draft something;
- ❖ Make money and earn living;
- ❖ Express themselves;
- ❖ Socialise and participate in different events;

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- ❖ Organise ideas and say what one cannot communicate orally;
- ❖ Share ideas and experiences with others;
- ❖ State reflections and jot down personal diaries;
- ❖ Teach/Train others and provide them with feedback;
- ❖ Learn and internalise some linguistic aspects (e.g., vocabulary and grammar); and
- ❖ Simplify something.

According to Harmer (2007), composing or writing in a foreign language is always a demanding process where language learners need to employ many skills and strategies. As a productive skill, writing draws on other language skills such as listening and reading. That is why language teachers usually delay it until their students have done a great deal of listening and reading in the target language.

In its simplest form, writing may take the form of notation: copying in conventional graphic form something already written, or reproducing in written form something that has been read or heard. This act hardly involves anything more than the ability to use the writing system of the language. Writing in the language becomes more complicated when it involves writing meaningful segments of language which might be used in specific circumstances by native speakers. This is the type of writing involved in things like grammatical exercises, the construction of simple dialogues, and dictation. In its most highly developed form, writing refers to the conveying of information or the expression of original ideas in the target language. These distinctions among the types of writing activities reflect the major areas of learning involved in the writing process. Students must learn the graphic system and be able to spell according to the conventions of language. They must learn to control the structure according the canons of good writing. They must learn to select from among possible combinations of words and phrases those which will convey the meaning they have in mind (Rivers, 1981).

Furthermore, it is important to be aware of the differences between spoken and written language. When people speak, they normally seem more relaxed and less formal. They are likely to express themselves in a simple language which is full of hesitations, pauses, repetitions, etc. In this regard, Holliday (1985) and Nunan (1991) state some of the features that distinguish spoken from written texts:

- ❖ Spoken language sounds simpler than written language; Transcriptions of spoken language look less structured because they represent 'unedited' language. The lexical density of written texts (i.e. the number of lexical or content words per clause) makes writing seem more complex;

- ❖ Spoken forms are in a sense more basic than the written forms; in writing, we have normally altered the normal state of events;

- ❖ Compared with speech, writing is often de-contextualised; in communicating a message, writers are usually distant in time and place from the person(s) with whom they wish to communicate. Because of this lack of direct contact with the reader, they are unable to make use of feedback from others to adjust their message;

- ❖ People usually exert more effort during writing as they do their best to clarify their message. This absence of the physical and paralinguistic features that the speaker uses to support his/her utterance adds burdens to the writer.

'Academic writing' always refers to this ***serious***, ***scholarly*** type of writing that is intended for ***academic*** purposes. Simply put, academic writing is writing done by ***scholars*** for other scholars—and that includes you. As a college student, you are engaged in activities that scholars have been engaged in for centuries: you will read about, think about, argue about, and write about great ideas. Of course, being a scholar requires that you read,

think, argue, and write in certain ways. You will need to *make* and *support* your *claims* according to the expectations of the academic community.

6.2 Development of Ideas and Paragraphs

In composition, *development* refers to the process of **adding** informative and illustrative **details** to support the main idea in a paragraph or essay. Depending on the writing genre and type of composition, I think that there are many ways through which body paragraphs can develop the theme or main idea (i.e. topic sentence): (1) developing the theme through **examples**; (2) developing the theme through **description;** (3) developing the theme through **contrast**; (4) developing the idea through **comparison**; and (5) developing the essay through **narration**.

I think that the main idea here is that the *topic* sentence alone is ***not sufficient*** to provide a complete argument. The reader might need to see more details which would definitely explore the topic more to clarify it. This *elaboration* might take the form of examples, description, contrast, etc.

A-Paragraph development by examples

Sometimes a paragraph is ***developed by examples.*** The example paragraph is a kind of **list paragraph**, in which *example sentences* closely **support** the topic sentence. According to Rosa & Eschholz (2012), illustration is the use of *examples* to make ideas more concrete and to make generalizations more specific and detailed. **Examples** enable writers not just to tell but to show what they mean.

Examine the following paragraphs:

- **Example 1:**

Effective Writing: A Must in Universities

*The **ability to write** well organised, concise paragraphs is **essential** to a student's success in almost all university courses. In preparing scientific reports of laboratory experiments, a student must present his findings in a **logical order** and **clear language** in order to receive a favourable evaluation of his work. To write successful answers to essay questions on history or anthropology examinations, a student must arrange the relevant facts and opinions according to some accepted pattern of paragraph structure. And certainly when a student writes a book report for English, or a critique for political studies, or a term paper for sociology, style and organisation are often as important as content. Clearly skill in expository writing is crucial to successful achievement in most university subjects.*

The key words or ideas in the first two sentences of the paragraph are in **bold**.

- **Example 2 (a paragraph written by a student):**

My Morbid Imagination

*My family is convinced **that I inherited my imagination from Edgar Allan Poe**. For example, when I was in kindergarten, I dreamed that my sister killed people with a television antenna and disposed of their bodies in the woods across the street from my house. For three weeks after that dream I stayed with my grandparents until they finally convinced me that my sister was harmless. Not long afterward, my grandfather died, and that sparked new fears. I was so terrified that his ghost would visit me that I put two brooms across the doorway of my bedroom at night. Fortunately, my little trick worked. He never*

came back. More recently, I was terribly frightened after staying up late one night to watch The Ring. I lay awake until dawn clutching my cell phone, ready to dial 911 the moment that spooky little girl stepped out of my TV. Just thinking about it now gives me goose bumps.

Example 3 (a model essay developed by examples):

The Successful Interview

To be successful in a job interview (or for that matter in almost any interview situation), you should demonstrate certain personal and professional qualities. You need to create a good image in the limited time available, usually from 30 to 45 minutes. Furthermore, you must make a positive impression which the interviewer will remember while he interviews other applicants. At all times, you should present your most attractive qualities during an interview.

You should, for example, take care to appear well-groomed and modestly dressed, avoiding the extremes of too elaborate or too casual attire. On the positive side, clothes may be a good leveller, putting you on a par with other applicants and requiring the interviewer to consider more important qualifications. On the other hand, clothes which are too informal may convey the impression that you are not serious about the job or that you may be casual about your work as well as your dress. Clothes which are too elaborate, too colourful, or too expensive suggest that you do not understand what behaviour is appropriate for the job or that you are snobbish or frivolous. The right clothes worn at the right time, however, gain the respect of the interviewer and his confidence in your judgement. It may not be true that 'clothes make the man,' but the first and often lasting impression of you is determined by the clothes you wear.

Besides care for personal appearance, you should pay close attention to your manner of speaking. Since speech is a reflection of personality, you should reflect confidence by speaking in a clear voice, loud enough to be heard without being aggressive or overpowering. Your speech should not call attention to itself, but it should reveal the individuality and ability of the speaker. Obviously, you must speak without grammatical or dialect differences for which you might be criticised or which might cause embarrassment to the employer. Although there are cultural differences with respect to the formality of the job interview, your speech must show you to be a friendly and pleasant person.

Speaking without a subject worth talking about will not impress anyone. You should be prepared to talk knowledgeably about the requirement of the position for which you are applying in relation to your own professional experiences and interests. Knowing something about the position enables you ask intelligent questions about the work and the requirements for the job. The interviewer can decide from the questions asked whether you are genuinely interested or knowledgeable. You can comment on your own training, experience, and other qualifications in relation to the specific tasks of the position. The interviewer can determine whether your background and potential seem to fit the position. The position for which you are applying is not only the safest topic for discussion, it is essential that you demonstrate your understanding of the requirements and your abilities in meeting these requirements.

Finally, to be really impressive, you must convey a sense of self-confidence and enthusiasm for work. As already indicated, you demonstrate self-confidence by your manner of speech and dress. You further show it by being prepared for the interview with information and questions about the position. In addition, the way you enter the room, sit, look at the interviewer, and fill out application

forms and other papers may express self-confidence. The eagerness with which you discuss the job rather than the salary may reveal your enthusiasm for work. You may express it also through your questions and comments about working conditions and facilities. And, of course, your previous experiences and success will tell the interviewer about your enthusiasm for work. Both of these qualities – self-confidence and enthusiasm for work – are valued highly by all interviewers.

The appropriately dressed job applicant indicates his sound judgement. His manner of speaking suggests his friendliness and competence. His curiosity and information about the position he is seeking demonstrate his sincerity and potential in the job. He exhibits self-confidence through his knowledge, and he shows his enthusiasm for work. If you display these characteristics, with just a little luck, you will certainly succeed in the typical personnel interview.

Outline & Analysis

The Successful Interview

Important personal and professional qualities

A good image in a short time   **TP**

A lasting impression

Attractive qualities

Well-groomed and modestly dressed

Not too elaborate   **EP1**
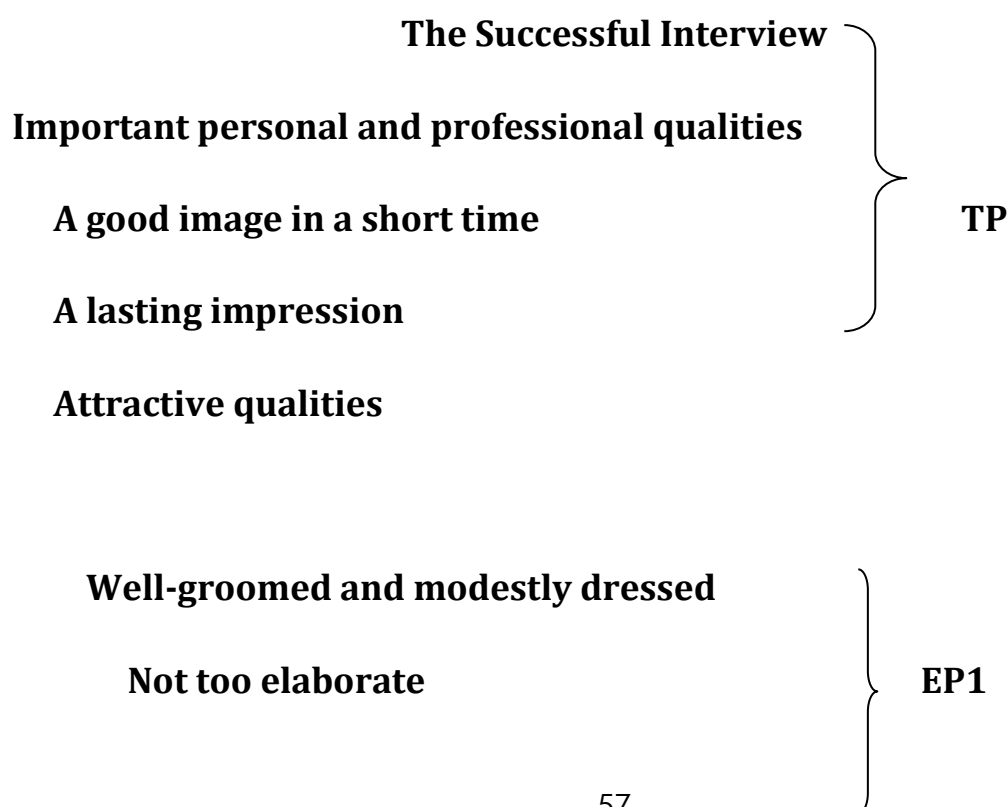
Not too casual

Right clothes gain respect

Manner of speaking

Clear and loud enough

Without grammatical or dialect differences   **EP2**

Friendly and pleasant

Know something about the job

Requirements for the position   **EP3**

Experience and knowledge

Self-confidence and enthusiasm

Be prepared for the interview   **EP4**

Show your interest in the job

Dress

Speech

Sincerity   **RP**

Self-confidence

(Succeeding in the interview)

Abbreviations: **TS** (Topic Sentence); **TP** (Topic Paragraph); **EP** (Example Paragraph); and **RP** (Restatement Paragraph).

B-Paragraph development by comparison

A comparison paragraph, as its name indicates, compares similar aspects or qualities of two subjects. Two different procedures are followed while writing down comparison paragraphs:

1. An example related to one subject (A) alternates with an example related to another subject (B);
2. All examples of subject A are listed together, followed by all examples of subject B.

In addition to the topic sentence (TP), the example sentence (E), and the restatement sentence (RS), additional sentence types may be used in writing comparison paragraphs:

1. A **topic introducer** (**TI**) might be used, followed by TS that states more specifically the basis of comparison;
2. **Transition sentences** (**Tr**) may be used to change from one point of view to another; from one set of ideas to another; or from one subject to another

- **Example 1: (1ˢᵗ procedure: alternating examples of A & B)**
  From Paragraph to Essay

Despite their obvious differences in length, the paragraph and the essay are quite similar structurally. For example, the paragraph is introduced by either a topic sentence or a topic introducer followed by a topic sentence. In the essay, the first paragraph provides introductory material and establishes the topic focus. Next, the sentences in the body of a paragraph

develop the topic sentence. Similarly, the body of an essay consist of a number of paragraphs that expand and support the ideas presented in the introductory paragraph. Finally, a terminator – whether a restatement, conclusion, or observation – ends the paragraph. The essay, too, has a device which brings the ideas to a logically and psychologically satisfying completion: the concluding paragraph. Although exceptions to these generalisations may be observed in modern creative writing, most well written expository paragraphs and essays are comparable in structure.

Now discuss this: **Does this paragraph include the necessary parts discussed – topic sentence, developers, and terminator? Identify them!**

- **Example 2: (2nd procedure: listing all examples of A followed by those of B**)

The Objective Test and the Essay Exam

In college and university courses, the objective test and the essay exam are two contrasting methods of evaluation commonly used to measure a student's grasp of subject matter. The objective test usually consists of a large number of unrelated questions that require the student to demonstrate mastery of details. It often leads to rote memorisation of isolated facts during the pre-test period of study. Since the questions on the objective test are presented in true-false or multiple choice form, the student may be encouraged to guess answers for which he has no accurate knowledge. The essay exam, on the other hand, usually consists of a few broadly stated questions that require the student to organise his response in essay form. Such questions force the student to give proof of his ability to handle general concepts. This type of exam also relies on factual information, but there is far greater necessity for the student to

demonstrate analytical and compositional skills. Mere guessing at answers is reduced to a minimum. Although the objective test and the essay exam have similar goals – the assessment of a student's academic achievement – the techniques (and very often the results) of the two types of examination differ significantly.

C-Paragraph development by contrast

Unlike the **comparison** paragraph, which compares **similar** aspects of two subjects, the **contrast** paragraph compares **dissimilar** aspects of two subjects. **Like** the **comparison paragraph**, however, the **two procedures** may be followed in writing the contrast paragraph. The first method **alternates** examples of **subject A** with examples of **subject B**; the contrasts may be in the **same** sentence, or they may be in **consecutive** sentences. The other method presents **all** subject A **examples** *together*, then all subject B **examples** *together*.

In writing **comparison** paragraphs, **transitional** words such as ***similarly, also, too, both*** are used. For contrast paragraphs, however, other transitional words and phrases are employed: ***unlike, on the other hand, in contrast***, etc.

- **Example**

Where to Study

One major decision which faces the American student ready to begin higher education is the choice of attending a large university or a small college. The large university provides a wide range of specialised departments, as well as numerous courses within such departments. The small college, however, generally provides a limited number of courses and specialisations but offers a

better student-faculty ratio, thus permitting individualised attention to students. Because of its large, cosmopolitan student body (often exceeding 20,000) the university exposes its students to many different cultural, social, and extra-curricular programmes. On the other hand, the smaller, more homogeneous student body of the small college affords greater opportunities for direct involvement and individual participation in such activities. Finally, the university closely approximates the real world; it provides a relaxed, impersonal, and sometimes anonymous existence. In contrast, the intimate atmosphere of the small college allows the student four years of structured living in which s/he contemplates and prepares for the real world. In making his choice among educational institutions, the student must, therefore, consider many factors.

D-Paragraph development by narration and specific details

Sometimes, a paragraph is developed by narration; this means telling more - in the form of a story – to clarify and support the topic sentence. Past events and specific details sometimes elaborate on a specific idea to strengthen it. For example, a story might emphasise the idea that someone is careless or strange, like in the example below:

My friend Jones is not a very practical person*. Driving along a main way one dark night, he suddenly had a flat tyre. Even worse, he discovered that he did not have a spare wheel in his car trunk! Jones waved to passing cars and lorries, but none of them stopped. Half an hour later, he was almost in despair. At last, he waved to a car just like his own. To his surprise, the car actually stopped and a well-dressed young woman got out. Jones was terribly disappointed: How could a person like this possibly help him? The lady, however, offered him her own spare wheel, but Jones had to explain that he had*

never changed a wheel in his life! She set to work at once and fitted the wheel in a few minutes while Jones looked on in admiration.

6.3 Good Presentation of Ideas

Having decided on what to say (or write), say it **neatly** (precisely or adequately), clearly, simply, coherently, and consistently. Presentation is very important as it makes reading faster and easier. It shows concern for the reader and it always pays to take the trouble.

A-Write neatly

Try to be as much legible as you can! Neatness is particularly important when filling in forms or writing job application letters. The way you write such documents will make a better impression on a prospective employer than a messy one. Also, neatness of presentation matters a great deal in examinations. Neatness is not a substitute of knowledge, but a messy presentation can lower the marks which the answers (e.g. written essays) receive.

B-Write clearly

Clarity is very important; so, keep sentences short and try your best to avoid complicated constructions with unnecessary subordinate clauses. It is far better to cut long sentences into short ones by the use of punctuation. The following example taken from a Government publication illustrates the case of a very long sentence which could be written better:

"In turn, India is exporting increased quantities of non-traditional goods like engineering products, machinery, components, equipment, electronic goods, etc for which there is a growing demand among the non-aligned countries, and which India offers not only at a competitive

price, but on comparatively easier financial terms and with facilities of after-sale service."

It would be much better to write it this way:

"India is exporting increased quantities of non-traditional goods like engineering products, machinery, components, equipment, electronic goods, etc. There is a growing demand for such goods among the non-aligned countries. India offers competitive prices, comparatively easier financial terms and facilities for after-sale service."

Thus, **one** long sentence has been cut into **THREE**, and made simpler and clearer.

C-Plan your paragraphs

Paragraphs are key aids to clarity:

- Paragraphs break the text into units, and this makes reading and understanding easier;
- There should be only one theme (topic) per paragraph. Therefore, paragraphs help the organisation of one's thoughts;
- Each paragraph has to contain a topic sentence; that is a sentence stating the theme of the paragraph. This sums up for the reader what the writer is trying to say;
- Each paragraph should end on a transition which introduces the next paragraph. This helps the reader to follow the reasoning structure.

Paragraphs can have many sentences, so long as the unity of the theme is preserved. There should be only one theme per paragraph. If the paragraph is a long one, it may be desirable to put the topic sentence at the beginning.

However, there is no hard or fast rule; the topic sentence can go wherever it fits.

D-Avoid long and unnecessary words

It is a golden piece of advice to avoid long and unnecessary words. Long words interrupt the flow of thought and the reader may not understand them. Here are a few examples of long words, each followed by a short word which would be better to use: *abbreviated/short; necessitate/need; prevaricate/quibble; desiccate/dry-up; circumscribe/limit; multi-faceted/many-sided;* and *tendermindedness/tenderness*.

However, in some cases, the long word is better because it describes the meaning more accurately. Moreover, there are occasions when long words are called for, because they either add to the meaning or improve the rhythm of the sentence. For example: ***"The moon-landing was a significantly memorable achievement"*** is stronger than: ***"The moon-landing was a great feat to remember"***.

Unnecessary words are those words which add nothing to the meaning of the sentence. Sometimes, we – as English learners – add some empty or unnecessary words that would add nothing to the meaning of the sentence. Some of us, for example, would prefer to start writing, especially when introducing a topic, with specific phrases or starters, such as: 'As a matter of fact…….', 'There is no doubt that …….', 'Generally speaking ……', and 'Needless to say…..'. Those starters can be removed or replaced by shorter ones (or just a single word) to convey the same meaning. Sometimes, we repeat ourselves by writing many synonyms (Don't panic! All of us – as Arabic speakers – did this!). For example, we might write down a sentence like this: *The Maths test was so **hard, difficult, complicated and tricky!*** Perhaps, just one of the above adjectives is sufficient to do the job.

E-Be coherent and consistent

To be *coherent* is to make sense, and to be easy to follow and understand. More specifically, it means:

- Putting the words of each sentence in the right place;
- Putting the sentences in the right order; and
- Avoiding ambiguity.

In other words, the basic unit for the written expression of thought is the **sentence**. To be complete and meaningful, the sentence must have at least *one verb* and *one subject*; the subject, however, can be implied.

Naturally, as the sentences become more complicated, the **order of words** becomes more important. For example: *"I am wearing the dress my mother made for my birthday"* does not mean the same thing as *"I am wearing for my birthday the dress my mother made"*! The **difference** in meaning comes from the place of 'for my birthday'. *Keep together* the words which belong together; failure to do so may yield some very odd results:

"He took out his gun, blew his nose, wiped it clean, put it in his pocket and wondered whether it would go off"!

The sentence was not meant to be funny; its author simply forgot to keep together the words which belonged together. It was **the gun** he wiped clean, not his nose; the sentence ought to run like this: *"He blew his nose: took out his gun, wiped it clean, put it in his pocket and wondered whether it would go off."*

With sentences, as with words, it is very important to keep to the **logical order**. It is equally important to use short, simple sentences with *one thought* per sentence.

Avoid ambiguity: Ambiguity is not lack of coherence, but obscurity. ***Faulty construction*** can lead to misunderstanding or to nonsense. See this: ***"I will eat at my home which is in London on Sunday"***. As if home was not in London during the week. Had the words which ***belonged together*** been ***kept together***, there would have been no ambiguity! So, see this modified one: "***On Sunday, I will eat at my home which is in London"*** or ***"I will eat on Sunday at my home which is in London"***.

Nothing is more irritating than to find the same word spelt in different ways. If one spells 'Muslim' with a 'u' and an 'i', one must not switch to 'Moselm' with an 'o' and an 'e'. The same applies to Koran/Quran, and to English words like cheque/check, through/thru, and rhyme/rime.

F-Consider 'register' (suitable language & tone)

Writing well involves presenting your material in a **tone appropriate** to your audience and to the task in hand. You would use different styles of language for a business letter, a newspaper report, a letter to a friend or a short story. It is important to develop a **suitable tone**, or register, for your written work.

A university essay is a **formal document** and requires a **formal register**. Students often struggle to find a balance between formal, intellectual language and open, accessible English. Many reputable scholars struggle with this too, which is why some academic books are so hard to understand. However, even the most complicated ideas can be articulated clearly. Your marker will be delighted to see complex thought presented in plain English. They will also notice if you dress up

weak thinking in flowery language. Pay attention to the register of your writing and remember who will read your work.

Pay attention to the way academic writers, for example, use language. If it seems too dense and formal then do not copy their style. However, if you find a book that is lucid, interesting and readable, try to work out what makes it so clear.

Avoid being too personal: Your name appears on the front of your essay, therefore your marker already knows that everything in the essay is your opinion. **Do not keep saying 'in my opinion'** or 'it seems to me that' etc. Have the courage of your convictions and state what you think. If you can back up your views with evidence from sources, there is no need to apologise or hesitate. You do not need to fear the first person, but don't overdo it. Present your work as a piece of cohesive thought rather than as collection of your own responses. Avoid using phrases such as, 'I want to look at' – just get on with it.

Avoid being too clever: Some of the worst grammatical errors are caused by trying to write long, complex sentences. A short sentence is the most powerful way to make a cogent point. However, one short declarative after another quickly rings wooden. Similarly, do not use words that you *think* you understand. If in doubt, look them up instead of leaving them out.

Avoid slang: This does not just cover words and phrases. It also applies to informal expressions and sentence constructions. Do not say, 'Cicourel's analysis of juvenile delinquency blew me away. You know what I mean?' You can express the same idea by saying, 'Cicourel's analysis is vivid and engaging,' or, 'Cicourel's observational research

demands a strong response from the reader.' Avoid using 'you' or 'us' for the reader of the text. 'One' sounds formal in everyday speech, but it is very useful in this setting.

**Tenses:** Use the past tense for anything that happened in the past. If you use the present tense to refer to an author's argument ('Bruce says x, y. Brewer argues that ...') then stick with that consistently. The present tense may be the most appropriate for certain generalizations ('Social stratification exists in every known society.'), but make sure that they really do apply to the present day.

G-Watch your grammar

If you want to express interesting ideas, then a sound **grasp of grammar** is essential. Your understanding of grammar may be more developed than you realise. If you have studied a foreign language, you may have a very sophisticated knowledge of how it works. Most speakers use grammar well without knowing all the terms for the techniques they are using. This is fine when it works, but it can help to stop and think about what you are doing. Markers tend to use technical, grammatical terms when pointing out problems in your work, which is not much use to you if you do not know what they are talking about.

This section will point out a few common problems, and offer definitions of some terms that may crop up in your markers' comments. If you have serious problems with the English grammar used in academic writing, you have to work hard to solve them. If your markers consistently complain about your _syntax_, sentence structure, tenses, pronouns and the like, you probably need some help from specialised sources on syntax and grammar.

Syntax is the order of elements. English is an 'SVO' language, which means the normal order of elements is subject-verb-object. 'The man bit the dog,' is clear in its meaning, if weird. Problems can develop, however, when a writer starts to pile various modifying elements (subordinate clauses, temporal phrases, etc.) at the beginning of a sentence. Then it is possible to lose track of the subject, the verb, and the object (complement).

H-Watch your punctuation

Punctuation is very important; without it, words would follow each other in an endless stream and the meaning would be lost. The role of punctuation is to make meaning clear. I remember a funny famous example (perhaps it was a joke about what male students wrote, and what female students in the same classroom wrote) that shows the importance of punctuation:

A woman without her man is nothing! (without punctuation). If left as it is, the sentence would bear two contrasted interpretations:

1. A woman: without her, man is nothing.
2. A woman, without her man, is nothing.

A **full-stop** (.) is needed to end the sentence, when a complete meaning has been reached. However, **three** full-stops (…) placed one after the other mean that words have been left out in a quotation; *'Let me tell you … I hope you agree.'* Or to indicate that the sentence has been left unfinished deliberately, *'I could go on and on…'*

The **colon** is used to introduce the words which follow it. *'My shopping list reads:* 12 eggs, 1 lb butter, 2 lbs sugar…' To introduce direct speech or a quotation. *Then he said: 'After all …'*

The **semi-colon** is very useful, especially because it is less final than a full-stop. It can be used between sentences which are complete in themselves, to indicate that there is a connection between their meaning: *'I disliked her at first sight; she looked sloppy in her jeans and her kinky hair dyed green was unkempt'*. A full-stop after **'sight'** would cut off the trend of thought while the insertion of 'because' would weaken the meaning.

Because the **semi-colon** is less than a **full-stop**, but more than a **comma,** it is useful to break up long sentences which already have commas in them. Here is an example taken from Samuel Johnson:

'The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early had been kind; but it has been delayed until I am indifferent, and cannot impart it; till I am known and do not want it'.

If Samuel Johnson had used full-stops instead of semi-colons, he would have destroyed the dignity of this passage my making it jerky. Instead, by using semi-colons, he adds weight to each of his reasons.

The **comma** is a useful stop, especially when reading out loud; it gives you time to breathe. There are as many different ways of using commas as there are styles of writing. However, here are 9 different cases when commas must be used:

- **Before and after speech**: 'I must ask you to repeat these words,' said the priest, 'before I can pronounce you man and wife.'
- **When listing things,** qualities, ideas or clauses: 'Fear, love, hate, hunger and death are man's lot'. 'His dedication to office, his endless energy, his honesty and his generosity will long be remembered.'
- **To separate words of *the same* part of speech:** Look at these examples:

1. 'He advanced slowly, steadily, silently.' (adverbs)
2. 'He is tall, dark, fat yet handsome.'   (adjectives)
3. 'He lied, stole, killed and fled.'   (verbs)
4. 'in walked the sailor, the soldier, the pilot...' (nouns)

- **To separate** from the rest of the sentence **qualifying words** not essential to its meaning: 'Napoleon, the French Emperor, was defeated at Waterloo.'

- **To separate** from the rest of the sentence a **non-defining clause**: 'The battle of Waterloo, which you have read about, is one of the most important events in history.'

- **Between words repeated for _emphasis:_** 'It was much, much too hot.'

- **Instead of '_or_' and '_and_':** For example: 'Give me apples, pears and prunes.' (I want all three) – 'Give me apples, pears or prunes.' (I want only one of them)

- **Usually after and around '_however_':** 'However, you must forgive him.' – 'Let us look at the facts, however, lest we do him an injustice.'

Moreover, there are many **_other punctuation marks_** can be used for different purposes. These include:

- **Question marks (?)**
- **Inverted commas** (which are commonly used to single out words or letters, or to indicate that the words between them are a quotation, part of speech, title of a book, etc.)
- **Brackets** (which are sometimes used to introduce words which do not affect the meaning of the text; or to set out numbers or letters of the alphabet used to enumerate lists; e.g. (i), (ii), (a), (b), (c), etc.)

- **Hyphens** (which are mainly used to make **compound words** 'vice-president', 'son-in-law', and 'know-how'; to unite two or more words in order to make them into an adjective: '***never-to-be-forgotten*** event'; after certain Latin prefixes: 'anti-English', 'ex-Prime Minster', etc.

- **Dashes** (which are used to: (1) summarise a list already given; and (2) emphasise the end of a sentence.

- **Exclamation marks (!)**

6.4 Editing and Revising Paragraphs and Essays

It should be clear that getting your thoughts down on paper is not the final stage of writing a good paragraph or essay. There remains the rewriting of the first draft so as to shape your ideas into a carefully styled composition. Nowadays, computers and other electronic devices and software have made the editing and redrafting process even easier and more manageable. Ordinarily, editing involves changes at three points: between sentences, within sentences, and in individual words.

At the word level, spelling and capitalisation are checked, but more creatively, words are often changed. A different word may be substituted for the original word because it is easier to understand, is more colourful, gives a more precise meaning, or provides variety.

At the sentence level, phrases may be put in a different order, structures of modification revises, different verb structures selected, or the length of phrases or whole sentences may be altered.

Finally, for smoothness and balance, changes are made between sentences or paragraphs. Such changes, designed to clarify relationships between

ideas, are often accomplished by punctuating more adequately, by introducing more effective transitional devices, or by restating or removing awkward phrases and sentences. Editing then – the self-conscious appraisal and revision of your own work – usually makes the difference between a merely acceptable and a truly superior piece of writing.

6.5 Academic Document Types

There are many types of academic documents, which do not look like such informal and/or personal documents like newspaper, magazines, and personal diaries. These include:

- *Books*, in many types and varieties.
- *Book reports*.
- *Conference papers*.
- *Dissertation*; usually between 6,000 and 20,000 words in length.
- *Essay*; usually short, between 1,500 and 6,000 words in length.
- *Explication*; usually a short factual note explaining some obscure part of a particular work; e.g. its terminology, dialect, allusions or coded references.
- *Research Article*.
- *Research Paper*; longer essay involving library research, 3000 to 6000 words in length.
- *Technical report*.
- *Thesis*; completed over a number of years, often in excess of 20,000 words in length.
- *Translation*.

6.6 Features of Academic Writing

Academic writing in English is *linear*, which means it has *one central point or theme* with every part contributing to the main line of argument, without digressions or repetitions. Its objective is to *inform* rather than entertain. As well as this it is in the *standard* written form of the language. There are eight main features of academic writing that are often discussed. Academic writing is to some extent: complex, formal, objective, explicit, hedged, and responsible. It uses language precisely and accurately.

a) *Complexity*

Written language is relatively *more complex* than spoken language. Written language has longer words, it is lexically more dense and it has a more varied vocabulary. It uses more noun-based phrases than verb-based phrases. Written texts are *shorter* and the language has more grammatical complexity, including more subordinate clauses and more passives.

b) *Formality*

Academic writing is relatively *formal*. In general this means that in an essay you should *avoid colloquial* words and expressions. In general this means in an essay that you should avoid:

1. colloquial words and expressions: "stuff", "a lot of", "thing", "sort of".
2. abbreviated forms: "can't", "doesn't", "shouldn't"
3. two word verbs: "put off", "bring up"
4. sub-headings, numbering and bullet-points in formal essays - but use them in reports.
5. asking questions.

c) *Precision*

In academic writing, facts and figures are given precisely. In academic writing you need to be precise when you use information, dates or figures. Do not use "*a lot of people*" when you can say "*50 million people*".

d) *Objectivity*

Written language is in general **objective** rather than personal. It therefore has fewer words that refer to the writer or the reader. This means that the **main emphasis** should be on the **information** that you want to give and the arguments you want to make, rather than you. For that reason, academic writing tends to **use nouns** (and adjectives), rather than verbs (and adverbs). This is related to the basic nature of academic study and academic writing, in particular. Nobody really wants to know what you "think" or "believe". They want to know what you have studied and learned and how this has led you to your various conclusions. The thoughts and beliefs should be based on your lectures, reading, discussion and research and it is important to make this clear.

-Compare these two paragraphs:

The question of what constitutes "language proficiency" and the nature of its cross-lingual dimensions is also at the core of many hotly debated issues in the areas of bilingual education and second language pedagogy and testing. Researchers have suggested ways of making second language teaching and testing more "communicative" (e.g., Canale and Swain, 1980; Oller, 1979b) on the grounds that a communicative approach better reflects the nature of language proficiency than one which emphasizes the acquisition of discrete language skills.

We don't really know what language proficiency is but many people have talked about it for a long time. Some researchers have tried to find ways for us to make teaching and testing more communicative because that is how

language works. I think that language is something we use for communicating, not an object for us to study and we remember that when we teach and test it.

Which is the most objective?

-In general, avoid words like "I", "me", "myself".

A reader will normally assume that any idea not referenced is your own. It is therefore unnecessary to make this explicit.

> Don't write: "*In my opinion, this a very interesting study.*"

> Write: "*This is a very interesting study.*"

Avoid "*you*" to refer to the reader or people in general.

> Don't write: "*You can easily forget how different life was 50 years ago.*"

> Write: "*It is easy to forget how difficult life was 50 years ago.*"

e) *Explicitness*

Academic writing is explicit in several ways:

1. It is explicit in its *signposting* of the organisation of the ideas in the text. As a writer of academic English, it is your responsibility to make it clear to your reader how various parts of the text are related. These connections can be made explicit by the use of different signalling words.

For example, if you want to tell your reader that your *line of argument is going to change*, make it clear.

> *The Bristol 167 was to be Britain's great new advance on American types such as the Lockheed Constellation and Douglas DC-6, which did not*

have the range to fly the Atlantic non-stop. It was also to be the largest aircraft ever built in Britain. <mark>However</mark>*, even by the end of the war, the design had run into serious difficulties.*

If you think that one sentence **gives reasons** for something in another sentence, make it explicit.

While an earlier generation of writers had noted this feature of the period, it was not until the recent work of Cairncross that the significance of this outflow was realized. Partly this was <mark>because</mark> *the current account deficit appears much smaller in current (1980s) data than it was thought to be by contemporaries.*

If you think **two ideas are almost the same**, say so.

Marx referred throughout his work to other systems than the capitalist system, especially those which he knew from the history of Europe to have preceded capitalism; systems such as feudalism, where the relation of production was characterized by the personal relation of the feudal lord and his serf and a relation of subordination which came from the lord's control of the land. <mark>Similarly,</mark> *Marx was interested in slavery and in the classical Indian and Chinese social systems, or in those systems where the ties of local community are all important.*

If you intend your sentence to give extra information, make it clear.

He is born into a family, he marries into a family, and he becomes the husband and father of his own family. <mark>In addition</mark>*, he has a definite place of origin and more relatives than he knows what to do with, and he receives a rudimentary education at the Canadian Mission School.*

If you are **giving examples**, do it explicitly.

This has sometimes led to disputes between religious and secular clergy, between orders and bishops. <mark>For example</mark>, in the Northern context, the previous bishop of Down and Connor, Dr Philbin, refused for most of his period of leadership in Belfast to have Jesuits visiting or residing in his diocese.

2. It is explicit in its ***acknowledgment*** of the ***sources*** of the ideas in the text.

If you know the source of the ideas you are presenting, acknowledge it.

Do THIS in academic writing

<mark>*McGreil (1977: 363-408) has shown that*</mark> *though Dubliners find the English more acceptable than the Northern Irish, Dubliners still seek a solution to the Northern problem within an all-Ireland state.*

NOT

Although Dubliners find the English more acceptable than the Northern Irish, Dubliners still seek a solution to the Northern problem within an all-Ireland state.

NOT

Researchers have shown that though Dubliners find the English more acceptable than the Northern Irish, Dubliners still seek a solution to the Northern problem within an all-Ireland state.

e) ***Accuracy***

In academic writing you need to be ***accurate*** in your use of ***vocabulary***. Do not confuse, for example, "*phonetics*" and "*phonology*" or "*grammar*" with "*syntax*".

Choose the correct word, for example, "meeting", "assembly", "gathering" or "conference".

Or from: "money", "cash", "currency", "capital" or "funds".

6.7 The Process of Academic Writing: Writing an Academic Essay

Writing down an academic article/essay is a common practice which you, as a university student, always do at the undergraduate stage. As an English major, you are always required to produce your answers to essay questions in most English and literature courses (e.g. Novel, Drama, and Poetry) in the form of coherent ***academic*** essays that reflect your understanding. Regardless of the accuracy of any information/ideas you include in this essay, the way you plan, write, organize, and signpost what you are writing is ***extremely*** important. After all, the course instructor would expect you to produce an ***academic*** piece of writing.

Some students do not get high scores in these courses, not mainly because they are not well-informed in the subject or do not have much knowledge, but simply because they are not able to ***compose*** an academic essay! An academic essay, as the table below indicates, should be characterized by:

1. being centred around ***one*** main topic that should involve some ***minor topics***;
2. having: (1) ***an introduction*** (in which the learner/writer should introduce the topic at hand). This includes setting the scene and stating the main topic/thesis/claims that the writer wants to defend; (2) ***a body,*** which is composed of some paragraphs (usually three or more), that usually develop an idea with some details, examples, illustrations, etc. This involves arguing about something, and supporting the main argument logically and coherently; (3) ***a conclusion*** that usually summarises the main argument and gives a

final note to the reader. This might include mentioning briefly the main ideas;

3. going through a ***provisional*** and ***developmental*** process of: mapping, brainstorming, planning, drafting, re-drafting, revising, editing, and writing a final draft;

4. requiring many skills, such as: (1) ***Composition & linguistic skills***: These include things like: how to utilize vocabulary and grammatical competence to produce accurate words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs; the ability to properly express oneself; the ability to develop an idea using supporting examples and details; the ability to create shifts and transitions between ideas/points; the ability to summarize a section by, for example, removing unnecessary details; the ability to use punctuation marks accurately and functionally; the ability to move certain sentences back and forward as required; (2) ***Research skills:*** These skills involve: how to choose and search for a topic; how to identify the appropriate resources and references needed for getting information about the topic (e.g. books, articles, websites, and research papers); (3) ***Organizational skills***: These relate to organizing ideas, taking notes, suggesting a time frame, and employing time and resources efficiently; (4) ***Reading skills***: These include things like reviewing academic and relevant resources and skimming and/or scanning some texts (both online and offline); (5) ***Computer and electronic skills***: These include the skills of employing computer and the Internet for composing the essay (e.g. using keyboard for composing the essay, copying and pasting texts, editing and saving the document, and sharing the document online with others).

The following procedure is useful when writing an extended essay or assignment: Available: http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm

	Task	Skills Needed	Product
1.	Read the question or brief and understand what you are required to do. Think about the subject, the purpose and the audience.	thinking academically	Subject.
2.	Think about what you know about the subject. Write it down in some way.	Brainstorming	Diagrams or notes.
3.	Go to the library and find relevant books or articles.	library/research skills	Reading list.
4.	Find the books on your reading list - if you have one - and study them.	reading skills: skimming and scanning	List of materials studied.
5.	Make notes on these books and articles. Record full details of the materials you use.	reading in detail selecting & note-taking paraphrasing/summarising	Notes.

	Task	Skills Needed	Product
6.	Organise your piece of work.	Planning Organisation	Plan.
7.	Type or write your first draft.	writing from notes synthesis writing paragraphs typing/word-processing	First draft.
8.	Discuss your first draft informally with friends, other members of your class and your lecturer if possible.	speaking skills listening skills discussion skills	List of revisions/changes.
9.	Revise your first draft, bearing in mind any comments that were made in your discussions. Go back to 2. if necessary Produce your second draft.	use of dictionaries & reference books writing introduction & conclusion quoting/writing a list of references	Second draft.
10.	Proofread your draft.	checking for spelling mistakes checking punctuation and grammar checking vocabulary use	Writing with changes marked.

	Task	Skills Needed	Product
		checking style checking organisation, references etc. checking for plagiarism	
11.	Produce a final typed version.	typing/word-processing writing title/contents page	Final piece of work.
12.	Check everything.	final check	Hand in.

6.8 Real Samples

Sample 1:

Excerpt from my PhD study:

Abdallah, M. M. S. (2011). *Web-based new literacies and EFL curriculum design in teacher education: A design study for expanding EFL student teachers' language-related literacy practices in an Egyptian pre-service teacher education programme.* PhD Thesis. Graduate School of Education, College of Social Sciences and International Studies, University of Exeter, England, UK.

Globally speaking, current advances in modern technologies have created a need for reconceptualising old notions of literacy centred on the ability to read, write, and comprehend printed texts, especially within language learning contexts (Buckingham, 2007; Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). The Internet or the Web, in particular, calls for new forms of reading, writing, and communication (Leu et al, 2005: p2) in this information age which, as Jewitt (2006: p13) notes,

marks a shift from page to screen. More specifically, the development of Web 2.0, a new generation of the Web that has been enabling new functions and possibilities for learning such as social networking, easy publishing online, and collaborative construction of knowledge (Alexander, 2006; Parker & Chao, 2007), imposes a new reality for language learning and practice.

Today, literate individuals should know how to gather, analyse, and use information resources to solve problems and accomplish certain goals (Kasper, 2000). This has become crucial within English language learning (ELL) contexts where learners are required to use English for a variety of communicative and functional purposes. As language learners are increasingly involved in electronic environments, they need new strategies because the ability to communicate through information resources necessitates new literacy skills (Karchmer, 2001). As a result, education and language learning demand a major restructuring based on these new literacies and curricula (Kellner, 2002) to understand the new competencies required by the Web (especially Web 2.0 technologies) along with a wide range of functional, cultural, critical, and technological aspects deemed vital for language learning.

As far as language teacher education is concerned, new literacies have become of great concern in educational institutions (Kellner, 2002; Leu et al., 2004). Internationally, there is a growing trend towards equipping prospective teachers in general and language teachers in particular with competencies to cope with new developments and innovations that necessitate expanding the concept of literacy itself to encompass current changes. This necessitates always reviewing and updating teacher education programmes themselves to be able to develop strategies that help prospective teachers to understand the new forms of literacy and be prepared to use technology for their professional growth and teach in ways that connect to students' lives (Kellner, 2002).

At the onset of their undergraduate preparation programme, EFL student teachers experience a transitional stage that involves some psychological

tensions caused by new academic requirements (Roberts, 1998: p72). This applies to the Egyptian context, especially AUCOE, where EFL student teachers spend some time struggling with new academic demands such as independent study, using the library, and coming to grips with the English language as both the content and means of instruction (Undergraduate Study, 2008). They should master the required knowledge base that involves some general educational competencies, lifelong learning skills, and specific academic skills related to English and literacy (Freeman, 1983; Johnston & Goettsch, 2000; Richards, 1998; Shulman, 1987).

The systematic pre-service EFL teacher education programmes provided by universities are, more than any time before, necessary and important. However, their components need to be updated to address the new literacy practices related to both the Web and EFL, which may foster lifelong learning skills and strategies necessary for student teachers' continuous professional development.

Nowadays, teachers in the field face many challenges related to technology and literacy. They are challenged not only to integrate technology into traditional aspects of literacy instruction (e.g., book reading), but also to engage students in emerging new literacies (e.g., online reading and writing) (Leu et al, 2005), which can be regarded as natural extensions of the traditional linguistic aspects. Research points to the pressing need for a strategic, organised instruction dealing with these new literacies along with a meaningful, effective integration of the Web in the learning context (e.g., Asselin & Moayeri, 2008; Coiro & Dobler, 2007).

Teacher education is the means through which new literacies can be integrated (Cornu, 1997: p321). As far as EFL teacher education is concerned, Cavanaugh (2005), Kamhi-Stein (2000), and McPherson et al (2007: p24) argue that EFL teacher education programmes should be updated to encompass new technological concepts and literacy practices, which have become essential for surviving in a digital networked environment, and which should

therefore be part of any pre-service teacher education programme (Leu, 2000c; Loethe, 1997). However, how best to help future teachers to learn about the Web and other ICTs has constantly been a challenge for teacher educators (Zhao, 2003), especially when it comes to TEFL or TESOL. Consequently, a revision of the programme contents, through redesigning its curricula to address such new aspects, is needed.

The Web and other new technologies should be perceived, not merely as products, but also as literacy tools (Coiro et al., 2008) and means towards improving educational practices. Hence, Van Braak (2001) proposes 'technical innovativeness' as a key component in influencing how individuals would enhance their practices based on technology use.

Sample 2:

Excerpt from: How to write a standard research article. By Caroline Coffin and Rupert Wegerif

What is an Introduction?

Much work has already been published on the structure of the introduction sections of IMRD research articles. Swales (1990, 1994) in particular presents a comprehensive account. In this section we make use of his CARS (Create a Research Space) Model This model illustrates how an introduction is typically shaped by its purpose of 'creating a research space'. Swales uses an ecological metaphor to suggest that research articles are all competing for 'space'. Thus introductions have to start by establishing the significance of the research field ('establishing a territory'); then provide a rationale for their research in terms of that significance ('establishing a niche'); and finally show how the paper will occupy and defend the ecological niche that has been carved out ('occupying the niche').

Computers are becoming an established part of education in schools throughout the developed world (Plomp and Pelgrum, 1991; Crook, 1994, p 1).

However, despite the growing expectation that computers will be available in classrooms, there remains considerable uncertainty and debate over how best to use them. Underwood and Underwood report that even in well-resourced schools computers are often underused because, apparently, teachers claim that they 'don't know what to with them' (1990, p 16). Crook's review of the evidence on the impact of computers in school education suggests that computers are often used in a way 'decoupled from the mainstream of classroom life' (1994, p 29). Crook and others (e.g. Fisher, 1993) argue that the limited use of computers in classrooms stems partly from the inadequate way their educational role is often conceptualised. This paper joins the debate about how best to integrate the use of computers into classroom education. A socio-cultural approach is adopted, based on the claim that education is essentially a discursive process (Edwards and Mercer 1997), and from this approach it is argued that computers can be used most effectively as a resource for group work and for the support of the teaching and learning of language skills. These arguments were made by Crook (1994) but this paper also argues that the educational implications of a socio-cultural analysis go further: to be used effectively, computers must be integrated into the curriculum-based culture of schooling.

The first part of the paper develops an educational strategy for the use of more directive `tutorial' software which can be incorporated by teachers into curriculum-based classroom activities. This strategy is based upon coaching 'exploratory talk' and then encouraging 'exploratory talk' in group work around computers within different curriculum subject areas. 'Exploratory talk' is defined, through the findings of a survey of research on collaborative learning, as that kind of interaction which best supports group problem-solving and group learning. The second part of the paper reports on the implementation and evaluation of an intervention programme which applied the proposed strategy in primary classroom. The intervention programme was designed to explore three research questions which arose from the educational strategy:

• Can the quality of children's interactions when working together at computers be improved by coaching exploratory talk?

• Can computers be used effectively to support the teaching and learning of exploratory talk?

• Can computer supported collaborative learning integrate peer learning with directive teaching?

Sample 3:

Excerpt from: Teaching with Wikis: Toward a Networked Pedagogy. By Rebecca Wilson Lundin

Abstract

Computers and writing scholarship is increasingly turning towards the network as a potential pedagogical model, one in which writing is intimately connected to its social contexts. The use of wikis in first-year composition classes can support this networked pedagogy. More specifically, due to unique features such as editability and detailed page histories, wikis can challenge a number of traditional pedagogical assumptions about the teaching of writing. This article shows how wikis can challenge assumptions in four categories of interest to composition studies: new media composition, collaborative writing, critical interaction, and online authority. The analysis demonstrates that wikis, while not automatically revolutionary to composition pedagogy, hold significant potential to help facilitate pedagogical changes.

For the past decade, the field of computers and writing has focused on literal and metaphoric networks as possible pedagogical models. Networks can socialize the writing process, readily

providing real audiences for student writing and emphasizing the situatedness of each piece of rhetoric among a constellation of others. By viewing writing as a networked activity, students focus on the connectivity and complexity of rhetorical situations rather than understanding writing as the de-contextualized product of a single, isolated worker. By viewing teaching as a networked activity, we focus on the collaborative nature of our professional work and on reciprocal relationships with our students. Given these apparent benefits, our hopes for composition are increasingly turning towards the network. Rice **(2006)** summarized this direction succinctly: Asking "What should college English be?" Rice answered, simply, "The network" (p. 133).

Our increasing focus on networks coincides with a growth in the pedagogical technologies that support such interactions. In growing numbers, rhetoric and composition teachers are using blogs, listservs, discussion boards, and web sites. Simultaneously, we are providing critical rationales and frameworks for the incorporation of these technologies in teaching, explaining how and why to use networked technology in the composition classroom **(see, for example, Barton, 2005; Lunsford, 2006; Wickliff & Yancey, 2001)**. Fundamentally, these pieces ask how, or whether, networked technologies can help us teach more effectively. A second approach to the study of technology in the classroom is to focus on the challenges that new technologies present to established pedagogical methods (see, for example, DeWitt & Dickson, 2003; Eldred & Toner, 2003; Moxley & Meehan, 2007). This type of work encourages teachers to

reexamine and redefine their goals for the classroom, asking and demonstrating how established teaching practices can be stretched and strained with the introduction of new technological practices. Though there is clear overlap between these two approaches to researching classroom technologies, this article primarily participates in the second. Like Eldred & Toner (2003), DeWitt & Dickson (2003), and Moxley & Meehan (2007), I begin with the premise that new technologies challenge, often in productive ways, long-held assumptions in the field of computers and writing. The increasing perception of a "networked" pedagogy as a productive possibility can and should encourage us to re-examine the goals and beliefs under which we operate, even as we discuss how new technologies may help meet those goals.

Such re-examination gives us an opportunity to make visible, and subsequently re-evaluate, the received wisdom of our field concerning the definition of writing, models of authorship, classroom authority, and more.

Wikis are a particularly productive site for this examination for a number of reasons. First, as a web-based technology they clearly participate in network culture. Wikis have steeply increased in popularity since their initial application as spaces in which computer programmers could collaboratively develop and share code. Now such web sites as Wikipedia and WikiHow have put the technology to a variety of literacy uses, developing massive, and popular, resources of collective information, aggregating copious amounts of text as well as a variety of multimedia elements. As Purdy (in press) observed, the online presence of Wikipedia is nearly inescapable (Wikipedia sites often appear first on Google searches for a wide range of issues) and serves as a testament to the growing popularity of wikis. Despite this popularity, academia often lags behind, both in its acceptance of resources

such as Wikipedia and in its use of wiki software (see, for example, Cohen, 2007; Purdy, in press). Given the drastic break between popular network culture's acceptance of these online writing environments and academia's resistance to them, analysing the challenges that wikis present to traditional methods of teaching promises to provide a constructive tension. This is particularly clear when we examine new modes of composition, which can broaden significantly in the new media environment provided by wikis, and when we explore the critical interaction that can occur in wiki communication between students.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Effective Reading Skills and Strategies

7.1 Overview of Reading Skills

Reading is an integral skill that goes beyond mere word recognition. It involves a complex array of sub-skills that enable us to extract meaning from text. Understanding the types of reading can help develop proficiency in this valuable skill.

Reading is a multifaceted skill that involves various techniques tailored to different purposes and content. Skimming is a strategic, rapid reading method for getting the gist of the material, often used for previewing or reviewing texts. Scanning, on the other hand, is a targeted reading approach, used to locate specific information within a text quickly. Intensive reading is a thorough, detailed reading style, focusing on understanding and analyzing every word and sentence, typically used for complex texts where comprehension of each part is crucial. Extensive reading involves reading longer texts for pleasure and general understanding, which can enhance language acquisition and fluency.

Types of Reading

Skimming is a rapid reading technique used to get a general overview of the material. You read the title, subtitles, and the first few sentences of each paragraph to get the gist of the content. It's like flying over the text at a high level.

Scanning is a reading technique for finding specific information quickly. For instance, scanning a text to find a particular name or date. It's a bit like using a metal detector on a beach to find a lost ring.

Intensive Reading involves careful reading of a small amount of text, with a focus on understanding the details. It's often used when studying a complex subject or learning a foreign language.

Extensive Reading is reading large amounts of text, usually for pleasure. The goal is to understand the overall meaning rather than focusing on the specific details.

7.2 Active Reading Techniques

Active reading transforms passive absorption of words into an engaging dialogue with the text. The SQ3R Method, encompassing Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review, is a systematic approach to understanding and retaining information. Surveying allows readers to preview the structure and main points of the text. Questioning turns titles, headings, and subheadings into queries that guide focused reading. The reading phase involves in-depth engagement with the text, followed by recitation to reinforce memory and understanding. Reviewing consolidates the material, ensuring long-term retention. Annotating and note-taking are instrumental practices that complement active reading, allowing readers to mark significant points and summarize concepts in their own words, thus reinforcing learning and comprehension.

Active reading involves engaging with the text to improve comprehension and retention. This can be achieved through the SQ3R method and annotating and note-taking.

SQ3R Method

SQ3R stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review.

- *Survey*: Skim the text to get a general idea of the content. Look at headings, subheadings, and highlighted words.

- *Question*: Formulate questions based on your survey. These questions will guide your reading.

- *Read*: Read the text carefully with the aim of answering the questions you formulated.

- *Recite*: Summarize the text in your own words. This will help cement the information in your memory.

- *Review*: Review the material after a few hours or days to reinforce your memory.

Annotating and Note-Taking

Annotating involves highlighting, underlining, or making notes directly on the text. This helps to focus your attention and aids in remembering the material. Note-taking, on the other hand, is the practice of writing down information from the text in your own words.

7.3 Reading for Comprehension

Reading for comprehension involves understanding the text at a deeper level. Comprehension is the core of reading, necessitating the identification of main ideas and supporting details. This involves discerning the central thesis or argument of the text and the evidence or explanations that bolster it. Understanding text structures, such as cause and effect, comparison and contrast, or problem and solution, is vital for interpreting the author's message and intent. Recognizing these patterns aids in predicting content and organizing information logically in one's mind.

Identifying Main Ideas and Supporting Details

The main idea is the central point that the author is trying to convey. Supporting details provide evidence or examples to back up the main idea. Identifying these components can help you understand the text's message.

Understanding Text Structures

Texts can be organized in different ways: chronologically, by cause and effect, comparison and contrast, problem and solution, etc. Recognizing these structures can enhance your comprehension.

7.4 Online Reading

Although they share some common features and strategies, such as activating prior knowledge and synthesising information (Eagleton & Dobler, 2007: p36), print-based reading and Web-based reading are not the same. From a new literacies perspective, the skills and strategies associated with traditional, print-based reading are still necessary to read and learn online, but are not sufficient alone since the nature of online reading comprehension is different (Coiro & Dobler, 2007).

Online reading is a complicated process that requires knowledge about new things such as how search engines work and how information is organised within websites (Coiro, 2005: p30). Thus, those who master the skills and competencies necessary to read books are not necessarily competent online readers. Empirically, Coiro (2005: p30) noticed that some students already skilled at reading books were struggling with finding information online wasting much time without reaching their target. For example, they were lost on the Web moving from one webpage to another without locating the information they needed to complete their assignments, a conclusion also reached by my pilot study (Abdallah, 2011b).

By the same token, Leu et al (2007) conclude that video recordings for some adolescent readers while reading online suggest that readers who struggle with offline materials may not struggle with online materials to the same degree as long as they have the skills and/or strategies essential for online reading comprehension. They conclude that isomorphism does not exist between offline and online reading comprehension because if they were the same, high-achieving offline readers would always be high-achieving online readers and vice versa.

Consequently, it is essential to understand the differences between online reading and offline or print-based reading which usually revolve around: (1) environment or medium; (2) nature; (3) types of the cognitive processes involved; (4) the complex nature of the texts readers interact with; (5) the additional new skills and/or strategies that online readers need in the Web environment.

The environment, medium, and ways of navigation of print and hypertext are completely different. While both environments typically provide supportive navigational features (e.g., a table of contents), the actual content of hypertext is hidden beneath multiple layers of information not viewable with traditional previewing procedures such as rapidly going through the pages of a printed book (Coiro & Dobler, 2007). Besides, the Web itself provides many features, such as hyperlinks, which facilitate the navigation process to the readers.

The construction of meaning as a cognitive process is another source of difference. Online readers have choices as they navigate through many websites and media, and therefore, they personally construct their own meaning and understanding out of this navigation process. Offline readers, on the other hand, read the texts already constructed for them. Thus, the construction of meaning during online reading comprehension is much more complex than it is the case with offline reading comprehension (Leu, et al, 2009).

Reading on the Web therefore adds layers of complexity to an already complex process (Kern, 2000: p223). This complexity is caused by the fact that comprehension on the Web requires the orchestrating of a number of additional cueing systems (e.g. operational, organisational, and multimedia cues) plus knowledge of informational text structures placing a heavier cognitive load on learners (Eagleton & Dobler, 2007: p31). This is shown by studies of how textual differences influence comprehension, which indicate that both children and adults have more difficulty reading informational texts

than reading narrative texts (e.g., Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). The difficulty posed by informational texts becomes more challenging when readers are to define a specific task, search for information, and select the resources themselves.

The nature of the text itself is different as online texts are more complicated than linear, printed texts. Online texts appear in types new to the readers, which Coiro (2003a/b) identifies as nonlinear, multiple-media, and interactive texts, to clarify the message transferred. Readers online are provided with options like clicking a hyperlink to access further details on a particular word or item. Now that online texts involve new forms and ways of arranging and structuring textual material introducing new challenges for readers, especially second and foreign language readers (Anderson, 2003: p4), higher levels of inferential reasoning and comprehension monitoring strategies are demanded.

There are many new skills and strategies needed within an online reading context. Leu et al. (2008: pp322-37) detail some of these skills and strategies as follows: (1) Online reading is usually initiated by a pre-reading question or query that guides the reading process, something not necessarily needed within a print-based reading context; (2) locating information online is another aspect of online reading comprehension that requires new skills (e.g., using a search engine, reviewing returned results, and quickly reading a webpage to locate links to required data). Locating information may create a bottleneck for the subsequent skills of online reading comprehension in the sense that those who possess those online skills necessary to locate information can continue to read and solve their problem, while those who do not possess them cannot; (3) During critical evaluation, a unique set of skills are required. Whereas critical evaluation is important when reading offline, it is perhaps more important while reading the Web where anyone can publish anything. Therefore, it is vital to identify to what extent the online information is reliable. The unique nature of the Web, as a source of information that differs from traditional resources, has

been thoroughly explored, mostly by librarians, who have highlighted the need for greater critical evaluation of Web-based resources (see Barker, 2004 and Kirk, 1996, for examples of evaluative schemes).

Reading online is a complicated process that is not simply defined around the encoding of online texts, or just the purpose, task, and context. Instead, as Leu, et al (2008: pp332-36) argue, online reading comprehension is also defined by a process of self-directed text construction that occurs as readers navigate on their own through an infinite informational space to construct their own versions of texts encountered online.

With the dominance of the Internet as a teaching/learning medium and the subsequent result that information gathering has become, perhaps, the most widely used application of the Web, it is surprising that there is still a lack of a research-based understanding of the strategies needed to successfully understand and read information online (Coiro, 2009; Coiro & Dobler, 2007). Some few studies were conducted to examine online reading (e.g., Coiro, 2007; Coiro & Dobler, 2007; Leu, 2007). New literacies required for dealing with information and material available online still need further investigation.

Many new reading sub-skills and strategies have emerged to express the new online processes. In this context, Leu (2002) suggests that developing more critical reading skills within networked ICT will be an important aspect of the new literacies to face the challenge ahead. Clarifying the nature of the challenge we have today, Eagleton and Dobler (2007) suggest that in order to be Web literate, we should meet the demands of the Web, which are associated with reading by acquiring new skills and strategies.

Skills of online reading comprehension:

2.2.1 Students should understand the features of online texts represented in the range of symbols, cueing systems, and multiple-media formats (e.g. icons and animated symbols).

2.2.2 Students should understand the nature of hypertext that entails new screen-based interactions between word, image and sound.

2.2.3 Students should look for and work out the overall meaning of an online message that has been formulated in a complicated digital context.

2.2.4 Students should focus on a particular question/problem/query to guide the online reading process.

2.2.5 Students should try to activate their prior knowledge and make use of their background information while dealing with new online texts.

2.2.6 Students should be able to read across an evolving range of online texts through skimming and scanning websites.

2.2.7 Students should be able to navigate through links and connected pages to construct meanings that meet goals and/or answer questions.

2.2.8 Students should be able to employ new reasoning and comprehension strategies to deal with nonlinear, interactive online texts.

2.2.9 Students should be able to read purposefully, selectively and pragmatically within an online environment to accomplish their objectives (e.g. by selecting relevant information).

2.2.10 Students should be able to make use of cues (e.g. captions, icons, hyperlinks, and interactive graphics) to identify relevant and important ideas.

7.5 Critical Reading

Critical reading goes a step further than comprehension. It involves assessing the credibility and value of the text. Critical reading goes beyond mere comprehension to involve a deeper analysis of the text. It requires evaluating the strength of arguments and the credibility of evidence presented. This level of reading challenges readers to assess the validity of the information, considering the context and the author's purpose. Recognizing bias and perspective is also crucial; it involves understanding the author's stance and how it shapes the presentation of facts and opinions. By questioning the reliability and objectivity of the text, readers develop the ability to think critically and read discerningly.

Evaluating Arguments and Evidence

An argument is a claim supported by evidence. Evaluating arguments involves assessing the logic of the claim and the reliability of the evidence provided.

Recognizing Bias and Perspective

Every author has a perspective that can influence how information is presented. Recognizing bias involves identifying any partiality or prejudice in the text. Recognizing perspective involves understanding the author's viewpoint or stance on the issue.

Critical literacy skills:

2.3.1 Students should understand some important facts about websites that relate to reliability (e.g. the fact that each website has its own agenda, perspective, and bias).

2.3.2 Students should be able to identify a website's form (e.g. blog, forum, or advertisement) and general purpose (e.g. entertainment, educational, or commercial) in order to evaluate the reliability of online sources.

2.3.3 Students should be able to identify the type of webpage content (e.g. a book, an article, a brochure, and an archive).

2.3.4 Students should be critical and reflective by going beyond the simple decoding and comprehension of the online text.

2.3.5 Students should be able to employ critical thinking skills and strategies while investigating web-based information to discover its accuracy, validity, reliability, and appropriateness to the task at hand.

2.3.6 Students should make use of their background knowledge to evaluate what they read online and to question the relevant social, political, and ideological elements.

2.3.7 Students should make critical, informed judgments about online information, which include: recognising bias, identifying the authors and their purposes, and distinguishing the commercial content from the academic one.

2.3.8 Students should be able to use clues on a webpage that help with evaluating it as an information source (e.g. clues in a URL or web address that help with determining a website location and type).

2.3.9 Students should be able to ask and answer evaluative questions such as: Is the information accurate? Is the author an authority on the subject? Is the information current and timely?

2.3.10 Students should be able to compare and contrast the reliability of the information they find by investigating multiple sources on the same topic.

7.6 SEARCH Framework for Locating Data Online

Henry (2006: p618) suggests a framework called SEARCH for the essential search skills needed for reading and locating information on the Web. *SEARCH* stands for six steps:

1. **S**et a purpose for searching;

2. **E**mploy effective search strategies;

3. **A**nalyse search engine results;

4. **R**ead critically and synthesize information;

5. **C**ite your sources;

6. **H**ow successful was your search? (Evaluating your search).

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter aims to equip student teachers with the necessary skills to navigate diverse reading demands effectively. By mastering these strategies, they can enhance their understanding, critical thinking, and overall teaching proficiency in English language education. Through the application of these techniques, student teachers will be prepared to foster a similar depth of reading comprehension and analytical skills in their future classrooms.

In conclusion, effective reading strategies are essential for academic success. They help you understand, remember, and critically evaluate the information you read. By mastering these strategies, you can become a more efficient and effective reader.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Citations and Referencing Styles

8.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the crucial role of citations and referencing styles within the domain of educational research, with a specific focus on TESOL/TEFL. It emphasizes the importance of accurate attribution as an ethical and academic imperative, examining the potential consequences of neglecting proper citation practices. Additionally, the chapter will provide an overview of common referencing styles prevalent in TESOL/TEFL research, highlighting their key features and offering practical guidance on avoiding common pitfalls.

8.2 Why are Citations and Referencing Important?

The sources underscore the significance of acknowledging the contributions of fellow researchers in scholarly writing. This acknowledgement is materialized through citations, which serve multiple critical functions:

- ➢ **Giving Credit Where Credit is Due**: Citations serve as a fundamental gesture of respect towards the intellectual property of other researchers. By diligently citing your sources, you acknowledge the originators of ideas, theories, and research findings that inform your own work.
- ➢ **Building a Foundation of Evidence**: Citations play a crucial role in substantiating the claims and arguments presented in your research. By providing references to previous studies and authoritative sources, you offer credible support for your assertions and enhance the persuasiveness of your arguments.
- ➢ **Guiding Readers Through the Research Landscape**: Citations act as signposts, guiding readers to the specific sources that have shaped your thinking. This allows them to locate the information you have drawn upon, enabling them to independently verify your interpretations and explore the topic in greater depth.
- ➢ **Positioning Your Research Within a Broader Context**: Citations enable you to situate your research within the existing body of knowledge in your field. By connecting your work to prior research, you demonstrate

awareness of the ongoing scholarly conversation and highlight the unique contribution of your own study.

➢ *Showcasing Research Breadth and Depth*: A well-researched paper is characterized by a comprehensive and relevant reference list. A substantial number of citations, thoughtfully selected and integrated, demonstrates the breadth and depth of your engagement with the literature in your field.

➢ *Upholding Academic Integrity*: Perhaps the most critical aspect of proper citation is the avoidance of plagiarism. Plagiarism, defined as the act of presenting someone else's work as your own, is a serious academic offence with potentially severe consequences. Accurate and consistent citation is essential for maintaining academic integrity.

8.3 Referencing Styles: A Diverse Landscape

A variety of referencing styles exist, each with its own set of rules and conventions governing the formatting of in-text citations and reference lists. Some popular styles commonly employed in educational research, including TESOL/TEFL, include:

APA (American Psychological Association): Originating in the field of psychology, APA style has gained widespread adoption across education, social sciences, and other disciplines. Its emphasis on the author and date of publication makes it a suitable choice for research that prioritizes the recency and relevance of sources.

MLA (Modern Language Association): MLA style is frequently preferred in humanities disciplines, such as language, literature, and cultural studies. Its detailed citation format, often including line numbers for textual analysis, makes it well-suited for literary scholarship.

Chicago/Turabian: The Chicago Manual of Style offers two distinct formats for citations and references: notes-bibliography and author-date. The notes-bibliography system utilizes footnotes or endnotes for citations, while the author-date format aligns more closely with APA style. Chicago's versatility has led to its adoption in a wide range of disciplines.

Harvard: The Harvard referencing system, prevalent in many countries outside the United States, shares similarities with author-date systems like APA. Its

emphasis on clarity and consistency has made it a popular choice for international academic publications.

It is essential to consult the specific style guide prescribed by your institution, department, or target publication. Each style has nuances in formatting, punctuation, and the inclusion of specific elements. Failure to adhere to these guidelines can lead to inconsistencies in your work and potentially raise concerns about attention to detail.

8.4 APA Style: A Closer Look

Given its prominence in education research, the sources highlight APA style as particularly relevant for TESOL/TEFL scholars. Let's examine some key features of APA style:

In-Text Citations

APA style utilizes an author-date system for in-text citations, requiring the inclusion of the author's last name and the year of publication within the body of your text. This approach serves to immediately attribute ideas and findings to their original sources.

Parenthetical Citations: When the author's name is not directly mentioned in your sentence, enclose both the author's last name and the publication year in parentheses at the end of the sentence.

Example: (Smith, 2020)

Narrative Citations: When incorporating the author's name into your sentence, place the publication year in parentheses immediately after the author's name.

Example: Smith (2020) argues that...

Multiple Authors: For sources with three or more authors, APA style implements a shortened format using "et al." after the first author's name in all in-text citations, except in cases where it might create ambiguity.

Example: (Jones et al., 2019)

Direct Quotations: When incorporating direct quotations from a source, include the page number or paragraph number (for sources without page numbers) along with the author and year.

Example: (Garcia, 2018, p. 45)

Reference List

A cornerstone of APA style, and indeed of all formal referencing styles, is the comprehensive list of sources cited within your paper. This list, typically titled "References," is placed at the end of your document and adheres to specific formatting rules that ensure consistency and ease of retrieval. The sources provide several key guidelines for crafting an APA reference list:

Author Information: List authors' last names followed by their initials, separated by commas.

Example: Garcia, M., & Smith, J.

Publication Date: Include the year of publication in parentheses immediately after the author's name.

Example: (2018)

Title: Capitalize only the first word of the title and subtitle, as well as any proper nouns. Italicize the titles of books and journals.

Example: The impact of technology on language learning

Publication Information:

Books: Include the publisher's name.

Journal Articles: Provide the journal title, volume number (italicized), issue number (in parentheses), and page range.

Websites: Include the URL of the website, omitting "https://" or "http://."

DOI (Digital Object Identifier): Whenever available, include the DOI for journal articles, books, and other digital sources. Present DOIs as hyperlinks, omitting the "DOI:" prefix.

Example: doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2012.688608

Retrieval Dates: For online sources with content that may change over time, provide the date you accessed the information using "Retrieved Month Day, Year" format.

Example: Retrieved July 12, 2023, from ...

8.5 Common Referencing Mistakes to Avoid

Navigating the intricacies of referencing styles can be a daunting task, and even experienced researchers can fall prey to common errors. The sources offer guidance on avoiding some of these pitfalls:

➢ **Inconsistent Formatting**: One of the most frequent referencing mistakes is inconsistency in applying the chosen style. It is crucial to maintain uniformity in punctuation, capitalization, and the order of elements within citations and references.

➢ **Missing Information**: Each referencing style requires specific elements for different source types. Always double-check to ensure that all necessary information (author, date, title, publication details) is included in each reference entry. Omitting even a seemingly minor detail can render a reference incomplete and potentially make the source difficult to locate.

➢ **Incorrect Punctuation**: Punctuation marks are not mere embellishments in referencing; they serve crucial roles in conveying meaning and ensuring clarity. Pay close attention to the placement of commas, periods, colons, and other punctuation marks, as even slight deviations from the prescribed format can create confusion.

➢ **Plagiarism:** While plagiarism is a serious academic transgression, it can often occur unintentionally, particularly when researchers are unfamiliar with proper citation practices. Always enclose direct quotations within quotation marks, and ensure that paraphrased information is appropriately cited to acknowledge the original source. Remember, even if you rephrase an idea in your own words, you must attribute it to the original author.

8.6 Seeking Help and Support: You Don't Have to Navigate Alone

Mastering the art of citations and referencing is an ongoing endeavour. As new source types emerge and styles evolve, researchers must remain vigilant in updating their knowledge and seeking guidance when needed. The sources, along with our conversation history, highlight several valuable avenues for seeking help and support:

➢ **Seek Guidance from Your Supervisor**: Your research supervisor is a valuable resource for addressing specific questions and concerns related to your research project. They can provide tailored guidance on

the preferred referencing style, clarify ambiguous formatting rules, and offer feedback on your reference list.

➢ **Utilize Library Resources:** Libraries often offer a wealth of resources dedicated to supporting researchers with citations and referencing. Explore workshops, online guides, and one-on-one consultations with librarians who can provide expert assistance on various referencing styles and citation management tools.

➢ **Consult Style Manuals and Reputable Websites**: The official style manuals (e.g., the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association) are considered the definitive guides for their respective styles. These manuals provide comprehensive explanations of formatting rules, numerous examples, and helpful tips for handling complex citation scenarios. Additionally, numerous reputable websites, often maintained by universities or professional organizations, offer accessible and reliable information on referencing.

➢ **Explore Citation Management Software**: Citation management tools, such as Zotero, Mendeley, and EndNote, have emerged as powerful allies for researchers seeking to streamline their citation workflow. These software programs enable you to store, organize, and format references from a variety of sources. They can automatically generate citations and bibliographies in your chosen style, significantly reducing the risk of formatting errors. While not mentioned in the provided sources, these tools have become increasingly popular among researchers, and I would encourage you to explore their capabilities.

8.7 Conclusion: Embracing Accuracy and Seeking Support

The meticulous practice of citing sources and adhering to referencing styles is paramount to maintaining the integrity and credibility of scholarly research. By accurately attributing ideas and acknowledging the work of others, we contribute to the collective pursuit of knowledge and ensure that the contributions of individual researchers are recognized and valued. Remember, mastering citations and referencing styles is an ongoing process. As you progress in your academic journey, embrace the importance of accuracy, remain curious, and never hesitate to seek guidance when navigating the complex landscape of academic writing.

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