University of Tripoli

The Faculty of Education in Gasser Bin Ghesheer

English Language Department

Subject: <u>Graduation project (EL450)</u>

"Guidelines for writing research projects for English language graduates".

Semester: Fall 2023

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Introduction

The development of productive skills and productive sub-skills is crucial in the field of English language education (Brown, 2014; Hedge, 2000). In order to diagnose and address issues related to these skills, the department has made a decision to focus the graduation projects for the academic semesters of Fall 2023/Spring 2024 semester on the development of the mentioned skills. Namely, the department decided to focus the department studies on the development of speaking and writing skills and sub-skills. This decision was based on a thorough analysis of questionnaires and reports from the previous semesters (Fall 2022 and Spring 2023), aiming to generate valuable results that can contribute to identifying challenges and proposing effective solutions.

Productive skills encompass both speaking and writing, which consist of various sub-skills (Celce-Murcia et al., 2014; Thornbury, 2006). Speaking involves pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, discourse management, register and tone, and non-verbal communication (Richards & Renandya, 2002; Ur, 1996). On the other hand, writing involves spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, cohesion and coherence, register and tone, style and creativity, and editing and proofreading (Nunan, 2003; Scrivener, 2011). Each of these sub-skills plays a significant role in the development of productive skills.

The graduates' research projects should aim to explore and investigate topics that are relevant to the development of productive skills and sub-skills. By conducting a comprehensive literature review, their project should identify key theories, concepts, and previous studies that provide a theoretical framework for their research (Brown, 2014; Hedge, 2000). The literature review should also analyze and synthesize the literature to identify gaps or areas where further research is needed. (Celce-Murcia et al., 2014; Nunan, 2003).

The most appropriate research methodology, whether quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods, should be determined with the supervisor. In the writing of the methodology section, data collection methods, instruments, and procedures should be described in details. Followed by an analysis of the collected data using appropriate statistical or qualitative analysis techniques.

The results and findings of the research should be presented in a clear and organized manner, and they should be interpreted and discussed in relation to the research questions and objectives, while

addressing any limitations of the study. Recommendations for further research and implications for English language education can then be provided based on the research findings.

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations will be carefully adhered to. Necessary ethics approvals and informed consent will be obtained if the study involves human subjects. Participant privacy, confidentiality, and the handling of sensitive data will be ensured.

By following established guidelines for academic writing, including font type and size, line spacing, and referencing style, graduation research projects will maintain clarity, consistency, and credibility. The project is expected to contribute valuable insights and recommendations for practitioners and policymakers in the field of English language education.

In conclusion, graduation research projects aim to address the needs of the department by focusing on the development of productive skills and sub-skills. By conducting rigorous research and analysis, it seeks to generate results that contribute to the field and offer practical solutions for enhancing English language education.

Topic Selection

In order to diagnose and address issues related to productive skills and productive sub-skills, the department has determined that the graduation projects for the Fall 2023 semester should be focused on their development. This decision was made based on the analysis of questionnaires and reports from the previous semesters (Fall 2022 and Spring 2023). The aim is to generate valuable results that can contribute to identifying challenges and proposing effective solutions.

Productive skills involve speaking and writing, with sub-skills including pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, discourse management, register and tone, and non-verbal communication for speaking, and spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, cohesion and coherence, register and tone, style and creativity, and editing and proofreading for writing. Each of these productive skills can be further broken down into sub-skills.

Here are the main productive skills and their sub-skills:

1. Speaking

In the department's curriculum speaking and listening are taught together as a subject, as both are fundamental language skills that are closely intertwined and complement each other. Within each skill, there are several sub-skills that contribute to effective communication. Therefore, for the graduation projects students can examine each or both skills.

The main sub-skills associated with speaking and listening:

Speaking Sub-Skills:
1. Pronunciation: The ability to produce sounds, stress, and intonation patterns accurately to be understood by others.
2. Fluency: The ability to speak smoothly and with natural pacing, without frequent pauses or hesitations.
3. Vocabulary: The knowledge and effective use of words and phrases to express ideas clearly and precisely.
4. Grammar: Understanding and applying the rules of sentence structure, verb tenses, and other grammatical conventions.
5. Discourse Management: Organizing and sequencing ideas coherently, using appropriate connectors and transitions.

6. Register and Style: Adapting speech to different contexts, such as formal or informal settings, and using appropriate language and tone.
7. Non-Verbal Communication: Utilizing body language, facial expressions, and gestures to enhance meaning and convey emotions.

Listening Sub-Skills:
8. Comprehension: Understanding spoken language in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and meaning.
9. Active Listening: Paying attention to the speaker, focusing on the message, and demonstrating interest through verbal and non-verbal cues.
10. Note-Taking: The ability to identify and record key points, ideas, and details while listening to a speaker.
11. Inference: Drawing conclusions and making educated guesses based on the information provided, even when it is not explicitly stated.
12. Prediction: Anticipating what the speaker might say next based on context, topic, or previous information.
13. Discourse Analysis: Understanding the structure and organization of spoken discourse, including recognizing turn-taking and discourse markers.
14. Intercultural Understanding: Recognizing and interpreting cultural nuances and differences in communication styles.

2. Writing
1. Spelling and punctuation: The ability to write words correctly and use appropriate punctuation marks.
2. Vocabulary: The knowledge and use of a wide range of words and phrases.
3. Grammar: The ability to use grammatical structures accurately.
4. Sentence structure: The ability to construct sentences with appropriate syntax.
5. Cohesion and coherence: The ability to organize ideas and connect them logically.
6. Register and tone: The ability to use appropriate language for different purposes and audiences.
7. Style and creativity: The ability to write effectively with a personal voice and creativity.
8. Editing and proofreading: The ability to revise and correct written work for accuracy and clarity.

Examples of the topics that can be covered

a- Error Analysis in Second Language Writing: Analyzing common grammatical errors made by second language learners in their writing

b- The Role of Discourse Markers in Oral Communication: Investigating the use of discourse markers in spoken discourse and their impact on coherence and cohesion.

c- Technology-Enhanced Approaches for Developing Productive Skills: Investigating the effectiveness of technology-mediated tools and platforms in supporting the development of speaking and writing skills.

d- Examining the impact of register and tone on effective communication

e- Writing Strategies for Academic Success: Investigating the use of specific writing strategies and techniques for improving academic writing proficiency among students.

f- Assessing the Impact of Feedback on Writing Development: Examining the effects of different types of feedback on the improvement of writing skills, including teacher feedback, peer feedback, and self-assessment.

g- The Role of Creativity in Language Production: Exploring the relationship between creativity and productive language skills, investigating how creative expression influences language production.

h- Types of assessment in writing subjects

i- The issue of reliability in the assessment of students' writing

j- The issue of reliability in the assessment of students' speaking skills.

k- The use of technology in learning the speaking skill

l- Use of different social media platforms in the development of learners' fluency/vocabulary inventory/ writing skills/ cultural awareness / cultural context ……

m- The use of AI software in the development of learners' vocabulary inventory.

n- Areas of teaching and learning of the skills mentioned, strategies and techniques to teach the skills and sub-skills in question….etc.

These are rough ideas and are in no way a conclusive list, they are merely suggestions.

The main body of research

1. Research Questions and Objectives: Based on the literature review, develop clear and specific research questions and objectives that will guide your study. These questions should address the gaps identified in the literature and contribute to the existing knowledge in the field.

2. Statement of problem: the researcher typically begins by introducing the broader context of English language teaching and then narrows down to the specific problem or gap in knowledge that the study seeks to investigate. The statement of the problem should be concise, clear, and focused.

3. Literature Review: Conduct a comprehensive review of existing literature related to your research topic. Identify key theories, concepts, and previous studies that provide a

theoretical framework for your research. Analyze and synthesize the literature to identify gaps or areas where further research is needed.

4. Previous studies: In this bit of your research, it is essential to reference recent studies that are relevant to your project. To identify gaps and compare results effectively, it is important to consider studies that have been *published within the last six years*.

5. Methodology**:** Determine the most appropriate research methodology for your study. Common methodologies used in educational research include quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods approaches. Justify your choice of methodology and describe the data collection methods, instruments, and procedures you will use.

6. Data Collection and Analysis**:** Collect data according to your chosen methodology. This may involve surveys, interviews, observations, or analysis of existing data. Analyze the data using appropriate statistical or qualitative analysis techniques. Clearly describe your data analysis process and ensure that it aligns with your research questions.

7. Results and Discussion: Present your research findings in a clear and organized manner. Interpret and discuss the results in relation to your research questions and objectives. Address any limitations of your study and provide suggestions for further research.

8. Conclusion and Implications**:** Summarize the main findings of your research and discuss their implications for English language education. Reflect on the significance of your study and how it contributes to the field. Offer recommendations for practitioners or policymakers based on your findings.

9. References**:** Include a comprehensive list of all the sources you cited in your research project. Follow a recognized citation style, such as APA, MLA, or Chicago, and ensure consistency throughout your project.

10. Ethical Considerations: Ensure that your research adheres to ethical guidelines and principles. If your study involves human subjects, obtain necessary ethics approvals and informed consent. Protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants and handle any sensitive data appropriately.

Remember to consult your advisor or supervisor throughout the research process. They can provide guidance, support, and feedback to help you develop a high-quality research project.

General guidelines that are commonly followed in research projects:

Font Type and Size**:**

- Times New Roman.

- The recommended font size is usually 12 points.

Line Spacing

Body of text: **1.5 cm** spacing.

 Block quotations, and bibliographies/references' list: **single spacing** within each entry.

Table of contents, lengthy tables: **single spacing** may be used.

Page numbers

Put a page number in the bottom right corner of every page, *excluding* the title page or cover page, which is page.

Total Number of Pages**:**

- The length of your research project may range from **30** (as a **minimum**) to **50** (as **maximum**) pages, excluding the appendices and references.

Referencing Style

- The referencing style APA stands for the American Psychological Association. It is a widely used citation style in the social sciences, including fields such as psychology, education, sociology, and communication. The APA style provides guidelines for formatting research papers, citing sources within the text, and creating a reference list at the end of the document. It offers a standardized format for academic writing and referencing to ensure clarity, consistency, and credibility in scholarly work.

- Use a consistent referencing style throughout your research project.

- Include a comprehensive list of all the sources cited in your research project in a separate references or bibliography section at the end.

Resources that could help you understand the use of APA referencing system:

     1- These websites help with generating the references used in the project

[Free APA Citation Generator \[Updated for 2023\] (mybib.com)](#)

[| HARVARD | Cite This For Me](#)

[Citation Form | APA | Journal | Citation Machine](#)

     2- This website has an inclusive set of information on referencing materials from a variety of sources:

https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples

Title Page Elements

    1- Title of research.
    2- Author(s) name(s).

3- Affiliation: department, faculty, university.
4- Supervisor(s) name(s).
5- Academic semester / year.

References

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