



University of Zawia  
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# **Challenges in Writing Graduation Project: Libyan EFL University Teachers and Students Perspectives**

*A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics*

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**Academic year - 2022**

## **Abstract**

This study investigates the challenges encountered by EFL Libyan University students in writing graduation projects, and it also explores these challenges from their teachers' as (supervisors) perspectives. A combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods was utilised to collect data. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the quantitative data from 60 respondents who were randomly chosen in order to know the challenges they encountered during the process of writing their projects. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with six tutors 'supervisors' to collect the qualitative data. The supervisors were chosen purposively to be at least with three years of supervision experience. SPSS software program was used to analyse the quantitative data while the qualitative data were transcribed and then analysed by employing the Thematic Analysis Method. The findings revealed that EFL undergraduate students face numerous challenges in the writing introduction chapter, literature review, methodology, data analysis and discussion and conclusion chapters. The research findings also showed that students encounter significant difficulties related to academic writing and referencing. Moreover, the qualitative findings reaffirmed that the most important reasons behind the students' challenges were: lack of project writing background, lack of academic writing style, lack of academic atmosphere in colleges, lack of resources, difficulties in citation, time limit to write their graduation projects in addition to supervision challenges. All these challenges negatively influence students' abilities to conduct a graduation project in the right way and according to the scheduled deadline given. Thus, the findings of this study are recommended to be used as a platform to convince the research site of the university to set up the Learning Support Centre to provide the academic support for the undergraduate students with research skills.

## **Declaration**

I hereby declare with respect that all of the data in this dissertation “Challenges in Writing Graduation Project: Libyan EFL University Teachers and Students perspectives” is entirely my own effort. When the work of other researchers has been directly quoted or paraphrased, it has been acknowledged in accordance with academic standards.

Nafeesa Mohammed Almokhtar

Signature.....

Date: .....

## **Dedication**

To the pure soul of my father

To my mother

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like first and foremost to extend my sincere praise and gratitude to Allah, the Creator, who granted me patience and power to complete this work. I would like to express my deepest expression of gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Abdussalam Saleh Tantani for his constant advice, critical comments and purposeful encouragement throughout the period of my dissertation writing. This dissertation would not have been completed without his support and guidance.

I would like to extend my special thanks to Zawia University students who participated in this study and helped in collecting the data for this research. In addition, I would express my appreciation and great respect to the teachers “supervisors” who volunteered and made the journey of data collection easy and useful.

No words express the gratitude owed to my mother who made innumerable sacrifices and dedicated her entire life to see me achieve this goal, as well as being the source of motivation to get to where I am now. Heartfelt thanks to my brothers and sisters who were my major support in all respects.

Moreover, my thanks should be given to my best friends Amel and Hajer for being the motivational empowerment by which I kept my strength and did not surrender. I cannot forget the support of my friend Mrs. Randa, who stood by my side all the time sharing me her great academic experience.

My prayer is that this dissertation affects positively on students learning, and enables students to complete their undergraduate projects successfully.

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## Abbreviations

<b>GP</b> .....	<b>Graduation Project</b>
<b>BA</b> .....	<b>Bachelor of Arts</b>
<b>TL</b> .....	<b>Target Language</b>
<b>FL</b> .....	<b>Foreign Language</b>
<b>SL</b> .....	<b>Second Language</b>
<b>EFL</b> .....	<b>English as a Foreign Language</b>
<b>ESL</b> .....	<b>English as a Second Language</b>
<b>SPSS</b> .....	<b>Statistical Package for the Social Sciences</b>
<b>L1</b> .....	<b>First Language</b>
<b>L2</b> .....	<b>Second Language</b>
<b>SRS</b> .....	<b>Simple Random Sampling</b>

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.0. Introduction**

This chapter describes the background of this study. It is initiated with an exploration of the challenges that students may face while writing their graduation research projects and understanding the teachers' views as supervisors about the challenges that might be encountered by the students. This chapter also discusses the statement of the problem, research aims and questions. The research significance, design in addition to an overview of the whole dissertation were all presented in this chapter.

#### **1.1. Background of the Study**

In literature, there are numbers of interesting definitions to the term research provided by key figures in linguistics, for example Kombo and Tromp (2011) defined research as a disciplined enquiry or systematic investigation aimed at providing solutions to problems. In other words, research simply means a search for facts, answers to questions and solutions to problems (Krishna, et. al, 2016). Undergraduate projects are considered as the first major independent research that students undertake at their universities. It was noted that writing an academic graduation project pose a challenge to university students specially those who have limited experience in writing a research paper.

Writing graduation project is an interesting task. Still however, not every student could manage to finish it as required. This may be due to some challenges that students might face. Therefore, those challenges are considered as the main focus of this study. In this respect, Romero, (2016, p.1) stated that "research studies are designed to find answers to specific questions or topics under investigation". Professionals across different settings conduct research to investigate topics relating to their field of study, increase knowledge to support evidence-based practices, test new hypotheses or to further understanding of existing theories. A research can lead to new contributions to the existing knowledge. Thus, only through research it is possible to make progress in any field. Above all, the researcher believes that before discussing the challenges that might face undergraduates

in writing their graduation projects, a logical question about the conceptualization of research of what a graduation project is, that should be answered.

Furthermore, conducting research could be an intimidating task to some students (Pearce, 2005). This might be due to inadequate background knowledge that begins from choosing the topic to study until the submission of the final graduation research project. Conducting a graduation research project is a challenge for both students and supervisors (I'Anson, 2004). Supervisors' plans after conducting the graduation paper are not only to help undergraduates to get a certificate, but also a tool that provides the opportunity for them to guide students to become professionals and help them explore career opportunities that may not otherwise be available.

Undergraduate students are required to carry out research as a part fulfilment of their bachelor degree. "Research is a process consisting of identifying and defining research problem, formulating and testing the hypothesis through data collection, organization and analysis, making deductions and reaching of conclusion from the test results of the hypotheses, and reporting and evaluating the research" (Pardede, 2018, p. 1). Thus, the first task in undertaking a study is to identify and determine the problem to be investigated. Identifying a research problem is important as it motivates and guides the need for conducting a study. It also lays the foundation for an entire project. To solve a certain problem one has to know about that problem (ibid). Hence, the problem identification is crucial to the researcher before conducting the study, and this makes it perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of any research undertaking.

Additionally, research needs to be systematic and carefully considered using scientific methods. "Researchers' task is to make use of existing data to investigate and find results, and analyze whether these newly gathered facts can be applicable to other contexts" (Bocar, 2013, p. 2). Therefore, students should have adequate background knowledge about the conception of research and how a good research paper can be designed. The job of a supervisor then is to help them making the right decision when it comes to the choice of the right methodology and research tools in particular (Judith, 2014). This is guided by the research question or problem under investigation.

According to Doer--shuck (2004) and Schwartz (2003), research paves the way for young scholars to belong to a community of learning, experiencing independent thinking, team work, leadership and communication as the work under the direction of a faculty member. In this regard, Uzobo and Alfred (2019, p. 223) argued that “more attention is paid to teaching rather than conducting research at the undergraduate level”. This may lead students at the undergraduate level just copy an already existing project and pass it to their supervisors who do not even have the time to read the first paragraph of the student’s work. This situation has made research a herculean task for undergraduate students owing to the fact that they have little knowledge about research in their undergraduate levels.

In general, research seeks to investigate answers to certain research questions which have not been answered so far. Regarding the above discussion, this study sheds light on the areas which make challenges for university students and prevent them from carrying out their research work in an academic way. The researcher attempts to determine the factors that influence students’ academic performance and search for what hinders them from presenting their GP as it should be. Thus, this topic is specifically chosen due to the researcher personal experience when writing her first research paper as a graduation project. Therefore, this research is considered as challenging task.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

It was noted that undergraduate students in the English department at Zawia University face challenges in writing their BA graduation projects in their final year. Therefore, this study is conducted to investigate these challenges on the part of students and their teachers as supervisors.

## **1.3. Aims of the Research**

This study is designed to achieve the following aims:

- Identify the challenges EFLstudents face while writing their research project.
- Understand the EFL teachers’ views as supervisors about the challenges that EFL students face when they write their research.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What challenges do undergraduate EFL students encounter when they write their graduation research projects?
2. What are the EFL teachers' views as supervisors about the challenges that students face when they write their project?

#### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

This study is significant in understanding the challenges encountered by fourth year students in the English department at Zawia University when they write their graduation projects. By identifying the difficulties that might face students in writing their graduation projects, a clear vision would be offered about how can these difficulties be overcome. Moreover, exploring those challenges can help supervisors to lead students to the stage where they can eventually submit a good research project. Moreover, figuring out the challenges in this study may also help new researchers who are interested in doing research to overcome any troubles they might face.

#### **1.6. Methodology of the Study**

Both quantitative perspectives (research generates statistics), and qualitative perspectives (understand individual's perception of the world) were used in this study. As pointed out by Laws, et.al, (2013, p. 143) "the key to triangulation is to see the same thing from different perspectives and thus to be able to confirm or challenge the findings of one method with those of another". To collect the quantitative data, a questionnaire was distributed to 60 participants randomly selected. And then, the quantitative data were analysed by using the SPSS software programs, which help rating the percentages of the challenges encountered by university students. Moreover, the researcher conducted 6 semi-structured interviews with teachers who supervise graduation projects at Zawia University. These teachers were purposively chosen to gather qualitative data. The qualitative data were analysed by using Thematic Analysis Method.



### **1.7. Outline of the Study**

This study is divided into six chapters. Chapter one includes a detailed background of the study regarding the context where it was carried out. It also contains the research aims, objectives as well as its significance. Chapter two investigates related literature concerning the challenging areas of the project writing process, such as chapters writing challenges, academic writing challenges and factors that affect students during the graduation project writing. Chapter three, discusses the methodology adopted including the research design, instruments, pilot study, sampling, procedures of data collection and ethical issues. Chapter four presents the data analysis framework, the procedures of analysing the quantitative and qualitative data. Chapter five includes a discussion of the findings obtained. Chapter six contains the conclusion followed by the research recommendations, limitations as well as suggestions for future research.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.0. Introduction**

The importance of reviewing the existing literature is to get a sense of what researchers already know about a particular question or a problem and place each work in the context of its contribution to understanding the research problem being studied (Arlene, 2005). In other words, literature review leads to understanding more about the topic under investigation. This chapter discusses the definition of graduation project from different point of views followed by its importance. Then this chapter goes further and identify the challenges that might face EFL undergraduate students when conducting their graduation project. These challenges include writing introduction chapter, writing literature review chapter, writing methodology chapter, writing data analysis chapter, writing discussion chapter, writing conclusion chapter, using different references in the project and academic writing challenges. Other factors that might have an effect on students during the process of writing their graduation project are: language interference, motivation, financial recourses, insufficient time to submit the research project, research resources and facilities and supervision issues. Moreover, this chapter reviews some relevant previous studies which investigate the challenges and problems that face undergraduate students when writing the graduation project. A summary of the chapter is also provided.

#### **2.1. Graduation Project Definition**

Undergraduate research projects provide an opportunity for students to shine in their preferred area of expertise and gain in-depth experience learning and conducting experiments with a topic related to their specific field of study (Patrick Bass, 2018). It is considered as an academic activity that supports students' competence in investigating, analysing a given data and enriching their learning experiences. Azzam (2014, p.1) stated that "graduation project is an independent task to be carried out by each student individually and accomplished according to specific timetable duration". More to the point, Hejase (2010) argued that the research project illustrates a student's skills to carry

out independent research. However, the graduation project is defined as “one of the requirements for the completion of the graduation degree” (Rasol, 2015, p. 3). It was also stated by the same author that a graduation project is a research experience, where a student defines his\her problem undertaken, create a hypothesis, design experiments to test the hypothesis, and drawn conclusions. Being on the same track, Jili’ow (2017, p. 2) argues that “students can't graduate without submitting their graduation project”. It is worth noting that writing graduation projects is one of the essential requirements that students have to accomplish during their final academic year.

Furthermore, research in common refers to the systematic search for information on a specific topic that can help solving practical problems and increase knowledge. Neville (2007) stated that research is a remarkable characteristic of any degree course because it provides students with an amount of control and independence on what they learn. He also defined research as “a process of enquiry and investigation; it is systematic, methodical and ethical; research can help researchers to solve practical problems and increase knowledge” (ibid, p. 1). According to Manual (2015, p. 44), research is “Any creative systematic activity undertaken in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this knowledge to devise new applications”.

Additionally, Goundar (2012, p. 3) stated that when students undertake a research study to find answers to a question, they are implying that the research process: (1) Is being undertaken within a framework of a set of philosophies (research approaches); (2) Uses procedures, methods and techniques that have been tested for their validity and reliability; (3) Is designed to be unbiased and objective. Moreover, Bist (2014, p. 38-39) proposed that a good research has the following qualities:

- Systematic: (research is structured with specific steps).
- Logical: (research is guided by the rules of logical reasoning and the logical process).
- Empirical: (research deals with concrete data that provides a basis for external validity to research results).

- Replicable: (allows research results to be verified).
- Purposive: (research must have a focus or a specific purpose).

## **2.2. The Importance of Graduation Projects**

Undergraduate research project paves the way for young scholars to belong to a community of learning, experiencing independent thinking, leadership and communication as the research work goes under the direction of a member of teaching staff (Doerschuck, 2004). Azzam (2014) argued that the research project also stimulates students to show their self-esteem. In this respect, Bocar (2013, p. 62) argued “in conducting a research one must have the interest of doing it”. Undergraduate projects facilitate students’ interest in research leading them to write their own research projects, presenting conference papers, writing for publications, and participating in research clubs. Moreover, Madan (2013, p. 1) said that “Research experience allows undergraduate students to better understand published works, learn to balance collaborative and individual work, determine an area of interest, and jump start their careers as researchers”. By the same token, Wenderholm (2004) confirmed that though it is difficult to find success with undergraduate research, it represents an opportunity to have a positive impact on a student’s academic experience.

Nevertheless, doing a research is different from the delivery of any other kind of student exercises. According to Gardner and Davies (2014), by ‘doing research’ in your project, you will become, however, modestly a member of the scientific or policy development community – aiming to measure, to understand, perhaps to evaluate. More to the point, a graduation project is completely different from ordinary courses, the courses project is broadly owned by the student, which aims to develop the intellectual abilities and scientific thinking (Azzam, 2014). Conducting research projects leads to find out answers to questions through the application of scientific procedures and to find reasonable solution to current problems (Jili'ow, 2017). Moreover, Collis and Hussey, (2014, p. 2), summarized the purposes of doing research as to “review or synthesize existing knowledge, investigate existing situations or problems, provide solutions to problems, explore and analyse more general issues, construct or create new procedures or systems,

explain new phenomenon and generate new knowledge”. Elmabruk, (2020), added that doing undergraduate research project helps students to broaden their horizons in learning as they read deeply about their chosen topic.

### **2.3. Challenges Face EFL Undergraduate Students when Conducting their Graduation Projects**

The journey of the project writing does not run smoothly all the way long due to many challenges that might hinder this process. Undergraduate research experiences vary from one student to another. In this respect, Akinbola, et.al, (2018, p.10) wrote, “The research student is the main person responsible for his or her research degree”. Moreover, Alsied (2017, p. 147) argued that “The task of writing research is not a simple one as it involves hard work and effort. It also needs much time and good background knowledge”. Similarly, Baldwin (2005, p. 8) said:

“The main objective of research projects at undergraduate level is to give students experience and understanding of the processes of research, and these can be mirrored in a small, short-term investigation – framing of the research question, literature review, choice of methodology, data gathering, writing up, reaching conclusions and identification of further research needs”.

The graduation project in Libyan Universities is considered as the first research paper that students write. This would not be an easy task for them in particular and to their supervisors whom students are going to consult during the writing process. Thus, the main goal of this study is to shed light on the challenges that affect both graduation makers (students and supervisors). In his study, Komba (2015) found that candidates seemed to have challenges in writing all chapters which were included in their research reports. The challenges included inappropriateness in presenting different chapters of the reports and lack of academic writing skills. Based on the findings of his study, it was recommended to offer research methods courses in the universities in order to overcome these challenges. The following are the possible challenges that students came across when undertaking their projects.

### **2.3.1. Topic Selection Challenge**

Selecting a topic is not easy because students usually are not fully aware of how to choose a topic and on what criteria they have to select it. Adhikari (2020, p. 27) “Selecting the right topic is the first step in the research journey”. It was also recommended by the same researcher that choosing potential topics of interest can help the researcher to continue being motivated and successfully overcome problems that are generally encountered in the course of the study. Fayomi, et.al (2018) confirmed that the step towards doing a good research work starts with the foundation of choosing the right topic. Thus, it is essential to ensure that the topic should suit the students’ area of interest. Hejase (2010, p.7) recommended a number of suggestions that might help students in selecting a research topic by saying “the topic selected should not be too broad that it causes confusion, too narrow that it causes limitation, beyond the student’s ability to do the actual research work and it should be something that can be formulated into a research question”. In the Libyan context, the choice of a research topic is governed primarily by the interest and passion of the student and then discussing it with the supervisor. Alseid, (2017) stated that most of Libyan learners are hesitant in selecting a topic and that process usually takes long time.

### **2.3.2. Writing Introduction Chapter Challenges**

The introduction chapter of the graduation project serves the purpose of leading the reader from a general subject area to a particular field of research. It establishes the context of the research being conducted by summarizing the current understanding and background knowledge about the topic. The role of the introduction in general is to convey the topic or argument that authors highlight in their manuscripts. It functions as an opening, and captures the reader’s attention while introducing the significance of the study (Cheung, 2012; Hashim, 2005, Stapa, et al., 2014). Moreover, the introduction states the purpose of the work in the form of the hypothesis, questions, or research problems, briefly explaining undergraduate students’ rationale, methodological approach, highlighting the potential outcomes that the study can reveal, and describing the remaining structure of the paper (Cassuto, 2018, p. 35). In other words, it can be simply

argued that the introduction chapter is the broad beginning of the paper that answers three important questions: What is the topic under investigation? what is its purpose? and how the researcher is going to conduct a complete study about it? (Redman, 2011).

Furthermore, the introductory chapter is a presentation of the theoretical background of the study where the statement of the problem and the specific objectives of the study in line with the main objectives/purposes are stated in clear and understandable language (Komba, 2015, p. 4). Caulfield (2020) also reaffirmed that the introduction to a research paper is where you set up your topic, provide background or summarize the existing research, position your own approach, detail your specific research problem and give an overview of the paper's structure. With regard to previous researches, (Abdulkareem, 2013; Al Badi, 2015; Al Khasawneh, 2010; Giridharan, 2012; Pineteh, 2014; Yuen & Mussa, 2015) all highlighted the problems and difficulties encountered by undergraduate and postgraduate students in writing academic researches. The outcome revealed that students made grammatical mistakes, had insufficient amount of vocabularies and faced problems in structuring and organizing sentences, ideas and paragraphs.

### **2.3.3. Writing Literature Review Chapter Challenges**

Literature review looks on and on into what other researchers have worked on, said or the discoveries made on specific issues/research problems. In this respect, Hart (1998) has described literature review chapter as selection of obtainable documents and or materials on a research topic. He also mentioned that literature review comprises of data, ideas, information and written proofs from a definite source to be used for the purpose of conducting an investigation in relation to a problem or research question with the aim of finding a definite course of action, and or solution to a question under investigation.

Similarly, Cresswell (2012, p. 80) stated that a literature review is a “written summary of journal articles, books, and other documents that describe the past and current state of information on the topic of your research study”. That is to say, the literature review chapter comprises of what has been already known and written down about a topic or a research question. However, the purpose of literature review chapter according to Foss

(2017) is to familiarize the readers of students' projects with key findings from various studies. It is designed to provide contextual knowledge that the readers need in order to understand the project findings and their significance. The literature review allows its readers to enter into conversation about a topic in the field of study. Mohammed and Murtala (2019, p. 15) stated that, "every literature review must also acquaint the readers with the research method used in the process of examining the topic or problem".

Literature review, as observed by Cresswell (2012, p. 8), Murray and Moore (2006, p. 52), is a very crucial part of every research work, because it systematically identifies, locates and analyses materials that provide data in relation to the topic or research question. They also maintained that it depicts research gaps and major areas of contention, identify outlines of the findings from various analogies in the research, and put together a study with contradicting results or findings and variations. They also emphasized the importance of library of materials for review than other sources, because that ensures "qualitative searching" of relevant materials with an in-depth commitment. In addition, the use of both information and abstracts from databases and search engines, for example Google Scholars besides books and journals that can be found online. There is also a desperate need for deciding on what and how to use and manage references and citations, endnotes and downloaded materials.

Generally, literature review encompasses what theories say and how relevant they are for the current study, what, how and to what extent a topic has been covered in the past, the missing part in the previous and reviewed literature, the methodologies used in the reviewed literature as well as the main findings. Researchers also believed that an effective literature review section should be comparable with the results of the study (Bert & Banister, 2016; Musa & Khamis, 2015). It was argued that the main purpose of the literature review section is to show how limitations in other works create a research gap for further research (Ridley, 2008).

Consequently, literature review should involve not only the statement of personal judgment but also an appeal to share values and ideas. It should not be simply the description of what other researchers have published in the form of a set of summaries; in



contrast, it should adopt the form of the critical discussion that requires critical analysis. Saiden, et.al (2011) stated that the literature review chapter in the area of research is hard to come by, thus he recommended good research, statistics and measurement and evaluation courses should be given to students. However, students are not adequately exposed to critiquing of research. Thus, a major problem that students run into when writing research papers is not reading enough about their topics. If a researcher listens or reads about each aspect, he/she will be aware of a holistic picture about writing a qualified paper.

#### **2.3.4. Writing Methodology Chapter Challenges**

The methodology chapter is one of the important chapters in any research paper, as it gives the readers a clear vision of the methods used to generate the results of the research topic. Rudestam (2007, p. 88) pointed out that “methodology chapter typically contains the following three subsections: subjects or participants, instrumentation or measures, and procedures”. Furthermore, Langos (2014, p. 4) stated that in this chapter, “the author outlines the research strategy, the research method, the research approach, the methods of data collection, the selection of the sample, the research process, and the type of data analysis, the ethical considerations and the research limitations of the project”. Moreover, Crawford (2010) said that methodology that is used in the research paper comes from the research question, not from your personal preferences for one design or another. She recommended refraining from choosing between a qualitative or quantitative methodology.

In this section, research students need to discuss the methods they used to conduct their research. Shona (2019) identified that, the methodology or method section explains what researchers did and how they did it in order to allow readers to evaluate the reliability and validity of the research. Once the methodological approach introduced, the researcher should give full details of the methods he/she used to conduct the research. In addition to outlining the tools, procedures and materials used to gather data, and the criteria used to select the research participants or sources. One of the difficulties in the data collection process is the questionnaire and the interview questions design. According to Aiyub, et

al., (2018, p. 167), "The design of questions and responses might influence the quality and validity of data." Hing, et al., (2011) stated that face-to-face interviews are especially more beneficial than long questionnaires with complicated topics. Haunberger (2010) claims that the attitude and behaviour of the interviewer might influence the response of the interviewees. Furthermore, respondents' experiences, culture, and perceptions will influence the interview process (Aiyub, et al., 2018).

Based on the findings of the researchers in the literature, it can be concluded that students require extensive guidance on how to select the appropriate methodology and tools for the study's objectives.

### **2.3.5. Writing Data Analysis Chapter Challenges**

To complete any research study properly, it is necessary to analyse the data collected in order to test the hypothesis and/or answer the research questions. Taskeen, et al., (2014) discussed this challengeable section by stating that data analysis chapter is an important section that requires high concentration and time. Nevertheless, researchers are usually unaware of data analysis techniques, for example SPSS software programs are used to analyse the quantitative data but researchers, even most of the supervisors, do not know how to use them. In his study, Uzobo and Alfred (2019) considered students' lack of statistical knowledge as one of the challenges that hinders the derivation of maximum satisfaction from their projects. For the given purpose, researchers seek help from other people who on payment analyse the data. Hence, data analysis in this way cannot provide satisfactory results. Analysing the qualitative data on the other hand are not easy for students who write their first research study. According to (Gibbs, 2018, p. 13), "a major part of qualitative research is based on texts and writing from field notes and transcripts to descriptions and interpretations and finally to the presentation of the findings and of the research as a whole". It was also stated by the same author that a key commitment of qualitative research is to see things through the eyes of respondents and participants (ibid)

### **2.3.6. Writing Discussion Chapter Challenges**

The discussion chapter is the section where the researchers delve into the meaning, importance and relevance of their research findings. It should focus on interpreting and evaluating what has been concluded, relating it to previous literature and research questions, and making an argument to support the overall conclusion (Shona, 2019). Moreover, Conn (2017, p. 608) stated that “a well written discussion section provides insights not found elsewhere in the paper”. Conn (2017, p. 607) also reaffirmed that:

The research report’s discussion section can be the most interesting part for readers to consume but the most difficult one for authors to produce. A cleverly crafted discussion section not only connects salient information from the background, method, and results sections but also moves beyond that content to provide important insights. The discussion section tells readers why they should care about the project. This editorial outlines some key content to enrich the contribution authors can make in their discussion sections.

Researchers such as Cheung (2013); St. John (1987) and Flowerdew (1999b) argued that the issue of students’ difficulties in writing the discussion chapter and stated that it is more difficult to write than the rest of the research paper because it is less formulaic than the method and result sections. Cheung (2013, p. 6) identified five significant difficulties that students usually encounter while writing the discussion chapter: (1) selection of content; (2) students do not know what to include in the discussion; (3) organization of content that students could not keep the logical flow of the content; (4) demonstration of an appropriate stance that students had difficulties in agreeing and disagreeing with different parts so it was very difficult to stay focus while writing this section; (5) limited grammatical knowledge as students usually face related significant difficulties when discussing the research findings. Students also might get confused with the verb tense and the academic vocabulary to be utilised in writing the discussion chapter.

### **2.3.7. Writing Conclusion Chapter Challenges**

The conclusion chapter is typically the final major chapter of a dissertation or thesis. As such, it serves as a concluding summary of your research findings and wraps up the

document. Writing a conclusion chapter, according to Faryadi (2012), is just as challenging as writing an introduction; moreover, (Holewa, 2004) claims that writing the conclusion is the most difficult element of the writing process as, it must be the best section of a written research. Moreover, the conclusion as a final section of a research report, marks the point at which the writer's intellectual resources have been depleted. Caulfield (2020) argued that the conclusion of a research paper is where you wrap up your ideas, restate the research problem addressed in the research, summarize your overall arguments or findings, suggest the key takeaways from your paper and leave the reader with a strong final impression.

### **2.3.8. Challenges of Using Different References in the Project**

Citing references plays a vital role reflecting the academic writing background of the students specially when writing a research paper. “Acknowledging other people’s ideas or opinions in one’s work is a feature of academic work” (Lamprey, 2013, p. 70). According to Rezeki (2018, p. 62), “despite its significance, students seem to perform it poorly due to lack of knowledge and awareness of citing role in their writing. As the result, they are often accused of committing plagiarism”. It was also stated by the same author that one of the ways to prevent students from committing plagiarism is by providing them with sufficient knowledge and skills related to proper citations. Kashkur, et al., (2010) also assured that failure in citation leads to plagiarism, which is a serious problem yet commonly happens in almost all fields. Wallwork (2011) added that this phenomenon is widely spread among non-native speakers of English. By the same token, Okamura (2008, p. 61) stated that “L2 writers have more difficulty in the use of citation forms to construct a persuasive argument than L1 writers”.

Furthermore, Rasol (2015, p. 9) states that “The level of the references used in the student’s graduation project are considered as a measurement for gathering data and the ideas used in preparing the background study of the project”. Any source utilised in the development of written work must be accurately cited. Thus, researchers need to use a clear and consistent style to ensure that the readers of their work can discover the sources they have cited to back up their claims or verify quotations. Therefore, proper citation allows others to locate the materials used (Lamprey, 2013). In their research, DeVoss and

Rosati (2002) raised an important issue by saying that plagiarism is tricky and is made even worse by the students' increasing use of the internet as a research tool. The utilization of the internet's virtual environment, as well as the available downloading and cutting-and-pasting procedures, provide new concerns in terms of plagiarism. As a result, students become unable to produce valid and reliable research papers since they lack the ability to cite the literature used in their projects.

### **2.3.9. Academic Writing Challenges**

Writing academic research project is expected to be structured in a manner that is defined by particular norms, standards, conventions and rhetorical moves that make it different from writing for other purposes (Cargill & O'Connor, 2009). It is one of the most demanding tasks that all academics and researchers face. Academic writing in every graduate program is considered to be a challenge even for students whose English is their mother tongue, and it is considered even more challenging for non-native English-speaking students who have different levels of academic experience in writing.

According to Bailey (2011, p. 3), the purpose of academic writing is to report on a piece of research the writer has conducted, answer a question the writer has been given or chosen, discuss a subject of common interest and give the writer's view and synthesise research done by others on a topic. Pineteh (2013) also argued the undergraduates lack of a mastery of academic writing conventions stating that it plays a critical role in socializing students into the discourse of subjects and disciplines in universities. He went further saying that as students enter higher education with weak literacy skills, they struggle to cope with institutional literacy practices and disciplinary discourses including academic writing. Therefore, their writing often lacks the flair and sophistication, which emerge from conceptual, reflective and analytical thinking.

A study conducted by Al Fadda (2012) to determine the types of difficulty encountered by King Saud University postgraduate students in learning how to write academic English. The researcher discovered the following types of academic writing difficulties: (1) the ability to distinguish between spoken and written English; (2) making an outline before writing a draft; (3) identifying the skills needed for successful writing; (4)

avoiding vague words and phrases. These findings suggest that students usually face too much stress in their academic writing class. Academic writing is a complex task, but it is made even more challenging at university level.

Furthermore, Oshima and Hogue (1998, p. 3) argued that “Writing, particularly academic writing is not easy. A study and practice needed to develop this skill. It is important to note that writing is a process, not a product for both native speakers and new learners of English”. It means that a piece of writing whether it is a composition for the English class or a lab report for chemistry class is never complete which is always possible to be revised repeatedly. Al-Khairy (2013, p. 8) investigated the major academic writing problems that Saudi undergraduates make in English as L2 at the University of Taif in Saudi Arabia. He found various problems at the sentence-level or at the maximum at paragraph-level of academic writing and gave many suggestions that language courses should be increased to strengthen all the language skills in general and writing in particular, motivate students to use English with the teachers as well as with each other, introduce modern and novel teaching techniques, equip the classrooms with necessary audio-visual aids, diagnose students’ writing difficulties at the beginning of their study at university, tailor the course contents according to their needs, introduce group/pair work, peer correction, and use mono-lingual dictionaries frequently, to develop their students’ writing skills.

#### **2.4. Factors Affect Students’ performance during the Graduation Project Writing**

Writing undergraduate research project is a key stage that reinforce students to improve themselves academically. However, there are many factors that might affect students’ success. Regarding this, Sithole (2016, p. 86) wrote “Conducting research at undergraduate level for the first time is a daunting task for students”. There are different factors such as: lack of training and experience in the research project, language interference, motivation, financial recourses, insufficient time to submit the research project, research resources and facilities, copying data\ plagiarism and supervision challenges. All of these challenges are discussed below:

#### **2.4.1. Lack of Training and Experience in Writing a Research Project**

Previous literature identified a number of significant factors that might have influence students' progress in writing their graduation projects. One of these factors is the limited training and experience in writing research projects. Kangai (2012, p. 90) argued that;

Most of the students would be undertaking research for the first time. In order to prepare students for the research project, all students are required to study and pass a pre-requisite course, Introduction to Research Methods, in their third year. This course is meant to equip students with the knowledge and skills required in the research project. The major focus of the course is to give students a conceptual and theoretical understanding of ten key stages of the research process.

Cone and Foster (1993, as cited in Saiden, 2011, p. 72) provided a number of institutional factors that might have a negative impact on the completion of research projects such as the absence of statistics courses. More to the point, Bailie (2009, p.1) stated that “Too often, students view research as just another “requirement” to complete their degrees without the realization that continued involvement with the research community, as a consumer or participant, should play a central role in their professional lives”. More importantly, postgraduate students should be convinced with the value and importance of research in their lives after they leave the classroom (ibid).

#### **2.4.2. Language Interference**

Students' L1 could be an obstacle that have an effective influence on students learning English as a SL/FL. They usually encounter difficulties whenever they are asked to write their ideas in English, because English is not their first language. Lestari (2020, p. 20) argued that “To write the thesis the students must have good language to support the ideas that they have”. In this respect, Dwihandini (2013) also said that second language learners in specific face difficulties in acquiring it, which may affect their project writing. According to Lestari (2020), the difficulties that students face while writing their thesis are related to their English proficiency which still low and limited. Thus, that it becomes the first factor that makes students unable to develop their writing thesis well.

Furthermore, Darus and Ching (2009) added that errors in EFL writing occur as a result of interlingual and intralingual errors. Similarly, Budiharto (2018, p.109) argued that “the influence of a native language on the TL has become a main problem, which not only influences language students in acquiring a new language but also in the quality of written English as a TL”. Ibrahim (2015) believed that when students complain about how difficult it is to write in a second language, they are talking not only about the difficulty in deciding on the appropriate words and using accurate grammatical structures but also about the difficulty in expressing their ideas in the target language.

### **2.4.3. Motivation**

Motivation is an internal incentive that pushes someone to think to achieve something (Harmer,1998). Related to the difficulties dealing with students' motivation, most of the students feel that they had no strong desire to their project writing. If students had a strong desire, they could successfully deal with any difficulty that may affect their study progress. In the learning process, motivation is an important aspect where it leads students to success in second language learning. Students who are not motivated will face difficulties in learning English. Brown (2000, p.164) stated that “there are two types of motivation; they were intrinsic and extrinsic motivation”. He also stated that motivation is the most frequently used catchall term for explaining the success or failure of virtually any complex task. It can be concluded that those who are motivated will have the opportunity to be successful ones. In short, it can also be concluded that motivation is very necessary for doing research work (ibid, p.160).

Regarding the demotivating factors that might hinder the learning process, Dörnyei (2001) said that demotivating factors as external forces might have negative effects on language learning and might eventually exterminate eagerness to participate in language learning activities. As a result, students who lose motivation early in the process of second language learning/acquisition may experience long-term negative consequences such as failure, loss of self-confidence, self-blaming, and excessive effort in regaining motivation (Falout & Falout, 2005; Ushioda, 2001). Moreover, Kaivanpanah and Ghasemi (2011) claim that “any failure to learn a second language may be largely due to the existence of demotivating factors on the part of learners” (p.90). The reasons that



make second language learners become demotivated while learning the target language does not concern only the linguists but it also concerns language teachers that observe their students losing their motivation in their daily classes (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009).

#### **2.4.4. Financial Recourses**

Financial problems are a vital issue for everyone, especially students. In other words, “financial problems lead to various problems that will eventually affect the students’ academic performance” (Norazlan, et.al, 2020, p.3). Saiden, et. al., (2011) also stated that the financial constraints affect students’ research project progress. Researchers such as Uzobo and Alfred (2019) and Mapolisa and Mafa (2012) reaffirmed the effect of the financial issues on the students’ project success. Moreover, Saiden (2011, p. 72) argued that financial constraints also militate against students’ timely submission of research projects by limiting the frequency of travel to see the supervisor, by curtailing key services like internet accessibility, computer typing, printing and photocopying. Students are not consulting their supervisors adequately. This is mainly because of the distance between them and their supervisors and because of the cost involved.

#### **2.4.5. Insufficient Time to Submit the Research Project**

Time is an important factor that students and their supervisors should consider in order to successfully conduct their graduation projects. In this regard, Saiden (2011, p. 72) stated that “Poor time management is one of the students’ related factors that contribute to failure to submit research projects on time”. He also recommended that students should be exposed to time management skills prior to embarking on their research projects. Mukwevho (2018, p. 226) added that “Time management is one of the major challenges that students face at tertiary institutions and this has a bearing on their academic performance and social life”. More to the point, Bocar (2013) argued that a researcher needs to manage time properly. She went on saying:

in conducting research, researchers must be cautious. They must allocate plenty of time to complete each stage of the activity. They must be conscientious and need to work in the library for a certain number of hours each week. They need to add some more hours or weeks before the scheduled deadline because there are

some things that take more time than what is planned, and there are some stages in research work that are more difficult than what the researchers expect (p.62).

In his research findings, Al-Qaderi (2016) confirms that students have short period of time to finalize their own research projects. Mack (2017) also argued that one of the effects of poor time miss a deadline. Saqib and Chan (2015, p.71) added that “Successful students are good time managers”. Many researchers opine that effective management skills help students to work towards their goals and avoid unnecessary activities, which distract one's attention. Time management is vital for students to set goals that are realistic. According to Gupta, et al., (2012), time management is an important skill that benefits students. Students who have a greater control over their tasks achieve the sense of satisfaction. By the same token, Kaushar (2013) concluded that good time management makes students to act accordingly.

#### **2.4.6. Research Resources and Facilities**

Students may face challenges related to research resources and facilities. Libraries play an important role in any academic institution, and it is the central component of the education system. Alsied (2017, p.147) said that “when it comes to Libyan students, there are many obstacles they encounter during their research. One of the biggest challenges is the lack of resources in the library. Students spend their time searching for the books and articles they need but most of the time they do not find what they want. Hence, this tends to delay the completion of their project and make them less encouraged to proceed in their work”. Furthermore, Alsied added that one of these challenges is that the internet is not always accessible to some students. When students need some resources for their research, they usually use the internet, but this is not the case for Libyan students. When Libyan students search for any information, they face the problems of slow and weak internet connection at home or college, which delays the completion of their research.

In addition, Taskeen, et al., (2014) argued that the library is not organized systematically and students spend most of their valuable time searching for books and reports instead of looking for related information from these books. Some catalogues in the library are not

available and researchers find the data related to their topic by looking at each item one by one which wastes the researchers' time and make it very hard for them to focus on the basic theme of the research. Shanmugam (2017, p. 24) claimed that due to the rapid development in information technology, the libraries were transformed to e-Books, e-journals taking place of journals, digital manuscripts, and other various documents in electronic form as information resources of a library. These developments save the time of the users but economically, still there is a challenge in the technical skill of the electronic resources.

#### **2.4.7. Copying Data \ Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a major problem for research and for the academic world. Helgesson (2015, p. 91) defined plagiarism as “someone using someone else’s intellectual product (such as texts, ideas, or results), thereby implying that it is their own”. In Longman Contemporary English Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2018), the act of plagiarism is defined as when someone uses another person’s words, ideas, or work and pretends they are his/her own. Alsied (2017) discussed this challengeable issue stating that among the difficulties that Libyan students have is the difficulty to express themselves in their own words. Therefore, they copy from other works and present it as their own writing without acknowledging the sources because some students have limited background in research.

Furthermore, Taskeen et al., (2014) stated that majority of novice researchers copy related studies and some advisors do not have enough experience in different methodologies. Thus, they allow their students to use other people’s work in their research without acknowledgement. Moreover, Rodafinos (2018, p. 161) highlighted the importance of plagiarism checks by saying “students who plagiarize by presenting someone else’s work or ideas as their own pose a dual challenge. The first one is when the student is not caught. Surprisingly, a second – and often more intricate challenge emerges when a student is caught”. Plagiarism has been rapidly growing in this era of technologies where students utilise technology to acquire someone work and submitting it as their own work. This fraud behaviour of students in tertiary higher learning institutions and universities is great concern today in the era of the internet (Eret & Ok,

2014). As result of explosion of plagiarism among university students, many universities in developed countries have been using technologies to combating deceitful plagiarism behaviour of students (Thompsett & Ahluwalia, 2010).

Anney and Mosha (2015, p. 204) argued that “Despite availability of software for detecting plagiarism, the plagiarism behaviour has been increasing and new cases are reported globally”. According to Gullifer and Tyson (2010, p. 463) “Plagiarism is perceived to be a growing problem and universities are being required to devote increasing time and resources to combating it”. More importantly, good academic writing is contingent on developing sound skills in research and writing, critically reading and comprehending appropriate sources, careful note-taking, paraphrasing, judicious use of quotations and giving credit to authors for their ideas and writing (Burton, 2007). As a consequence of plagiarism, students deny themselves an opportunity to master these skills, making academic writing increasingly difficult as they progress through their degree. From this discussion, it can be concluded that there is merit in understanding students’ perspectives regarding plagiarism in order to develop successful strategies to promote academic integrity and thereby prevent plagiarism.

#### **2.4.8. Supervision**

One of the main issues that affects the graduation project writing process is the quality of supervision. Thondhlana, et al., (2011, p. 73) argued that “supervision is a critical element, which contributes immensely to the successful and timely completion of research projects”. According to Alsied and Ibrahim (2017), choosing supervisors can be one of the biggest problems that Libyan students encounter during research writing. He stated that “some supervisors do not frequently follow up with the students because they are not available all the time in the college” (p.147). When students start their graduation project, they usually hesitate in choosing a supervisor; during the project, they may decide to change supervisors for different reasons. In some cases, supervisors are uncooperative particularly when students are not active enough, lack of motivation or if the topic does not interest the supervisor.

Furthermore, Taskeen, et al., (2014, p. 3) states that instead of helping and guiding students, supervisors impose the responsibility on researchers and do not show any guidance or help. Researchers such as Torres (2014), Pearson (2002), Wisker and Robinson (2012) and Vilkinas (2002) all agreed that a supervisor is a facilitator, supporter and a guider. Thus, the supervisor needs to be the one who motivates students to produce the undertaken topic under investigation in a professional and an academic way that a graduation project should be. This was also confirmed by Orellana, et. al., (2016, p. 90) who cited a list of supervisor's roles and attitudes proposed by Brown and Atkins (1988) as follows:

- Director (determining topic and method, providing ideas).
- Facilitator (providing access to resources or expertise, arranging field-work).
- Adviser (helping to resolve technical problems, suggesting alternatives).
- Teacher (of research techniques).
- Guide (suggesting timetable for writing up, giving feedback on progress, identifying critical path for data collection).
- Critic (of design of enquiry, of draft chapters, of interpretations of data).
- Freedom giver (authorizes student to make decisions, supports student's decisions).
- Supporter (gives encouragement, shows interest, discusses student's ideas).
- Friend (extends interest and concern to non-academic aspects of student's life).
- Manager (checks progress regularly, monitors study, gives systematic feedback, plans work).
- Examiner (e.g., internal examiner, mock vivas, interim progress reports, supervisory board member).

Moreover, the student-teacher rapport plays a crucial role in the period of the project production. Jones (2013) confirmed the importance of student-supervisor relation and how this can affect the completion of the research undertaken. Being on the same track, Orellana (2016, p. 88) wrote "the key factor of the success of a research project is the relationship between the supervisor and researcher during the training stage". While

Taskeen (2014) said that supervisors are responsible to provide proper assistance and guidance to researchers as researchers themselves cannot work well.

## **2.5. Previous Studies Related to Undergraduate Students' Challenges**

Acknowledging graduation project writing challenges and attempting to address them, a good number of scholars have conducted research studies with the aim to uncover those challenges that face undergraduates and their supervisors. Conducting research for the first time among under-graduate students is, indeed, an academically challenging exercise whose outcome is as worthwhile as a challenge itself. Mapolisa and Mafa (2012, p. 1) argued that “the undergraduate level is a fertile ground for such an investigation”. However, for the purpose of this study, only the relevant literature is reviewed below to present studies, which reveal some challenges facing undergraduates during the process of their graduation project writing, how their supervisors view these challenges and in what way they can overcome them.

Reviewing previous literature provided valuable insights related to the challenges that EFL/ESL students might face while writing their graduation projects. Some researchers have investigated this issue beyond its product aspect, focusing on a number of additional sources of difficulty including: issues concerning the selection of a particular topic and reviewing related literature (Yeh, 2010). There are also challenges in data collection and analysis in addition to a limited access to resources in libraries (Alsied & Ibrahim, 2017). Another significant factor that might affect the process of writing dissertation is the limited support to be received from supervisors (Dwihandini, 2013).

Dwihandini (2013) conducted a study entitled “*The Analysis of the Factors Affecting Undergraduate Students' Difficulties in Writing Thesis in The English Department of Mahasaraswati University*”. In this study, it was concluded that there are three factors that considered as potential causing factors of students' difficulties in writing thesis, namely psychological factor, socio cultural factor and linguistic factor. Being more explicit, the psychological factor was self-esteem. While the socio-cultural factor was found in the

communicative competence, and the linguistic factor was found in the domain and the extent error analysis.

A study conducted by Mapolisa and Mafa (2012) at Zimbabwe Open University's Department of Education. The research findings identified three main categories of challenges that had effect on the students' research experience. Their focus was on the tutor-related challenges, student-related challenges and institution-related challenges. The tutor-related challenges involved the level of engagement between the supervisors and their supervisees such as absence from work by supervisors and few meetings with students. The student –related challenges identified the students' personal issues, such as time limit, financial issues, family problems and lack of motivation and commitment. On the other hand, the institution-related challenges highlighted the gaps that hinder the progress of both, the students and their supervisors such as lack of technological facilities, lack of library resources and lack of workshops that help to foster the student's computer literacy. Mapolisa and Mafa (2012) confirmed that the above mentioned challenges could negatively affect the capacity of the students' research production.

Uzobo and Alfred (2019) in his case study article about the Bachelor Degree (B.S.) holders' research experiences in the South-South Region of Nigeria surveyed 362 respondents using cognitive apprenticeship model. His study focus was to shed light on four aspects which in a way or another affect the graduation project production: (1) benefits of undergraduate research; (2) impacts of undergraduate research experiences on future career decisions; (3) relationship pattern between undergraduate students and their project supervisors; (4) challenges faced by undergraduate students during the research process. The findings of his empirical case study identified a number of interesting benefits that graduates could derive from their undergraduate research experiences, and more importantly, these benefits could positively influence their future career. He also found that there were yet challenges graduates usually face during their research experiences. These challenges range from financial constraints to supervisors' attitudes towards supervisees. Therefore, he assured on the policy makers to concentrate on what hinder undergraduate relationship patterns with their supervisors.

Al-Qaderi (2016) also examined the challenges facing undergraduate students in Ibb University, Yemen when they write their graduation research projects. English in Yemen taught as Foreign Language (FL), and it is found that the predominant problems the students encountered were (1) weak academic level of the students in English; (2) lack of well-equipped library with open access to e. resources and websites; (3) students' difficult circumstances and their negative attitudes towards research projects.

A case study with fifth semester students of English Education Department, State Institute for Islamic Studies Sunan Ampel Surabaya conducted by Yusuf (2013) and entitled "*Students Problems in Writing Research Proposal*". In this research, he analysed the problems in writing research proposal and its causes. The research findings assigned three elements of research proposal as serious problems for students in writing their research proposal. Those three problems are classified as follow: the methodology, literature review of literature review, and the research introduction. The causes of students' problems in writing research proposal are: limited background knowledge about methodology, inability to write critical literature review and incapability to compose good introductions.

Another study entitled "*An Analysis on Factors Causing Undergraduate Students Difficulties in Writing Thesis*" and conducted by Sariyanto, Supardi, I. and Husin, S., (2013). He analysed four major factors that were considered as potential factors causing students' difficulties in writing theses. These four factors are classified into five indicators, namely writing the introduction chapter, writing the literature review chapter, writing the methodology chapter, writing data analysis chapter, and writing the conclusion chapter. According to the research findings, the process of consultation factors was divided into: understanding and doing supervisors' suggestion/feedback and availability of time for discussing. More to the point, the psychological factors were also divided into three indicators, namely motivation, self-esteem, and anxiety. Finally, the economic factors were divided into managing time as a college student and a worker, and making the first priority between finishing study and working. Based on his research



findings, it was concluded that the most causing factor difficulties in writing thesis is the limited basic knowledge that students have about writing a thesis.

Elmojahed (2010) looked into the claim that Libyan University students' research projects rarely meet the required criteria of empirical research. He examined samples of completed research projects from several EFL departments. The researcher also conducted a number of semi-structured interviews with teachers, and administered a student survey. The findings gained showed that students fail to properly cite and reference their sources, which is considered plagiarism. Students also did not follow the major stages of empirical investigation or proofread their finished work.

Finally, reviewing previous related literature showed that number of studies investigated different aspects of writing graduation projects in different ways. Therefore, the focus of the current study was placed on the challenges that students might face while conducting their graduation projects as part of students' fulfilment to get their bachelor degree among EFL learners at Zawia University. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, there is a lack of such studies in the Libyan context. Even though this is a very important issue, no attention has been paid to tackle such challenges so far, and that is why this study was conducted.

## **2.6. Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter reviewed previous literature related to the challenges that students may face when writing their final year graduation projects. It also discussed the factors that might affect the process of writing graduation projects. Moreover, this chapter reviewed some previous studies related to how other researches dealt with these challenges according to their contexts.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.0. Introduction**

This chapter addresses the research methodology employed in this study to investigate the challenges that undergraduates face during their graduation project writing. Research methods refer to the “techniques and procedures used in the process of data gathering” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 44). It sheds light on the methodological approaches adopted by the researcher in the study and identifies the methods chosen to collect and analyse the data. The nature of the inquiry, the character of the population, the nature of hypotheses and variables, and the research questions all have an impact on the research methodology and data gathering methods chosen (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Cohen et al., 2007; Bryman, 2008; Creswell, 2008; Berg, 2009). In other words, research approaches are the plans and procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, this chapter covers the following topics: research design, data collection tools, students’ questionnaire, teachers’ interviews, pilot study, sampling techniques adopted, data collection procedures and ethical issues of the study. Finally, a summary of what was discussed in this chapter is also provided.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

The research design of the study is considered as a framework for planning a research and answering research questions. Hejase (2010, p. 8) argued that “it is the framework selected by the student, in coordination with the supervisor, and used to evaluate the data and the information in order to draw a conclusion”. Faryadi (2019) pointed out choosing methodology of any research is based on the type of research you are conducting. Creating a research design means making decisions about the type of data needed, the location and timescale of the research, the participants and sources, variables and the methods for collecting and analysing data (Shona, 2019, p.11). Moreover, it also sets the parameters of a research paper as it determines exactly what will and will not be included. It also defines the criteria by which researchers evaluate their results and draw

conclusions. The reliability and validity of a research study depends on how researchers collect, measure, analyse, and interpret their data. A strong research design is crucial to a successful dissertation (ibid).

The rationale for the methodology in this research was based on the precept that a fuller understanding of the research focus can be obtained if it is investigated from different perspectives (Cohen et al., 2007). Therefore, a mixed method approach was adopted, i. e., both the quantitative approach and the qualitative approach were utilised. “Data can be elaborated, clarified, explained, and confirmed using these combined approaches” (Jang et al., 2008, p. 221). Mixed methods allow for a combination of numerical measurement and in-depth exploration (Shona, 2019). This approach is also known as a triangulated method. Triangulation is closely related to mixed research approaches as it involves using two or more methods for data collection (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 241). The function of this research method is to consider multiple viewpoints, perspectives, positions, and standpoints which always including the standpoints of qualitative and quantitative research (Burke et al., 2007)

As a result of the purpose of this research, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used. Quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures (Creswell, 2014). On the other hand, Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (ibid). Moreover, research design provides rich information about the description of participants and an understanding of their behaviour (Zhang & Creswell 2013). Thus, two research techniques of data collection, structured questionnaire and semi-structured interview, were used in this study to obtain reliable results. More details about these tools are discussed below.

### **3.2. Data Collection Instruments**

To collect the data required, a triangulated approach was utilised. Cohen and Manion (1994, p. 233) define triangulation as “the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour”. The two data collection tools are discussed in detail below.

#### **3.2.1. Students’ Questionnaire**

Questionnaires, according to Gass and Mackey (2007, p. 148), are "written instruments that present all participants with the same series of questions or statements, which the participants then respond to either by providing written answers, marking Likert-style judgments, or selecting options from a series of statements". Williams (2003) argued that questionnaires are used in a wide range of settings to gather information about the opinions and behaviours of individuals. Therefore, a structured questionnaire was used in the current study to collect the quantitative data. In this type of questionnaires, respondents’ answers are limited to a fixed set of responses. In other words, a structured questionnaire was used because it is easier to administer and to analyse. It is an effective mechanism for efficient collection of certain kind of information, particularly language learning strategies (Dornyei, 2003).

Furthermore, the concept of the questionnaire in this study was adopted from the one used in an earlier study conducted by Uzobo and Alfred (2019) then amended by the researcher to suit her study goals. The questionnaire included a total of 28 items divided into two parts. The first part contained five “yes or no questions” to figure out the students’ background knowledge about the concept of research. The second part followed Likert Scale strategy and was aimed to measure: (1) the challenges students face when they come to organize and write their graduation projects, (2) the external challenges that affect the project value, (3) the institutional challenges, and finally (4) the supervision challenges.. Roopa and Rani (2012, p. 274) said that “Likert scale is a psychometric scale commonly involved in research that employs questionnaires to measure social attitudes”. This part included 23 points regarding levels of agreements (agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree) towards the challenges stated (see Appendix A). Before

submitting the questionnaire to the participants, its validity (The degree to which a questionnaire measures what it was intended to measure) and reliability (the extent to which a measurement gives consistent results) were carefully checked through presenting it to four experienced teachers in the English department of Zawia University. They presented several comments and suggestions. Moreover, they reported that the questionnaire was valid and appropriate to achieve the purpose of the study. Some items were modified according to the teachers' suggestions (see 3.3. Pilot Study, p. 34-35). Then the data collected from the questionnaire was analysed using the SPSS software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

### **3.2.2. Teachers' Interviews**

A semi-structured interview is defined as a set of pre-prepared questions with an open-ended format to encourage the interviewees to give more details on the issues under investigation (Dornyei, 2007). This kind of interviews is particularly flexible as a means of collecting data, since new lines of enquiry are likely to emerge from the data the respondent provides, and these can lead to unforeseen and fruitful research findings (Robson, 2002). It is allowed to depart from any schedule that is being utilized, new questions may arise due to the respondent's replies and the order of questions may be revised (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Thus, in order to gain a better understanding of the teachers' view about the challenges that students went through during the project, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Six main interview questions were prepared in advance by the researcher (see Appendix B). These questions were checked by the supervisor and other experts in this area. The questions were aimed to focus on the supervisors' perspectives on the challenges faced by Libyan EFL undergraduate students in completing their graduation projects, with an emphasis on how they usually deal with those problems during supervision.

Furthermore, Cohen, et.al, (2007) pointed out that the interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard. The interviews in this study were conducted with six teachers as 'supervisors'. The supervisors who took part in the interviews were chosen purposively. Although the

interviews schedule consisted of a list of questions, the researcher occasionally deviated from the list and made extra comments when it was essential to obtain further information until saturation. The interviews took place in a small office in the departments that the researcher visited and lasted between 23 to 35 minutes. Moreover, the researcher asked the teachers (supervisors) at the end of each interview if they had any further remarks or any further contribution regarding the interview content in order to enhance the interview value. Thematic analysis method was employed to analyse the interviews data obtained. The answers were captured during the interviews sessions using a note-taking and phone recorder, and then verbatim transcribed and evaluated when the data analysis procedure was completed.

### **3.3. Pilot Study**

Researchers frequently undertake a pilot study to confirm the usability of their surveys or interviews in order to ensure efficiency. According to Roopa and Rani (2012, p. 275), “pilot survey: A preliminary part of research conducted before a complete survey to test the effectiveness of the research methodology”. Similarly, Cohen et al., (2007, p. 341) argued that “a pilot has several functions, principally to increase the reliability, validity and practicability of the questionnaire”. In other words, conducting a pilot study presents many benefits and advantages for the researcher. One of them is the exploration of the particular issues that may potentially have an antagonistic impact on the survey results. These issues include the appropriateness of questions to the target population. Junyong (2017, p. 601) emphasized that “a pilot study asks whether something can be done, should the researchers proceed with it”. Moreover, Bell (1993, p. 84) stated that “All data-gathering instruments should be piloted to test how long it takes recipients to complete them, to check that all questions and instructions are clear and to enable you to remove any items which do not yield usable data”.

Cohen et al., (2007, p. 158) emphasized the importance of piloting questionnaires and refining their contents. He also suggested seeking views from experts on questionnaires (ibid, p. 342). Therefore, the items should be reviewed to make sure they are accurate, free of item construction problems, and grammatically correct. In the current study, the

questionnaire was designed by the researcher then carefully checked by the supervisor to ensure its validity and appropriateness. The questionnaire was first piloted with four experienced teachers, two of them hold PhDs and two hold MAs. Then it was distributed to twelve students at the college of Education in Zawia to check its clarity and appropriateness. The feedback obtained helped the researcher to generate some amendments such as rearranging the material, updating the language, reducing the questionnaire items, and removing superfluous phrases.

The interview questions were designed by the researcher then checked by the supervisor. To ensure that all the interview questions are clear and easy to follow and none of them could be vague, they were piloted with three MA teachers. Another important purpose for conducting such a pilot study was to gain more experience in interviewing. According to Cohen et al, (2007, p. 151), “Researchers can enhance the reliability of their interviews through piloting their interview schedules”. More to the point, Castillo-Montoya (2016) found that interview protocols could be strengthened through piloting the interviews. This can help the researcher to identify any necessary modifications within the interview design. In the current study, the feedback obtained helped the researcher to do some modifications to the interview questions such as amendments to the words used, and what concepts should be included and excluded, in order to make it more valid and more reliable.

#### **3.4. The Population and Sample of the Study**

In general, a research sample is a specific group of individuals through which a researcher collects data. Pooja (2019) defined sampling as a procedure to select a sample from individuals or from a large group of population for certain kind of research purpose. In other words, “sampling is the selection of a subset of the population of interest in a research study” (Turner, 2020, p. 8). The participants of the research in hand are undergraduate English language students from University of Zawia and the supervisors who oversaw their projects. The research sample included seventy-one students and six supervisors selected from the Faculty of Arts in Zawia, the College of Education in Abu-

Issa, College of Languages in Zawia and the College of Education in Zawia, all of them belong to University of Zawia.

Furthermore, the researcher generated a random sampling technique to select the appropriate sample to whom the questionnaire would be distributed. The researcher used the SRS (Simple Random Sampling) technique that each and every member of the population has an equal probability of being selected and a sample chosen randomly is meant to be an unbiased representation of the total population (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). The participants were EFL undergraduates in their last year of study and had already completed their graduation project. This decision was taken on the basis that the participants could recall the thesis writing process accurately and hence could provide the most credible information. On the other hand, a purposive sampling technique was adopted to select six supervisors to be interviewed. Patton (2002, p. 230) argued that “the logic and power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information rich cases for study in depth. Information rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry”. Therefore, the supervisors selected had more than three-year of experience in supervising EFL undergraduates.

### **3.5. Data Collection Procedures**

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 2021 the questionnaire was distributed in person to seventy-one students (graduated students and those who almost about to finish their final examinations). This process took a week to receive all the copies of the questionnaire. 43 participants answered and returned the questionnaire immediately, whereas only 17 sent it back via internet within four days and 11 of the copies were not sent back as promised. Ultimately, the researcher received sixty copies of the questionnaire fully completed.

Regarding the qualitative data, six supervisors were interviewed in a semi-structured way. The process of interviewing was initiated on 3<sup>rd</sup> of June and continued to 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2021. Each interview took approximately 23 to 35 minutes. All of the interviewees showed high interest in the topic under investigation and provided a great deal of information (see table 3.1). The interviewees had the chance to express their views



adequately and to speak thoughtfully about their experiences of supervision. The questions were asked in a logical order to keep the flow of the discussion go smoothly. As the respondents provided their consent, all the interviews were recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. The table below lists the dates and length of the interviews conducted.

**Table.3.1. Teachers’ Interviews Schedule**

Teachers’ Interviews	
Teacher F	
Interview date	Length (minutes)
3\6\2021	27min:21 sec
Teacher R	
Interview date	Length (minutes)
8\6\2021	32min:02 sec
Teacher A	
Interview date	Length (minutes)
10\6\2021	32min:09 sec
Teacher S	
Interview date	Length (minutes)
10\6\2021	23min:59 sec
Teacher N	
Interview date	Length (minutes)
12\6\2021	30min:42 sec
Teacher T	
Interview date	Length (minutes)
16\6\2021	34min:58 sec

### **3.6. Ethical Issues**

As this research deals with human respondents, certain ethical issues were addressed. The consideration of these ethical issues was necessary for the purpose of ensuring the privacy as well as the safety of the participants (Dornyei, 2007). Among the significant ethical issues that were considered in the research process included consent and confidentiality. Researchers are in need to protect their research participants, develop a trust with them, promote the integrity of research, guard against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on their organizations or institutions and cope with new, challenging problems (Isreal & Hay, 2006). Therefore, the researcher considered the ethical issues and limitations when data of the study was collected. The researcher then was permitted to visit different English departments in Zawia University. This was accomplished with the assistance of the supervisor. He contacted the heads of the English departments with an official request letter to allow the researcher to communicate with members of the teaching staff in the targeted departments. The participants selected were first informed about the study's goals and their rights would be protected if they agreed to participate. The participants were also advised that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The participants were also reassured that their data would be used solely for the research purposes. Moreover, to protect the participants' privacy, their real identities were identified by the initial letters of their names.

### **3.7. Preparing Data for Analysis**

All the data collected was organized and saved to the computer in order to prepare it for analysis. The quantitative data were analysed by using SPSS software programme, whereas the thematic analysis method was employed to analyse the qualitative data. More to the point, the qualitative data were first transcribed, and then coded. More details are provided in the following chapter.

### **3.8. Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter discussed the research design and methodology employed in the current study. The data collecting instruments were introduced and grouped into two categories: students' questionnaire, and teachers' interviews. The researcher then conducted a pilot

study to test the research tools to ensure their validity and reliability. This chapter also included a full discussion of the study population and sampling procedures, which explained and clarified the stages involved in conducting the research. Finally, this chapter included some ethical issues followed by a summary of the preparation of data for analysis.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Data Analysis**

#### **4.0. Introduction**

This chapter presents the process of analysing the data collected by structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. According to Glesne and Peshkin, (1992, p. 127), "data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can make sense of what you have learned". By the same token, Cohen et al., (2007) pointed out that data analysis is the process of reducing large amounts of textual data to proportions that are manageable and understandable. The purpose of analysing data is to obtain usable and useful information. The process of data analysis started by the data being entered into the computer and ended with the findings of the descriptive analysis. The results gained are presented in the form of figures and tables in order to illustrate the major findings. SPSS software program was used, as it gives accurate and precise results while being economic in effort and time (Dornyei, 2003). It was chosen "because of its popularity within both academic and business circles, making it the most widely used package of its type" (Arkkelin, 2014, p.2). In contrast, the thematic analysis method was utilised to analyse the qualitative data. Thematic analysis theory is a method of analysing reporting themes within qualitative research data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). All the data gained from both the questionnaire and the interviews are analysed below in order to provide comprehensible answers to the research questions.

#### **4.1. The Analysis of Students' Questionnaire Data**

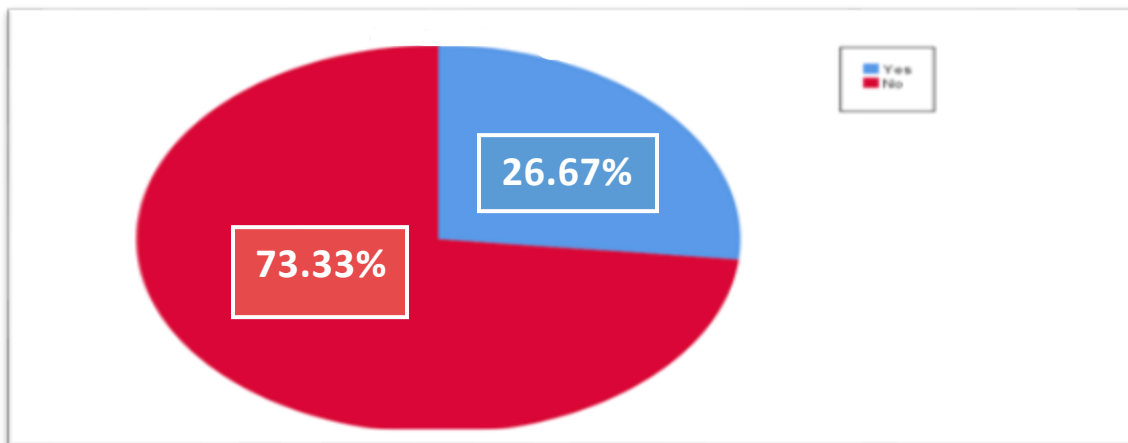
Sixty participants with a percentage of (100%) returned the questionnaire. The answers gained revealed that most of the participants reported almost the same answers for some questions. The findings obtained are separately presented for each question or statement by means of a graph or a table. Then a brief description is provided for each as well. This data was entered into the SPSS program to determine the frequency and the percentage of the questionnaire items. The results then were reported in two parts: Part one included five (yes or no) questions regarding the students' background knowledge about the challenges they might face. Part two: consisted of twenty-three points to be answered

using Likert Scale to detect the challenges that EFL students might face during the project writing, and divide them into four categories: strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

#### **4.1.1. Part One: Students' Background Knowledge about Writing Graduation Project**

Part one highlights the student's prior knowledge issues that are presented in figures as shown below, along with an analysis of each question. The 'yes' answers are indicated in blue, while the 'no' answers are indicated in red. See appendix (A) for any further information.

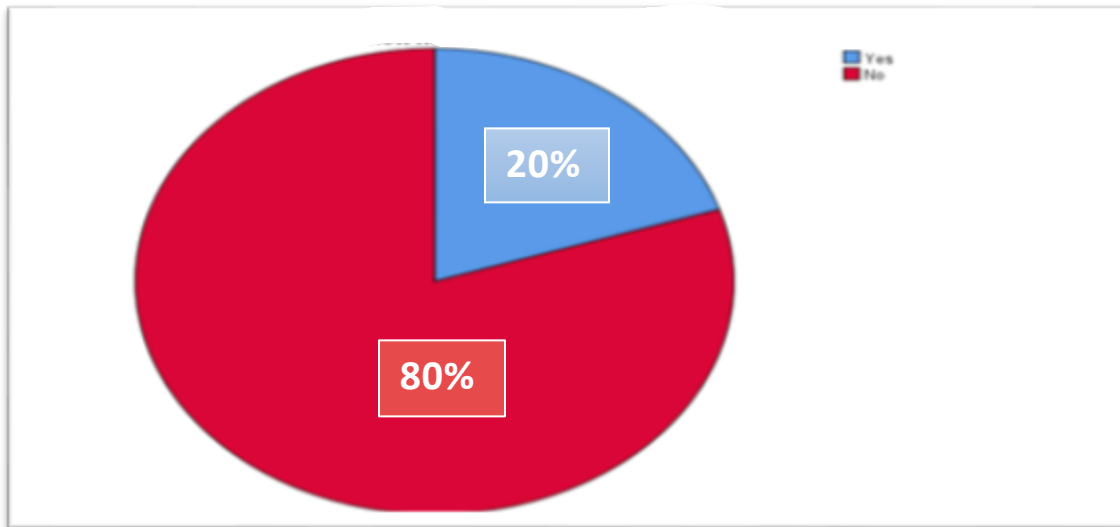
##### **4.2.1.1. Do you know how to choose a topic?**



*Figure: 4.1. Choosing the topic*

Students' responses to the question: [Do you know how to choose a topic?] as shown in figure (1), revealed that 44 students with a percentage of (73.33%) answered (no) that they have difficulty in choosing their project topic while 16 students with a percentage of (26.67%) answered (yes) that they did not have a problem in choosing their project topic.

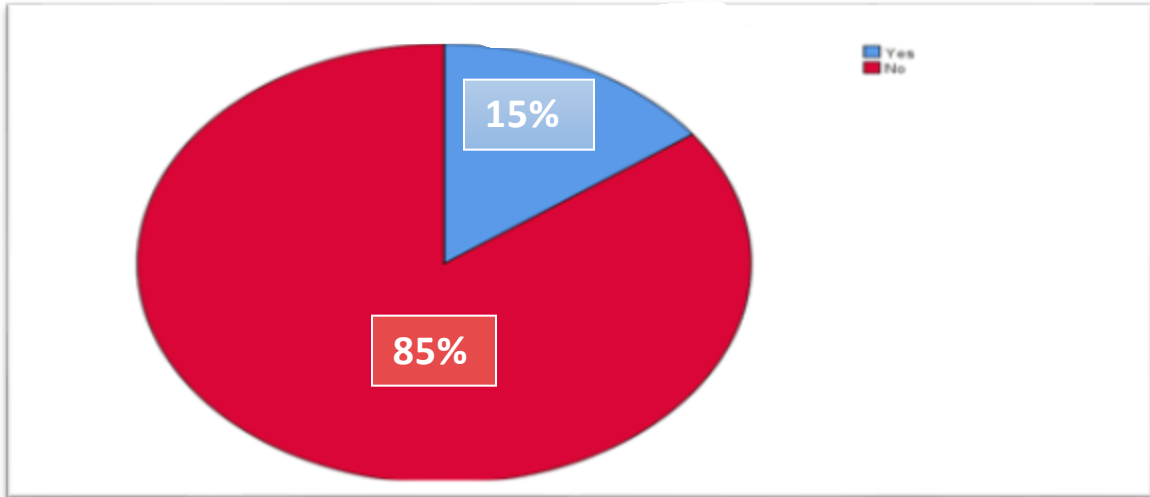
#### 4.1.1.2. Do you know how to construct your sentences academically?



*Figure: 4.2. Constructing sentences academically*

Figure (2) above shows the findings of the question [Do you know how to construct your sentences academically?] which revealed that 48 students with a percentage of (80%) answered (no), and acknowledged that constructing academic sentences is difficult for them as undergraduates. On the other hand, 12 students with a low percentage (20%) disagreed with this, and responded with (yes) to indicate that they had no problems with academic writing.

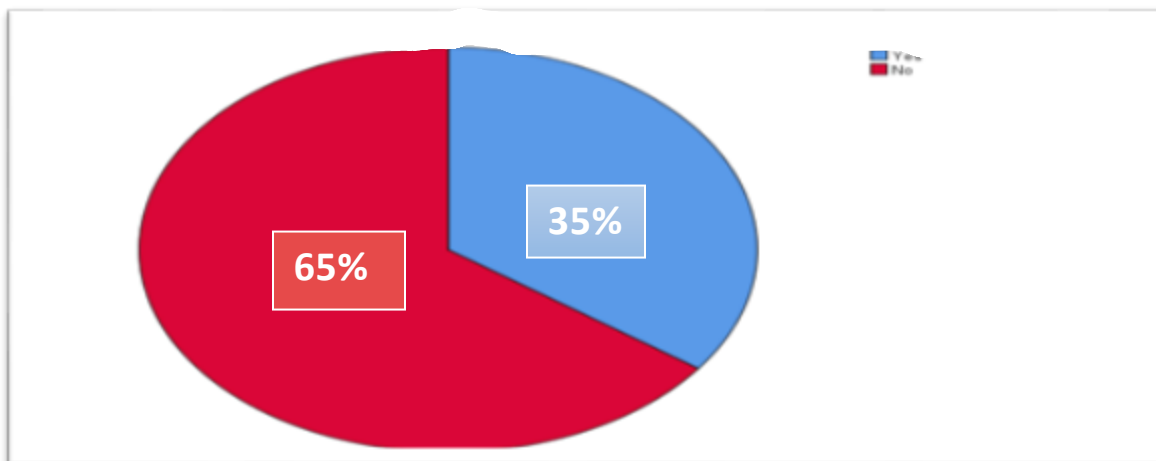
#### 4.1.1.3. Do you know how to think critically?



*Figure: 4.3. Thinking critically*

Figure 3 illustrates that 51 students with a high percentage (85%) answered (no) to the question: [Do you know how to think critically?] indicating that critical thinking is a significant difficulty for undergraduates. However, 9 students with a low percentage (15%) demonstrated that critical thinking was not a problem for them when writing their projects.

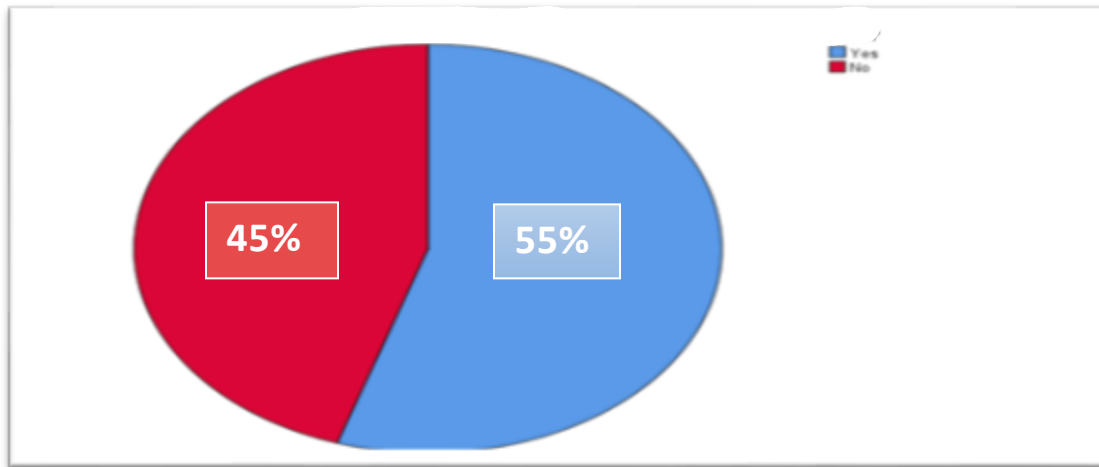
#### 4.1.1.4. Do you know how to design a methodology to collect the required data?



*Figure: 4.4. Designing the methodology to collect data*

Figure 4 above shows that when students were asked: [Do you know how to design a methodology to collect the required data?], 39 students with a percentage of (65%) indicated that they are unsure how to select an appropriate methodology for gathering data for their projects. However, 21 students with a percentage of (35%) disagreed and stated that they are aware of the methods they should use to obtain their project data.

#### 4.1.1.5. Do you know how to set an outline for your graduation project?



*Figure: 4.5. Setting the project outline*

The students' responses to the question: [Do you know how to set an outline for your graduation project?] were: 33 students with a percentage of (55%) responded affirmatively to the question, indicating that they understand how to create a project outline. In contrast, 27 students with a percentage of (45%) stated that this was a challenge for them and responded with (no).

#### 4.1.2. Part Two: Students' Challenges about Writing Graduation Project

The following tables show the statistical results gained from the students' questionnaire in order to answer the first research question. This part presents the extents of agreements of students using the Likert Scale, aims to gather answers to the 23 points discussed in the questionnaire regarding the challenges that face EFL students during the project writing. The responses were emerged into four choices; strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree and disagree. These findings are categorized as follows.



#### 4.1.2.1. I have difficulties in writing the introduction chapter

**Table: 4.1. Students' responses about difficulties in writing the introduction chapter**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	13	16.0	21.7	21.7
	Agree	26	32.1	43.3	65.0
	Disagree	12	14.8	20.0	85.0
	Strongly disagree	9	11.1	15.0	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

Table 4.1 above shows that when students were asked if they had difficulties in writing the introduction chapter of their graduation project, (43.3%) agreed that the introductory chapter was a challengeable part, and besides those (21.7%) reported strongly agree to this point and assured to this point. In contrast, (20%) reported disagree with this point, as it was not a challenge for them, and (15%) responded strongly disagree.

#### 4.1.2.2. I find it difficult to review the literature

**Table: 4.2. Students' responses about difficulty to review the literature**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	40	49.4	66.7	66.7
	Agree	13	16.0	21.7	88.3
	Disagree	4	4.9	6.7	95.0
	Strongly disagree	3	3.7	5.0	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

The table 4.2 above shows that when asked if reviewing the literature on their topic was challenging for them, 40 students with a percentage of (49.4%) reported strongly agree, and 13 students with a percentage of (16.0%) responded agree. Four students with a low percentage (4.9%) responded disagree, although only three students with a very low percentage reported (3.7%) disagree.

#### 4.1.2.3. I find it difficult to write the methodology chapter

**Table: 4.3. Students’ responses about the difficulty to write the methodology chapter**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	39	48.1	65.0	65.0
	Agree	16	19.8	26.7	91.7
	Disagree	3	3.7	5.0	96.7
	Strongly disagree	2	2.5	3.3	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

As table 4.3 above presents, when the students were asked if they found writing the methodology chapter challenging, the responses rates were mixed, 39 students with percentage of (48.1%) reported strongly agree and 16 with a percentage of (19.8%) responded agree that it is a tough chapter to write. Only 5 pupils, however, opposed to it, 3 students with a percentage of (3.7 %) reported disagree and 2 with a percentage of (2.5%) responded strongly disagree.

#### 4.1.2.4. I find it difficult to select the samples

**Table: 4.4. Students’ responses about the difficulty to select the samples**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	31	38.3	51.7	51.7
	Agree	20	24.7	33.3	85.0
	Disagree	5	6.2	8.3	93.3
	Strongly disagree	4	4.9	6.7	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

According to Table 4.4, 31 students with a percentage of (38.3%) chose strongly agree that picking the project sample is difficult. 20 students with a percentage of (24.7%) responded agree. On the other hand, 5 participants with a percentage of (6.2%) reported disagree with the difficulty of sampling strategies. Aside from that, four of them with a percentage of (4.9 %) chose strongly disagree.

#### 4.1.2.5. I find it difficult to analyse quantitative data

**Table: 4.5. Students’ responses about the difficulty to analyse quantitative data**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	42	51.9	70.0	70.0
	Agree	14	17.3	23.3	93.3
	Disagree	3	3.7	5.0	98.3
	Strongly disagree	1	1.2	1.7	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

Table 4.5 above demonstrates that 42 participants with a percentage of (51.9%) reported strongly agree that analysing the quantitative data was difficult for them. On the other hand, 14 students with a percentage of (17.3%) chose agree. Only a small percentage of the participants (3.7%) responded disagree with this argument, and only one student reported strongly disagree.

#### 4.1.2.6. I find it difficult to analyse qualitative data

**Table: 4.6. Students’ responses about the difficulty to analyse qualitative data**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	47	58.0	78.3	78.3
	Agree	13	16.0	21.7	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

The results displayed in table 4.6 shows that the whole sample population believed that analysing the quantitative data was a big challenge. 47 students with a percentage of (58.0%) reported strongly agree and 13 students with a percentage of (16.0%) responded agree.

#### 4.1.2.7. I find it difficult to discuss my findings

**Table: 4.7. Students’ responses about the difficulty to discuss my findings**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	33	40.7	55.0	55.0
	Agree	23	28.4	38.3	93.3
	Disagree	4	4.9	6.7	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

Table 4.7 above, indicates that the majority of the sample population believed that discussing the study findings was a difficult task to be done. 33 participants with a percentage of (40.7%) reported agree to this point and 23 students with a percentage of (28.4%) chose agree. In contrast, only 4 students with a percentage of (4.9%) felt the opposite and reported disagree with this argument.

#### 4.1.2.8. I find it difficult in writing the conclusion chapter

**Table: 4.8. Students’ responses about the difficulty in writing the conclusion chapter**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	18	22.2	30.0	30.0
	Agree	29	35.8	48.3	78.3
	Disagree	12	14.8	20.0	98.3
	Strongly disagree	1	1.2	1.7	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

The above table shows that when the students were asked if writing the conclusion chapter was difficult for them, a big number of students responded positively to this argument, as seen in table 4.8. This was strongly agreed upon by 18 students with a percentage of (22.2%) and 29 students with a percentage of (35.8%). Only 12 students with a percentage of (14.8%) chose disagree, and only 1 student with a very low percentage (1.2 %) reported disagree.

#### 4.1.2.9. I find it difficult to list my references

**Table: 4.9. Students' responses about the difficult to list my references**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	21	25.9	35.0	35.0
	Agree	16	19.8	26.7	61.7
	Disagree	18	22.2	30.0	91.7
	Strongly disagree	5	6.2	8.3	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

According to table 4.9, the majority of the sample group agreed that listing references in project writing was challenging. 21 students with a percentage of (25.9%) reported agree, and sixteen students with a percentage of (19.8%) went with agree. On the other hand, 18 students with a percentage of (22.2%) chose disagree, and only 5 students with a percentage of (6.2%) responded disagree.

#### 4.1.2.10. I find it difficult to write the abstract of my project

**Table: 4.10. Students' responses about the difficult to write the abstract of my project**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	19	23.5	31.7	31.7
	Agree	27	33.3	45.0	76.7
	Disagree	11	13.6	18.3	95.0
	Strongly disagree	3	3.7	5.0	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

Table 4.10 above shows that a large percentage of students agreed to the abstract writing challenge statement. 19 students with a percentage of (23.5%) reported strongly agree and 27 students with a percentage of (33.3%) chose agree. Only 11 students with a percentage of (13.6%) reported disagree with the aforementioned statement, and only 3 students with a percentage of (3.7%) chose strongly disagree.

#### 4.1.2.11. I find it difficult of language barriers

**Table: 4.11. Students’ responses about the difficult of language barriers**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	42	51.9	70.0	70.0
	Agree	18	22.2	30.0	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

Table 4.11 above shows that the participants unanimously agreed that first and second language difficulties posed a significant obstacle. The agreements were split into two categories. 42 students with a percentage of (51.9%) reported strongly agree with the statement and the rest with a percentage of (22.2%) responded agree.

#### 4.1.2.12. I find it difficult because the insufficient time to submit the project

**Table: 4.12. Students’ responses about the difficult related to the time to submit the project**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	29	35.8	48.3	48.3
	Agree	31	38.3	51.7	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

The entire population sample agreed with the statement above, as shown in table 4.12. 29 students with a percentage of (35.8%) reported strongly agree and 31 students with a percentage of (38.3%) chose agree.

#### 4.1.2.13. I find it difficult because the lack of financial resources

**Table: 4.13. Students’ responses about their lack of financial resources**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	7	8.6	11.7	11.7
	Disagree	5	6.2	8.3	20.0
	Strongly disagree	48	59.3	80.0	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

As table 4.13 above shows, a large percentage of students disagreed with the statement that they lacked financial resources. 48 students with a percentage of (59.3%) responded strongly disagree and 5 students with a percentage of (6.2%) chose disagree. Only 5 pupils with a percentage of (8.6%) reported agree with the statement.

#### 4.1.2.14. I find it difficult because the lack of technological expertise

**Table: 4.14. Students’ responses about the lack of technological expertise**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	12	14.8	20.0	20.0
	Agree	30	37.0	50.0	70.0
	Disagree	12	14.8	20.0	90.0
	Strongly disagree	6	7.4	10.0	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		



Table 4.14 shows that the rate of agreement with the statement above about students' lack of technological skill varied, as 30 students with a percentage of (37.0%) reported agree and 12 students with a percentage of (14.8%) chose strongly agree. Students, on the other hand, strongly disagreed with this statement, with a percentage of (14.8 %) reported disagree and (7.4 %) reported strongly disagree.

#### 4.1.2.15. I find it difficult to access to research sites

**Table: 4.15. Students' responses about the difficulty to access to research sites**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	22	27.2	36.7	36.7
	Agree	27	33.3	45.0	81.7
	Disagree	8	9.9	13.3	95.0
	Strongly disagree	3	3.7	5.0	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

Table 4.15 above shows that the majority of the sample population agreed that acquiring access to research sites was a barrier in gathering data for their graduation project, with percentages of (33.3 %) and (27.2 %), respectively. Only 11 students disagreed with this assertion. 8 students with a percentage of (9.9%) reported disagree and 3 students with a percentage of (3.7%) chose disagree.

#### 4.1.2.16. I find it difficult because the lack of motivation

**Table: 4.16. Students' responses about the lack of motivation**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	38	46.9	63.3	63.3
	Agree	19	23.5	31.7	95.0
	Disagree	1	1.2	1.7	96.7
	Strongly disagree	2	2.5	3.3	100.0

	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
	Total	81	100.0		

Table 4.16 above shows that lack of motivation played a significant role in the students' project writing, and that almost the entire sample population agreed on this. 38 students with a percentage of (46.9%) reported agree to this challenge and 19 students with a percentage of (23.5%) chose agree. Only three students with a percentage of (1.2 %) and (2.5 %) felt the opposite and were motivated.

#### 4.1.2.17. I find it difficult because the lack library resources

**Table: 4.17. Students' responses about the lack library resources**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	48	59.3	80.0	80.0
	Agree	12	14.8	20.0	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
	Total	81	100.0		

Table 4.17 above demonstrates how a lack of library resources constituted a significant obstacle for students who were unable to obtain data relevant to their project topic. The students as a whole agreed with this statement, with a percentage of (59.3 %) reported strongly agree and (14.8 %) responded agree.

**4.1.2.18. I find it difficult because the lack of research atmosphere in the college**

**Table: 4.18. Students’ responses about the lack of research atmosphere in the college**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	52	64.2	86.7	86.7
	Agree	3	3.7	5.0	91.7
	Disagree	5	6.2	8.3	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

Lack of research atmosphere in college as table 4.18 shows, posed a challenge towards students’ project success. According to virtually the whole participants, 52 students with a percentage of (64.2%) reported strongly agree and 3 students responded agree. On the other side only 5 students with a percentage of (6.2%) opposed this statement and disagreed.

**4.1.2.19. I find it difficult because the supervisor was co-operative**

**Table: 4.19. Students’ responses about the cooperation of their supervisors**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	18	22.2	30.0	30.0
	Agree	39	48.1	65.0	95.0
	Disagree	1	1.2	1.7	96.7
	Strongly disagree	2	2.5	3.3	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

Table 4.19 shows that students agreed with the statement above regarding supervisors being cooperative, as 39 students with a percentage of (48.1%) responded agree and 18

students with a percentage of (22.2%) chose strongly agree. Although only a small percentage of the participants disagreed with the statement, (2.5%) disagreed and (1.2%) agreed.

#### 4.1.2.20. I find it difficult because few meetings during supervision

**Table: 4.20. Students’ responses about the meetings during supervision**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	41	50.6	68.3	68.3
	Agree	19	23.5	31.7	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

As it can be seen in table 4.20, the whole population agreed on the statement regarding the few meetings a supervisor holds during the project writing journey, as 41 students with a percentage of (50.6%) reported strongly agree and 19 students with a percentage of (23.5%) chose agree.

#### 4.1.2.21. I find it difficult because of little practical directions were given from your supervisor

**Table: 4.21. Students’ responses about the little practical directions were given from your supervisors**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	21	25.9	35.0	35.0
	Agree	17	21.0	28.3	63.3
	Disagree	12	14.8	20.0	83.3
	Strongly disagree	10	12.3	16.7	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

The students' responses to the statement above differed in rate, as shown in table 4.21 a total of 21 students with a percentage of (25.9%) reported strongly agree, and 17 students with a percentage of (21.0%) responded agree. On the other hand, 12 students with a percentage of (14.8%) disagreed with the statement, and ten students (12.3%) strongly disagreed with it.

**4.1.2.22. I find it difficult because supervisor did not go through my chapters regularly**

**Table: 4.22. Students' responses about the regularity of going supervisors through the project chapters**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	17	21.0	28.3	28.3
	Agree	24	29.6	40.0	68.3
	Disagree	9	11.1	15.0	83.3
	Strongly disagree	10	12.3	16.7	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

More than half of the sample population agreed that the statement above posed a difficulty to students' project completion as shown in table 4.22 above. 24 students with a percentage of (29.6%) reported agree and 17 students with a percentage of (21.0%) responded strongly agree. However, a significant percentage of students are opposed to it, as 10 students with a percentage of (12.3%) chose strongly disagree and 9 students with a percentage of (11.1%) disapproving.

#### 4.1.2.23. I find it difficult because the supervisor was late in handing the work back

Table: 4.23. Students' responses about when supervisors handing the work back

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	23	28.4	38.3	38.3
	Agree	17	21.0	28.3	66.7
	Disagree	11	13.6	18.3	85.0
	Strongly disagree	9	11.1	15.0	100.0
	Total	60	74.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	25.9		
Total		81	100.0		

Table 4.23 above reveals that delivering the work back to students late was an impediment to project writing progress. 23 students with a percentage of (28.4%) responded strongly agree and 17 students with a percentage of (21.0%) chose agree. On the other hand, 11 students with a percentage of (13.6 %) disagreed with it, and 9 students with a percentage of (11.1 %) responded strongly disagree.

#### 4.2. Analysis of Supervisors' Interview Results

This section presents the results gained from the teachers' semi-structured interviews and looks at how it was analysed. In this respect, Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p.127) argued that "data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can make sense of what you have learned". In analysing qualitative data, researchers may use these theories: content analysis, grounded theory, thematic analysis or discourse analysis (Cohen et al., 2007). Thematic analysis method was employed in this study to analyse the data obtained from the interviews. The transcribed data was coded by going over each transcript one by one and assigning codes to certain qualities within the text. Coding is a process in which data are grouped into different categories (Cohen, et al., 2007). After reading and reading each transcript and letting the categories emerge from the data, the researcher has a list of primary codes. The following are the main themes

that illustrate the teachers' views, as supervisors, regarding the students' project writing challenges:

### ***The teachers' view about the students' project writing background***

The findings obtained indicate that all the supervisors being interviewed (A, S, F, R, N, T) agreed to the point that students' research writing background is very limited and needs to be developed. Supervisor (F), for instance, clarified her point of view by saying:

*I guess students come from a background where they are fully dependent on teachers... also have not been trained to be "independent critical thinkers" ... have lower expectations than those of their supervisors' ... lack of students' self-confidence in their writing skills... students' low language proficiency ... lack of educational background... lack of sufficient formal instruction in research methodology (insufficient /ineffective research methodology courses).*

In line with her opinion, supervisor (S) reaffirmed the point that students lack the practicality in research writing when she said "*Students have the subject entitled 'research methodology' that they know the theoretical part but they do not practice*". Concerning this, the rest of the interviewees were extremely happy with highlighting this particular point, as it is very challengeable to supervisors. For Zawia University students as supervisor (T) contributed, it is the main reason behind "*the poor background*" as he named it. Therefore, it is the necessity to teach the research methodology as a subject in early semesters to give students the chance to practise the academic research writing as much as possible.

### ***The teachers' view about the students' academic writing style***

The findings gained revealed that all the interviewees were disappointed about the students' academic writing style. They stated that the students' academic writing level is not the required level for graduation. For example, supervisor (F) said:

*The students' writing is very weak. They are unable to cope with the conventions of academic writing e.g., they do not know how to present ideas clearly &*

*logically; do not know how to synthesize information/ideas/different points of view; unable to do proofreading; unable to revise their written work.*

The extract above confirms that students suffer have limited knowledge about the academic writing style. Moreover, supervisor (S) said: *“We need to work as teachers for academic writing subject itself”*. And clarified her answer saying; *“it is not only writing but academic writing. In this way, we can work on the style that the student can use, the forms, the words they choose. We need to have a new subject called academic writing to work on and to make students work academically”*.

The findings also showed that almost all the interviewees, supervisors (A, T, N and R) agreed that the subject of academic writing should be taught separately and students must be obliged to write lots of assignments in order to improve their academic writing skills. This practice helps students a lot when they come to write their graduation projects. In this regard, supervisor (T) stated that *“students’ research writing ability will reflect on their attitude and their teaching style either positively or negatively when they become future lecturers”*.

### ***The teachers’ view about the academic atmosphere in college***

The research findings showed a consensus among the supervisors interviewed that the academic atmosphere is not well prepared for doing research due to the following reasons: (1) absence of courses on how to do a research project; (2) absence of workshops on writing graduation projects in the target language. The qualitative findings also revealed almost similar point of views and most of the supervisors being interviewed considered students’ failure in writing projects one of the educational institution responsibilities, as it is the place where all English language skills are taught. In this respect, supervisor (A) argued:

*Students, specially who will graduate, need a special academic guidance that the college should have places to create workshops through which students can present their topics in front of public and this also will help them avoid their fears and use the language.*



Similarly, supervisors (N, R and F) put the responsibility on the English departments at their colleges. They suggested that the department should provide an academic environment for students in which they can practise the target language in class as they cannot do that outside class. Furthermore, supervisors (T and S) reaffirmed that English is not practised outside class. Students graduate with inadequate English academic writing skills as the chances of practising the target language extensively inside the classroom are very limited and the teacher's effort to bring an English environment inside the class and offer students good opportunities to practise writing research topics before the final year of graduation.

***The teachers' view about the supporting students to get access to data resources***

The findings obtained indicated that this issue formulates a real challenge to supervisors as well as their supervisees. They all agreed that collecting resources required is a fundamental procedure before commencing the process of writing the graduating project. Supervisors (A, S, F, R, N and T) unanimously agreed on one opinion that the university library does not provide references for academic researches. For example, supervisor (T) commented saying:

*The only resource I could recommend to my students was the internet resources. Because the University library is lacking in books and journals, websites and sometimes I provide my students with other personal literature I have at home were the sole means of completing the graduation project.*

Similarly, supervisor (R) said, *"I could only advise my students using internet resources. Because the University library is short on books, the only source of assistance was the Google websites and books I had at home"*. Moreover, supervisor (N) added, *"Despite the fact that I am aware of the University library's shortcomings, I allow my students to search first and then provide them with appropriate references that support their research objectives"*.

***The teachers' view about the most significant challenges students face during the period of the project writing***

The findings obtained revealed that students face numerous challenges through their graduation project writing. Thus, almost all the interviewees thought that the students' lack of academic writing experience is the most significant factor behind the weakness of their graduation projects. In this regard, supervisor (F) contributed, *“let's first admit that the task of writing research is not a simple one as it involves hard work, effort, much time and good background knowledge”*. She also went on saying, *“due to this weak background will affect the stage of analysing the data obtained because students will not be able to produce a comprehensible graduation paper to their future readers”*. This implies that students must have a strong intellectual foundation in order to master the fundamentals of academic research. Moreover, supervisor (A) raised another significant point by saying, *“Another issue is the large number of students. As a supervisor, I cannot meet them all at once, and if I do, I won't be able to address all of the writings they present at the same time”*.

According to the findings gained, there are other significant challenges that might obstacle the process of writing students' graduation project. From supervisors (T and N) point of views, these challenges are related to the topic selection, setting the GP outline and choosing the appropriate methodology. Supervisor (N) viewed the GP outline as a challengeable process by saying, *“If students could outline their project content well from the beginning, they will save time for themselves and for us to work on other aspects of the project”*. Supervisor (T) assured his point of view as he said,

*Choosing a research topic in general and a graduation project topic in particular, is a difficult task, especially if it is student's first engagement in the research field. A supervisor's job is difficult when it comes to selecting a topic that fits the project goals and the students' limited knowledge in a short amount of time.*

Furthermore, supervisor (R) considered another factor that can be a challenge for undergraduates when they tend to write their projects. She clarified her view by saying,

*Finding references that serve the students' need in order to gather data to their topic is one of my issues during the supervision period that my students rely on me to provide them with references and their argument that they do not know how to read the literature.*

Supervisor (R) also added that citing references is as challenging issue for students. In clarifying her contribution, she said, *“different schools have different ways in citing the references and to undergraduates it is difficult in such a short time given to discuss them all that sometimes I cite most of them if students fail to do so”*. This implies that the students did not receive any regular instructions to do their graduation project.

Furthermore, analysing the data showed that supervisor (S) considered L1 interference as the most challenging factor that makes the process of writing a graduation project a difficult task for undergraduates. She said,

*Students have no idea how to write in English unless they first think in Arabic. This makes my job of revising their work tough since I often feel like I'm writing in their place, and I couldn't give them another chance because the department had set a deadline that we couldn't miss.*

The above mentioned extract shows how the students are affected by their first language which hinders them to write in the target language.

### ***The teachers' view about the supervision challenges***

The findings gained showed that the supervisors provided various interpretations according to these challenges. For instance, supervisor (A) said, *“The students should understand the project itself like the atmosphere of the project and what they need to do like a duty”*. This can be interpreted as a more background knowledge is needed about doing a graduating research project from both supervisors and students. Moreover, supervisors (S and F), stated that not all students do what their supervisors asked them to do in time. They may have their reasons which make the project-writing a hard job for both of them. In this regard, supervisor (T) said, *“one of the serious challenges for students is that some of them do not know their duties regarding writing graduation projects. They confused between their supervisors' responsibilities and theirs”*. This

implies that students' limited knowledge about what is required for the process of writing the graduation project might confuse or complicate the supervision progress.

In addition, supervisor (R) referred to L1 interference as a significant challenge for students when writing their graduation projects. It was also mentioned by the same supervisor that supervisors obliged to correct almost the whole writings of their supervisees. Supervisors (T and N) considered the time provided for writing the graduation project as their tiring challenge, for example supervisor (T) argued:

*The responsibility of setting time for students to write their graduation projects is laid on the department side as they are who put rules and list the schedule for us "supervisors and supervisees". Supervisors are also lecturers at college and this means that we have other commitments as students do and if we do not have enough time, we won't be able to submit a well-written work.*

The above mentioned extract shows that supervisor (T) was worried about the supervision regulations and time. Therefore, students should be aware of these procedures and regulations should to set appropriate time plan for their projects.

### ***The teachers' view about the most challengeable chapter for students to write***

The findings revealed that the supervisors have different point views about what is the most challengeable chapter for students to write. For example, supervisors (A, S and N) agreed that the literature review is the most challengeable chapter. Supervisor (S) strongly reaffirmed that by saying, *"It is not any other chapter but the literature review"*. This is because this chapter needs lots of writing skills specially how to quote others' work. Moreover, supervisor (N) added *"As the college library lacks resources, it is difficult for providing students with references and to gathering data about their topic and this makes the literature review chapter the most challengeable one"*.

Furthermore, supervisors (F, and R) stated that the methodology chapter and the data analysis chapter were the most challengeable ones. They thought that the methodology chapter contains the essential framework that leads students to achieve their project goals smoothly and systematically. Commenting on this point, supervisor (F) said:

*To be honest, they have problems with all chapters! However, if you want me choose one; I will go with the methodology chapter, because it is the framework that guides the entire process. Choosing the right tools and applying them is a very sensitive step and here I should refer to the weak and poor research background I talked about earlier and how each step of the project writing need the students' academic and intellectual proficiency.*

Supervisors (F, and R) added that the data analysis chapter is the interpretation of the data gathered that needs knowledge and They experience. The interviewees particularly referred to the students' limited experience in dealing with statistical programs that are needed for analysing quantitative data. Supervisor (R) referred to the conclusion chapter as the most changeable one by saying:

*It might cause a challenge to L2 students because this chapter needs a good vocabulary store as well as the sense of narration which may lack as L1 would interfere as it used to do with non-natives of English language as it tells the readers the whole story of their study journey.*

Supervisor (A) expressed an opposite point of view towards writing the conclusion chapter. When she was asked if it is a significant challenge for students, she replied,

*The conclusion chapter is not challengeable chapter for students as the rest of the chapters because the data is already gathered and all they need to do now is reintroduce and conclude them. This also affirms that the academic writing competence is the main factor that influences undergraduates when they write their graduation projects and any research paper they may write in future.*

The research findings also showed that supervisor (T) had another view about the difficult chapters for students to write as he was the most experienced one among the supervisors who had been interviewed. He referred to three chapters; the introduction chapter, the methodology chapter and the discussion chapter. In his contribution, he argued,

*The introductory chapter is the interface for the study by which the students are going to define and introduce the whole plan to their supervisors and to their*

*readers. The methodology chapter on the other hand acts like the engine that guides the graduation project to the road of success. Finally, the discussion chapter is where the students are going to discuss the findings that their study aims to come up with successfully. Achieving this, a good graduation project sample will be produced.*

Thus, supervisors (T, R and S) suggested that the research methodology subject should be taught within two semesters to offer students sufficient background and experience in writing a graduation research project.

### ***The teachers' view about the time given to students to write their projects***

Analysing the data gained from the supervisors revealed that all of them had the same views regarding the time provided for writing and submitting the work. For instance, supervisor (F) stated that *“students need more time to cope with the requirements of writing graduation projects (which they are already lacking)”*. Supervisor (A) suggested that *“There should be a change in the system of timetable and create a separate session to projects”*. Moreover, supervisor (N) stated that both students and supervisors are in real trouble. She argued that

*The time given to us and to our students is very short that even if we finish the writing and submit the work we still unhappy with the production. Working in a hurry reduces lots of the work value.*

### ***The teachers' view about avoiding plagiarism***

The analysis of the data revealed that all the supervisors agreed that avoiding plagiarism is important for students when they write their graduation projects. They added that students should be informed by their supervisors about how to avoid plagiarism. According to supervisor (A), students should be aware of this issue from the very beginning. She said, *“From the beginning, I have to give my students the idea about this issue before they get in this trouble. So they should know about the plagiarism and how it occurs”*. Moreover, supervisor (S) assured on her role as a supervisor by saying that: *“I*

*have to teach them paraphrasing*". And then she clarified her statement explaining how she deals with her supervisees by assigning work sessions in which they teach them how to quote and how to avoid plagiarism. Supervisor (F) explained her way of dealing with copied data as following;

*Due to the lack of students' research practical background, we are ready for plagiarism ... I avoid this by detecting all traces of academic dishonesty and directing students to re-write all the copied parts of the text in their own words (of course through use of summarizing and paraphrasing) ... sometimes I threaten them that I'll punish them when they neglect my directions... actually I threaten them that I'll cut marks for all plagiarized parts of their writings.*

In addition, supervisors (T, R and N) had faced the similar challenges regarding the plagiarism issue. They admitted that sometimes they were obliged to rewrite or paraphrase some bits of work for their students as they do have time to show them how to avoid plagiarism. For example, supervisor (T) said, "*due to students' lack of research background, me as supervisor and a lecturer I cannot manage to meet my students regularly and advise them to avoid plagiarism*". This indicates that busy supervisors might negatively affect their students work.

### ***The teachers' view about the overcoming students' challenges***

The findings revealed that the interviewees suggested a number of advices that may help undergraduates to overcome any future challenges they might face during the process of their writing their graduation projects. According to the data obtained, all the supervisors mentioned that students should be motivated and encouraged to avoid their fear towards the writing process. One of those advices was said by supervisor (S):

*I tell them that we sometimes make errors but we should learn from them. I advise them to read and read, try to make your own language, it is you who you water yourself with the knowledge and make fruits. I advise them that it is not bad to make mistakes and learn out of them.*

It can be understood from the above extract that the supervisor forces her students to be confident of their abilities. Unlike her, supervisor (A) said, "*students at this stage have to*

*submit at least a 90% percent well prepared work, because this is their last phase before being future teachers and the mistakes here are not acceptable*". Moreover, when asked about her role in helping students to overcome the challenges they might face she responded: *"my duty is to guide my students and show them the right steps to work on but not to write for them. Students are fighters and they should fight for their topic success as any other subject they study"*. Supervisors (R, T and N) referred to the same strategy they use to help their students overcome any obstacle they might face. They mentioned that they follow the time challenge game. This will be clarified in the following response by supervisor (T):

*Because we are on the same boat as supervisors and students, we must swim through these difficulties. I remind my students that they only have a week to submit a draft of their plan, as well as their subsequent plans. This motivates them to work hard, and I will be happy to teach them to develop their writing.*

Moreover, supervisor (R) added, *"challenges are part of the students' project writing journey and to us as their supervisors as well"*. To her, motivation was the only way to support her students. In her contribution, she confirmed that,

*Students are always afraid from things they do not know or do not have previous knowledge about. My attitude towards this is to reduce that feeling and substitute it with confident. This needs effort and if they become motivated they will reach a point where they can continue without much guidance from me.*

This indicates that the supervisor (R) above was aware of what students need to overcome all the challenges they might encounter during writing their graduation projects.

#### **4.4. Summary of the Chapter**

All the data gained from the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews were analysed in this chapter. The quantitative data obtained revealed that students lack the practical part of the research writing, and this was confirmed by the qualitative data as the supervisors' responses assured on the importance of concentrating on the students' academic research writing challenges. These findings are discussed in depth in the next chapter.



## **Chapter Five**

### **Discussion**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This study was conducted to explore the challenges that EFL Libyan University students encounter while writing their final year graduation projects, and how their supervisors view these challenges. This chapter discusses the findings obtained in relation to the research questions and previous literature. A brief summary to this chapter is also given. Before going further, it worth noting to revisit the research questions.

#### **5.2. Research Questions**

Q1- What challenges do undergraduate students encounter when they write their graduation research projects?

Q2. What are the teachers' views as supervisors about the challenges that students face when they write their projects?

#### **5.3. The Challenges Undergraduate Students Encountered and Teachers' Perspectives about Conducting Graduation Project**

The quantitative findings revealed that 73.33% of students responded with “no” that they face challenges when choosing a topic for their graduation projects, while 26.67% responded with “yes”. This finding is in accordance with Alseid's (2017) argument in which he stated that most Libyan learners are hesitant in selecting a topic and they take a lot of time for that. This problem can be attributed to students' limited experience in research writing. Interestingly, the qualitative finding confirmed this conclusion as supervisors (A, S, F, R, N and T) validated this problem claiming that, it is due to undergraduates' lack of research experience, students struggle when choosing a topic for their GP. They also agreed unanimously on one point of view that if students were unsure about a topic, how they would decide on an area of interest to research. Supervisors also referred to the topic's content, stating that through the selection of their research topic title, students will make the research procedure either difficult or easy. This was also

clear when students were asked about the academic research atmosphere in college as the majority of them with a 91.7% strongly agreed that they lack this important research atmosphere (See table 4.18). Due to this lack, the majority of students with 95% agreed that they lack motivation towards research writing (see table, 4.16). This finding is in line with what Adhikari (2020) who recommended that choosing potential research topics of interest could help the researcher stay motivated and overcome challenges that arise repeatedly over the course of the study. Adhikari also argued this issue saying, selection of a research topic is a big challenge for students and professionals alike. As a result, students should be aware that selecting a topic is a delicate process that influences the quantity of research they undertake, as it either limits the scope of the research or allows the researcher to conduct unlimited inquiry.

Furthermore, the qualitative findings demonstrated that the majority of students with a percentage of 80% responded “no” that they face challenges about their academic research writing style and that they have difficulties of structuring their sentences in an academic manner, similar to how a research paper is written, while only 20% of them reported “yes”. According to this finding, it can be deduced that undergraduates have a genuine need for distinct sessions to master their academic writing abilities. This was also confirmed by their supervisors in the interviews’ sessions when they were asked about the students’ academic writing. They were all dissatisfied with the academic writing level that their students are going to graduate with, particularly because they would become teachers in future. They put the responsibility for that on the university where they study. As an example, supervisor (A) said,

*The students’ writing is very weak. They are unable to cope with the conventions of academic writing e.g. they don’t know how to present ideas clearly and logically; don’t know how to synthesize information/ideas/different points of view; unable to do proofreading; unable to revise their written work.*

This conclusion matches the findings provided by a number of recent studies such as Abdulkareem, (2013), Al Badi, (2015), Pineteh, (2014) and Yuen & Mussa, (2015). They all emphasized the challenges that undergraduate and postgraduate students face when composing academic research reports. These challenges include: grammatical mistakes,

insufficient vocabularies, and challenges with structuring and structuring words, ideas, and paragraphs. In other words, academics attempting to write a piece of research work must know how to write well in order to deliver the research findings effectively. The solution for this issue was also provided by Komba (2015) who has proposed, university teachers are advised to revise the teaching methods and the contents of academic writing and methodology modules to make them cope with the needs of EFL students to accomplish the writing of the thesis. Moreover, Al-Khairi (2013, p.1) found various problems indicates that academic writing for L2 speakers in particular is a challenge and suggested to the institutions the following: Language courses should be increased to strengthen all the language skills in general and writing in particular, motivate the students to use English with the teachers as well as with each other, introduce modern and novel teaching techniques, equip the classrooms with necessary audio-visual aids, diagnose students' writing problems in the beginning of their studies at university, tailor the course contents according to their needs and introduce group/pair work, peer correction, use dictionaries frequently, etc.

Furthermore, it is interesting to find the analysed data gained from both students' questionnaire and supervisors' interviews concordant to one point that undergraduates have difficulty in writing their graduation projects due to their lack of critical thinking abilities. Analysing the quantitative data showed that 85% of the participants admitted having weakness regarding the critical thinking abilities in research area (see fig 3). More to the point, supervisor (F) argued that "*students have not been trained to be critical thinkers*". According to Hitchcock (2011), the American philosopher, Dewey, first appeared the concept of critical thinking, just 100 years ago. He stated that Dewey (1910), presented in his book "How we Think" what he called "reflective thinking" as an active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends. Therefore, students should learn how to write academically and know how to think critically when gathering data to their study.

Nevertheless, designing a methodology was among the challenges raised from the data obtained in this study. The findings revealed that the students' responses in (4.2.1 and figure 4) showed that a large proportion of undergraduates with a percentage of 65% suffer when they design a methodological framework for their study. On the other hand, 35% of them did not find it a challengeable issue and they can design their GP methodology responding with a "yes". This was confirmed during the interview session with supervisor (F) who described the process of designing the methodological framework as "*the framework that guide the entire study to help answering the research questions*". She also added,

*Choosing the right tools and applying them is a very sensitive step and here I should refer to the weak and poor research background I talked about earlier and how each step of the project writing need the students' academic and intellectual proficiency.*

This finding goes in line with what Crawford's (2010) argument in which he stated that the methodology which researchers are going to use comes from the research questions of the study. Statistically, 91.7% of the participants in this study agreed that writing the methodology chapter is a challenge for them (see table, 4.3). This finding matches Yusuf's (2013) conclusion in which he confirmed that writing the methodology chapter is a serious challenge for students in addition to reviewing the related literature and composing a good introduction. Therefore, the methodology subject should be practically taught to students to help them be ready to do their graduation projects easily.

Moreover, when the research participants were asked if they know how to set their GP outline, their responses were neutral, i. e. with a percentage of 55% reaffirmed positively that it is not an issue to set an outline for their GP. On the other hand, 45% negatively affirmed with a "No" answer that they lack the knowledge of setting their GP outline and still need guidance from their supervisors. During the interview sessions, two of the supervisors (T & N) raised this point. Supervisor (N) said, "*If students could outline their project content well from the beginning, they will save time for themselves and for us to work on other aspects of the project*". This finding is in line with what Al Fadda's (2012)

findings in which she stated that writing an outline before writing a draft facilitates students' success in academic writing.

Moreover, analysing the quantitative data showed a great portion of students' agreements rating between 43.3% who reported agree that they encounter challenges when they start writing the introduction chapter of their graduation project and 21.7% responded strongly agree to this challengeable stage. On the other hand, with a percentage of 20% and 15% reaffirmed that the students did not encounter any difficulty in writing the introductory chapter for their GP. This finding reveals that writing this particular chapter is an issue for undergraduates as they suffer from the beginning of their writing. In accordance with this, the qualitative findings revealed that because of the lack of the research experience, students were expected to face such a challenge, as this chapter is where the whole processes of their graduation project study plan is defined. These findings go in line with Komba (2015) and Caulfield (2020) who defined the introduction chapter as a presentation of the theoretical background where the statement of the problem and the research objectives are clearly stated in understandable language. Also they pointed out that the introduction chapter is where researchers set up their topic, provide background or summarize the existing research, position their own approach, detail their specific research problem and give an overview of their research structure.

The findings obtained also revealed that the majority of the students with a percentage of 66.7% reported strongly agree and 21.7 chose agree that they face lots of troubles when writing the second chapter (Literature Review Chapter) of their graduation project. While 6.7% and 5.0% showed disagreement to this point. This finding indicates that integrating previous studies in which similar topics were investigated is not easy for undergraduate students. Reviewing previous literature is the backbone of any study conducted and verifying past studies done by other scholars justify the research and make it fruitful. This finding is confirmed by most of the supervisors interviewed. They stated that reviewing previous literature demands a critical thinking skill that students lack, in addition to the limited research experience they have. Supervisor (S) commented on this issue saying that: *"It is not any other chapter but the literature review"*.

Moreover, supervisors (A, S, F, R, N and T) unanimously agreed on one opinion that the university library does not provide references for academic research. For example, supervisor (T) argued that he always provides his students with the books and resources they need during the process of writing their projects. He also added that the internet is an important source of information for students. Supervisor (N) added, *“As the college library lacks resources, it is difficult for providing students with references and to gathering data about their topic and this makes the literature review chapter the most challengeable one”*. This point of view agrees to students’ responses as they totally agreed with a percentage of 100% that the libraries at their universities are empty of any resources (See table 4.17). Moreover, 70% of the participants complained from their weak technological expertise when they want to get access to the internet (see table, 4.14). On the other hand, 81.7% declared that they find it difficult to access research sites as they search for references to support their research due to the poor internet connection (see table, 4.15). This indicates that students encounter serious difficulties in gaining the data required for writing their research project. These findings are in line with Saiden, et.al, (2011) when he stated that the literature review chapter is hard to come by, thus he recommended good research, statistics and measurement and evaluation courses should be given to students in advance. In contrast, the data showed that only one supervisor (supervisor A) had a different point of view when said that the literature review does not show any creativity from the side of students because the content is already mentioned and they need only to refer to it. This means that students need to read more in order to increase their knowledge about writing the literature review chapter. This chapter is a big challenge not only for students but it is also a challenge for teachers as well when they do research. If students did not have the knowledge of how to read literature and quote properly, this may lead them to commit plagiarism. This was detected in supervisor’s (F) contribution, *“due to the lack of students’ research practical background, we are ready for plagiarism”*. This finding agrees with Alsied’s (2017) argument in which she stated that plagiarism is one of the critical difficulties that Libyan students encounter when expressing themselves in their own words. Therefore, they copy from other works and present it as their own without acknowledgement. This can be attributed to the limited background knowledge the students have in research.

Furthermore, the research findings demonstrated that the majority of the participants have significant difficulties in analysing both quantitative and qualitative data. According to the quantitative findings, it was confirmed that this particular chapter was a big challenge for students due to their very limited experience in dealing with statistical programs such as SPSS. The supervisors interviewed also highlighted this problem, claiming that this chapter converts the data numerically so that the samples can be counted as percentages and this would not happen as required if students did not have the experience in dealing with statistical programs. Taskeen, et al., (2014) and Uzobo and Alfred (2019) discussed this issue, indicating that the data analysis chapter is an important section and that students' lack of statistical expertise is one of the challenges that prevents them from getting the most use of their projects. The quantitative findings also showed that the majority of students with a percentage of 93.3% face significant difficulties in analysing the data quantitatively (See table 4.5). Regarding the qualitative data analysis, 78.3% of the research participants reported 'strongly agree' and 21.7% responded 'agree' that they do not have the proper academic writing skills required for transcribing and analysing the raw data (See table 4.6). More to the point, the research findings confirmed that even when evaluating qualitative data, students lack academic writing skills which might negatively affect their analysis. In this regard, supervisor (F) confirmed that students' weak background knowledge about academic writing skills usually affects the process of data analysis, therefore, producing a comprehensible graduation paper is a big challenge for them. This indicates that a good academic writing skills in addition to a wide background knowledge about analysing the data are a must for university students.

The findings obtained also revealed that the students' poor academic writing skills made them face significant challenges in writing the discussion chapter. In this regard, 93.3% of the participants reported that they could not discuss their findings while only a small number of them with a percentage of 6.7% responded that they did not face any difficulties in discussing their project findings. During the interviews, one supervisor indicated that the discussion chapter needs to be written in a good academic language as it represents the core of the research project. More importantly, supervisors recommended that university students should be taught academic writing courses to enhance their writing proficiency (see 4.3.2). This finding agrees with Conn's (2017)

argument in which he stated that a well-written discussion section provides insights not found elsewhere in the paper as it tells readers why they should care about the project. Thus, as suggested by literature and most of the supervisors, students need to improve their academic writing skills, and their supervisors should pay more attention to this particular skill.

Additionally, the findings gained showed that a great portion of undergraduate students with a percentage of 78.3% agreed that the conclusion chapter is challenging. When piloting the questionnaire, the researcher discussed this point because it was assumed that this would not be a challenging issue. The research findings demonstrated that concluding the results obtained need a critical thinking skill and a good academic language that students lack as mentioned earlier in this chapter. This conclusion is confirmed by the qualitative findings, as an example, supervisor (R) said, *“It might cause a challenge to L2 students because this chapter needs a good vocabulary store as well as the sense of narration which may lack as L1 would interfere as it used to do with non-natives of English language as it tells the readers the whole story of the study journey”*. Analysing the qualitative data showed that the participants agreed on the language barriers that students face, as mastering the target language in a poor academic atmosphere is really a big challenge (See table 4.11). This finding is in agreement with Holewa (2004) and Faryadi’s (2012) findings in which they argued that the conclusion chapter is as challenging as other chapters. In contrast, analysing the qualitative data revealed that supervisor (A) had another point of view, as she did not consider the conclusion chapter a challenge for her students since the data is already gathered and all what students need to do is reintroduce and conclude them. This finding is in agreement with Clare’s (2018) argument in which he stated that the conclusion should not be the most difficult thing to write, but still it is mega important as it represents the message that the researchers leave to their readers. As a result, students should be aware that the conclusion chapter is a delicate chapter to write because it organizes all of the findings they worked so hard to achieve.

Furthermore, the quantitative findings (see section 4.2.2, tables 9 and 10), showed that students face challenges in listing references with a percentage of 61.7% and in writing the abstract with a percentage of 76.7%. These challenges were confirmed by supervisor



(R) who stated that *“different schools have different ways in citing the references and to undergraduates it is difficult in such a short time given to discuss them all that sometimes I cite most of them if students fail to do so”*. This indicates that supervisors were in a desperate need to be given enough time to help students learning the basics of graduation project writing. This was also confirmed by the quantitative findings as 48.3% of the participants reported ‘strongly agree’ with the time issue and 51.7% responded ‘agree’ to the difficulties related to the insufficient time given to them to submit their GP (See table 4.12). This conclusion goes in line with Elmojahed’s (2010) research findings in which he found that students fail to properly cite and reference their sources, which is considered as plagiarism. Therefore, teachers should solve this issue by teaching students the research methodology subject practically.

Nevertheless, the quality of supervision is one of the major concerns in writing graduation projects. The quantitative findings showed that students are not happy with their supervisors’ attitude towards their graduation project accomplishment. With a high percentage of 100%, students showed a complete dissatisfaction with the few meetings with their supervisors. Moreover, students in the survey claimed that their supervisors were not co-operative, and late in handing their work back as they were in need to regular feedback on each chapter, and due to this, students lack the practical directions that their supervisors should offer them (See tables, 4.19, 4.21, 4.22 and 4.23). In contrast, the qualitative findings revealed that the supervisors blamed students and universities for the disregard during the supervision. As mentioned by supervisor (T), the department has the responsibility in organizing time for supervisors and their supervisees, taking into account their responsibilities, and assisting them in presenting well-written works. In this respect, Alsied and Ibrahim, (2017) and Chabaya et al., (2009) argued that a lack of regular interaction with supervisors is another barrier, some supervisors have been accused of behaving irresponsibly by skipping to monitor students step by step due to other commitments. Moreover, as a result, students are left to complete the majority of the work on their own, which frequently leads to unsatisfactory research projects (Alsied & Ibrahim, 2017). These issues are not limited to students' research skills or competence levels; supervisors' lack of research skills and expertise are also significant factors (Simuforosa, et al., 2015).

#### **5.4. Summary of the Chapter**

The findings obtained were discussed in detail in this chapter, along with comparisons to earlier research. To sum up, all the discussed findings come to a conclusion about the challenges that had a negative impact on the students' project writing. The research questions were presented and fully discussed. Moreover, it was attempted to provide comprehensible explanations for the challenges that undergraduate students face when writing their graduation projects. This was through discussing the findings derived from the quantitative and qualitative findings gained.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Conclusion**

#### **6.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary of the whole study. The conclusions are based on analysing and discussing the data obtained. In a linier debate, recommendations are made to the undergraduate students, supervisors and institutions. Suggestions for further researches and limitations of the study are provided. A brief summary is also included at the end of this chapter.

#### **6.2. Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of the data obtained and the discussion of the research findings, this study focused on the challenges that EFL undergraduate students encounter when writing their graduation projects, and how their supervisors view these challenges. This study was carried out to identify the factors that stand behind these challenges, and suggest solutions and recommendations to overcome them. This study employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Being more explicit, a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were utilised to the collect data required. The questionnaires were distributed over 60 students. Six supervisors were among the participants being interviewed. Four of them have master's degree and two have PhD.

The quantitative findings obtained demonstrated that undergraduate students face significant difficulties in conducting their BA graduation projects. They face challenges in each step of their projects writing. These challenges include choosing a topic for a graduation project, writing the proposal, setting the research plan in the introduction chapter, which in turn includes identifying the problem statement, and formulating the research questions and aims. Reviewing the literature is one of the biggest challenges that students encounter. Deciding on a methodological framework and choosing an appropriate sample and data collection tools are also identified as other challenges that students face. Moreover, the research findings revealed that students face challenges in

how to analyse the data obtained and then how to discuss the findings obtained in relation to the research questions and the existing literature. The current study also showed that students face significant difficulties in writing academically, citing the references used in addition to some supervision issues. All of these challenges can be attributed to the lack of theoretical and practical background knowledge about writing a research in general and writing graduation projects in particular.

Furthermore, in the current study, the qualitative findings revealed that the interview sessions with supervisors confirmed all the challenges mentioned by students in addition to others related to the students themselves. The supervisors stated that some students do not know how to conduct a research project which makes the supervisors' job becomes more difficult. All of the supervision obstacles were linked to the lack of students' research experience. One of the significant issues raised by supervisors is the time given to students to submit their graduation project. Moreover, the findings revealed that students encounter serious challenges in their few meetings and practical sessions with their supervisors since they were unfamiliar with the norms and stages of how a well academic GP is written. Supervisors reacted by arguing that the department, not the supervisors, is responsible for this issue and that the department should provide them with a special place in which they could keep in touch with their supervisees. Supervisors' delayed feedback is another significant issue for students. This makes students become anxious about their supervisors' feedback and comments on their work because they need to know if their work was approved or more amendments are required. In order to overcome these challenges, recommendation for students, supervisors, and universities are provided below.

### **6.3. Recommendations for Students/Supervisors and Institutions**

In this part, the recommendations are drawn from the findings of this study. These recommendations are given to the undergraduate students, supervisors, and institutions. These recommendations are:

- Undergraduates are recommended to be more motivated in order to maintain their research project writing adventure move forward smoothly. Thus, they should precisely follow the supervisor's instructions.
- The findings of the study revealed that students were suffering from lack of research background knowledge. Therefore, they should know how to define their projects, how to decide upon a methodology understanding the difference between qualitative and quantitative research, how to choose the appropriate research tools, and how to choose their participants.
- Before conducting the interview sessions students should check the recording equipment and make sure, they have enough tapes, batteries, papers, pens, etc. Moreover, they should check that they have a suitable venue to carry out the interview, away from noise and interruptions.
- Students must practice the language as much as possible in order to improve their vocabulary storage and their academic writing.
- Students should prepare a topic of interest in advance over the summer vacation or the preceding semester, since this may help them to know what to do later.
- Students should also know in advance what personal characteristics do they have, which might help them to complete their research, and they should know what skills and experience do they have which might help in their research.
- The findings of this study reported that the students face challenges in analysing quantitative and qualitative data. Therefore, training sessions and workshops should be offered to students to teach them how they can analyse their data.
- Students should be required to write simple research articles on a monthly basis, which improve the quality of their writing abilities.
- Teachers in English departments should teach students research methodology subject theoretically and practically at the same time, which may help them to know what to do when they start writing their graduation project.
- Teachers should consider undergraduate students' research backgrounds, as this is the primary goal of this study.
- The researcher recommended supervisors to schedule meeting sessions with their supervisees on a regular basis.

- They are also advised to hold workshops for each chapter so that students can be encouraged and practice their linguistic skills properly.
- To motivate students, supervisors should ask them to hand their writings on time, otherwise they will fail. In relation to the students' writing, detailed feedback should be provided.
- Supervisors should also put a balance between their professional responsibilities and supervision in order to provide students with appropriate guidance and assistance, particularly timely constructive feedback on the GP's language, style, content, and structure.
- The academic writing course should be scheduled as part of the teaching schedule.
- The department should set a limit on how many students the supervisors are willing to supervise.
- Supervisors should have a place where they can meet with their students and hold discussions.
- The findings of this study could potentially be used to develop training research workshops focusing on how EFL undergraduate students can strengthen their research backgrounds.

#### **6.4. Limitations of the Study**

This study has some limitations. These limitations were mostly methodological. According to Cohen et al., (2007), researchers must be direct and clear about all aspects of their studies. Moreover, due to the Corona pandemic (covid19), the sample of the study was not large and the researcher could not contact participants from other universities. Another difficulty for the researcher was finding time to contact supervisors to schedule interview sessions because they were overloaded with lectures and other responsibilities.

#### **6.5. Suggestions for Future Research**

As it has been stated in chapter one, this study aimed to investigate the challenges that EFL Libyan undergraduate students face when writing their graduation projects and their

supervisors views about these challenges. A similar study could be conducted by using different research methods and focusing on challenges that supervisors might encounter during their supervisions. Moreover, although the researcher worked hard to gather data that meet the research goals, it is hoped that other researchers look at the issue from different perspectives and come up with new insights that help undergraduates to overcome any challenges that may negatively affect their progress when writing their graduation projects.

#### **6.6. Summary of the Chapter**

The overall conclusions on the challenges that Libyan EFL undergraduate students might face while writing their graduation projects were summarized in this chapter. Moreover, some recommendations to students, supervisors, as well as universities were also provided. The research limitations and a number of suggestions for further studies were presented.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Students' Questionnaire

#### Student's Questionnaire

Dear Candidates

This structured questionnaire is designed to EFL undergraduate students who conduct a graduation project as a part fulfillment of their Bachelor Degree. The main aim of this survey is to investigate the challenges EFL Libyan undergraduates face when they write their graduation projects. I would be grateful if you kindly complete this questionnaire. Your participation would help with the success of the study. The data collected through this survey will be kept strictly confidential and it will be used for the academic research only.

#### \*Participants Personal Information:

Name \ Optional: .....

Gender:            Male: ( )                                  Female: ( )

Age:                ( )

University: ..... College: .....

#### Part 1: Student's Background Knowledge Challenges

- Please tick the right answer for each of the following questions:

1- Do you know how to choose a topic?

Yes ( )                                  No ( )

2- Do you know how to construct your sentences academically?

Yes ( )                                  No ( )

3- Do you know how to think critically?

Yes ( )                                  No ( )

4- Do you know how to design a methodology to collect the required data?

Yes ( )                                  No ( )

5- Do you know how to set an outline for your graduation project?

Yes ( )                                  No ( )

## Part 2: Challenges Face EFL Students During the Project writing

- Tick to what extent do you agree or disagree with the items below:

**NOTE:** The degrees you are going to tick are abbreviated and accompanied by an appropriate percentage to help measuring the extent of compatibility and incompatibility with the challenges addressed in the tables bellow as follows:

\*Strongly Agree (SA,100%)

\*Agree (A,75%)

\*Disagree (DA,50%)

\*Strongly Disagree (SDA,25%)

<b>A-Project Chapters Challenges</b>	<b>SA 100%</b>	<b>A 75%</b>	<b>DA 50%</b>	<b>SDA 25%</b>
6- I have difficulties in writing the introduction chapter				
7- I find it difficult to review the literature				
8- I find it difficult to write the methodology chapter				
9- I find it difficult to select the samples				
10- I find it difficult to analyse quantitative data				
11- I find it difficult to analyse qualitative data				
12- I find it difficult to discuss my findings				
13- I have difficulty in writing the conclusion chapter				
14- I find it difficult to list my references				
15- I find it difficult to write the abstract of my project				

<b>B-Influential Challenges on the Project Value</b>	<b>SA 100%</b>	<b>A 75%</b>	<b>DA 50%</b>	<b>SDA 25%</b>
16- First and second language barriers				
17- Insufficient time to submit the project				
18- lack of financial resources				
19- Lack of technological expertise				
20- I find it difficult to access to research sites				
21- Lack of motivation				

<b>C-Institutional Challenges</b>	<b>SA 100%</b>	<b>A 75%</b>	<b>DA 50%</b>	<b>SDA 25%</b>
22-Lack of library resources				
23-Lack of research atmosphere in the college				

<b>D-Supervision Challenges</b>	<b>SA 100%</b>	<b>A 75%</b>	<b>DA 50%</b>	<b>SDA 25%</b>
24- Supervisor was not co-operative				
25- Few meetings during supervision				
26- Little practical directions were given from my supervisor				
27- Supervisor did not go through my chapters regularly				
28- Supervisor was late in handing the work back				

## **Appendix B: Interview Questions**

Dear Teachers

I am working on a study entitled “Challenges in Writing Graduation Project: Libyan EFL University Teachers and Students Perspectives”. This interview aims to answer the following research questions for this study; what are the teachers’ views as supervisors about the challenges that students face when they write their graduation projects? The purposes of this study are: (1) to identify the challenges students face while writing their projects. (2) To understand the teachers’ views as a supervisor about the challenges that students face when they write their projects.

I would like to ask you some questions, as supervisors, about how you view students’ challenges when they write their graduation projects. Your name will remain anonymous.

At this point, I am interested in the challenges you and your supervisees have experienced during the supervision period.

**Q1-** Do you think that students have the sufficient research background to conduct a graduation project?

**If ‘No’**, what is the reason behind student’s weakness in project writing?

**If ‘Yes’**, please clarify

**Q2-** What do you think of:

**a-**The academic writing style of students when they tend to write their graduation projects?

**b-**The academic atmosphere in the college, and how does it encourage students to write research papers?

**Q3-** How do you help your students to get access to data resources?

**Q4-** From your point of view as you have supervised so many graduation projects:

**a-**What are the most significant challenges students face during the period of the project writing?

**b-**What are the difficulties you came across as a supervisor during the supervision period?

**c-**What is the most challengeable chapter for students to write and why?

**Q5-** Do you think that the time given to students is enough to write their graduation project?

**Q6-** How do you deal with copied data, and what advice can you give to help undergraduates to avoid copying other researchers’ writings (plagiarism)?



Appendix C: Ethical approval Permission letters from the departments

Ministry Of Higher Education  
And Scientific Research  
University Of Zawia  
General Administration

وزارة التعليم العالي  
والبحوث العلمي  
جامعة الزاوية  
الإدارة العامة

التاريخ: / / 20 م الموافق: / / 14 هـ الرقم الإشاري: .....

السادة/ كلية التربية الزاوية  
كلية الاداب الزاوية  
كلية التربية ابو عيسى  
كلية اللغات الزاوية

تحية طيبة وبعد .....

نحييكم ... وتفديكم إدارة الدراسات العليا والتدريب بجامعة الزاوية بأن الطالبة  
"تفيسة محمد المختار محمد" إحدى طالبات الدراسات العليا لنيل درجة الاجازة العالية  
"الماجستير" بقسم: (اللغة الانجليزية) ، وهي بمرحلة إعداد رسالتها .

نأمل ... مساعدة الطالبة المعنية للاطلاع و الحصول على البيانات والمعلومات ذات  
العلاقة بموضوع الرسالة ..

شاكرين لكم حسن التعاون  
والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

د/ يوسف شعيبان المبروك  
مدير إدارة الدراسات العليا والتدريب

مسورة الى

الم -  
2021/12/zainab

ص.ب: 16418 الزاوية هاتف: 00218.23.7626384 فاكس: 00218.23.7626882 الموقع الإلكتروني: www.zu.edu.ly  
البريد الإلكتروني: info@zu.edu.ly