How BA Students Perceive Graduation Thesis Writing Process: A Qualitative Inquiry

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Abstract

Education practices in a wide variety of contexts around the world show that senior students are required to write a thesis in English to have a Bachelors of Art degree in their field. The existing literature presents a number of studies focusing on challenges that doctoral and Master of Arts students have in due of thesis writing in English as a foreign language. However, seldom attention has been devoted to the perceptions of Bachelor of Arts students about the graduation thesis writing process, and key to the forward is an investigation of these possible challenges on which suggestions for improvements could be based and which could help readers see the existing camp in full colour. With the aim of filling this void, the current qualitative survey study with semi-structured in-depth interviews was designed to investigate the twelve BA candidates' perspective in a north-eastern state university of Turkey. The findings obtained by an in-depth content analysis show that the perspective graduates are confronted with difficulties related to language, writing and style, research methodology, the research topic as well as personal matters. The study is intended to contribute to universities for better education practices and to respond to the emerging need in the body of the literature that necessitates far-reaching discussions regarding BA practices.

Key Words: challenges, thesis writing, senior students, bachelor degree

Introduction

Writing is one of the most challenging language skills in that it requires several skills including the use of correct grammar, the choice of appropriate lexicon, the ability to plan the process, the use

of appropriate linking, to add but a few. It becomes harder when one is supposed to write in a foreign language, i.e., English in this case. Academic writing is regarded a vital language skill to get an academic degree (Odena & Burgess, 2017). As one forms of academic writing, graduate thesis is valued to evaluate the comprehensive abilities of students (Liu, 2015). However, the process of thesis or dissertation writing is hard to follow as students may confront a wide variety of troubles including language-related problems, the difficulty to find a topic, supervisor-related problems or cultural issues. As a great number of doctoral students have to write thesis in English in order to attain a degree (Gürel, 2011), it is worth analysing the uncovered difficulties of these students encounter in the course of thesis writing to produce possible solutions to the process for both students writing a thesis and supervisors supposed to guide them in this challenging academic journey.

The existing literature includes several studies on the problems of MA or PhD students, yet a comprehensive analysis implies an emerging need in that the challenges encountered in thesis writing to get a Bachelor of Art (BA, henceforth) degree have been under investigated. However, undergraduate thesis writing is regarded to have “an essential role in education irreplaceable by other means of teaching” (Han, 2014, p. 120). Seeing that an increasing number of students have been attempting to hold a degree of BA in universities throughout the world, it may be fundamental to discover these challenges. To compensate this notable demand, the present case study was designed to investigate the possible challenges the fourth graders in an English language and literature department of a north-eastern university encounter while writing their graduation thesis in English.

Review of Literature

Thesis writing should be understood as an investigation requiring an authentic proposal performed by a student, and in the process investigation of theories or previous studies and the categorization of authentic or current data are required (Owens, 2009). This academic attempt is required to get a master and doctoral degree in many distinct fields of universities (González-Chordá et al., 2016; Odena & Burgess, 2017; Owens, 2009; Paltridge, 1997, 2002; Sadeghi & Khajepasha, 2015; Silén & Johansson, 2016).

Thesis writing process has a number of steps. Based on a detailed literature review, Sadeghi and Khajepasha (2015) designed a universal framework for thesis writing as follows.

Table 1 Universal Framework for Thesis Writing

Preliminary pages	• Title page • Committee page • Dedication page • Acknowledgement • Abstract • Table of contents • List of Tables, Figures, abbreviations, etc.
Chapter 1: Introduction	• General background information on the study • Purpose and significance of the research • Research questions and hypothesis • Definition of key terms
Chapter 2: Review of the literature	• General review of relevant literature and report on theoretical frameworks relevant to the problem • Report on previous research studies relevant to the problem (major findings, how they were obtained and what can be learned from them) • Critique of previous research studies (problems in design, instrumentations and analysis techniques as well as their contribution to the literature) • Statement of the gap in the literature and the rationale for the study
Chapter 3: Method	• Research design • Participants • Research instruments • Procedures
Chapter 4: Results	• Statistical techniques for data analysis • Findings of research
Chapter 5: Discussion and conclusion	• A re-statement of the research problem • A re-statement of the results • Discussion and interpretation of the findings in relation to previous research on the topic • Limitations • Implications • Suggestions for further research
References / Bibliography	• Comprehensive list of all sources
Appendices	• Questioners, tests, etc.

Source: Sadeghi and Khajepasha, 2015, p.362.

Challenges in this long thesis writing process that requires hard work are inescapable. A wide range of domestic and foreign studies have been conducted to define and categorize thesis writing challenges students around the world encounter. For instance, in a survey performed in the area of engineering in Turkey with forty-four instructors and eleven doctoral students, Gurel (2011) found that doctoral students have inadequate training on writing in English as a second language and they fail to overcome academic writing barriers. Furthermore, it is reported that doctoral students have insufficient writing capacity in their mother tongue i.e., Turkish, let alone English. Due to their knowledge of limited words, they cannot verbalise their ideas and arguments and reword identical voices or structures. Additionally, the influence of mother tongue on second language causes trouble during the production stage. In a similar study, Akbulut, Sahin and Cepni (2013) found that the main problem of Turkish doctoral candidates is to choose a topic for thesis writing as they have unsatisfying knowledge on background. They note that this problem may result from the fact that students cannot use databases effectively and they have underdeveloped analysis and synthesis skills.

In a similar tone, based on their qualitative research hosted in two universities in Auckland and New Zealand with four master students and four thesis advisors, Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) articulate clearly that foreign language students who are incapable of analytic thinking may encounter serious challenges in writing the concluding part of their thesis. Also, they have verbalised that both figuring views and integrating them with conjunctions and combining findings of current research with old ones may constitute problems due to their poor English writing skills and inability of comprehending archive research. For that reason, students' writings might be monotonous and undistinguished.

In another study in three universities of Iran, Sadeghi and Khjepasha (2015) evaluated and compared haphazardly chosen 60 theses of MA students They realized that thesis writing students come across a wide range of troubles like systematic arrangement of thesis' segments and instruments, accurate use of grammar, form and content. This may result from either personal incompetence since thesis writing necessitates disciplinary work as a genre or advisors as they may not be able to check over theses to detect the mistakes and misunderstandings to be corrected. Also, Sadeghi and Khjepasha (2015) found that discussion parts are localized differently and some theses of three universities even do not consist of data analysis, definition of key terms and design parts. In another study, Wang and Yang (2012) found similar problems as their respondents were found to struggle with theoretical knowledge and logical organization, and they could not analyse and synthesise the existing literature about their own research topic, and think critically while writing their academic research report.

As the literature summarised above clearly shows, in the process of writing an undergraduate thesis there may occur several problems. Scholars in the related camp have suggested a variety of solutions to avoid these possible problems or solve them. Han (2014) best summarizes these suggestions as follows:

> Administrators, teachers and students should made efforts collectively. For independent institutions, it is important to raise both teachers' and students' awareness in the importance in thesis writing. Teachers should shoulder the responsibility of guiding students in thesis writing and enhancing their abilities. The following effective measures will be helpful: improving the quality of teaching; perfecting the curriculum; enhancing field research; improving pedagogy; improving assessment; improving educational management; cultivating students' rigor and diligence in learning and writing; researching every requirements of undergraduate thesis writing; All these mentioned above would push English teaching practice in the undergraduate level to a new height (p. 127).

Methodology

The intent of the current study is to investigate the possible challenges that 4th grade English majoring students meet while writing their BA graduation theses and to see how these students interpret what they have experienced in this academic journey. To this end, the following research questions were devised:

1. Do students face challenges in thesis writing process?
1.1. What are the possible process-related challenges?
1.2. What are the possible language-related challenges?
1.3. What are the possible supervisor-related challenges?
2. What do students suggest for a better thesis writing process?

To elicit the possible challenges the student participants face in this academic journey, qualitative research that "deal with the subjective data such as, opinions, experiences, perceptions, feelings" (Arıkan, 2017, p. 21) was opted for. Face to face -structured interviews were preferred as the mode of data collection in this survey as in oral interviews researchers "can clarify any questions that are obscure and also can ask the respondent to expand on answers that are particularly important or

revealing" (Fraenkel et al., 2009, p. 119). In addition, personal interviews are regarded advantageous over questionnaires as respondents do not have to struggle with reading and writing.

The Department of English Language and Literature at a state university in north eastern Turkey was chosen as the setting of the study as thesis writing is set as a serious requirement for students who want to hold their BA. The department offers courses on both English literature and linguistics and thus two alternatives to their students who will write a graduation thesis. Students are supposed to choose their supervisors based on their interest area, i.e., literature or linguistics. The coach, i.e., the expert supervisor, and the coached, i.e., candidate student, are supposed to meet at least once a week to talk about the research procedure and steps to be taken. At the end of this one-year process, students have a scholarly written report of their research and they are supposed to present their study in public at the department.

The total sample of 12 fourth grade English majoring students, 7 female and 5 male ones, was individually and orally interviewed, and the interviews were audio-recorded with their permission. The interviews taking 3-14 minutes were finalised over in a week, May 2017. The participants were chosen on a voluntary basis, i.e., for their eagerness to be interviewed (Gürel, 2011). At the outset, the student participants were kindly requested for appointments to be interviewed. Later, they were briefly informed about the research problem so as to encourage them to elaborate on their opinions. Taking ethical issues into consideration, the researchers informed the participants about the purpose of the study, and they were branded artificially with numbers to ensure anonymity and confidentiality (Carlin, 2013; Kayaoğlu & Sağlamel 2013). The interviews were conducted in Turkish to establish rapport, make the dialogue easy, help them verbalize themselves clearly, and ensure abundant replies (Kayaoğlu & Sağlamel, 2013).

The gathered data were analysed with content analysis to draw inferences from it (Krippendorff, 2004). This method of analysis refers to "an approach to the analysis of documents and texts that seek to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories and in a systematic and replicable manner" (Bryman, 2004, p. 183). In the analysis process of the current study, the researchers followed the steps suggested by Creswell (2007). They started with organising the data. They converted the audio data into text data. Then they looked through this text several times and identified a great number of codes which they later put under certain themes. In the research report, they represented the data with tables and discussions and supported the findings with what the respondents had verbalised.

Findings

Within the scope of content analysis, a detailed portray of challenges the second language students encounter during the process of thesis writing in English were pictured and categorized under relevant themes as is seen in the following table.

Table 2 Main problematic areas in the process of thesis writing remarked by the participants

Main theme	Sub-theme	Codes	f	%
Challenges of thesis writing process	Thesis topic	• Straying away from the topic	1	
		• Needing to change the topic	2	11
		• Determining a topic	8	12.50
	Sources	• Having difficulty in attaining international sources	2	
		• Having limited Internet access	2	8
		• Having inadequate sources	3	9.09
		• Needing to obtain expensive sources	1	
	Methodology	• Gathering data	2	
		• Determining a sample	2	
		• Ensuring questionnaire validity	1	9
		• Conducting interviews	1	10.22
		• Preparing a questionnaire	1	
		• Analyzing data	2	
	Literature review	• Using own words	1	3
		• Reading critically	1	3.40
		• Having hesitations about the sufficiency of background information	1	
	Language-related	• Having difficulty in translation	4	
		• Using appropriate conjunctions	3	
		• Having difficulty in choosing proper words	6	20
		• Having difficulty in using grammar	4	22.72
		• Having difficulty in choosing appropriate sentence structures	2	
		• Being incompetent in colloquialism	1	
	Writing and style	• Having problems with referencing	3	
		• Having problems with quotating others' words	2	11
		• Having problems with punctuation	1	12.50
		• Having problems with writing style	1	
		• Having problems with APA/MLA guide	1	
		• Plagiarizing due to improper paraphrasing	1	
		• Lacking experience of thesis writing	2	
	Personal	• Having problems in orienting to their advisor	1	
		• Procrastinating	5	15
		• Managing time	9	17.04

Personal	• Having problems in orienting to their advisor	1	15 17.04
	• Procrastinating	5	
	• Managing time	9	
Advisor	• Having limited time for feedback	2	2 2.27
Other	• Coping with pedagogical formation, thesis writing, coursework and training altogether at the same semester	9	9 10.22
		88	***100***

As is seen it the table above, out of 88 codes in total, the most prevalent problems specified are language related issues (N=20). Most of the participants (#2, #3, #4, #7, #9, #10, #11 and #12) reported that since academic writing in a second language requires the use of a formal language and has its own procedures, they may face difficulty in translation, use of connectors, lexicon, syntax and so forth. The following excerpts can best prove how the participants have difficulty in the use of English:

> Yes, I do not think that I am competent enough. Because thesis is kind of academic writing involving its principles and long euphuism, I am not very qualified. Actually, so I may have serious problems both in grammar and selecting suitable words. (A female participant, 4 May 2017)

> (…) but well I write thesis, it has to be academic so I may have some problems…for instance I needed to write lots of definitions belonging to others and combine them and I have difficulty in this. Like conjunction for instance, I have trouble in ordering same opinions or different opinions when I try to write them on each side. (A female participant, 10 May 2017)

> (…) frankly, since I did not know some structures and also used the same words repeatedly, I suffered a lot and had to check them over regarding other studies. (A female participant, 9 May 2017)

It was also discovered that two participants (#6 and #7) writing their thesis in literature touched on their problems with making translation decision. They complained about the difficulty to make an appropriate translation to provide the exact meaning of the author:

> (…) I study literature. For example, I have to make important translation decisions when I have to make literary translation, well like this. The thing can be understood easily by any Turk, yet may sound nonsense when it is translated in English. Well how should I translate it? Then it does not give the meaning of author's... (A male participant, 8 May 2017)

> I am studying translation. Well, I am adapting a Turkish drama into drama. The drama, called as Adem'in Kaburga Kemiği by Ulker Köksal, has colloquial language and I do not have good comprehensive knowledge of daily language in English as in Turkish. Well, I could not translate some parts that I normally could translate in academic sentences somehow. Because, informal language, well idiomatic usage, you cannot find correspondence of it in Turkish, and when you use simple sentence in order to give the same meaning you are not satisfied it. (A female participant, 9 May 2017)

In addition to language-related problems, the participants touched upon some personal issues (N=15) such as time management problems and procrastination (#1, #2, #3, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9, #11 and #12):

> (…) Well I do it later, I do it later, then things are messed up, now I have backlog. If I had reorganized when the advisor gave the first feedback, I could make a progress now, yet I postponed, well when I postponed, I had some other home works, exams, then. Now, I lost my grip. (A female participant, 7 May 2017)

> I think it should not be postponed. Yet, I postponed too. I know that's why I am under stress now, and I have to write it in a week. (A female participant, 9 May 2017)

> Time problem, I mean well perhaps you have a long time to write your thesis, from the beginning the semester to the end, but you need to keep up with many things in this process. (A female participant, 9 May 2017)

In parallel with previous studies, as a third most commonly stated challenge in the survey, it was noticed that some participants (#1, #2, #3, #6, #9,#11 and, #12) experienced writing and style problem (N=11) including referencing, quoting, punctuation, paraphrasing, and register:

> Generally, I am confused with two guides called MLA and APA while citing, since I do not know which one to use I have to check it on the Internet constantly: noting date, well, just first latter of the name and comma or vice versa. Well, I do not remember even now... (A female participant, 4 May 2017)

> Well, I wrote, and the advisor gave feedback. There was pretty much plagiarism. Yes, the advisor gave feedback as saying “write it again”, “paraphrase it over again”. Well, I try to correct them. (A female participant, 7 May 2017)

> The biggest problem is in quotation. I say it in behalf of my classmates. We are not quoting correctly. Then, what happens, well, it seems as a plagiarized monument. Both my classmates and I have the biggest problem with this issue. (A male participant, 10 May 2017)

> …well writing style, margins, what to pay attention while quoting well, in parenthesis, name, surname, comma like punctuations. We did not know them. (A female participant, 9 May 2017)

The analysis showed that the participants also suffered from topic-related problems (N=11). Some participants (#1, #2, #3, #5, #6, #9, #11, and #12) reported that choosing an appropriate and original topic was the hardest part. Some also complained that the topics assigned by their advisors did not appeal to them. The following excerpts can best prove these topic-related challenges:

> Let me put it this way, well the advisor already told me to detect my topic by myself, but when the advisor saw that we cannot choose our topic on

> our own, s/he and wanted to choose a topic for myself. (A female participant, 7 May 2017)
>
> Indeed, I had an exact topic at first, yet, well I had difficulty since the topic had been studied many times. So we decided creative drama at last. (A female participant, 10 May 2017)
>
> Well, not having the chance to choose my own topic was the biggest problem. Since the advisor gave the topic, well, the topic did not attract me. I do not have enthusiasm on the topic that does not attract me. (A male participant, 10 May 2017)

Another problem stated by the participants is the section of methodology (N=9) as some of them (#1, #2, #5, #8 and #12) touched upon problem areas such as gathering data, ensuring questionnaire validity, interviewing, analyzing data, and determining the sample.

> It has criteria, we well wanted to translate an English questionnaire to Turkish, but since it would not ensure the questionnaire validity, we used English one again after translation, well we used the original one. (A male participant, 9 may 2017)
>
> (…) Well, questioning or interviewing, for instance I do interview, well it is difficult to reach teachers due to time-related problems or the difficulty to get permission (…), English teachers, in primary school, secondary school, well they may not be willing… (A female participant, 10 May 2017)

In addition to all these problem areas, most of the respondents (#1, #3, #6, #7, #8, #9, #10, #11 and #12) complained that since they had to deal with many things simultaneously while writing their BA thesis, they had though times (N=9). The following excerpts could serve well to illustrate these complaints:

> There are both school and pedagogical formation, training course. Also we have several assignments as well as the responsibility to write a BA thesis, not to mention the anxiety of graduation. Apart from this, since I have two retake courses in the second semester, this term, it is difficult

> for me to concentrate and work on them. (A female participant, 9 May 2017)

> Because we have pedagogical formation during the senior year and,well thesis cannot be completed simultaneously with pedagogical formation. I mean, while dealing with all these pedagogical formation or thesis, you have a social life as well. Namely, you have to spare time for yourself. Namely, it is very difficult to perform all these three. (A male participant, 9 May 2017)

Also, it was observed that some participants (#1, #2, #3, #5, #6, #8, #9, #11) had difficulty in reaching academic sources, and some others stated that they could not read these sources critically, and compiling a literature review was challenging for them:

> I had difficulty in attaining sources. Such, ehm since my topic has not been studied yet, well, I searched on the Internet for some certain points. I decided to work on the topics that might not be exactly the same with mine but somehow connected with mine considering their draft. Well I had difficult choices and alternatives. (A male participant, 8 May 2017)

> (…) Yes, well literature, for instance, I learned very late that we should not include our own sentences in literature review. I used my own sentences. The advisor said repeatedly, well, you should not add your own sentences in this session, you will only write what has been done before about your topic, will quote, so literature review become a challenging process for me ee… (A female participant, 9 May 2017)

> (…) about your detailed investigation well you are doing critical reading for thesis. This process is difficult since for critical reading you need to know the topic well. (A male participant, 7 May 2017)

The participants were also asked their opinions or recommendations for a successful BA thesis writing process for the future BA candidates. The results are tabulated as below.

Table 4 Suggestions and remarks of the participants

Participant	Suggestions
#1	• Benefiting from other courses such as methodology, academic writing, linguistic, teaching method, research techniques
#2	• Consulting the advisor regularly and putting more afford than advisor
#3	• Reading lots of articles
#4	• Selecting a topic that will motivate students
#6	• Selecting a topic that will be engaging
#7	• Starting to writing from the beginning of the process/term
#8	• Starting to writing from 3th grade
#9	• Having the freedom to choose one's own topic
#10	• Selecting a topic and advisor students like
#11	• Having academic writing classes
#12	• Receiving feedback on time and being planned

They touched on the importance of providing students with a wide variety of departmental courses such as academic writing, methodology, research techniques as these all could give them ideas about their own BA thesis and help them in the process. They also stressed that BA candidates need to be provided regular feedback by their advisors. In addition, they commonly stated that BA candidates should have the freedom to choose their own thesis topics; otherwise, it would be quite difficult for them to feel motivated to continue in this academic journey. They also suggested that students need to start thesis writing from the third grade as the process is quite demanding, and they stressed that students should be careful while choosing their advisors since the success of the process depends on them too. These points could be seen in the following table:

> All of the writing, methodology, well research techniques, namely, teaching method classes are helpful. While studying, I thought that they were useless but, well people get to know later, I leafed through the books many times. Still, I do. Namely, advisors were right absolutely. I benefited from the all linguistic classes since I prepare a thesis on linguistic now. (A female participant, 4 May 2017)

> (…) And it is required to take feedback on time…yeah as I said that it is really necessary to be planned, really… (A female participant, 10 May 2017)

> Why the topic is important? Because, when you write you should not be obstructed. I mean, it should be something that always motivates you…(A male participant, 7 May 2017)
>
> I advise the one who will write thesis that they should begin at 3th grade if it is possible. (A male participant, 9 May 2017)
> (…) The more you read article the more you know things, since they will serve the purpose while writing thesis. (A female participant, 7 May 2017)
>
> (…) I may recommend to the advisor that they should let the student select their own topic.… (A male participant, 10 May 2017). Firstly, you should not choose a topic or a class you do not like or I advise that you should not work with an advisor that you do not want. Because thesis writing is a long process and well I think you should not lose your motivation, you should not postpone writing thesis. (A male participant, 10 may 2017)

Discussion and Conclusion

In line with earlier studies, when the remarks of participants were examined comprehensively, it was spotted that the most prevalent challenges were language-related ones including grammar, word selection, appropriate structures, translation, word selection, conjunctions, to list but a few. This might result from the fact that academic writing in a second language, where students do not have chance to practice their writing skill outside the classroom borders, is one of the most challenging language skills for language learners. As stated by Han (2014), written production, which is a complicated in nature, gets much more challenging for foreign language learners. Similarly, Gurel (2011) and Komba (2015) also presented findings regarding troubles with language in terms of grammar, proper word selection, lack of large and rich vocabulary, and so on.

It was also discussed in the literature that advisors have an effective role in identifying students' thesis topic (Akbulut, Şahin & Çepni, 2013). However, determining an interest-based topic could be useful for the candidates as this freedom and interest could motivate them to go on well.

Otherwise, a topic selected by the advisor might not inspire or motivate the student during the long thesis writing process. Similarly, Chang and Strauss (2010) articulate that the dilemma on the topic between the student and the mentor causes the student to write in an undesired field unwillingly.

Similar to previous studies, it was clearly decoded from the arguments of the interviewees that they had serious challenges in the methodology section, i.e., both designing and applying it (for instance, Sadeghi & Khajepasha, 2015). So as to eliminate these problems it would be fruitful to start research techniques classes much earlier than fourth grade. In addition, as stated by Carlin (2013), in the present study the senior students reported that it was difficult for them to reach to-the-point sources. Thus, the advisor play a key role in both showing their students how to reach sources and providing them with the ones that they cannot reach on their own.

In line with previous works (i.e., Akbulut, Sahin & Cepni, 2013), it was found that some of the respondents complained that they could not have enough feedback from their advisors due to their busy schedule. However, their feedback is significant to support senior students in the process as they do not have enough experience to conduct such an academic work. As Carlin (2013) emphasizes, the evaluation of the advisors is beneficial for candidates to show them whether they are on the correct track, and these follow up reports may make the writing process easy for the candidates (Akbulut, Sahin & Cepni, 2013). As Liu (2015) rightly puts, “a thesis of high quality needs not only students’ solid specialized knowledge and excellent writing skills, but also teacher’s instruction and training in writing norms, originality awareness and research competence” (p. 840).

Another commonly stated problem area was academic writing requirements. As they lack experience in quoting, citing, paraphrasing, punctuation, they tend to plagiarise due to improper paraphrasing (Cadman, 1997; Kayaoglu et al., 2016). Similarly, Berlinck (2011) notes because of poor education, students not only plagiarize but also are unaware of it and its consequences. Thus, these academic skills need to practised in academic writing classes in earlier grades in the department. What is more, as Kombo (2015) rightly notes, the content and teaching approaches of these academic writing and research methods courses need to be revised carefully. As a last word, it is hard not to agree with what Liu (2015) concludes: “Graduate thesis is a long-term work, which plays a significant role in cultivating students’ creativity, practical ability, rigorous style of work and serious attitude to science. Only by consistent strengthening and perfecting the

management system, renewing teaching concept, reforming teaching contents, methods and pattern, improving teachers' and students' comprehensive quality, can the quality of graduate thesis be improved" (p. 841).

On the other hand, it was clearly revealed in the light of survey that senior students had to deal with many things in the same semester such as having pedagogical formation, training course, conducting course projects, retaking failed exams, getting ready for the centralized exam to be a teacher, i.e., Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS) as well as thesis writing. Therefore, they might have difficulty in managing their time and concentrating on the process of writing. Due to their stress caused by this hectic schedule, they feel demotivated and tend to procrastinate. Thus, it would be fruitful to outline a plan to initiate pedagogical formation course or thesis writing in the 3th year. In addition, thesis advisors need to manage the process well and serve as guide both as academically and personally.

Finally, the primary purpose of the current study is to illustrate possible challenges of the senior students facing during the process of thesis writing. The findings show that the BA candidates are confronted with difficulties related to language, writing and style, research methodology, the research topic as well as personal matters. The objectives of the departmental courses such as academic writing and research techniques need to be revised to include academic writing and research skills that students have serious problems with. In addition, thesis writing should not be delayed until the fourth grade as it is difficult to meet the demands of this academic process for the BA candidates who have future anxiety. As suggested by Ulusoy et al. (2009), one of the most important measures that should be taken to avoid these possible problems is to convince students about the possible benefits of writing an undergraduate thesis for their academic development. If students themselves are convinced, it would be easier for the supervisor to lead the process by collaborating with the candidate.

Yet, there is still much research to be conducted due to limitations of the current survey. Future investigation may include more participants to reach more in-depth data and choose quantitative survey methodology to have data that could be generalized. In addition, it could be interesting to investigate the possible challenges that native students have during thesis writing in Turkish Language and Literature department and to compare and contrast the findings. Also, the current survey can be replicated to investigate the ideas of advisors about the possible pains of this academic journey.

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