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**Department of English**

Students' Anxiety in the Preparation of their Dissertation: Case of EFL Master II Students  
at Tlemcen University.

*Dissertation submitted to the Department of English as a Partial  
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Didactics and  
Assessment in English Language Education.*

**Presented by**

Ms. Asma ARAB

Ms. Fatna ABDELMALEK

**Supervised by**

Prof. Hadia HAKEM

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## **Dedication 1**

*First of all, thanks to ALLAH who gave me the guidance and strength to finish my research.*

*To my beloved parents who always encourage me and all my Family members.*

**ARAB ASMA**

## **Dedication 2**

*To my dearest parents*

*To my husband “Abd el Djalil”*

*To my brothers with love: Cherif and Hammadi*

*To my unique sister “Manel”*

*To all my teachers (specially teacher of English in Middle School “Said”)*

*Special gratitude is due to all those extraordinary people who have stood by me in very hard moment:*

*My best friend Merieme, My Cousin Wassini, My grandmother and My husband family.*

**ABDELMALEK FATNA**

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## **Abstract**

The present study was designed to investigate the issue of anxiety and its impact on students' achievement(s) in their writing dissertation process. It aims to achieve three main objectives. First, searches how students' achievement affected with the existence of anxiety in their dissertation. Second, to investigate what are the factors which cause students' anxiety, and what is its impact on their work. Third, to find out what are the negative effects on students' achievement in the dissertation. Indeed, going through the process of dissertation was helpful to suggest some strategies that teachers and learners can follow to reduce their feeling of anxiety. To reach this end, the research depends on two main data gathering tools was conducted at Abu bekr belkaid university (Tlemcen) which are a questionnaire that was addressed to forty (40) EFL Master two students and an interview with seven (7) EFL teachers from the same university. The data collected by means of these research instruments were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The study reveals that most Master students experienced a certain level of anxiety. In this regard, there are many causes that increase the Master students' anxiety such as: lack of knowledge, lack of self confidence, fear of failure, restricted time, and the discussion with the supervisor, which affect their work and leads to a poor achievement in the dissertation. Accordingly, these results also illustrate different strategies in which Master EFL students and teachers can use to cope or minimize the feeling of anxiety and help student to feel more comfortable and complete their final desire.

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### **List of Acronyms**

**AF:** Absolute Frequency

**DAELE:** Didactics and Assessment in English Language Education

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**FOF:** Fear of Failure

**LC:** Literature and Civilisation

**LMD:** Licence Master Doctorat

**SC:** Self Confidence

# **General Introduction**

## General Introduction

The research proposal is an important working document which over the next few months becomes transformed into “dissertation” as a final stage of the Masters ‘degree and enable students to show evidence of independent investigation and the ability to plan and manage the project within deadlines. It is really necessary to highlight the factors which may hinder or affect negatively the process of preparing the dissertation. One of these factors is student’s anxiety, especially, during the research. Dissertation writing process is the most provoking anxiety aspect of research in some situations, and it is one of the most negatively influential affective variables, it plays an important role in English foreign language student’s anxiety and it contributes in providing the candidature with the opportunity to show that they have gained the necessary skills and knowledge in order to organize and conduct the final document dissertation. Therefore in order to have a holistic understanding of the research process and to gain a better academic achievement, students’ affective variables need to be taken into consideration by providing solutions or strategies that enhance and motivate their feeling and reduce their anxiety.

The main objective of the present study is to shed some light on the issue of Master *II* students’ anxiety during the preparation of the dissertation, more specifically, the study is looking to demonstrate how EFL master students experience anxiety in their writing process:

- To explain what factors are more probable to cause feeling of anxiety in the dissertation.
- To clarify the impact of students’ anxiety.
- To find out the strategies that students and teachers can follow to decrease anxiety in research work.

The thesis on anxiety relies on two main research questions which are:

- 1- What are the main causes of anxiety that EFL master students face during their dissertation research?
- 2- How does anxiety affect students' preparation for their master dissertation?

The above research questions led to formulate two hypotheses that should be tested and verified:

1. EFL Master II students feel anxious during the preparation for their dissertation because of different causes that may hinder their ability to complete the work; amongst these psychological issues such as the fear from failure and the lack of self-confidence, adding to that the lack of knowledge, the restricted time, as a main source of students anxiety, and communication with their supervisors.
2. Anxiety affects students' work negatively to a high extent which leads them to under-achievement in the dissertation, lack of self-confidence and their preparation becomes ill-organized.

In this study two instruments will be used. The first is a questionnaire which will be directed to Master two students of English at the department of English at Abu Bekr Belkaid University in order to investigate and observe their opinions about the effects of anxiety and to be guided by their answers in analyzing the research.

The second tool is an interview which will be conducted with EFL teachers who have been supervising master students for many years to make sure that their responses are the product of continuously interacting with different students during many years of observation and supervision of students needs in research.

After collecting the data, the results will be analysed on mixed methods, qualitative and quantitative, to shed more light on the impact of students' anxiety on the progress of achievement.



To determine the aims of this research the dissertation is divided into three (3) main chapters. Chapter one is devoted to the literature review and chapter two which is concerned with the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative results obtained from teachers' interview and students' questionnaire. Then chapter three deals with some proposed suggestions and recommendations that are hoped to help students to cope with their anxiety.

The first chapter deals with a brief theoretical overview of anxiety, then the main types of anxiety, causes and effects of anxiety. In addition to this some tips that both students and teachers can use to eliminate, or at least, to diminish anxiety in the research process.

The second chapter is a practical one, which is basically an investigation of the main causes that lead to students' feeling of anxiety and the strategies that teachers and learners can follow to reduce it. It consists of the analysis of data collection and interpretation. Also the chapter seeks to answer the research questions by confirming or disconfirming the research hypotheses, and then concludes with the research results.

The third chapter consists of some effective suggestions and recommendations proposed by both learners and teachers in order to help them alleviate their feeling of anxiety and to be able to accomplish their ambition toward dissertation with comfort and low level of anxiety.

# **Chapter One:**

# **Literature Review**

## **1.1 Introduction**

Preparing the final stage of the masters' degree that provides the candidature with the opportunity to show that they have gained it has always been a central issue for many EFL Master when they are required to achieve it on the second semester. students are affected by a group of factors. Particularly, where students express their fear and feeling of uneasiness against dissertation whether in theoretical or practical part. Anxiety is the prominent factor that has an influence on EFL students' achievement.

The purpose of this chapter is to give a theoretical account on what anxiety is and its types by highlighting its impact on EFL learners in preparing the dissertation due to different causes.

## **1.2. Definition of Anxiety**

All learners experience anxiety from time to time in varying degrees including foreign language learners. The Concise Oxford Dictionary states four meanings to anxiety: "1) state of being anxious-troubled, uneasy in mind; 2) concern about the future; 3) earnest desire (as in anxious to please or to succeed); 4) morbid state of excessive uneasiness" (cited in Crozier, W.R, 1997: 123). Another definition is given by the Cambridge Dictionary that is "an uncomfortable feeling of nervousness or worry about something that is happening or might happen in the future, and something that causes a feeling of fear and worry." (*Cambridge Online Dictionary of English*, 2018). In plain words, anxiety is usually associated with unpleasant emotions and it is similar to fear.

In a scientific way and as a complex psychological term, anxiety has been defined by many researchers who have significant differences of opinion. Anxiety is described by Spielberger (1983:1) as "The subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (as cited in Horwitz, 2001: 113). It is a group of negative feelings that sweep human when they are anxious. In simplest form, Davis and Palladino

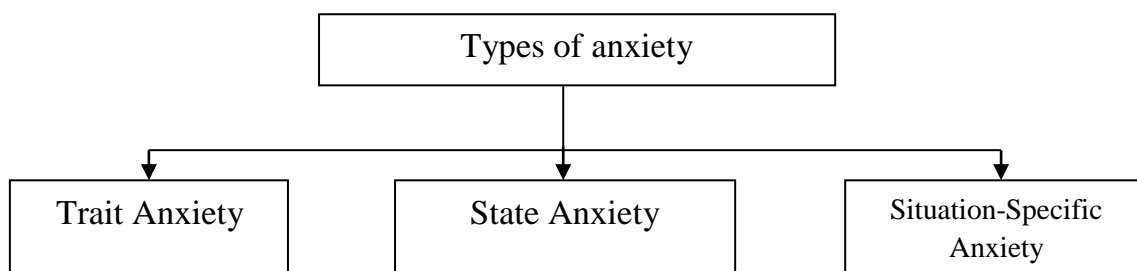
(1997) defined it as “a general feeling of apprehension including hyper-vigilance, increased sympathetic nervous system activity, and difficulty concentrating” (cited in Kelly, 2002: 54).

Anxiety in learning has been explained by Horwitz who stated that “Anxiety negatively influences language learning, it is logical because anxiety has been found to interfere with many types of learning and has been one of the most highly examined variables in all of psychology and education” (2001: 113). A similar definition is provided by Scovel (1978: 113) who Stated that anxiety in learning is as “an emotional state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object” (as cited in Saidi, 2015: 6). These two definitions imply that learning a foreign language make learners anxious as a reaction to their feeling in stressful situation.

The above definitions explain that anxiety is complicated conditions in which most people who suffer from it struggle to explain how they feel. Also, the person who is anxious feels worry, dread, nerve, apprehension, fear, stress to a specific situation, or unease about something with uncertain outcome.

### 1.3. Types of Anxiety

Anxiety has been studied by many scholars who distinguished different types of it. Two of these scholars Macintyre & Gardner (1991) identified three approaches / types of anxiety namely: trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation-specific anxiety. These are represented in the following diagram.



**Diagram 1.1.:** Types of anxiety

### **1.3.1. Trait Anxiety**

Spielberger (1993) defined trait anxiety as “an individual's likelihood of becoming anxious in any situation” (cited in MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991:87). It refers to a stable predisposition to become nervous in different kinds of situations. In trait anxiety people are divided into two categories; first, people with high level of anxiety who get nervous easily; they lack emotion stability (Goldberg, 1993). Second, people with low level of trait anxiety are emotionally stable and tend to be calm and relax. However, this approach to anxiety research has been criticized in that the interpretation of trait anxiety would be meaningless without being considered in interaction with situations because a particular situation may be perceived as anxiety-provoking by some but not by others although those people may have similar trait anxiety scores (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991:88).

### **1.3.2. State Anxiety**

This kind of anxiety happens when experiencing unpleasant feelings during a specific moment or situation, a response to a particular anxiety-provoking stimulus, for example: prior to taking examination or important test (Spielberger, 1983). It refers to a temporary condition during which a person experiences significant levels of anxiety, i.e. the feel of nerve and worry does not stay for a long period of time, it disappears quickly which makes it volatile and variable. In other words, state anxiety arises when the person makes a mental assessment/evaluation of some type of threat but when this threat goes away the person is no longer feeling anxious and becomes stable. In addition, the person may live the same situation but will not have any anxiety indices because this type is changeable and differs from a situation to another. That is to say, State anxiety can vary in intensity and can change over time. That is why this approach of anxiety has been criticized for asking the question "Are you nervous now?" instead of "Did this situation make you nervous?" (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991: 90).

### **1.3.3. Situation-Specific Anxiety**

It can be seen as trait anxiety that recurs consistently over time within a particular situation. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991: 90) add that “situation specific constructs can be seen as trait anxiety measures limited to a given context”. This perspective examines anxiety reactions in very specific situations, such as: public speaking, writing examinations, performing math, or participating in a second or foreign language class. In this type of anxiety a given situation that makes a person feels anxious may not affect another person at all. Therefore, a person who experiences situation-specific anxiety is not necessarily always nervous and stressed, he may be anxious in one or some situations but not in all of them. It can be considered to be the probability of becoming anxious in a particular type of situation.

### **1.4. Definition of Dissertation**

The origin of the word dissertation is from the Latin word “dissertate” which means a long essay on a particular subject, especially one written for a university degree or diploma (Oxford Online Dictionary 2018). Similar to that, Cambridge dictionary defines it as “A long piece of writing on a particular subject, especially one that is done in order to receive a degree at college or university” (Cambridge Online Dictionary 2018). The first usage of the word in the English language in 1651 gives a useful starting definition an extended treatment of a subject that is to give further details and look deeper at specific subject (Lizard, 2018). The dissertation which is also called thesis is a formal document/discourse submitted in support of candidature for academic degree or professional qualification presenting the author’s research and findings. In other words, it is an independent and original research that is to say the majority of the input should come from the researcher based upon some research and data collected by him, which he takes the responsibility for his own learning and choose his own subject within his specific area of interest where he identifies and proposes solutions to the problems that he works on. In addition, it has been given more explanation as it is highlighted by Rowen Murray (2011: 2), who stated that:

Writing a thesis is a completely new task for most postgraduate students. It brings new demands. It is a far bigger project than most students will ever have undertaken before. It requires more independent study, more self-motivation. There is much less continuous assessment. It is likely to be the longest piece of continuous writing you have ever done. However, writing a thesis is not a completely new experience. It does build on your previous studies. Skills you developed in undergraduate years – and elsewhere – will be useful.

The above definitions show that even though it has never been handling by learners it requires some specific skills they have learnt during their studies, as well as methodological and research skills. Dissertation is typically divided into chapters where the learner gives answers to his questions or hypothesis that he states which he develops a logical argument and evidence about it. All the process of writing a dissertation is done under supervision by a supervisor who can provide guidance, support and direct his supervisees towards relevant materials.

### **1.5. The Importance of the Dissertation**

A dissertation is a new task for students to have a grade, and it is considered as the last step for them to get a master degree, being the concern of the present work. Thus, many students wonder, why does a degree programme include a dissertation? And why is it important?

A thesis is likely to be the most important piece of writing students are asked to do. It is a way of indicating students' capacities as researchers because it demonstrates that they are capable of identifying their own area of interest, able to explore a subject in depth, define a suitable question, experience the process of producing knowledge, manage a research project from beginning to end, use the appropriate research tools, consolidate communication, information-seeking and intellectual skills (Rodrigo, 2013).

A dissertation certifies that the student is able to function as a fully recognized professional researcher and it could be the unique factor that gets a student noticed by employers.

### **1.6. Causes of Students' Anxiety in the Dissertation**

Most people are suffering from anxiety to the extent that Zeidner (1998: 03) maintains that: “the second part of the 20th century has been variously designed as the age of anxiety”. As anxiety has taken its own sit in EFL Master Students from centuries ago, and that is due to many reasons.

#### **1.6.1. Lack of Self Confidence**

Students with low esteem are likely to have a high level of anxiety in any situation of their work, since with this influence factor they lack the confidence to perform well as it is defined by Shrauger and Schohn (1995) as “Gives individuals a gauge of their capability and proficiency, as well as, their viewed potential to handle all kinds of problems”. However too much or too little of it may be a form of hindrance, i.e. students with low self- confidence cannot finish the work at time and this can lead them to low morale, eventually giving up on themselves due to lack of perceived ability, on the other hand it might even lead to depression in the extreme case, nonetheless, negative feelings and more anxiety will lower students' self-confidence. According to (Anderson, 1968) it is considered as a sought-after personality trait, whether in social interactions or during a job interview, i.e. it creates good individual impressions while working with others, or as they would want confident and competent staff.

Consequently, many English foreign language learners generally who have lack of self –confidence find difficulty in completing the writing process, the existence of low self-esteem is due to some psychological obstacles which cause fear of failure that prevent their ability to achieve better product. Therefore, students with low self-confidence cannot finish the work at time and this can lead them to low morale, eventually giving up on themselves due to lack of perceived ability.



### **1.6.2. Fear of Failure**

People are trying to make every effort to succeed in life, but find themselves at multiple bumps in the road filled with destructive health problems like stress, anxiety, and fear of failure from trying to achieve acceptable work. Most students complain about exhausting of the load in research and writing the dissertation and not enough time to finish it due to the conducted study and the daily pressure of the dissertation. (Mckenna, 2016)

Research shows that many students are suffering from the suffocating feelings of anxiety and failure due to the constant stress university inflicts on them, i.e. students think that fear of failure is a significant obstacle that stands between them and their goals. On the other hand fear of failure is the intense worry students' experience when they imagine that all the horrible things that could happen if they fail to achieve a goal. In the same context, Conroy et.al (2002) state that fear of failure tend to appraise threat to the achievement of personally meaningful goals when one fails in the performance (Wilt, 2016: 3)

Therefore, students with this big problem were led to the creation of prevention goals, which may blur their focus, undermine their efforts and make planning difficult, also the negative consequences that have been identified by researchers as: students with fear of failure (FOF) expect including feelings of shame and embarrassment, a big blow to self-esteem, the prospect of uncertain future and disappointing or even unsatisfied result. In essence, these students may even actively sabotage their chances of success, e.g. procrastinate, leave tasks until the last minute, or expend little effort.

### **1.6.3. Lack of Knowledge**

Lack of knowledge or information is the third factor found in research which causes anxiety to students while they are preparing their required work, i.e. finding relevant and suitable data and sources to back up the argument. Since after reaching

the methodology section, it can be quite frustrating to know that they have not acquired enough data or information to support their argument. (Emily, 2015) Therefore, students with lack of knowledge face difficulty in writing their essay, especially, when using or transferring knowledge and this can lead them to low self-confidence for example: the one who have not read a book before. So student with low self esteem think that they do not have sufficient knowledge in English to enhance and develop their essay then this can cause them fear of failure.

Moreover, students have several lines of incomplete knowledge that can be brought to bear on a given issue, in addition, to any negative likelihood stemming from a lack-of-knowledge inference, the student may have encounter information that suggests that the assertion is true, i.e. students with lack-of-knowledge factor they cannot support the idea they want.( Gentner & Collins, 1981).

#### **1.6.4. Restricted Time**

A dissertation is an extended project that asks Master students to manage their time and undertake a variety of tasks. By maintaining a balance between the write up and the other assignment deadlines can be a little daunting task for the students. Unavoidable delays that take place while gaining access to proposal research.

When students move towards writing a dissertation, the biggest constraints that face in the way is the time that limits their work, (Kelly & Karau, 1993) stated that can be defined as a state of being compressed. It is a constraining force or influence that can psychologically persuade some to behave and think differently, while time pressure has been shown to increase the level of individual or group performance quality is shown to be less consistent. (Orfus, 2008: 120)

As a consequence research has shown that if students have high level of anxiety and they are under time pressure their performance will decrease and they could not prepare the dissertation at time.

### **1.6.5. Discussion with the Supervisor**

Any Master student is supported through the dissertation by an academic supervisor. He will be advised by his Programme Director or dissertation coordinator of the process by which his programme either allocates academic supervisors or students seek a preferred academic supervisor. Also students are allocated up to a maximum of five formal meetings with their supervisor across the duration of the dissertation. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss progress and resolve any difficulties, however these discussion may cause a big problem to many students which is “Anxiety”, i.e. when students are with their supervisors to discuss the work they feel anxious and stressed due to a lot of reasons such as: the way supervisors act with their supervisees, how they criticize their work and correcting their mistakes or the time that they give to them to advise and monitor students whether or not the research appears to be feasible and relevant.

Therefore, students with these different difficulties during their discussion are to be more anxious and that may lead them to think to stop the task or change the supervisor. Students also can feel unprepared due to lack of observation as to when observation would take place, as a result most of them were troubled that nervousness could cause them to perform poorly during their practice and even its incorrect assessment by supervisors could lead to unexpected students’ procrastination. Finally, according to Ulug, Ozden, & Eryilmaz (2011) the influence of attitudes and style of teaching is usually studied in terms of the impact on students’ academic achievement, (Cited in Moskvicheva, Bordovskaia, & Darinskaya, 2014: 587). Thus, for successful research project it is necessary for supervisors to understand the needs of students in the specific types of support at different stages of research project.

## **1.7. The Effects of Anxiety on Students' Achievement**

All people may feel anxious when faced with the problem of anxiety. According to (Owens et al, 2012 Cited in Cassie, 2012: 32) “Anxiety can negatively affect academic performance”, So that students with high level of anxiety show low level of academic achievement.

### **1.7.1. Poor Planning and Time Management**

Time management is considered as an answer to the issue of “not enough time”. Simply put, time is very precious thing, it has wings and as such is passing very fast, i.e. time management “Is a set of principles, practices, skills, tools and systems that help us use time to accomplish what we want”. It refers to the techniques, and strategies that individuals use in utilizing and maximizing the work that they do. (Kenneth, 201: 2)

Among the most frequently occurring problems is the commencement of the dissertation writing. The students tend to fear that their task will not be finished on time and they will not be able to meet the deadlines, since universities allot long period of time to the students to finish their dissertation and students think likewise but eventually they fail to submit their proposal work in due time. The main reason behind this is the poor time management.

One of The biggest constraints that come towards writing a dissertation is the time that limits students' work. Most students can feel anxious because of “Time” factor, while that factor can affect them negatively in failing to manage the time, effectively it can have some very undesirable consequences such as : procrastination as the most obvious result and students with higher stress levels, inefficient work flow and low productivity, missed deadlines and even poor quality work, i.e. if they do not manage their time well, students' work quality will suffer, in trying to complete tasks at the last minute, and they will sacrifice quality for speed. Avoiding this problem by dividing tasks up across a reasonable length of time, leave themselves enough time at the end to check for mistakes and to make changes.

Therefore; the secret to achieving success in life is effectively managing this resource that everyone possesses equally and paying sufficient emphasis to planning (Macan et al, 2000). Also time management is very important and it may actually affect individual's overall performance and achievements (Saqib & Nasrullah, 2017).

### **1.7.2. Lack of Self Confidence**

Self-confidence has been defined in a number of ways throughout the literature, according to Oxford dictionaries.com it is as: "A feeling of trust in one's abilities, qualities, and judgment", in this context. (Bandura, 1977; Chemers, et al, 2000 ; Clark et al, 2008) advocated that "involve belief in one's own abilities to perform", also they state that self-confidence (SC) of interest to this study is task specific, students with self confidence being in one's ability to undertake a specific action to achieve an outcome (Cited in Greenacre, Manh, & Chapman, 2014:170). That is to say, students point of view about themselves, (Sandeep Meshram, 2009) advocates that: "If you do not have self-confidence, you will never become successful at all", he also states that: "Self-Confidence has always been the core of self-development, the building block on which goal setting, motivation problem solving, communication will power and other aspects of self-help stem from" (Cited in Kampe, 2014). When students have low self esteem, this is typically, accompanied by low performance standards for themselves, even the individuals with low self esteem can believe themselves incapable of performing well in the dissertation. So that, students with low self esteem cannot curium the required process and see themselves as failures to check their dissertation and lose their efficacy.

Sometimes low self-esteem, rather than being an aspect or consequence of current problems, people with low self-esteem find it hard to give themselves credit for their achievements and tend to think they do not deserve things, become more troubled by failure.

### **1.7.3. Under-Achievement**

Many students suffer from anxiety when facing difficult academic tasks. Nevertheless, promising definitions have contributed much in addressing the issue of underachievement. For example, Whitmore (1980) and Colangelo (1982) believe that many definitions of underachievement underscore the gap between potential (ability) and performance (achievement), (Cited in Chukwu-Etu, 2009: 88).

Therefore, Anxiety and depression lead to higher levels of worry in regards to academic tasks. Higher levels of anxiety, depression and worry can lead to lower performance and poorer working memory function. In the same vein, Owens et al, (2012) claimed that School tasks that involve more working memory are greatly affected by anxiety and depression(cited in Cassie, 2016: 101). As a result, this may lead to perfectionism and procrastination and they tend to be tense and unable to prepare the work.

Consequently, the relationship between anxiety and academic performance has been studied in a variety of laboratories and natural settings. Individuals experiencing anxiety show apprehensions that often interfere with performance in everyday life as well as in academic situations. Anxiety in general is expected to have a negative effect on performance (Sindhu, 2016), i.e. anxiety can directly influence students' academic achievement in the sense that students with high anxiety level perform poorer compared to those with low anxiety.

### **1.8. Conclusion**

The chapter has focused on the literature review which dealt with students' anxiety in dissertation process. Then, anxiety was defined and the three types of anxiety have been clarified: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. Studies and discussions brought out that anxiety affect students' achievement negatively, so it was important to seek for its main causes during the process of preparing the dissertation that may prevent EFL students at the University of Tlemcen from achieving better since it is the first experience for them.

# **Chapter Two.**

# **Data Analysis**

## Chapter Two: Data Analysis

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## **2.1. Introduction**

The present chapter is the practical part of this research paper which is aimed to answer the research questions and to prove and validate the research hypotheses that have been stated by the researchers at the beginning of this study; the causes behind anxiety that make learners fall on it and how it affects them during their works. In this chapter, the researchers made a deep investigation by examining a sample population (EFL students and teachers) to understand the most critical points and reach the purpose of his study by using different research tools. The students' questionnaire and teachers' interview have been used to gather data for the research which are explained and analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The chapter presents the research design and introduces the participants then describes the two research instruments and the procedures of data analysis, as well as explains the results and terminated by discussion about the main findings.

## **2.2. Research Design**

Research design is “a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected and analyzed” (Parahoo, 1997: 142). The researcher has to make the right decisions to adopt appropriate procedures so as to achieve the purposes behind conducting a research study. Then, the research design intends to reach the answers motivating the study and helps the researcher elicit data in relation to the studied topic.

In this research paper data is gathered from various sources in order to prove the validity of the formulated hypotheses in which the two research instruments, questionnaire and interview, have been adopted for collecting different information. This data will be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. In this regard, these two types of data collection methods have been integrated in order to ensure the diversity of the gathered information, and to obtain the entire concept of the raising problem that is investigated, this is asserted in the following quote by Mertens where he explains that “mixed methods can be used to provide a more complete picture of the phenomenon under study than is possible using a single method” (2012: 9).

The research has been conducted at in the English department and given randomly to forty EFL students who reached Master II level and seven LMD teachers of English. In one hand, students answered nine questions from the questionnaire. In the other hand, the structured interview with nine questions was addressed to the teachers. All the responses had been taken into account with no exceptions, and used in the analyses as an argument to support the research hypotheses and give some solutions to avoid anxiety.

### **2.3. Sample Population**

Sampling according to Pilot & Beck means “the process of selecting a portion of the population for a study to represent the entire population” (2004: 291).

In this research, two samples have been chosen. The informants are EFL teachers and Master II students from Tlemcen University. They have been selected randomly from the large existing population to collect the required data for the investigation. The following section attempts to provide a detailed description of these informants.

#### **2.3.1. The Students**

The participants who participated in this study are Master II students from Abou Bekr Tlemcen University at the department of English. The researchers have dealt with forty (40) males and females students who belong to the two specialties: Didactics and Assessment in English Language Education (DAELE) and Literature and Civilization (LC), who are chosen randomly as a research sample. These students' age varies between 23 and 24 years old. This questionnaire is given to Master II students because it is their first experience in working on a dissertation in which they face different obstacles, and in order to know how they feel when preparing it.

#### **2.3.2. The Teachers**

Seven (7) teachers who work at the department of English at Tlemcen University make the other sample of population. Five of them are males and two females. Each one of them has taught a particular speciality for many years and has

supervised different personalities of supervisees several times. Thus, they can give

more information, deeper explanation and various opinions to have a better view on this study depending on their experiences and what they observe from their direct interaction with students, and in order to have more understanding about the role they play in guiding and advising the students to help them overcoming any issues they may have in their work.

## **2.4. Data Collection Instruments**

Research instruments are designed tools that aid the collection of data for the purpose of analysis to check the validity of the research hypothesis. David and Peter (2003: 3) claimed that they “are simply devices for obtaining information relevant to your research project, and there are many alternatives from which to choose”. It has several types for gathering information including: questionnaire, interview, classroom observation and psychological tests. In this research two instruments are used to investigate: a questionnaire and interview. These two tools are described in the following part.

### **2.4.1. The Questionnaire**

The questionnaire represents the most widely used instruments in order to collect two types of data: facts and opinions. It contains a set of written questions by a researcher about his/her aim of study to be answered by a sample population, Brown (2001: 6) stated that “Questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers”. It involves ‘closed’ and ‘open ended’ questions. Closed questions require answers with ‘yes’ or ‘no’ or to choose one or more response from several options. For the open-ended questions the respondents can answer freely without any borders in which they give their own opinions or background information about the topic or justify their answers. Moreover, David and Peter (2003: 7) added that “It can often provide a cheap and effective way of collecting data in a structured and manageable form. While questionnaires can be very detailed, covering many subjects or issues, they

can also be very simple and focus on one important area". Thus, questionnaire is an easy way to collect information and more compared to observation, and it does not take too much time.

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The questionnaire is the first research tool that was used to collect data. It was administered to forty (40) students from the whole population of EFL Master II students from Abou Bekr Tlemcen University the department of English. It consists of nine questions divided into four rubrics. It is designed to figure out the learners' opinions about anxiety and how much it is influenced at the process of their work.

#### **2.4.2. The Interview**

The second research instruments that was used to gain deeper understanding in this study is the interview which is a conversation between the researcher and the informant about their opinions and attitudes within a specific topic, it usually includes open-ended questions. According to Gillham (2000: 1) "An interview is a conversation, usually between two people. But it is a conversation where one person-the interviewer-is seeking response for a particular purpose from the other person-the interviewee". Three models of interviews exist: the structured interview, semi-structured interview and unstructured interview. In the semi-structured interview the questions are prepared in advance to be answered by all interviewees with the possibility for the interviewer to add more questions during the interview if he needs further explanation, goes into details or gain a more in-depth understanding. Therefore, the researchers in this study opted for the use of the semi-structured interview.

The interview consists of nine questions that were addressed to seven teachers who were chosen randomly in different places at the English department (classroom, the halls of the department, teachers' office) by using recorder for saving the answers. It was carried out from twelve to nineteen March 2018. The purpose of using this tool in addition to questionnaire is to gather more information from another point of view but students.

#### **2.5. Data Analysis**

As it is mentioned above two tools have been used to collect data in this

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research. The data that were collected from both the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview will be analysed in quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative Research is used to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics. In other words, it relies on statistics. According to Kothari (2004: 131) "The role of statistics in research is to function as a tool in designing research, analyzing its data and drawing conclusions". In the other hand, qualitative research has been defined by Ryan (2001: 1) as "any research that uses data that do not indicate ordinal values." The goal behind using these two instruments is to collect data from various sources and to have a more comprehensive vision about the study from different perspectives.

### **2.5.1. Students' Questionnaire Results**

The questionnaire was addressed to forty (40) EFL students which consist of nine questions. These questions were formed from close-ended, and multiple choice questions (see Appendix A). In close-ended questions, the respondents are required to answer by ticking the "Yes" or "No" box. In multiple choice questions, there is a set of responses from which the informants have to select one or more.

This questionnaire is given to Master II students because it is their first experience in working on a dissertation in which they face different obstacles, and in order to know how they feel when preparing it.

#### **Rubric One: Background Information**

The aim of this rubric was to obtain some information about the students who experienced or faced this factor and would indirectly help the researcher in interpreting the data.

**Question one:** How do you feel when you are preparing your dissertation?

The first question addressed to EFL Master students was intended to express their feelings and how they feel when they are preparing the dissertation. Since this latter was an important parameter for the researchers to know if students are more anxious to prepare the proposal work or not.

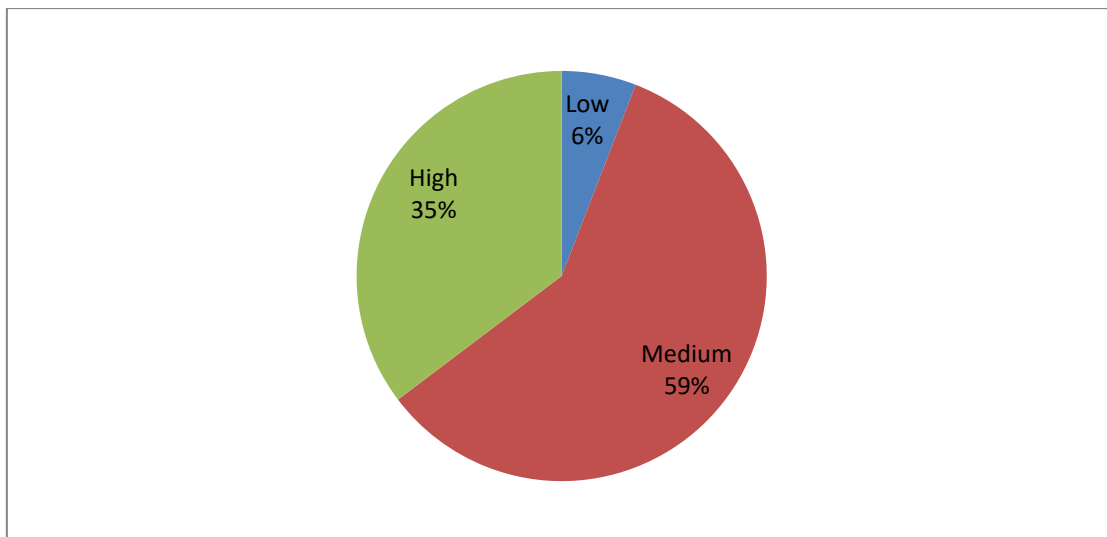
Options	Participants	Percentages %
Anxious	34	85%
Comfortable	6	15%

**Table 2.1:** Participants’ feelings during the preparation of the dissertation.

From the table above it is noticed that the students who felt comfortable in preparing their dissertation are 15 % (6) and those who felt anxious are 85% (34). The number of students who feel anxious while preparing their dissertation is higher than those who feel comfortable. Therefore, producing or writing a final essay “dissertation” is the desire of majority of Master students.

**Question two:** If anxious, to which extent?

Question number two aimed to know to which extent the students were anxious.



**Figure 2.1:** Participants’ level of Anxiety.

According to this table, the data shows that the majority of students are having medium level of anxiety 59% (20), while 35% (12) of them have high level, and those who have low anxiety are only 6% (2).

It has been noticed that the plurality of the anxious students during their work have medium anxiety since they are experiencing this process for the first time, while others have high level, then it depends on the students.

**Rubric Two: Causes of Students’ Anxiety in Preparing Dissertation**

This rubric had the aim of finding out the main causes that lead EFL Master two students to be anxious while studying for the research work.

**Question Three: Why do you feel anxious while preparing your dissertation?**

The researchers asked this question by giving five choices to tick and the possibility to give other suggestions. Getting some causes of the problem was the main purpose.



**Figure .2.2:** Participants’ Causes of anxiety to prepare their proposal work.

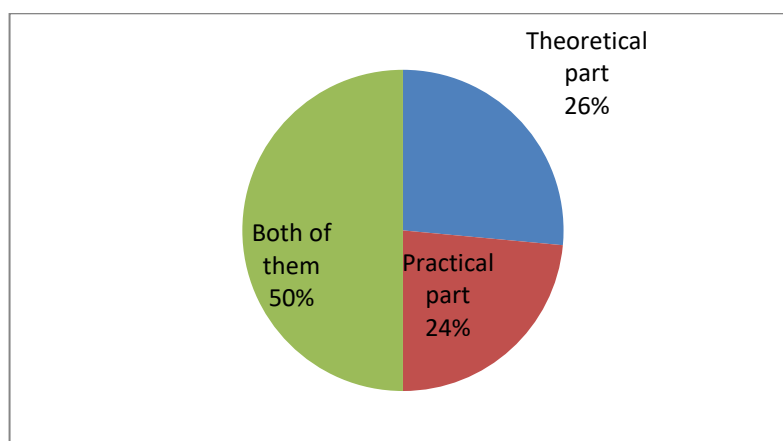
From the statistics it has been found out that the students who referred their anxiety to the lack of knowledge are 27.5% (11), 17.5% (7) of them referred it to the lack of self confidence, and 40% (16) of them who referred their anxiety factor to the fear of failure, also 50% (20) of students referred it to the restricted time, while 22.5% (9) of them claim that it is caused by the discussion with the supervisor

Also we give students the possibility to suggest other causes and we found that: 5% (2), one of them clarified that s/he is anxious because of the lack of references, and the second one suggested that it is the first experience for them.

It has been noticed that preparing Master Dissertation is first experienced by students and this can cause them anxiety at different level and it depends on the students, the result showed that plurality of the students have medium level of anxiety.

**Question Four:** In which part of the Dissertation do you feel anxious?

The aim of this question is to know the most part of the dissertation in which the students feel most anxious



**Figure 2.3:** Participants' opinion about the difficult part of the dissertation.

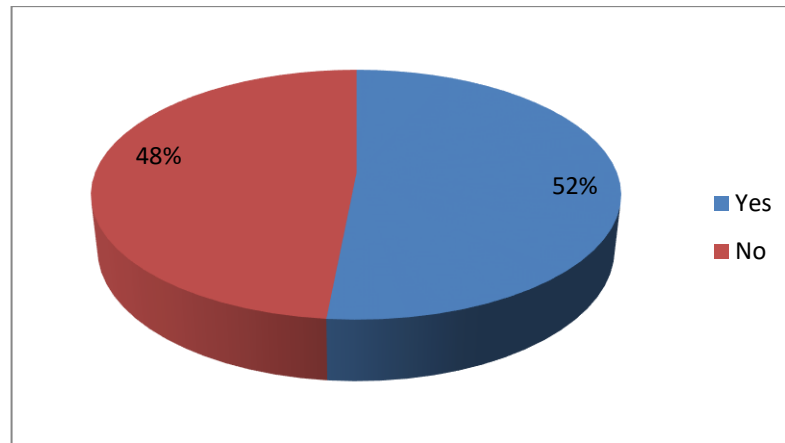
It is clear from the results that the number of students who feel anxious when dealing with the theoretical part is 26% (9 students), those who are anxious when working on the practical part are 24% (8), then students who are to be more anxious in both parts are 50% (17).

It has been found out from the above mentioned results that the most anxiety is provoked during students' research in both parts.

**Question Five:** Do you think that the supervisor contributes in raising your anxiety?

Question five is addressed to EFL Master learners in order to figure out if the supervisor can be a cause of students' anxiety.





**Figure 2.4:** Students’ opinion about their supervisors’ contribution in raising their anxiety.

Indeed, from the whole number of anxious students, eighteen (42.5%) confirmed and 48% (16) of them denied. In this question we gave students also the opportunity to support their answers .and it found out that 52.5% (17) of students who claimed that the supervisor contributes to raise their anxiety explained that s/he does not (give them much time) to explain how they should work, and does not share any support or guide, and the way of criticizing and correcting mistakes, does not give references or they just add more tasks to do in pressure time, so that can make them feel more anxious and think negatively. On the other hand the others 48% sixteen who answered ‘no’ said that their supervisors always put their minds at ease and clarify ambiguities and reviewing their process by giving enough time, and some of them found that their supervisors are very helpful and cool; then encourage them by giving advice and orientations to avoid theoretical and practical mistakes, while one of students who state that it depends on the supervisor.

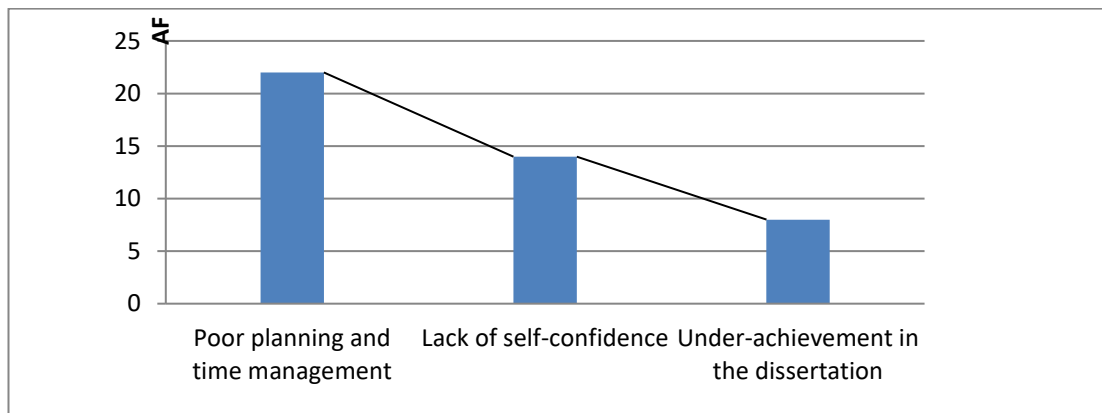
From these results it is found that the most cause of students’ anxiety is the time giving by supervisors. And it can be said that the majority of students are more anxious due to their supervisors.

**Rubric Three: Effects of Anxiety**

Rubric number three aimed at discovering the negative effects of anxiety that students’ faced during their work.

**Question Six:** How does anxiety affects your work negatively?

The aim of this question is to find out the negative effects of anxiety in students' work by giving the following effects to select.



**Figure 2.5:** Participants' opinion about the negative effect of anxiety in their work.

The results illustrates that the number of students who claimed that anxiety affects their work negatively by poor planning and time management are 44% (22), and those who are affected by lack of confidence are 32% (14), then 18% (8) of them fear from the under-achievement in the dissertation outcome.

**Question Seven:** Does Feeling Anxious while working on your dissertation makes you more motivated?

Question seven sought if Master 2 students agreed that the factor of anxiety can motivate them during the work or not. In this regard 32% (11) students reported that anxious feeling make them more motivated to work, (44%) eight of them who are undecided, yet 24% (15) disagreed the idea.

Options	Participants	Percentages %
Agree	11	32%
Undecided	8	44%
Disagree	15	24%

**Table 2.2:** Participants' attitude if anxiety motivate them or not.

From the chart above it is noticed that most of the students disagree that anxiety can motivate them, since feeling anxious lead to less concentration, pressure and confusion, Then discourages students performance, make them lazy and think to stop the work and of course with this big problem students could not finish the required work on time. On the other hand those who agreed that anxiety motivates them in the sense of making them aware of their level and push them to do more efforts and think twice on their work, then obtain a better results, while one of them undecided said that it can be both because sometimes, pressure is necessary to push students write, but anxiety can be debilitating.

#### **Rubric Four: Strategies to Cope with Anxiety.**

The last rubric deals with the most useful strategies that are used by students and teachers to diminish anxiety effects.

**Question Eight:** What do you think you can do to reduce your anxiety?

This question targeted to see how students cope with the problem of anxiety by suggesting to them some strategies to select from. In this vein, twenty of the students reported that they coped with their anxiety by practice and preparation. Eighteen of them (25%) of them provided that they diminished their level of anxiety by encouraging themselves to take risks. Fifteen (21%) of the students reported that the needed to communicate with previous Master students. Eleven (15%) students provided that they minimize their feeling of anxiety by eliminating fear of making mistakes. Eight (11%) students claimed that they use relaxation techniques to help them feel more relaxed and comfortable. They also added that they wanted their teachers to behave in a certain way to help them complete their dissertation comfortable.

From the result above, it has been noticed that the mostly used strategy by learners is: practice and preparation.

Therefore, it conclude that nearly the learners are anxious, they know the impact of their anxiety in hindering their abilities, so they help themselves by using ways that they can rely on it to minimize their fears, which may help them to feel more comfortable.

**Question nine:** What do you need from your supervisor to do in order to reduce your anxiety?

This question had the aim of finding out what students want from their supervisors to help them in reducing the factor of anxiety. In this sense, thirty four (85%) students asserted that the supervisor needs to find ways to motivate them to prepare their work comfortably. Nine (19%) of the students pointed out that the teacher should make them work in pairs and groups to be more motivated. Eighteen (38%) students reported that practicing positive error correction and show understanding as a helpful strategy by considering mistakes as a natural phenomenon if not they need to correct it in a good and polite way and explain the work in a simple and not complicated way to decrease their fear of making mistakes, and to overcome their shyness. Twenty (43%) students claimed that the supervisor needs to be close to them, i.e. they wanted him/her to be like a friend to feel more comfortable with him. Five (11%) students suggested different views. One of them said that the supervisor should help him to be fixed in the topic and the outline; another one claimed that the teacher should guide him by giving relevant references; two of them pointed that the supervisor had to give them more time to discuss and correct their mistakes directly, while the last one reported that his/her supervisor should advise him and show the way of working since it is the first experience for them.

According to these results, the most useful strategies according to students to minimize their anxiety in the dissertation process are: Acting friendly, and practicing positive error correction and show understanding, because they gain the highest amounts among the other strategies.

Consequently, the results show that teachers or supervisors may play an important role in decreasing their students' anxiety, in addition to this, from the answers we understand that the students, indeed, need the help of their instructions in order to reduce their writing dissertation anxiety.

### **2.5.2 Teachers' Interview Results**

The answers of the seven teachers on the interview questions have shown

different results that are stated in the following part.

**Question 1:** Do your supervisee(s) feel anxious during the preparation of their dissertation?

The aim of this question is to know if anxiety exists in students during the preparation of their dissertation. The majority of the teachers (6 of them) have the same point of view that their supervisees do feel anxious when they are working on it in which some of them add that anxiety is a normal behaviour and part of human nature, it is normal to be anxious at the beginning and it is a common problem that students face. However, one teacher states that their supervisees have never face this problem and they feel comfortable all the period of their work.

**Question 2:** How do you describe students' level of anxiety during their work (high, medium, low)?

This question tries to explore the level of anxiety in students (high, medium, low). In this sense, five teachers agreed that its level cannot be generalized on all students because it depends on them, each one feels differently, some with low anxiety may be because they prepared themselves very well, while others with high anxiety perhaps they ignore what to do and may have problems even in how to start things so they are not prepared, and between these two there are students with medium anxiety. So the student is the one to know the degree of his anxiety. One of them added that it depends on the educational level and the motivation that they acquired during their preparation; while others added that they are not in frequent touch with their supervisees since they usually email each other or met in few minutes, so they cannot decide how they feel. The sixth teacher claims that the level of anxiety is going to be a little bit low for those students who are excellent and medium compared with the others. The seventh teacher says that most of the learners have medium level of anxiety during their preparation.

**Question 3:** Why do students feel anxious?

The purpose behind this question is to discover whether the teachers are aware of what makes students feel anxious. In this regard, the first teacher asserted that they feel anxious because they are limited by time in which they have to finish their

work, also they study at the same time they conduct research with the pressure of sitting for the exam. The second teacher declared that when they do not read enough about their topic they cannot really be at ease and they are going to repeat themselves that they are not going to finish at time which makes them feel anxious. The third teacher claimed that students are generally afraid of failure the thing that makes them feel anxious. The fourth teacher said that their anxiety comes due to their fearing of not achieving their work on time and when they have difficulties at the level of collecting data; in addition to the lack of information. The fifth teacher agreed that one of the principal causes is the lack of experience which they have never dealt with research paper, they know about it in vague but they have lack in details. The sixth teacher focused more on the oral presentation in which they have to prepare for the viva day where they have to stand in front of many people, the stress from that and the fear of making mistakes or getting reprimanded and embarrassed in front of their family and friend make them very anxious. The last teacher said that the lack or the fear of not finding references, the lack of knowledge about methodology and thinking in the viva day in advance lead them to fall in anxiety.

**Question 4:** Do anxiety play a role in students' under-achievement in their thesis?

The goal of this question is to figure out the teachers' opinions of anxiety whether it is one of the main causes of the students' under-achievement in their dissertation. Thus, four teachers agreed that it does not really affect their achievement because it is a matter of preparation if they have prepared themselves well, done some sufficient reading, have really consulted their supervisor and everything they need in order to write a dissertation. That is to say it is not only about anxiety but other variables must be taken into account to describe their under-achievement. Two teachers state that anxiety does cause for students under-achievement in their dissertation, especially in the oral presentation. One teacher said that it may if it is considered as one point of many several points about research, otherwise it is not really felt during the preparation that means if they are well monitored and guided by the teachers and they are hard worker and make

research voluntarily and with seriousness, they will surpass the anxiety point.

**Question 5:** In which part of the research they feel more anxious?

This question concerns the common part of the dissertation in which the students feel anxious. Most of the teachers (5 of them) have the same point of view which is the practical part where they encounter many difficulties, for instance: collecting data or analyzing it. The rest of them (2 teachers) see that it is the theoretical part which they argue with students' ignorance of how to read, summarize, take information and quote, also the fear of falling in plagiarism because they do not know how to avoid it. In addition to this, one of them claimed that they have difficulties in choosing the titles, subtitles and things that are linked to their topic because when they know what to put in theory the practical side is linked to this and can be done automatically without that much of anxiety because they know that they have done something good.

**Question 6:** How does anxiety affect their work?

The researchers pointed out this question to seek the various effects of anxiety on the supervisees during their preparation. Three teachers have the same opinions who said that they are affected at the level of organization where most of them do not know how to organize themselves. Two Other teachers agreed that it may affects positively; when they are anxious they do their best to reach something good and work day and night in order to catch up all what they have missed, that is to say it motivates them a lot, however, sometimes it is the other way round which produces something negative because it makes them at loss when they do not know where or how to start and finish. One teacher provided that it affects them by making some delay and being somehow not in the right position of taking decisions, it could make them doubting about everything they are writing and anxious about the right way of writing a research work. Another teacher claimed that they are affected in a negative way in which they are going neither to think nor to write well.

**Question 7:** How do you react with your anxious students?

This question is targeted to find out how teachers deal with their students who are under anxiety. At the level of this question each teacher gives his own reaction.

The first teacher provided that he tries to encourage and advise them to have a rest, think about their topic, read for a while about it and then come back, this help them to decrease their anxiety. The second teacher asserted that he tries to motivate and help them by giving the way of working and shows them how to get references and do research , the most important thing is to spend time with them in doing their own research. The third one claimed that he takes care of them and tries to be nice to them. The fourth teacher maintained that students' anxiety is not really one of his priorities and it is not the teacher's responsibility to handle it, he is there to guide them and it is up to the students to manage how to deal with it. The fifth teacher declared that she tells her supervisees to take it easy and anxiety is something normal to feel like the others, and all what they have to do is to work hard later they are going to achieve better results. The sixth one said that he creates a friendly atmosphere and tells them that this is a natural way to think about problem, all people go through this kind of anxious phenomena when preparing a work and they have to take it as easy as possible. The seventh teacher claimed that she tries to make her students feel safe and ensures that they master their topic and everything goes on the right track.

**Question 8:** Do you think that starting early would make students feel less anxious?

The question aimed to see if starting early helps students to feel more comfortable with their dissertation. At this point, all the teachers agreed that one of the advantages from starting early is to lower students' anxiety because they are limited by time which starting early means finishing early especially students are always stuck with the idea of finishing by May and do their presentation otherwise if June comes they are left till September so even time pressure makes them more anxious. Also, when starting early, they become more organized with the possibility To manage their time and have all the time they need to write their thesis. One teacher added that fixing at least the title and the outline at the first year as Master students makes them feel at ease better than keeping it till the second semester of the second year; this is going to add more pressure on them. Another teacher suggested that if students have enough time to think about the topic, the issues that



Can lead to the topic and the research instruments that can be used, they are going to avoid many obstacles among them anxiety.

**Question 9:** What are the strategies that you suggest to your supervisee(s) in order to reduce anxiety?

Via this question the researchers were eager to know the suggestions of the teachers according to their experience as supervisor about the strategies that students can do in order to overcome anxiety. In this view, three teachers claimed that the most effective strategies are to start early to have an idea about the entire topic and the kind of data collection and analysis that students are dealing with, and find the topic that they are interested in, then reading a lot about it to have a good background and to get a lot of ideas and full knowledge about their theme, thus they are going to be able to take the easiest way to achieve their work. Moreover, one of them added that they must follow their supervisor's pieces of advice and take them into consideration. One teacher provided that they need to fix the theme and the outline of each chapter both titles and subtitles and show them how to deal with plagiarism in order not to fall in it and use in a beneficial way. Another teacher declared that the best way to avoid anxiety is to organize their work time, respect and stick to it. The sixth one asserted that they have just to take it easy as a dissertation is something quite normal and part of the learning process. The seventh teacher suggested that to take the work in term of steps not do everything at the same time, this may help them to establish a kind of freedom at the level of the mental and the thinking of the work , and make them learn that research has been done by other students the same as them.

## **2.6. The Discussion of the Main Findings**

At this part of the work the researchers provide a discussion of the main results. The pre-mentioned hypotheses at the beginning of this research project have been investigated by using two research instruments (questionnaire & interview) for collecting data from both EFL learners and teachers, in order to explore their validity.

Regarding the first research hypothesis which stipulates that feeling anxious

during the preparation of a dissertation has various causes. The results show that most of learners fall in anxiety when they work at their thesis and many factors that lead to anxiety have been found.

The data obtained through the students' questionnaire and teachers' semi structured interview revealed that students face issue with the restricted time because they are afraid of not finishing their dissertation at the exact time. The fear of failure is one of the main factors that students suffer from in which they have no experience about it and have never dealt with it so they are afraid of failing and not achieving a good work. Also, the lack of knowledge in terms of methodology, writing, information, references and reading in which they do not read enough about their topic and some of them have never read a book before. In addition, they have to study and at the same time prepare for their research work that make them confused in which one they have to concentrate on and this put more stress and pressure on them. The lack of supervisor's interest and/or care and the way he/she treat their supervisees with no support or guidance, and do not help them enough as they suppose and being harsh on them in terms of correction which make learners stressful when meeting their supervisors. Teachers added that thinking about the viva day and the fear of presenting and making mistakes in front of many people make them feel more nervous and dread. Therefore, the first hypothesis related to the current research has been validated by the gathering information from the two research instruments. Concerning the second hypothesis, the researcher suggested that feeling anxious has a negative effect on students at different levels during the preparation of their dissertation.

The gathering information from the research instruments showed that anxiety does effect students' work in which two points of view have been highlighted; some see that it has a negative effect on them and others a positive one. In one hand, teachers and students who agreed that the feeling of anxiety has advantages on students claimed that it motivates students and make them work harder and put more efforts on it and check their work and mistakes which lead them to more preferable and precise outcome. In the other hand, some said that anxiety has

many disadvantages which effect students' work negatively. They stated that anxiety discourages and disturbs their comfort and makes them concentrate less than they used to, and their desire for work become less and less and more lazy which may make their plans and schedules that they have been designed uncommitted with it or not respected nor followed, all that may cause some retardation in which they would not finish their work at the desired time with under achievement in their research. That is to say, the second hypothesis in this work is proven by the above mentioned findings but it is not completely true because anxiety has also some positive effects that motivate learners.

## **2.7. Conclusion**

The present chapter was devoted to the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the collected data from two research instruments from different sources. In fact, the students' questionnaire and teachers' interview revealed that EFL Master II students were anxious to prepare their final project 'dissertation' by experiencing three different levels of anxiety. Moreover, the causes that push them feel anxious: lack of knowledge, lack of self-confidence, fear of failure, restricted time, and communication with the supervisor.

**Chapter Three:  
Suggestions and  
Recommendations**

## **Chapter Three: Suggestions and Recommendations**

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### **3.1. Introduction**

Anxiety is considered as a serious problem faced by Master II students during their working on a dissertation. To this extent, in the current chapter the researchers use the obtained findings in this study in order to propose some effective suggestions to tackle the issue and solve it. It outlines a handful of recommendations for both learners and teachers in order to reduce or overcome learner's anxiety.

### **3.2. Suggestions for Learners**

Learners must know that anxiety is something normal to feel and it is not impossible to overcome and there are various strategies to reduce and cope with it. However, according to Newman (2015) anxiety affects learners differently, so one strategy may not work for all of them that is why they need to choose the best strategy that suits them. The following are some researchers' techniques that may help them deal with their anxieties:

#### **3.2.1. Practice and Preparation**

Practice and preparation are one of the most useful ways that may help learners to cope with their anxiety, because they develop their self-esteem in writing and reading which can minimize the level of anxiety. As it is the first time for them to deal with a thesis, they have never read or written that much which make them afraid of reading and tend to doubt a lot in anything they write. Therefore, they should start reading step by step and practice it every day and eventually they are going to get use to it, understand more about their topic, and start to have a clear idea about their literature review and what kind of things they should write about it. In the other hand, they do not have to write whole chapter at once but they need to practice writing even though few sentences per a day not just talking about writing instead of doing it, without focusing on the perfection of each paragraph (using quotes, paraphrasing) this is going to make them stuck and trap in a quagmire of language, and hold them back from finishing (Hedge, 2012). Moreover, being uncertain about something leads to greater anxiety because facing the unknown is the most frightening. In this regard, it is impossible for anyone to predict what is

going to happen in the future or which obstacle they would face in the period of their working, however, they can and must prepare themselves very well to be capable to confront the unknown or any difficulties may hinder their work process. Therefore, practice and preparation help learners to believe more in themselves and prove that they can do it which develop their self-confidence to diminish their anxiety.

### **3.2.2. Relaxation Techniques**

Relaxation techniques are effective ways that help learners to deal with their anxiety. According to Bryan (2001) there are several relaxation techniques learners can use (as cited in Saidi, 2015: 34). For instance, anxious learners should breathe slowly and deeply, close their eyes with relaxing their muscles then trying to clear their mind by no thinking of anything; this may help them to feel more comfortable and calm. They can do something that used to make them feel relax like reading something that the student appreciate such as: novels, poem and else or reading Quran for Muslim learners, do some running, listening to a calm music or going to quiet place with fresh air...etc. Also, they can talk to someone they trust about what bothers and makes them feel anxious, or to a person who had worked on a thesis before and may experience the same thing in which he may give them some useful advice or strategies to get over it. In addition, they can feel comfortable by forgetting everything and repeating words such as: I am calm, I am doing good, I can do it, I can finish my work easily and I am for it. So, learners should use these relaxation techniques to be able to control their anxiety.

### **3.2.3. Minimizing Fear of Making Mistakes**

Decreasing the fear of making mistakes is considered as a useful way for learners to alleviate their feeling of anxiety. The fear of making can help them in improving their writing by checking the spelling, grammar rules and punctuation...etc. But they should not exaggerate on it because it causes problems and may lower their self-confidence. So they need to know how to control their worries. In order to do that they must understand that making mistakes is not a sign

of weakness but a fundamental step for learning. . Bassett (1985:3) also asserted that “mistakes are opportunities for growth nothing more”, because without making mistakes they will never be able to develop their own learning skills (as cited in Saidi, 2015:35). They only need to focus on transferring the information without being anxious of making mistakes. That is why, learners must realize that making mistakes is a normal thing and part of human nature and no one is infallible.

#### **3.2.4. Starting Early**

Starting early is considered as another strategy that would help learners to lower their anxiety. The research paper has a limit time that must be respected which the fear and worry of not finishing at the time increase their feeling of anxiety. To finish a dissertation there a lot of things to do and as it is their first experience it may take time more than they expect. Starting early can enable them to have more opportunity for their theory; having enough time for choosing the topic (research questions and hypotheses), making research, reading books, collecting data and writing... It can also help them have more time for their thesis and enough time for understanding the entire content deeply and clearing any point of doubt or issue that may arise while their preparation (Sai, 2017). In addition, they will ensure that they are thorough and well prepared with their work. In the other hand, the longer they delay the more difficult it would be for them to actually start the procedure in which they may have not done enough research or their arguments are not good enough. To solve this problem they should start writing early. Therefore, starting early is very important which they have much time to do their work and solve any obstacle they may face to reduce their anxiety.

#### **3.2.5. Positive Self-talk**

Self-talk is a double-edged sword which can increase or decrease learners anxiety because the mind tends to be adapted to the words that are said to it. In this sense, thinking in a positive way is very important to lower the feeling of anxiety because those who find themselves frequently engaging in negative self-talk such as: I am going to mess this up, I am going to fail, and I cannot handle this..., tend to be more nervous and stressed which lead them to higher anxiety and lower self



esteem. To dispel these negative thoughts they need to change and replace it with positive ones by taking a deep breath and repeating encouraging phrases even though they may think that they are conning themselves, for instance: I can handle this, there are a lot to do but I'll take it one step at a time, I am as good as the others...this make more relax and confidence and step by step they start to believe it and in themselves and help them to overcome their negative thinking. In other words, positive self-talk is when they use the power of their words to overcome their anxiety (Rivera, 2018). Thus, they must learn how to talk to themselves in relaxing manner with using positive dialogues instead of negative ones, that is to say positive self-talk is an effective strategy for learners to alleviate their anxiety.

### **3.3. Suggestions for Teachers**

As a supervisor the teachers play an essential role in guiding learners along the period of their preparation for research project in which they need pieces of advice and special treatment and instructions, as it is their first time dealing with this kind of work. In other words, the interaction between the supervisor and his supervisee(s) is very important and has its part in overcoming anxiety on learners that is why a number of strategies have been given which they can use to minimize the level of learners' anxiety.

#### **3.3.1. Act Friendly**

Acting friendly is one of the essential strategies that are acquired from the supervisor to have in order to lower their supervisee's anxieties. Teachers should face their student with smile expressions and try to make conversation about similar interest like common sport team, and encourage them with positive feedback and comment even if they make mistakes, so they are going to feel comfortable when presenting their work to their supervisor "because they know that they will not be embarrassed or criticized if they make a mistake. It has been made clear to them that mistakes are a natural part of learning" (Dorneiy, 2001:41). In this regard, Young also stated that "instructors can reduce language anxiety by adopting an

attitude that mistakes are part of the language learning process and that mistakes will be made by everyone” (1991:432). These encourage them to take risks and make them feel safe because they are not afraid of being criticized.

Using humor helps to improve the interaction between the supervisors and their learners and create friendlier atmosphere. The teachers who had a good sense of humor and being friendly, relaxed and patient, who make students feel comfortable and encourage them to speak were cited as helpful in reducing foreign language anxiety (Young, 1991). These make learners feel more relax and confidence in the discussion with their supervisors and ask questions...etc. Moreover, Dornyei (2001) pointed out that having a humor sense is not about continuously cracking joke but rather having relaxed attitude, and if learners can feel that teacher allows a healthy degree of self- mockery, they will be more comfortable.

### **3.3.2. Group Work**

Group work is one of the effective strategies to reduce learner’s feelings of anxiety. Group work makes learning more interesting and exciting for them and promotes their self-learning abilities, as Dornyei (2001:100) stated “students in cooperative environments have more positive attitudes towards learning and develop higher self-esteem and self-confidence than in other classroom structures”. He also claimed that group work has several advantages that may be helpful for learners to achieve better improvement in their foreign language learning “Cooperative situations generally have a positive emotional tone, which means that they generate less anxiety and stress than other learning formats” (Dornyei, 2001: 101). Working together will not make them feel isolated or lonely because they are all going in the same process and face the same kinds of problem. In addition, they will support, assist, encourage and motivate each other to keep moving forwards and solve any issue that may appear (Lee & Golde2012). This is because while working together they learn and rely on each other and share common goals and the same journey, which in turn create on them a feeling of unity. Therefore, group

work is one of the best procedures that teachers can use to lower their supervisees' anxiety.

### **3.4. Conclusion**

This present chapter is designed by the researchers to give some suggestions and recommendations based on the main results. The purpose behind these suggestions is to propose some strategies for learners in order to help them alleviate their feeling of anxiety and to be able to write their dissertation with more comfort, and some others for teachers to show them how to act/react and treat this kind of learners and what they should do to be a support for their supervisees to minimize the level of anxiety.

# **General Conclusion**

## **General Conclusion**

EFL master II students are required to write an extended essay as part of their fulfillment for their master degree; however, it has been noticed that those students find difficulties in writing due to the psychological factor anxiety. This raise of this factor affects the students, especially, in the period of exams and during their research, it seriously inhibit their learning ability (writing) and achievement. The main source of anxiety is the restricted time. In fact, anxiety is a psychological factor that has an impact on students while preparing their dissertation. For this reason, this study was designed to investigate the issue of the effects of anxiety on students' achievement by relying on different parameters. To which extent students feel anxious in order to prepare their work, the causes, and the effects of anxiety on their achievement which the researchers targeted to discover.

To narrow down the investigation, the questions which arise here are:

1. What are the main causes of anxiety that EFL master students face during their dissertation writing?
2. How does anxiety affect students' preparation for their master dissertation?

To these research questions, it has been hypothesized that providing that :

1. EFL Master II students feel anxious during the preparation for their dissertation because of different causes that may hinder their ability to complete the work; amongst these psychological issues such as the fear from failure and the lack of self-confidence, adding to that the lack of knowledge, the restricted time, as a main source of students anxiety, and communication with their supervisors.
2. Anxiety affects students' work negatively to a high extent which leads them to under-achievement in the dissertation, lack of self-confidence and their preparation becomes ill-organized.

In order to check the validity of the proposed hypotheses, two tools of research were used throughout the study, notably, a questionnaire conducted with master II students and an interview carried out with EFL teachers having in charge to supervise them.

Accordingly, the research study was divided into three chapters; the first one with theoretical consideration of anxiety aspect related to the dissertation. The second practical chapter shed light on the analysis of the research instruments, and the third chapter dealt with proposed suggestions and recommendations to anxiety.

This research attempts to investigate the issue of feeling of fear, apprehension, and anxiety during dissertation process by highlighting its main causes and effects. The research study built to find some strategies to cope with anxiety in students and help them feel more comfortable while writing their dissertation.

Through the research two research instruments were used: students' questionnaire, and teachers' interview at Tlemcen University and after the analysis of data collection, the two hypotheses were confirmed. That is all master EFL students felt anxious to design the required work regarding to different levels which depends to each students. Also, there were many effects as a result of various causes that led students to be anxious, apprehensive, and tense while preparing their tasks.

Teachers and students can reduce students' anxiety, since both of them may contribute in its existence. Learners can cope with their anxiety by using relaxation techniques, encouraging themselves to take risks, eliminating fear of making mistakes, practicing and preparing themselves well, and communicating with previous master students. Teachers also can participate in reducing their students' anxiety following some strategies in the period of supervision such as : group work to share their ideas, practising positive error correction and show understanding, and acting friendly with their students to raise the.ir self-confidence.

To conclude, high levels of anxiety have a negative effect on master students which can be due to different causes. For this reason, being able to cope with it is more important.

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# **Appendices**

## Appendix A

### Students' Questionnaire

Dear students

This questionnaire is part of research work which aim at investigating why students feel anxious when preparing or writing their dissertation and how anxiety affected their work? We would be so grateful if you could sincerely answer the following questions.

**Anxiety:** 'is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system'.

(Spielberger, 1983:1)

#### Rubric One: Background Information

**Q 01:** How do you feel when you are preparing your dissertation?

Anxious  comfortable

**Q 02:** If anxious, to which extent?

Low  Medium  High

#### Rubric Two: Causes of Students' anxiety

**Q 03:** Why do you feel anxious in preparing your dissertation?

A) Lack of knowledge

B) Lack of self confidence

C) Fear of failure

D) Restricted time

E) Discussion with your supervisor

Others.....

**Q 04:** In which part of the dissertation do you feel anxious?

A) Theoretical part

B) Practical part

C) Both of them

**Q 05:** Do you think that the supervisor contributes in your anxiety?

Yes  No

Why.....  
.....

**Rubric Three: The negative effects of anxiety**

**Q 06:** How does anxiety affect your work negatively?

A) Poor planning and time management

B) Lack of self confidence

C) Under-achievement in the dissertation

Others.....  
.....

**Q 07:** Does Feeling anxious while working in dissertation makes you more motivated?

Agree  Undecided  Disagree

Explain.....  
.....

**Rubric Four: The Strategies to cope with students' anxiety**

**Q 08:** What do you think you can do to reduce your anxiety?

A) Encourage yourself to take risks

B) Use relaxation techniques

c) Eliminate fear of making mistakes

D) Practice and preparation

E) Communicate with previous master students

Other

suggestions.....  
.....

**Q 09:** What do you need from your supervisor to do in order to reduce your anxiety?

A) Group work

B) Practicing positive error correction and show understanding

C) Act friendly

Other.....  
.....

**Thank you in advance for your time and your collaboration.**



## **Appendix B**

### **Teachers' interview**

**Question 01:** Do your supervisee(s) feel anxious during the preparation of their dissertation?

**Question 02:** If yes, how do you describe their level of anxiety during their work, (High, medium, low)?

**Question 03:** Why do you think your students feel anxious?

**Question 04:** Do you think that anxiety is one of the main causes of the students' underachievement in their dissertation?

**Question 05:** In which part of the dissertation you noticed that students feel anxious?

**Question 06:** How does anxiety affect their work?

**Question 07:** How do you react with anxious students?

**Question 08:** Do you think that starting early would help them feel more comfortable?

**Question 09:** According to your experience as a supervisor what are the strategies that you suggest to your students in order to overcome/reduce their anxiety?