UNIT 07

Writing & Organizing the Research Proposal

Bringing every element together in a coherent document

M. Khames

7.1 Common structure of a proposal

The exact structure varies across universities and departments. However, a proposal in English Didactics commonly includes:

Section	Main content
Title	The proposed research topic.
Introduction	General background and context.
Problem Statement	The issue that requires investigation.
Research Questions	Questions the study seeks to answer.
Research Objectives	What the study aims to achieve.
Hypotheses	Tentative predictions, when appropriate.
Significance	Why the study matters.
Literature Review	Previous research related to the topic.
Theoretical Framework	The theories guiding the study.
Methodology	Approach, design, participants, instruments, and procedures.
Expected Outcomes	Possible contributions or anticipated findings, without claiming results in advance.
Timeline	Estimated stages and duration of the study.
References	All cited academic sources.

Some institutions also require an abstract, table of contents, limitations, or a proposed chapter outline.

7.2 Writing the introduction

The introduction provides the general background. It should introduce the broader educational area, establish the relevance of the topic, gradually narrow the discussion, and lead the reader towards the research problem.

> **THINK OF A FUNNEL**
>
> A good introduction moves from **general context** to **specific research focus**.

7.3 Significance of the study

This section explains why the research is valuable.

Theoretical
Contributes to knowledge and discussions in English Didactics.

Practical
Offers useful insights for EFL teachers and learners.

Pedagogical
Informs classroom practices and instructional decisions.

Institutional
Provides information that may support educational planning.

EXAMPLE

The proposed study may provide insights into how digital feedback can support students' writing development and inform EFL teachers about ways of integrating digital feedback into writing instruction.

7.4 Expected outcomes

Expected outcomes describe what the study may reveal or contribute, for example: a better understanding of students' perceptions of digital feedback; identification of the types of feedback students consider useful; insights into students' revision practices.

AVOID

Presenting expected outcomes as guaranteed results.

7.5 Research timeline

A timeline presents the estimated time needed for each stage. It should reflect your actual research context and institutional schedule. Example (weeks):

Research stage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Topic selection & proposal development (3 wks)	■	■	■																		
Literature review (4 wks)				■	■	■	■														
Instrument development & validation (3 wks)								■	■	■											
Data collection (4 wks)											■	■	■	■							
Data analysis (3 wks)															■	■	■				
Writing and revision (4 wks)																		■	■	■	■

7.6 Academic writing

Use formal, clear, and objective academic language.

M. Khames

Avoid	Prefer
Informal expressions	Clear academic statements
Unsupported personal opinions	Evidence-based claims
Repetitive sentences	Appropriate linking expressions
Overly complicated vocabulary	Precise terminology
Plagiarism and inconsistent referencing	Consistent citation and referencing

INFORMAL → ACADEMIC

× I think students have many problems with writing.

✓ **Many EFL learners experience difficulties in developing effective writing skills.**

7.7 Referencing and citation

Referencing acknowledges the original authors whose ideas and findings you use. Follow the style required by your department or supervisor, such as APA 7th edition where applicable.

Term	Meaning
In-text citation	Acknowledging a source within the text.
Reference list	Full details of all sources cited in the proposal.
Paraphrasing	Expressing another author's ideas in your own words, with the source acknowledged.
Direct quotation	Reproducing an author's exact words with appropriate citation.

IMPORTANT

Every source cited in the text should appear in the reference list, and every reference-list entry should correspond to a source cited in the text, subject to your institution's guidelines.

7.8 Final proofreading

Before submitting, check:

- ☐ Is the title clear and focused?
- ☐ Is the research problem supported by evidence?
- ☐ Are the research questions answerable?
- ☐ Do the objectives correspond to the questions?
- ☐ Is the methodology appropriate?
- ☐ Are the participants accessible?
- ☐ Are the instruments suitable?
- ☐ Are the ethical considerations addressed?
- ☐ Are all sources properly cited?
- ☐ Is the document organized and free from avoidable language errors?

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