



Introducing University First Year Students to Academic Writing: Salient Issues

Bertha Muringani¹, Maboleba Kolobe²

¹Senior Lecturer, Department of English, National University of Lesotho

²Associate Professor in Linguistics, National University of Lesotho

*Corresponding Author: Bertha Muringani

Email: bmuringani@gmail.com



Article Info

Article history:

Received 14 November 2023

Received in revised form 27

January 2024

Accepted 27 February 2024

Keywords:

Academic Writing

Language Problems

Citation

Reporting Verbs

Communication Skills

Abstract

The present study investigated problems faced by first year students at the National University of Lesotho (NUL) as they try to adjust their writing into academic style. The research subjects were from the faculties of Humanities and Science and Technology. Data were collected from the students' Communication and Study Skills (CSS) past examination papers (2018/2019). The study employed a descriptive design. A suitable analytical framework was crafted drawing from Appraisal and Metadiscourse theories. Also, some portions of the essays were analysed qualitatively to get a better understanding of the practices and also to identify common problems among students. The problems identified included citation incompetence, a limited repertoire of reporting verbs, poor academic writing style and some influence of creative writing. The study concluded that NUL first year students need more assistance to improve their academic writing skills and therefore recommended a number of solutions with more direct tutor intervention.

Introduction

Generally, when students enrol at university, it is expected that they come with an acceptable level of English language proficiency basing on the fact that they would have passed high school exit examinations, for example, Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education (LGCSE). Unfortunately, this has turned out not to be the case for most of NUL students as reflected by their performance in CSS courses. They still have those common language problems that range from spelling to sentence construction, yet they are expected to learn disciplinary literacies. During the period of this study, two compulsory courses were offered at NUL to initiate first year students into academic writing. The first one was *Communication and Study Skills* (ELG1014) offered during the first semester. This course taught students academic writing skills such as argumentation and referencing. The second course, *Remedial Grammar* (ELG1024), was offered in the second semester and it addressed language deficiencies identified from the students' writing during the first semester course. After attending the two courses, one would expect the students to perform better in academic writing in the subsequent years of their studies, but this was not always the case because the CSS Unit often received complaints from the faculties that it services that their students could not write effectively. It should be noted that up to that point, NUL had been offering generic communication and study skills courses, meaning all first years were taught the same courses with similar course content irrespective of their disciplines. But starting from the academic year that began in August 2019, new discipline-specific courses were offered. These are courses tailor made to meet different disciplinary needs. It is against this background that the present study was conducted.

The importance of essay writing in tertiary academic activities cannot be overemphasized. It is generally agreed that of all the four communication skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), writing is the most used skill for academic assessment. It is mostly through writing that students are assessed in the form of assignments, tests, reports and examinations (Gonye et al., 2012; Mutimani, 2016). Unfortunately, this skill has proven to be difficult to many university beginners, and in some cases the problem has been worsened by the fact that English, which is used for most academic communication, is the students' second language. This common problem has attracted the interest of communication skills and academic literacy researchers from different universities world over (Goundar & Bogitini, 2019; Pineteh, 2014; Shin et al., 2018). The NUL students are not exceptional; they also face a number of problems in the process of adjusting to academic writing in general and to their specific disciplinary discourses in particular.

Earlier research

Numerous studies have been conducted in the field of academic writing but with little attention given to the salient features of academic writing such as referencing, particularly for first year students. The present study, therefore, aims to investigate this under researched area. Studies such as Gonye et al. (2012), Pineteh (2014) and Mutimani (2016) looked at all writing problems faced by students, causes of the problems and suggested solutions for improving the students' academic writing. Gonye et al. (2012) investigated problems encountered by first year students at Great Zimbabwe University during their first few weeks of entering university. The study revealed a wide range of writing weaknesses such as spelling errors, subject-verb agreement errors, preposition misuse, wrong tenses and redundancy. It was also found that the majority of the students were careless with their work. They never planned the work, and they only produced one draft which they did not edit before submission. These observations led to the conclusion that the studied students' academic writing was weak.

Similarly, Pineteh (2014) conducted a study in South Africa at Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The research found that academic writing challenges faced by students emanated from their different linguistic and general literacy backgrounds, their attitudes towards academic writing and the privileging of middle-class literacies in South African higher education (Pineteh, 2014). The weaknesses identified included inability to follow academic writing conventions and poor sentence construction.

In the same vein, Mutimani (2016) investigated academic writing challenges experienced by Bachelor of Education primary level students at the University of Namibia. The study revealed various academic writing challenges faced by the students. Similar to Pineteh (2014) findings, students' challenges in this case were a result of linguistic and general literacy backgrounds, their attitudes toward academic writing and the privileging of middle-class literacy practices in Namibian higher education.

Gonye et al. (2012) and Pineteh (2014) recommended a combined effort among all lecturers to improve writing skills until students complete their programs. Collaborative teaching between communication skills lecturers and the disciplinary specialists was mentioned as an important measure to improve students' writing (Gonye et al., 2012; Mutimani 2016; Pineteh, 2014). Mutimani (2016) recommended integrating academic literacies in the curricula of all disciplines, and promoting multimodal teaching strategies and assessment to mitigate the identified challenges. The study also recommended intensive academic reading and writing workshops and increased formative feedback from lecturers.

Other studies focused on specific aspects of academic writing such as reporting verbs, for example, Shin et al. (2018), Bouchikhi & Bouanani Dounyazed (2017). Banini (2021) study of L2 first year student writing at the University of Botswana found that students used more informing verbs (e.g. say, state, report) that simply reported the cited propositions in a neutral manner and lacked persuasiveness. This, according to the researcher, implied that attribution of cited content to its source was the main motive behind the undergraduates' reporting.

At Purdue University, Shin et al. (2018) examined the effects of corpus-informed instruction on developing L2 writers' learning of reporting verbs in a first-year writing course by comparing drafts of literature reviews before and after a workshop. This study took an experimental approach whereby researchers used corpus-informed materials to improve L2 writers' lexical and functional uses of reporting verbs. The study advocated for a move towards contextualized teaching. Shin et al. (2018) observed an increase in the experimental groups' reporting verb lexical variety and a decrease in the use of verb types used in speech such as *say*, *talk about* in favour of types used in academic writing like *claim*, *conclude*, *propose*. The researchers concluded that corpus-informed instruction may support L2 writers in the development of lexical and functional reporting verb use because it exposes students to authentic academic material with the expected conventions and discourse.

The two studies reported above shifted from the common trend by the studies reported earlier in that, instead of investigating all writing problems encountered by students, they narrowly focused on reporting verbs that are used to introduce cited information. Apart from studies focusing on undergraduate reporting, some research has investigated the influence of social media in academic writing. For example, Bouchikhi & Bouanani Dounyazed (2017) looked at the effect of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube in L2 masters' students writing in the department of English at the University of Tlemcen in Algeria. The research data revealed that most students indicated the following reasons for using abbreviations in academic writing: to save time; when one would have forgotten the spelling of the words; sometimes used without reflecting; and for simplicity. In writing, the influence was realized in language errors such as capitalization misuse, punctuation, spelling and tense errors. The researchers commented that,

One can observe that people everywhere around the world have developed a new structure of texting while connecting in social networks. They may use informal and less correct language like dialect, a lot of abbreviations, acronyms, spelling mistakes, and also emoticons in their daily interaction (Bouchikhi & Bouanani Dounyazed, 2017).

The type of language described above can easily encroach into students' formal writing if they are not careful. In their conclusion, Bouchikhi & Bouanani Dounyazed (2017) noted that "indeed, students when texting, write the way they speak without giving importance to the academic rules such as capital letters, punctuation..., this lack of importance became a habit for students while writing in classes". Pertaining to this issue, Selwyn (2009) pointed out that Facebook negatively influenced students' writing because some students are now using informal writing structures rather than formal writing styles.

The existence of a wide range of writing problems as discussed in this section points to a great need for academic writing teachers to intensify their efforts to assist beginners to acquire the appropriate writing practices and subject specific discourses. The present study aims to investigate problems faced by NUL first years in relation to referencing or citation skills and its related language issues such as the use of reporting verbs and subject-verb agreement. This area seems to have received less attention from academic writing scholars.

Rationale

The present study found it necessary to investigate problems faced by NUL first years in academic writing to contribute to the ongoing debate of academic writing skills. Though some research has been conducted on undergraduate academic writing challenges in different contexts, a similar study with NUL students will enrich the existing body of knowledge since writing problems are likely to differ due to factors such as students' social backgrounds and learning experiences (Gonye et al., 2012). Unlike most previous studies that tended to look at all academic writing problems, the present one aimed to identify typical academic writing challenges faced by NUL students. These are problems involving salient academic writing features such as referencing and stance taking. This has been deemed necessary because new approaches to academic writing have revealed that producing good academic writing requires not only writers' linguistic ability but also their awareness of rhetorical features accepted by readers in their disciplines. The study also aimed to establish possible causes and suggest solutions to mitigate the problems' impact on students' writing. It is hoped that the research findings will provide helpful information to communication skills and academic literacy lecturers about problems encountered by first year writers in general and those at NUL, in particular.

This study investigated challenges encountered by NUL first year students as they are orientated into academic writing. It also looked into the possible causes of the identified academic writing problems, and how the challenges could be addressed.

Methods

The present study aimed at answering the following questions: What academic writing challenges are encountered by National University of Lesotho first year students? What are the possible causes of these academic writing problems? How can the challenges be addressed? To address the questions, a qualitative approach was adopted. This approach was found suitable for analysing texts written by students.

Analytical framework

A suitable analytical framework was adopted from Muringani (2021). The adopted framework was crafted from two different frameworks: one proposed by Swales (1990) for citations and further refined by Hyland (2005) under metadiscourse; and the other proposed by Hu and Wang (2014) drawing from Appraisal theory. Hyland (1999) briefly defines citation as "the attribution of propositional content to another source". Citations were classified according to the 'integral' and 'non-integral' groups (Swales, 1990). Integral citations are those where the name of the cited author occurs in the citing sentence, while non-integral forms make reference to the author in parenthesis. Reporting verbs were categorized according to Hu & Wang (2014) 'acknowledge', 'distance', 'endorse' and 'contest' groups. On the one hand are 'Acknowledge' and 'Distance' verbs which portray stance positions that are dialogically expansive, accommodating alternative perspectives and voices. Hu & Wang (2014) explain 'Acknowledge' as a stance where writers take neutral positions and make no evaluation of the cited propositions with reporting verbs such as *state*. 'Distance' shows a position whereby the reporting writers distance themselves from the reported propositions using such verbs as *claim*. On the other hand, are 'Endorse' and 'Contest' verbs, portraying stance positions that are dialogically contractive, shutting out alternative views. 'Endorse' communicates a type of stance whereby reporting writers support or agree with the reported propositions, presenting cited propositions as "authoritative, trustworthy, or convincing" as exemplified by verbs such as *demonstrate* (Hu & Wang, 2014). 'Contest' is a stance whereby the writers show a negative

attitude towards the cited information by directly criticizing or rejecting the idea using such verbs as *ignore*.

Data collection method

A corpus of 100 essays of about 1½ pages each was built from 2018-2019 first semester course, *Communication and Study Skills* (ELG1014), examination scripts. Students wrote either a descriptive or an argumentative essay on the topic: *Depression as a mental illness and depression as being caused by people's lifestyles*. Samples of essays were chosen from sciences and humanities faculties, 50 essays per cluster. These essays were identified as suitable data because they were written after students were taught essay writing skills throughout the semester. ELG1014 course content included, among others, in-text and end-text referencing skills, academic writing style and paragraph writing skills. It was hoped that an analysis of the essays would reveal the extent to which students had acquired academic writing skills as well as the challenging aspects that still needed attention.

We identified citations, reporting verbs and subject-verb agreement errors manually. The method was feasible because the texts were short and we were guided by marking tracks to identify most of the relevant features. In addition, some portions of the essays were analysed qualitatively to get a better understanding of the writing practices and also to identify other academic writing problems among students.

Results and Discussion

Citation

Data revealed the following common citation problems: failure to acknowledge sources resulting in plagiarism; using full titles of sources for in-text references instead of authors' surnames; failure to identify surnames for non-Basotho authors, not knowing what and when to bracket, and lack of citation variability. These weaknesses are explained and exemplified in the subsequent paragraphs.

It was observed that some students used full source titles for in-text-referencing as illustrated in the examples below. (1) "Depression frequently manifests itself in feelings of sadness, low energy and hopelessness". (Research by school of biosciences and technology on depression 2012). (2) ...and it could be regarded as clinical depression because it entails serious mental disability with severe consequences for an individual... (Cost effectiveness of a care treatment for depression in low-income people in Santiago).

Another problem observed was that some student writers could not distinguish authors' surnames from first names and some even included authors' initials for in-text referencing. In the examples below, the author's first name is Michael and the surname is Morrison. While example 3 used the first name, example 4 included the initial. (1) According to Michael (2010), the genes of the mental illness in the parent's body can be transferred to a child. (2) According to Morrison, M. (2010) the medical studies have shown that depression is inherited.

Not knowing what and when to bracket was also a common problem in the students' referencing practices. For instance, in example 5 the author's name was supposed to be bracketed, but in 6 it was not supposed to be bracketed. (1) "Depression is a common mental disorder that present with depressed mood..." Araya et al. (2006). (2) When an individual has both depression and addiction, it is called a Dual Diagnosis, said by (Iyer and Khan 2012).

Lack of citation variability was identified as yet another common weakness among students. It was observed that the first-year students mostly used one form of citation resulting in lack of variability in their citing practices. They used by far more integral citations than non-

integral ones. Examples of the citations are as follows: (1) Iyer and Khan (2012) noted that some of the people who researched came to the conclusion that... [Integral]; (2) As stated by Iyer K. and Khan Z. (2012) depression can also suppress the immune system and weaken the body ... [Integral]; (3) “Depression is a common mental disorder that presents with depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure, decreased energy, feelings of guilt...” (Araya et al. 2006: 79). [Non-integral]

However, this pattern is not peculiar to NUL students only. Research has shown that, generally, students master integral citations earlier than they do non-integral ones. Concerning this matter, Swales (1990) believes that when students first learn referencing in their academic writing, maybe starting from the last years of high school, they will be using integral forms, for instance, when they quote authors of literature set books such as Shakespeare or some characters in the books. But we believe that explicitly teaching the two forms of citation may help students to master both forms concurrently. Exposing students to discipline-specific texts can help them to better grasp how to use the two citing forms and to observe the citation form preferred by their discipline. Such direct tutor intervention is necessary because citation is one distinguishing feature of academic writing, an important practice that all aspiring academics should strive to master since it enables writers to sharpen their arguments in various ways.

Reporting verbs

Reporting verbs are used to introduce quotations in academic writing. In this study, data revealed that NUL beginners tended to use more acknowledge verbs than the other verb categories. To be specific, many reporting verbs occurrences were acknowledge verbs with *according to*, *state* and *say* as the most frequent. These are neutral verbs without evaluative implications on the cited propositions. Petrić (2007) observed that acknowledgement of sources or attribution is “the most common and rhetorically simplest” citation function and this function “helps writers display their knowledge of the topic”. The use of such verbs is expected at this level since the students are not yet confident enough to pass evaluative voices. Students are not yet aware of the evaluative potential of reporting verbs (Thompson & Ye, 1991) and therefore do not project their personal feelings and judgements in their writing. Endorse verbs were the second frequent with *show* as the most frequent word, and also featuring *supported*, *find* and *prove*. These verbs were used by students to support their arguments. The least used verb category was distance verbs and only two were used, *claim* and *estimate*. The former was the most frequent and the latter was used only once. Previous research has also identified use of reporting verbs as one challenging aspect of academic writing especially for the L2 writers. Pecorari (2008), for example, reports that students do not always consciously decide on which reporting verbs to use; they often randomly choose the verbs. On the other hand, Bloch (2010) observes that L2 writers often seem concerned with varying their vocabulary choices without much consideration of how it affects their stance towards the reported propositions.

It was observed that some student writers preferred the by-adjunct passive forms of reporting verbs. In fact, some reporting verbs were in this form as illustrated below: (1) As *stated by* Iyer and Khan (2012), depression can also suppress the immune system and weaken the body, thus results in physical ailments and chronic diseases. (2) This is *supported by* Michael Morrison saying “young romance also comes with all its follies and ugly downside...” (3) As *indicated by* Morrison (2010), “...breakups, unfulfilled affection, and communication problems between couples could very easily lead to disaster in the form of depression.”

One possible explanation for the passive verb preference is that the form is not affected by the subject-verb agreement rule as the active verb does. Whether the referenced source has one or more authors would not affect the form of the verb.

NUL first year writers demonstrated that they could use a variety of academic reporting verbs as illustrated in earlier examples. However, a few cases with conversation or narrative verbs were observed, for example: (1) Iyer and Khan *tell us* that bipolar patients are more likely to have children with some sort of clinical depression... (2) Some people resort to drug and alcohol abuse as *uttered* by Iyer and Khan (2012). (3) As *said by* Araya et al. (2006), it can either be caused by people's lifestyle or it can be a mental illness. (4) Sowilo (2013) added *saying* "over time, low self-esteem is a risk factor for depression, regardless of who is tested and how".

The findings reported in this section point to a need for a deliberate and focused teaching of reporting verbs to first-year students. While reporting verbs can be quite useful in academic writing, students normally find it difficult to use them effectively because they are many, and each of them has a slightly different and often subtle meaning. The task of using appropriate reporting verbs seems more difficult to L2 writers (Bloch, 2010; Hyland, 1999; Muringani, 2021) yet the verbs are an integral part of citation that helps writers to take a stance towards cited propositions. They provide room for writers to comment as they report authors' propositions; hence they become an important device for evaluation. Because of their significance in academic writing, Shin et al. (2018) state that "teaching L2 developing writers appropriate use of reporting verbs is a central component of first-year writing courses because reporting verbs perform a fundamental role in evidence-based academic writing". These writers add that use of reporting verbs allows writers to attribute information to external sources while also conveying their perspective on and evaluation of the source(s) used in their texts.

Because of the identified need among NUL first-year students to improve their use of reporting verbs in academic writing, we suggest that a multifaceted training approach should be taken. At this point, we explain some of the teaching methods that can be used. One way is to conduct focused workshop sessions that actively engage students with various reporting verbs, providing practical exercises and examples from academic literature. These sessions should facilitate discussions on the nuanced usage of reporting verbs, helping students understand how different verbs convey distinct attitudes towards cited sources. As proposed by Shin et al. (2018), another way is contextualised teaching involving discipline-specific materials to help students learn how to use appropriate verbs. By exposing students to discipline-specific instances, they can better understand how reporting verbs contribute to scholarly arguments within their chosen fields. Also, assignments requiring students to critically assess how experienced academics use reporting verbs provide practical insights into the diversity of reporting verb usage.

We also recommend implementation of sessions where students assess each other's writing, focusing on the choice and effectiveness of reporting verbs. This collaborative approach promotes discussions on the reasons behind selecting particular verbs and creates a dynamic learning environment. In addition, students can do case studies of published work illustrating how the choice of reporting verbs can impact the overall tone and credibility of academic writing. Analyzing instances where specific reporting verbs strengthen an argument, contrast perspectives, or highlight disagreements will empower the first-year students to make more deliberate decisions in their own writing.

Lastly, designing scaffolded writing assignments that gradually introduce students to more complex reporting verb usage can help. The instructor can start with simpler tasks involving basic reporting verbs and progress to assignments requiring the incorporation of verbs from different categories. This incremental approach allows students to build their skills gradually.

Subject-verb agreement

In a number of cases, students failed to use correct verb forms that would agree with their subjects. Such errors were observed in, for example, reporting verbs used to introduce quotations. Examples provided here mostly include those errors identified in citing statements because they could easily be identified in the process of analysing citations. The errors are on the italicised verbs. (1) Morrison (2010) also *indicate* that “peer pressure can also lead teenagers towards drinking...” (2) Araya, et al. *says*, “...those who suffer from depression however, the emotional low periods don’t go away so easily”. (3) Iyer et al. (2012) *states* that bipolar has a huge influence in leading to depression. (4) Sowisco and Orth (2013) also *shows* that low self-esteem makes people take things personally in a negative way... (5) In addition, depression as mental illness *lead* to death. (5) Secondly, depression as mental illness *come* in different forms just as many other illnesses.

In examples 18 and 19, the confusion seems to be a result of the abbreviations *et al.* Students tended to overlook the fact that the cited authors were more than one; therefore, the verb had to be in the plural form.

Other problems

A few narrative writing traces and social network influence were observed in the form of idiomatic expressions and symbols/ abbreviations as exemplified below. Such few cases could be an indication that the students had managed, to some extent, to adjust to university writing practices. Nevertheless, it could also be a result of the nature of the topic that was written on.

Examples: (1) *To keep the ball rolling*, people who are long-term unemployed usually *catch* depression as mental illness. (Idiom + wrong word choice). (2) If the illness is not taken care of, *people will die like flies* because it puts their health at high risk of committing suicide... (Idiom + wrong spelling). = exaggeration which is not accepted in academic writing. (3) Depression is a significant contributor to the global burden of disease & affects people in all communities across the world. (use of an ampersand symbol).

Conclusion

This study concluded that NUL first-year students had reasonably mastered the academic writing style. Nevertheless, similar to Mutimani (2016) observation, the students’ writing showed that they still had problems despite having gone through the communication skills course. Problems were observed in the way they cited sources, their use of reporting verbs, subject-verb agreement errors and creative writing features, specifically idiomatic expressions. There is consensus among scholars that academic essay writing is one skill that has proven difficult to many university beginners, hence the call by the scholars for more explicit instruction of academic writing skills at tertiary level (Bloch, 2010; Dong, 1996; Mansourizadeh & Ahmad, 2011; Muringani, 2021; Petric & Harwood, 2013). Just like any other skill, academic writing needs training and practice; therefore, students must receive adequate teaching and should be given enough practice for them to effectively acquire the skill. This, however, has proved difficult in most academic institutions including NUL due to different reasons, such as huge classes. It is our hope that implementation of our recommendations presented in the next paragraph will improve NUL first years’ writing practices, thus preparing them to pursue their studies successfully.

Fortunately, NUL has reviewed communication and study skills courses to take an academic literacy dimension. We propose that the Communication and Study Skills Unit embraces this opportunity to introduce collaborative teaching between CSS lecturers and discipline specialists. This move helps students to learn general academic writing practices and at the same time acquiring specific disciplinary discourses. Secondly, we recommend introduction of a writing centre that will take care of those students who need one-on-one writing coaching. This will help to attend to students' weaknesses that the CSS lecturers are failing to handle because of large classes. Thirdly, we suggest that there be more direct tutor intervention through giving students more academic writing practice and exposure to properly written academic material. This can be achieved by making use of corpus-informed instruction as suggested by some research (Shin et al., 2018; Kwon et al., 2018). Lastly, we suggest that academic literacy teaching continues to second year of each program because it is not possible to have students acquire and perfect the required disciplinary writing skills within one academic year.

ORCID

Bertha Muringani  <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-6707-1505>

Maboleba Kolobe  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2254-6771>

References

- Banini, S. E. (2021). *Range and variability of reporting verbs in Doctoral Theses of Humanities students* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Bloch, J. (2010). A concordance-based study of the use of reporting verbs as rhetorical devices in academic papers. *Journal of Writing Research*, 2(2), 219-244. <https://doi.org/10.17239/jowr-2010.02.02.7>
- Bouchikhi, M., & Bouanani Dounyazed, A. S. (2017). *The Impact of Social Media on Students' Academic Writing in the Department of English at Tlemcen University* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Dong, Y. R. (1996). Learning how to use citations for knowledge transformation: Non-native doctoral students' dissertation writing in science. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 428-457.
- Gonye, J., Mareva, R. & Sibanda, J. (2012). Academic writing challenges at universities in Zimbabwe: A case of Great Zimbabwe University. In: *Journal of English and Literature*, 3(3), 71-83. <https://doi.org/10.5897/IJEL11.092>
- Goundar, P. R., & Bogitini, L. J. (2019). First year Fijian undergraduate university students academic essay writing error analysis. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 8(1), 172-177.
- Hu, G. & Wang, G. (2014). Disciplinary and ethnolinguistic influences on citations in research articles. In: *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 14, 14–28.
- Hyland, K. (1999). Academic attribution: citation and the construction of disciplinary knowledge. In: *Applied Linguistics*, 20 (3), 341-367. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/20.3.341>
- Hyland, K. (2005). *Metadiscourse*. London: Continuum.
- Kwon, H., Staples, S. & Partridge, S. (2018). Source work in the first-year L2 writing classroom: Undergraduate L2 writers' use of reporting verbs. In: *Journal of English*

- for *Academic Purposes*, 34, 86-96. (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2018.04.001>; 14/01/2020).
- Mansourizadeh, K. & Ahmad, U. (2011). Citation practices among non-native expert and novice scientific writers. In: *Journal of English Academic Purposes*, 10, 152-161. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2011.03.004>
- Muringani, B. (2021). *Citation, Stance And Engagement In Postgraduate And Published Academic Writing* (Doctoral Dissertation, University Of South Africa).
- Mutimani, M. M. (2016). *Academic writing in English: Challenges experienced by Bachelor of Education primary level students at the University of Namibia, Katima Mulilo campus* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Namibia).
- Pecorari, D. (2008). Academic writing and plagiarism. <https://doi.org/10.1558/wap.v2i2.325>.
- Petrić, B. (2007). Rhetorical functions of citations in high- and low-rated master's theses. In: *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 6(3), 238-253.
- Petrić, B., & Harwood, N. (2013). Task requirements, task representation, and self-reported citation functions: An exploratory study of a successful L2 student's writing. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 12(2), 110-124. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2013.01.002>.
- Pineteh, E. (2014). The academic writing challenges of undergraduate students: A South African case study. In: *International Journal of Higher Education*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v3n1p12>
- Selwyn, N. (2009). Faceworking: exploring students' education-related use of *Facebook*. In: *Learning Media and Technology*, 34(2), 157-174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439880902923622>
- Shin, J., Velázquez, A., Swatek, A., Staples, S. & Partridge, S. (2018). Examining the effectiveness of corpus-informed instruction of reporting verbs in L2 first-year college writing. In: *L2 Journal*, 10 (3), 31- 46. <https://doi.org/10.5070/L210337022>
- Swales, J. (1990). *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. Cambridge: CPU.
- Thompson, G. & Ye, Y. (1991). Evaluation in the reporting verbs used in academic papers. In: *Applied Linguistics*, 12(4), 365–382.