Citation Practices: A Corpus-Based Analysis of Literature Reviews Sections of Ph.D. Theses in Biological Sciences

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Abstract

The writers construct a coherent discourse by presenting their stance based on previous research in academic contexts. Citation forms, being an essential part of discursive practices, have always been of interest to academics and researchers to explore their structural and functional significance. Since the issue regarding these discursive aspects of citation practices has not been explored in Pakistan. The objective of the study is to differentiate the referring patterns of the theses writers at the doctoral level in Pakistan. To explore differences in discursive practices regarding citations by theses' writers in L2 academic context. To this end, a corpus of the literature review chapters of Ph.D. theses of Biological Sciences, thirty in number, was constructed and later on analyzed through AntConc. Swales (1990) and Thompson and Tribble's (2001) studies were taken as the theoretical framework for the analysis and further interpretation of data. The study was delimited to integrated and non-integrated citations, including the subcategories. It was found that majority of the writers preferred to use Source as sub pattern of non-integrated citations. Similarly, the structural and semantic analysis of these forms makes up a significant part of the study, which obviously reflects the indigenous practices of the writers in putting their voices into different forms of citation.

Keywords: Integrated, Non-integrated, Reporting, Non-reporting, Source, Reference, Origin, Identification.

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A researcher builds his studies upon the existing knowledgeable frameworks of other writers in the field. He tries to establish an inter-textual relationship by referring to the available literature. Therefore, use of appropriate form of citations helps the researcher to situate his own work in the broader epistemological network. The practice of citation also helps researchers to demonstrate their affiliation with the discipline they belong to while conducting credible research. These appropriate in-text references may also help the writers to establish a niche and make their arguments more persuasive to the readers. Hence, strategic manipulation of the rhetorical features depends upon the proper use of citations, which makes the writers' work more acceptable as well as convincing (White, 2004). By extending the argument, the writer also mentions that literary piracy can be prevented only through the appropriate use of citations.

Citations have been examined in terms of being integrated, with the writer being a part of the sentence, or non-integrated, having the writer in parenthesis. Scholars like Swales (1990), Hyland (1999), Thompson (2005), Thompson and Tribble (2001), Thompson and Ye (1991), White (2004), Charles (2006), Petric (2007), Samraj and Monk (2008), and others have focused on different aspects of the issue. Hyland (1999) argues that the purpose of citation is that of ascribing propositions to the previous researches and signifying alliance to the disciplinary knowledge. Referring to other sources as an intricate communicative process with structural, thematic, and matter-of-fact variables may attract academics and information scientists (White, 2004). Researchers such as Hyland (1999) and Thompson and Ye (1991) have analyzed reported citations placing their work in comparison to the cited works and their authors. Some other studies (Thompson, 2005) were made to investigate the genre of theses to identify the interrelationship between the contents and structural significance of citations. Although the academics differ in their dealing with discursive practices, they come to an agreement to consider citations as serving both purposes of acknowledging others' works as well as justifying their own claims.

Despite the abundant work done on research articles, it is acknowledged that researchers have paid less attention to unpublished theses at both MPhil and Doctoral levels (Samraj & Monk, 2008). Charles (2006) endorses this phenomenon and argues that writers of theses in L2 contexts who are novices in this field need to learn and apply these referring patterns. Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) also accept that the number of studies on how non-natives cite their theses is not significant. Hence, the investigation of citation patterns has particular value in academic circles as it would encourage novice researchers to investigate the practices of citing others and also understand its functional significance.

From Pakistan's academic perspective, the matter of citation patterns was explored with the hypothesis that the writers in Pakistan usually make a choice of diverse referring patterns with meager knowledge regarding their various forms or they use limited options for citing others. So, it was sensed to learn how theses' writers invoked other sources and how to put their authorial voices in these patterns. It was also significant to know why the writers prefer one type of citation pattern over the others. Thus, the goal of this research was to dig out implicit techniques of persuasiveness, used by the writer while integrating their voice and showing their attitude towards the existing sources of knowledge. Many studies held in this regard, using L1 context, found variations in citation practices. These variations that occurred in the use of citation practices in various disciplines had several factors. It was hypothesized that these variations conformed to the norms of their respective subject or sub-discipline; the

particular needs of speechmaking; and the functional or semantic requirements of the argument that the researcher wanted to entertain.

Research Objectives

a. To observe citation practices used in the studies conducted at doctoral level in Biological Sciences.
b. To identify the frequencies of different citation forms across different subjects in Biological Sciences.
c. To recognize the semantic role of citation forms in theses written across the subjects.
d. To provide guidelines to researchers regarding citation practices in an L2 context.

Research Questions

i. How do the writers of theses at the doctoral level refer their propositions to the previous researchers and their works in the Biological Sciences?
ii. To what extent do these patterns differ from one another in terms of subjects in intra-discipline?
iii. How can the different patterns of citations be construed as different voices on the part of theses' writers?

Literature Review

Swales (1996) argues that academic discourse is social interaction where the writers construct their arguments into significant patterns to assist the readers. It is believed that writing is an interactive process and the writer needs to be thoughtful of his reader as much as face-to-face speakers (Sinclair, 1981). Added to this, Reppen (2002) asserts that the writers must hold in view the reactions of their anticipated viewers, predicting their background knowledge. Hence, academic writers produce knowledgeable texts that not only apprehend specific responses in an active audience but also convince readers to a point (Harris, 1991). Several academics have explored various means which may help them to present themselves in their texts (Cadman, 1997). A writer's distinctiveness is directly associated with the choices writers make in their discourses.

It is argued that academic discourse is considered an impersonal construction and the use of the subject pronoun 'I' and expressions of sentiments need to be evaded (Hyland, 2009). Okamura (2008) calls this ''author-evacuated'' prose, and this is common a practice in physical and natural sciences. Contrary to these, the writers in social sciences and humanities prefer to utilize those discursive strategies which may help a writer to place himself as an author. For example, the use of hedges, says Hyland (2005), implies that the author's practices are based on perception and not upon the authenticity of a knowledgeable source. Hence the preference for a certain tense may reflect the writers' level of claim regarding an earlier argument.

The citation refers to the acknowledgment of propositions to other works of sources (Hyland, 1999). Depending upon the context the referring patterns may either be original or stated indirectly. These patterns may also depend upon the rhetorical structure of the statement or the citing behavior expected within a subject. Direct citations mean mentioning the citing statement inside quotation marks. Swales (1990) gave a basic framework by dividing citations forms into two types: integrated citations and non-integrated citations. An integrated pattern refers to a statement where the cited person acts as an agent of the sentence or plays an obvious grammatical function. Non-integrated form of citation, on the other hand, prefers to show the

cited author in parenthesis. This division was further illustrated by Thompson and Tribble (2001) by giving its rubric to analyze data through sub-categories of integrated and Non-integrated forms of citations.

Reporting type of citations mention a researcher's attitude to a previous statement and thus increase the persuasion of the text (Thompson & Zhou, 2000). Such stylistic arrangements make the authors' argument more persuasive (Jonsen et al., 2018) and more precise to pinpoint a niche for the study conducted. Hence, the writers' communicative strategies highlight whether a specific author explains, defines, provides, clarifies, or suggests. Some other studies also show that L2 writers employ a limited choice of reporting patterns, and they use other arguments for acknowledgment purposes to demonstrate their understanding of issues. For example, it was noticed that writers in the L2 context adopt a neutral stance as compared to the writers' critical as well as speculative stances in the L1 context. It implies that students in the L2 context were interested in displaying respect for the professed right of published researches (Joseph et al., 2018).

It is significant to know that academic discourse analysis has not been attempted for this purpose in Pakistan. Shehzad (2005, 2006, 2008, 2011), Abbas (2013), and Khan (2013) have conducted studies on genre analysis. Added to these, studies about the Pakistani academic context reveal that a large number of studies conducted were meant to determine, the impact factor, the number of publications, the frequency of citations, the number of authors, the place of publication, male/female sharing, and organizational association. For example, Haq and Alfouzan (2019) conducted a bibliometric evaluation of Pakistan Information and Library Science Journals from 2008 to 2017. In the field of medical sciences, Memon (2019) worked on the bibliography of citable documents published in the JPMA from 1965 to 2018. Quite similar to these, a study conducted by Haq (2021) found a strong correlation between the authors and the number of citations and they found that multi-author papers were cited more as compared to those having only one author. So, the academic context in Pakistan is underexplored in terms of linguistic analysis of citation patterns.

The present study holds considerable worth as having focused on non-native speaker writings regarding citation patterns, with a more particular focus on authorial voice in unpublished Ph.D. theses across subjects in the discipline of Biological Sciences. Looking from different angles, like the preference for different citation patterns, semantic significance, and allying to a particular discipline.

Material and Methods

The area of study is academic discourse, focusing on the genre of theses at the doctoral level and more specifically on citation analysis. The theses submitted in Biological Sciences as a major discipline and Biotechnology, Botany, and Zoology as sub-disciplines make up the population of this study. The corpus size showing the number of theses per subject as well as per discipline is as given below:

Table 1

Corpus Size

Discipline	Biological Sciences			Total
Subjects	Bio-tech	Botany	Zoology	
Theses Per Subject	10	10	10	30

The literature review chapter was selected further for being rich in citations. The corpus was constructed from the literature review sections of Ph.D. theses having a purposive sampling procedure. AntConc 3.2.1w (Anthony, 2007), a free concordance software, was used as a tool for analysis of the data. A mixed-method approach was adopted to determine the frequency and types of citations. The option of concordance added with human judgment was applied for both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data. The theoretical framework is comprised of Swales' (1990) work defining Integral and Non-integral citations added by Thompson and Tribble's (2001) study determining the sub-types such as Source, Identification, Reference, Origin, Reporting, Non-reporting, and Non-citation under both major categories.

Results and Discussions

The data was obtained and placed under the categories of Integrated and Non-Integrated forms as mentioned in Swales (1990) and the rubric of Thompson and Tribble (2001) for sub-categories, named: Source, Identification, Origin, and Reference under Non-integrated, while Non-citation, Reporting, and Non-Reporting, under Integrated citations. The data was analyzed through quantifying and evaluation of each pattern, first into Integrated and Non-Integrated categories and then into Source, Identification, Reference, Origin, Non-Citation, Reported, and Non-Reported as sub-patterns of both major types.

Table 2

Integrated and Non-integrated citations

Discipline	Average Citations/ Discipline	Integrated Citations	Non-Integrated Citation
Biotechnology	1000	242	758
Botany	1000	316	684
Zoology	1000	344	656
Total	3000	902	2098
Percentage	100	30.07	69.93

Table 4.1 shows a proportional analysis of major referring forms employed in the genre of theses from Bio-Sciences. It presents the frequencies of each pattern in one thousand citations used in theses on all three subjects. It shows that the occurrences of Non-Integrated forms (2098) outnumber the Integrated patterns (902). Furthermore, in vertical distribution, Biotechnology (758) came out with the highest number of occurrences of Non-Integrated forms of citations as compared to Botany (684) and Zoology (656). Apart from these, Integrated forms have occurred most frequently in Zoology (344) than in Botany (316), as well as in Biotechnology (342).

Table 3

Intra- Discipline Analysis of Citation.

Discipline	Average / Discipline	Non-Integrated Citations				Integrated Citation		
		Source	Identification	Reference	Origin	Non-Citation	Reporting Citations	Non-Reporting
Biotechnology	1000	570	162	4	22	11	173	58
Botany	1000	598	86	0	0	1	250	65
Zoology	1000	565	77	11	3	1	321	22
Total	3000	1733	325	15	25	13	744	145
Percentage		57.77	10.83	0.5	0.83	0.43	24.8%	4.83%

The results displayed in the table show that authors of theses in 'Bio-Sciences' were inclined to downplay the authors' role as an agent as compared to the statement or the procedure adopted. Rababah and Almarshadi (2013) argue that citation practices require writers to appropriately cite a source. Borg (2000) also recommends that L2 writers may not be able to incorporate other sources into their research reports. Hyland (2014) compares the Social Science discipline as a soft discipline with science and technology as hard disciplines. He says that soft disciplines prefer integrated forms, placing the cited person as the agent or subject of the sentence, while hard disciplines prefer a non-integrated pattern of citation to de-emphasize the role of a cited person. In this way, the issue analyzed in the L2 context conforms with the community of science discipline in the L1 context. It is explained further that the researchers in scientific discourse do not emphasize the names of researchers, as the doers do not maintain any bearing upon the procedure followed (Thompson, 2000). In conclusion, the writers in the natural sciences de-emphasizing the role of the person cited (Chang, 2013). Another point to consider is that "the preferring trend for Integrated and Non-Integrated forms is an intricate outcome of different influencing factors, including referring norms, genre, discipline, and individual study type" (Charles, 2006, p. 317). The above table presents the sub-categories of both integrated and non-integrated citation forms.

Table 3 indicates the instances of each type of citation pattern in comparison to other categories in intra-discipline discipline along with the due proportion of each pattern out of total instances in all the three sub-disciplines. These patterns, along with their respective impacts, both quantitative and qualitative, have been explained and interpreted below:

Source

The table presents occurrences of this pattern, with 570 in Biotechnology, 598 in Botany, and 565 in Zoology. This may also be noticed that Botany (598) has got maximum occurrences in intra-discipline. It was found that Source has got maximum frequencies (1733) in 3000 citations across Bio-Sciences.

Identification

The given table shows that this form is preferred among different patterns of citation. In intra-discipline, this form has occurred most frequently in Biotechnology (162 out of 325) followed by Botany (86) and Zoology (77). Its total occurrences (325) in intra-discipline are the third-highest after Source (1733) and 'Verb-Control' (744).

Origin

The given table shows that origin occurs the most in Biotechnology (22) as compared to Botany (0) and Zoology (3). It signifies that this pattern (25 out of 3000) is the third least preferred among all forms of citations. So, it is the third in the number of occurrences.

Reference

Table 3 reveals comparative occurrences of Reference in Biotechnology (4), Botany (0), and Zoology (11). It is observable that occurrences of this pattern were found the most in Zoology as compared to other sub-disciplines in Bio-Sciences. So, it positions 2nd lowest as compared to other patterns in 'Bio-Sciences'.

Reporting Citations

Table 3 shows this form as another more employed one across different forms of referring patterns. Zoology has got the maximum frequencies (321 out of 744) as compared to

250 in Botany and 173 in Biotechnology. Among different patterns, its occurrences are limited to 744 in Biological Sciences (3000). In this way, the total frequencies of this Reporting pattern are next to the Source.

Non Reporting Citations

This pattern is variously named, sometimes called Naming (Thompson &Tribble, 2000) or Part of the Noun Phrase. The given table shows that Botany (65) is the highest in terms of occurrences, with 58 in Biotechnology and 22 in Zoology. The table also shows that non-reporting (145) is fourth in the number of various citation forms.

Non-Citations

Non-Citation as shown in the table has occurred the least among the different forms of citation. This form has occurred the most in Biotechnology (11) than in Botany (1) and Zoology (1). Collectively, this pattern has got 13 occurrences, the lowest one among different forms of citations.

Semantic and Syntactic Appraisal of Citations

Quantitative analysis of different forms illustrates authorial inclination towards Non-Integral form of citation, in general, and Source as a sub-pattern, in particular. In addition to this, it is more important to analyze these patterns from semantic and syntactic perspectives as to how a writer manifests his voice through different linguistic choices and formal manifestations. The following are the instances showing these practices with more illustration of thematic and functional significance.

Table 4

Semantic Appraisal of Non-Integrated Citations

S/No.	Citation Content	Citation Type	Subject/ Discipline
1	a number of frameworks or models (Brickhill et al., 1996; Obura, 1991; Sifuniso et al., 2000), had…	Origin	Zoology/Bio-Sciences
2	Early psychopathic traits (see Johnston & Mash, 2001)	Reference	Biotechnology
3	These findings were also noticed by other studies done in Japan, France, French Guiana and New Zealand (Choi et al., 1997; Baril et al., 1999; Carme et al., 2002; Lake et al., 2002).	Identification	Zoology
4	It is accumulated in cytosole under stress conditions (Ketchum et al., 1991).	Source	Botany
5	The phenomenon found was observed by such other studies in Korea, France, French Guiana and New Zealand (Choi et al., 1997; Baril et al., 1999; Parekh, 2000; Carme et al., 2002).	Identification	Zoology

Table 4 presents the semantic significance of citations found across the subjects. The extracts taken as examples are similar syntactically but different semantically. The instances mentioned as Source attribute the proposition to an author, identify a niche, or occupy a niche. Secondly, the extracts related to Identification, identify the authors of the studies instead of a statement. Hence, this form is also called "information prominent citation." Added to these, the types of citations that may portray the originator of a theory or method, a software program,

etc., are known as Origin. Finally, there are Reference citations as indicated in the second row in the table. Signalled by the directive, "see," it functions as a shorthand device that refers to a detailed procedure or source of knowledge that is considered too lengthy to be repeated.

Although instances of different patterns did exist in the theses of all disciplines, the ratio of attempts varied from subject to subject as a subpart of a particular discipline. Thompson (2005) illustrates that the writers opt for various lexemes and structures keeping in mind the different sections of theses writing. Since the current study was delimited to Literature Review chapters only, the theses writers opted for the cited statement of an author (Source) instead of going for the originator of a theory, procedure, or concept (Origin). Samraj (2013) also endorses that the writers tend to refer to Origin citation in the methodology sections. It was found that the writers followed a trend of using patterns of Identification, Reference, and Origin only incidentally. These may also signify the writers' less use of the referring forms, namely, Reference, Identification, and Origin, for their work in the L2 context (Jalilifar, 2012), preferring formal perfection with less priority or attention to the functional or semantic value of a citation.

Syntactic Evaluation of Integrated Citations

Both of these categories, along with Non-citations, come under the major title of Integrated citation pattern. Reporting citations were observed in their different forms like tense forms, types of reporting verbs - Fictives, Non-Factives, Counter-Factives and different voice forms, like, active and passive voices signifying different attitudes regarding the argument developed. Non-reporting citations were found as part of the noun phrase or prepositional phrase which signifies to an author, a specific procedure, program, definition, and some findings of a particular author or researcher.

Table 5

Syntactic Evaluation of Integrated Citations

S/No.	Citation Contents	Citation Mark	Citation Type	Subject/ Discipline
1	The very common form of the diseases, illustrated by Marek, which may cause significant mortality losses	Reporting verb	Non-citation	Zoology
2	According to Street (1993) a dynamic association is found between…	Non-Reporting	Naming	Biotecnology
3	It was suggested by Parekh et al. (2005) that modern practices of recombinant DNA…	Passive	Reporting Passive	Biotechnology
	Parekh (1966) was considered as the most cited author of the trait theorist …	Linking verb	Reporting	Zoology
4	Harris elaborated that highest heritability was noticed for secondary branches followed by seed.	Reporting verb	Non-citation	Botany
5	Parekh worked (2007) worked on antibacterial activities of some selected medicinal plants	Reporting verb	Reporting Citation	Biotechnology

Reporting Citations

The occurrences of reporting citations in the given extracts indicate that the verb form or choice of tense tends to deliver different views. Research authors need to be very thoughtful in using apposite verb forms (Khan, 2020). As indicated by the given examples, the writer uses the verb "foresees" which is presently simple and signifies a statement regarding an established scientific principle or fact. Similarly, past indefinites, such as the term "worked", infer upon the finding of a study recently conducted and yet to go through a series of repetitive processes to make part of the knowledge exist (Hyland, 2000). Likewise, the use of the present perfect tense, as argued by Hyland (2000), is supposed to be a phenomenon in a stage of confirmation. In the same way, the change of voice into passive where the author has moved away from the subject position, putting more focus on the statement rather than the author. Hence, it is more like, as far as the semantic significance of the statement is concerned, to Non-integrated pattern of citations. Alongside these, the use of linking verbs or copular verbs, as mentioned in the above extract, was used to give information about a state of a person, place, or object rather than show the stance of the author cited. The example presents the author as "the most cited author," thus speaking more about his being than his work. These forms are mostly employed at the beginning of the literature review section to establish the territory, reviewing the previous researchers (Kuan, 2006; Khan, 2013).

Non-Reporting Citations

The non-Reporting form of Integrated citations employs a pattern where the cited author is shown as part of a noun phrase or prepositional phrase. In this pattern, the writers place the authors in a place other than the agent position. Non-Reporting form may refer to a text, instead of a person or human being as subject/agent (Thompson & Tribble, 2001), also known as reification, to signify a work done, a definition, equation, method, or formulation. So, this study has been very useful for observing different forms of Non-reporting patterns or reifications.

The prepositional phrase "according to" clearly mentions the structure that the writers use to highlight a reification, or maybe, or sometimes, out of convenience rather than its thematic value or function. This structure was used very commonly in the study conducted, which may also infer that the writers, in the L2 context, having less knowledge of these patterns, would prefer to use this pattern. Similarly, reification may also signify a particular finding, work, method, or illustration, using a different noun and prepositional phrases, for example, "Christie's (2000) work", or "A study by Dore and Wickens (2004) suggests." These citation patterns are used where the writer focuses more on the work done. Hence, Non-reporting pattern of citation was used very frequently by the writers across the discipline, partly for their easily adaptable nature as well as for the usual requirements of the rhetoric.

Non-Citation

For one or another reason, this kind of pattern was observed where the name of the author was mentioned without a year reference. The instances of this form were detected numerously, as shown in table 4.3.2. Several speculations were made based on the studies conducted on this issue, as to why this pattern was preferred by the writers. This form of citation is sometimes used as a secondary source where the name of the author needs to be used and the year is not confirmed. However, the factor of repetition appeared to be one of the reasons for preferring Non-citation is one where a thesis writer avoids the use of an appropriate citation. Likewise, the writers, sometimes sought through referring to the philosophy associated with

some eminent thinkers generally and not in terms of reference to a particular study, for instance, "Marxist" or "Darwinian" (Jalalifer, 2007). The use of Non-citation has been found across the subjects. So, this pattern may not be specified to a subject, rather than a common discursive practice of theses' writers in the L2 context.

Conclusion

To conclude, the study was intended to discover the citation practices in terms of the writers' stance from a Pakistani academic perspective. The study was focused on finding answers to the questions posed at the beginning. First, it was intended to know how the writers of theses at the doctoral level refer their propositions to the previous researchers in Biological Sciences? The findings suggested that the theses writers used different forms of referring patterns, such as integrated, non-integrated citations at the structural level, while Source, Reference, Identification, Origin, Reported, Non-reported, and Non-citation, at both functional as well as semantic levels. Another question was seeking the extent of the difference these patterns show from one another in terms of subjects in intra-discipline? The findings suggested that the thesis authors were more inclined to using Non-Integrated form of citations, particularly the Source pattern, implying as the argument is more important than the author. It may also be considered that there is a direct relationship between writers' identities and the choices they make in their respective discourses. Hence, a kind of uniform treatment was noticed, in all the theses of the Biological Sciences, regarding the use of citation patterns, as almost all the writers preferred Source as non-integrated forms of citations to align themselves with their respective disciplines. The writers' less use of Non-Citation, Identification, Reference, and Origin was a common practice of these writers in L2 context. Thus, the linguistic behavior noticed was possibly due to seeking grammatical perfection rather than the functional significance of citations. Finally, how can the different patterns of citations be construed as different voices on the part of theses' writers? The various forms of the writers demonstrated the writers' response to the cited person and his standing regarding the issue. The writers of Biological were noticed to give more value to the argument or statement of information rather than the author. Hence, they used non-integrated form of citations in abundance. The real stance of the writers was noticed is using Reporting form of citations to mention their voice in the form of reporting verbs. So, Reporting patterns were the next most preferred kind of citation pattern after Source. So, the thesis writers in Pakistan follow the set patterns, regarding the stance manifested in citations, as per practiced by their respective disciplines. In other words, researchers refer to previous researchers and their works using different citation patterns according to the demands of a specific discipline, requirements of rhetoric, or the theme of the arguments being highlighted. It was observed that the researchers create different voices through different citation practices in the literature review chapters of Ph.D. theses submitted to the Pakistan Research Repository. Based on these observations, it is suggested that the writers in Biological Sciences, across the subjects, conform to the studies conducted in the L1 context except for the categories, such as Identification, Origin, Reference, and Non-Citation.

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