

Citations of first-year students at the university of Botswana

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Abstract

Academic disciplines are often called discourse communities in research into academic discourse. Citing and referring to other authors in writing shows respect to the intellect of individuals. Students need to cite sources properly in order to be members of the Academic discourse community. This study explored in-text citations in research projects written by first-year students in the Faculty of Education at the University of Botswana. Using Swales' notion of a discourse community, text analysis and qualitative content analysis, twenty research projects were analysed and three students and two lecturers were interviewed. The findings suggest that students need to be taught the importance of in-text citations and also be assisted to be members of the academic discourse community. There is a need for clear guidelines on citations and regulations for in-text citations and plagiarism for students as soon as they are admitted into their first academic year.

Keywords: *in-text citations, academic writing, academic discourse community*

Introduction

Academic writing skill is one of the skills taught to university students. Citation is an important feature of language use in academic writing. Citing and referring to other authors in writing shows respect to the intellect of individuals. Therefore, it is important to teach students citations in order to cite and acknowledge sources accordingly. Citation, in its general terms, may be defined as the acknowledgment of author's ideas in academia. Recognizing other people's ideas or opinions in one's work is an integral feature of academic work. This type of acknowledgement is variously known as referencing, documentation, or reference citations (Lamtey & Atta-Obeng 2012).

In-text citations have a number of functions. They give credit where it is due, add authority to a statement and show that a writer is not just giving his/her views including those of other writers. They also prove a point or offers support for an argument a writer wants to make and enable readers of a work to find the source material (Damarell et al., 2005). References need to be cited where documents are referred to in the text or a work. Accuracy and consistency are essential to enable readers to identify and locate the materials referred to therefore there is need for novice writers to perfect their referencing skills. Arsyad Zaim and Susyla (2018, p. 28) assert that the need to cite in academic writing is a requirement because knowledge on all topics has been previously developed by others and the main purpose of an academic text is to extend readers' knowledge on a particular topic.

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Swales (1990) contends that, generally, citation can be categorised into integral/non-integral and reporting/non-reporting. According to Swales, a citation is integral when a writer places the cited author in the citing sentence or running text whereas a non-integral citation is where the cited author occurs in parenthesis or referred to using notes, numbers or through other devices. Furthermore, Swales classifies citation into reporting citation when the writer uses reporting verbs such as 'suggest', 'claim', 'state', 'argue', and content. Whilst, non-reporting citation, as the term suggests, refers to a citation that does not contain a reporting verb. In addition, Swales lists the ways in which a writer introduces the author's name in an integral citation: as a subject, passive agent, a part of a possessive noun phrase and as an adjunct of reporting. Sun (2008) argues that these examples of a citation could indicate the writer's commitment to or detachment to the cited authors and the importance of their work.

In academic writing, the ability to locate claims within a disciplinary framework is an important skill. Novice writers, especially those using English as a second language, face considerable difficulties when asked to write essays and research projects. They have to read and cite sources in these forms of genre. As EAP instructors, we have observed that Students just write without acknowledging sources, a practice that is acceptable at the secondary school level. This paper examines how first-year students can be assimilated into an academic discourse community, and it explores the in-text citations in the research projects that they write. It further aims at understanding and helping students appreciate the work of others and acknowledge them appropriately. It also investigates whether first-year students qualify to be a discourse community according to Swales (1990) Criterion.

Context of the Study

Communication and Study Skills is a unit at the University of Botswana (UB) responsible for teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Professional Purposes (EPP). Each module is compulsory and is worth 3 credits. Students cannot graduate from UB if they do not have credits for these two courses. The modules provide students with academic writing skills across their entire degree programme and professional communication to prepare them for work. The Unit has adopted a 'scaffolding' staged approach to academic writing skills development. Semester one covers the fundamentals of academic writing: paragraph development, essay planning, note taking and note-making, in-text citations and reporting verbs for quotes. Module 2 develops students' academic writing skills and focuses on the various writing styles needed for various forms of assessment in the university as well as professional communication for the workplace.

Students are given individual essays or tasks in groups where they work collaboratively. It has been observed that when giving students essays or research project tasks, they do not follow the writing process. During the process of writing, some students will not turn up for the meeting with the facilitator. They work on their papers or assignments without checking with the lecturer even when asked to submit notes or drafts. Those who do not consult usually have confidence that they will pass or they plagiarise other people's work without acknowledging sources or without citations. Citations have attracted much research attention (Hewings, Lillis, & Vladimirou, 2010; Nguyen & Pramoolsook 2015; Swales 2014). In most cases, students will not submit on time because of different issues they encountered during the writing process and this led to this type of research.

This paper focuses on citations done by first year students in the faculty of Education in the University of Botswana, It explores how students write and cite other sources in their essays and research projects in order to determine whether they are members of academic discourse community. The general aim of this article is to explore the extent

to which first year students at the University of Botswana are familiar with the techniques for preparing in-text citations for an academic discourse community.

Research Objectives

1. To evaluate students' knowledge with regards to reference citation in academic writing
2. To assess students understanding of the importance of in-text citation in academic writing.
3. To assess if students are given enough time to practice writing skills.
4. To determine if students meet the Swales Criterion of discourse community.

Theoretical Framework

This study falls under the English for Specific genre analysis framework. It does not focus on the structure of the texts but on Discourse community which is strongly associated with the work of Swales (1990). Some of the University of Botswana graduate attributes are: Research skills and information literacy; accountability and ethical standards; and organisational and teamwork skills. Students need these attributes in order to be members of the university discourse community. Swales (1990) define discourse communities as "socio rhetorical networks that form in order to work towards sets of common goals" (p. 9). Academic disciplines are often called discourse communities in research into academic discourse. Woodward-Kron (2004) explains that "discourse community foregrounds the linguistic and contextual dimensions of disciplinary knowledge... while members may have shared beliefs; academic discourse communities are unlikely to be homogenous sites of consensus" (p. 141).

Students as members of the university discourse community have to learn to become competent in the genres that they have to write. Every Faculty has its own style and expectations. For example, the Faculty of Education expects their students to be able to write academically acceptable research projects. The students are novice writers and are being prepared to be integrated into discourse communities. Swales criterion for a discourse community is used in this study to assess if students' preparations meet the criterion described below:

1. *A discourse community has a broadly agreed set of common public goals.* The university has the public goal of educating students to given academic standards and of certifying their progress by means of awarding qualifications. Students have to connect with the expectations and conventions of the university as an institution.
2. *A discourse community has a mechanism of intercommunication among its members:* Students have to participate in some communication mechanism which is specific to their department such as classes, and seminars. They have to write essays and research projects for their different lecturers.
3. *A discourse community uses its participator mechanism primarily to provide information and feedback:* In a university setting, students receive constant information in the form of lecture input, and they receive regular feedback on work such as assignments or presentations.
4. *A discourse community utilizes and hence possesses one or more genre in the communicative furtherance of its aims.* The university department uses all the genres that would be typically associated with a university, whether spoken (lectures) or written (essays or research project). Students need to learn to become competent in these genres.
5. *In addition to owning genres, a discourse community has acquired some specific lexis:* During their studies students have the opportunities to acquire some lexis specific to the 'academic writing' privileged at university. They learn discipline specific language in their departments.

6. *A discourse community has a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevance content and discursal expertise.* As members in the university community, students may be seen on a continuum from novice students to expert students. Students are slowly assimilated into their discourse community as they progress from year to year in their course of study. They need to be trained to write academically as soon as they enter university. As far as the university community is concerned, members gain the status of an expert when they successfully achieve a degree.

Studies Conducted on Citation Practices

Sun (2008) examined the citation problems found in Chinese MA theses. The study aimed at finding the main problems of this group of students in handling citations. The findings show that some students lack awareness of the importance of citation for the purpose of creating their research space in the introduction part of their most important academic writing, the MA theses. Chinese MA students tend to use one citation pattern and are reluctant to use the other patterns. Regarding the use of reporting verbs and verb tenses, Chinese students also show a preference for a limited number of verbs, and a predominating use of the Present Simple tense, indicating that these students do not have sufficient skills in employing citations appropriately. Chinese students tend to overuse citations as authoritative support for their own work, with little critical evaluation of previous research. To ensure the effective use of citations, Sun (2018) suggests the genre-based teaching of citation through both explicit teaching and the practice of analysing mature writing as well as the writing itself.

In another study, Lamptey and Atta-Obeng (2012) explored writing challenges by postgraduate students at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Ghana. The researchers distributed 506 questionnaires which represented 10% of the total population of postgraduate students of KNUST. The study aimed at identifying and discussing some of the challenges faced by KNUST postgraduate students in their academic writing. The study found that KNUST postgraduate students have problems in mastering reference style formats because of the variations in citation. This finding concurs with that of Sun (2008) cited in Rezeki (2018 p. 64) that students seem to have challenges in citation due to the different citation styles. Furthermore, the study by Lamptey and Atta-Obeng (2012) revealed that students were not able to identify the citation format they used and they could not cite references for books and journal articles with confidence. Moreover, students tend to rely on books, lecturers or librarians for assistance in ensuring the accuracy of citations they use in their work. Among the recommendations made were that, librarians should play a wider role in the arena of academic integrity, and faculty and librarians should collaborate in teaching students about reference citation formats used in academia. College librarians should advocate for the standardization on reference styles in their various colleges. Library orientation given by librarians should be replaced with Information Literacy skills to be offered to students in the first and final years.

Luzon (2015) conducted a study on 35 Spanish students in their third year of an English studies degree at Spanish University. The data of the study was a learner corpus of 35 literature reviews on wikis and collaborative writing produced by participants as an assignment. This study is similar to the current one as it focuses on citation practices of undergraduate students. Luzon's study aimed at identifying the problematic or inappropriate use of sources in texts produced by undergraduate students. The study revealed that texts written by university students exhibit frequent examples of textual practices that are unacceptable by their prospective discourse community, which include, but not limited to textual plagiarism, partially attributed borrowings, excessive quotation and scarcity of summaries and paraphrases, patch writing, limited range of reporting verbs, and lack of evaluation.

The problematic citation practices were attributed to several reasons such as unawareness of the function of referencing, and the need to acknowledge sources, low linguistic level and low level of academic literacy and lack of familiarity with the language of citation. The study argues that the inappropriate borrowing and misusing of sources by students is not usually a result of dishonesty but of students' insufficient knowledge of the rhetorical features of academic text and low development of important skills involved in the reading-writing process Luzon (2015). There is a wide agreement amongst scholars that poor referencing and inappropriate use of sources do not usually result from an intention to deceive, but from challenges that students face when attempting to produce writing that is expected to meet the standards of expert writing (Howard 1995; Pecorari 2003).

Rezeki (2018) conducted an in-depth analysis of 10 undergraduate students' research proposals submitted in the academic year 2015/2016 to the English Education department of Lotus University, Indonesia. The study aimed at identifying student citation practices within the English department. The study discovered problems of citing especially in areas of language and content. In language, it was revealed that students often began a paragraph with a quotation or citation, which is not recommended in academic writing. In addition, they tend to insert too much or too little details of sources, use double subjects and double reporting verbs. Regarding content, the findings of the study showed cases of plagiarism intentionally or unintentionally committed by the students. A case of plagiarism is also shown by the improper student citation for the materials taken from other sources such as table, diagrams, formula, or sample texts. The data showed that such materials were often used without acknowledging the authors of the original sources at all. Rezeki (2018) recommended that clear guidelines on citations and regulations for plagiarism must be made available to all students.

Rationale and Justification of the study

EAP recognises that tertiary students display different learning needs which cannot be addressed by teaching them the same type of English Language (Coffey, 1984) The present study looks at texts produced by undergraduate students to evaluate whether they use sources and acknowledge them to support their arguments. The concept of discourse communities provides a rich contextual framework for researching the social practices that shape students' writing in disciplinary contexts. Literature shows that the use of sources by second language (L2) students has been the focus of much recent research (Luzon; 2015; Lee, Hitchcock & Casal 2018). Different authors refer to the incorporation of textual chunks of other authors in different words: Baily and Challen (2015; Keck 2014) call it textual borrowing while Weigle and Parker (2012) refer to it as source text borrowing.

Magogwe and Nkateng (2018) conducted a research on essays written by Social Sciences students in the University of Botswana and recommended that "...there was a need for students to be taught referencing, in-text citations and the use of paraphrasing" (p. 5). Different researchers have highlighted different reasons for students' problems with citations. Hamilton (2016) found that students are expected too early to apply referencing conventions perfectly. Although there has been research on student citations around the world, there has not been a similar study conducted in the context of Botswana. The variety of research cited above clearly shows that students are not yet ready to fit in the description of the academic discourse community and hence the purpose of this article. It is noted in the current study that students cannot be expected to fit in the discourse community at first year, hence the need to assimilate them into the discourse community.

Methodology

Twenty (20) research projects that were written by first year students in the faculty of Education were analysed to check how students cited sources and how the sources were acknowledged. The students were given tasks in groups to research in areas related to their major courses. They were to identify their own topics, each group had six students. Collaborative writing is one of the effective and a solid form of gathering more quality information as people team up to perform a given task and hence this creates so many benefits for the participants in literacy writing. A study of college freshman using vigorous control groups demonstrated that students who worked collaboratively learned and produced better work than students who worked individually. The study which falls under EAP, involved conducting individual interviews with six students who have just completed their first year and two lecturers teaching in the faculty of education. The interviews were meant to share the experiences of students when writing academic texts, they were also to find the views of the lecturers when marking students project and on the issue of whether students are socialised into the academic discourse community.

In order to answer the research questions three students were interviewed and two lecturers teaching academic writing were also interviewed. The interviews were meant to share the experiences of students when writing academic texts, they were also to find the views of the lecturers when marking students project and on the issue of whether students are socialised into the academic discourse community.

Hsieh & Shannon (2005) identified three approaches to coding within content analysis: conventional content analysis, directed content analysis and summative content analysis. In directed content analysis, the analysis starts with relevant research findings as a guide. Although systematic coding was not actually a strong part of our analytical process we used the directed content analysis as it fits what we wanted to achieve. Zhang & Wildemuth (2009) explain that in directed content analysis “initial coding starts with a theory or relevant research findings” (p.309). Hsieh & Shannon (2005) go on to say that “content analysis focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text” (p. 1278). Zhang & Wildemuth (2009) build on this, stating that “samples for qualitative content analysis usually consist of purposefully selected texts which can inform the research questions being investigated” (p. 309). Students’ research projects and interviews were analysed using qualitative content analysis in order to analyse the data focusing on the in-text citations and how they are presented, and the findings are discussed in the following section:

Findings and Discussions

As stated in the criterion, students attend their classes for Communication and academic literacies that enable them to read and write for their content courses. They are given tasks such as essays, and research projects where they have to demonstrate the skills acquired. After assessing the tasks, the lecturers have to give students feedback. Students who are keen always question or respond to the feedback they are given. After analysing the twenty projects, the findings are classified into four broad groups as illustrated in the Table 1 below.

Table 1
Analysis of students’ citation mistakes

Categories	No of groups	Types of errors	Examples
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1.Plagiarism	15/20	1. Failure to acknowledge the source	a. <i>Globally, millions more cases of violence, child marriage, female genital mutilation, unintended pregnancies are expected due to COVID-19 pandemic.</i>
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1/20	2. Copy and paste Inclusion of irrelevant materials not related to the topic) example shows an illustration of copy and paste, which is making a reference to non-existing information	b. <i>'these commentaries [1,2] as well as the Enberg and Morral [3] paper, raise important and thought-provoking questions concerning the role of adolescent substance use in academic outcome.</i>
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Categories	No of groups	Types of mistakes or errors	Examples
	6/20	3. The students plagiarise data with statistics and fail to acknowledge the source.	c. <i>About 60% of University of Botswana students suffer from mental health disorder...</i> d. <i>It is estimated that the University of Botswana has the highest national HIV prevalence rate amongst all institutions in Botswana</i>

Categories	No of groups	Types of mistakes or errors	Examples
	1/20	4. Combination of two different citation styles. Students use the APA and Harvard style of referencing in in-text-citation	a. <i>Recent studies have shown that heavy adolescent substance use can lead to problems with working memory and attention due to changes in adolescent brain activity [5].</i> b. <i>Example b. Campbell (2005), mentions that there is enough evidence to suggest that there is indeed a big problem of substance abuse in Botswana.</i>

2.In-text Citation	7/20	5.Provision of direct Quotation with no citation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>“E-learning is a system of learning that uses electronic media, typically over the internet”</i> b. <i>“Depressants drugs are drugs that slows down the function of n The central nervous system by suppressing the rate at which messages is interpreted by the brain”</i>
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Categories	No of groups	Types of mistakes or errors	Examples
	13/20	6 Use of full names and initials of the author.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>“ As Paulo Coelho (2015).....”</i> b. <i>“ Edinger, Reimer van Villies (2003) identified.....”</i> d. <i>“Dr Lindsay Blank (2005).....”</i> e. <i>According to Mutala, .S . (2002),.....”</i> f. <i>“(C.S Klima, 2008)....”</i> g. <i>(Kemp, A et al, 2005)</i> h. <i>(S. Taylor, 2015)</i> i. <i>(B. Gilham 2017)</i>
	6/20	7.Mentioning of all authors names in in-text citation, failing to shorten to et al.,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>According to Thurmond, Wambach, Connors and Frey(2002) these are.....”</i> b. <i>“(D.Hillis, A.Mercy & R.Saul 2016)”</i>
	5/20	8.Wrong spelling of et al., abbreviation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>“(Subedi et.-al.2020),</i> b. <i>(Douncet el-al, 2020)”</i>, c. <i>“ (Casey at al 2009),</i> d. <i>Fraenkel, at al 2012)”</i>
	2/20	9.Failure to correctly write the short form of the term ‘page’,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. <i>“According to Lenhardt el al.,(2010), “</i> f. <i>“According to Junco at et (2010)”</i> g. <i>“Wagner al et (2008)”</i>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>(P.20)</i> b. <i>(Baker, 2006, 171)</i>

1/20	10. Citing authors twice, at the beginning and at the end of the sentence)	a. <i>(Cennimo, 2021) explained that ‘covid-19 is an illness caused by a novel corona virus called severe acute respiratory syndrome Corona virus 2(SARS-CoV-2) was first identified amid an outbreak of respiratory illness cases in Wuhan city, Hubei Province China’. (Cennimo,et al., 2021, p.1)</i>
2/20	11. Inclusion of the title as part of in-text citation	a. <i>“...Botswana police indicate that, between January and May 2020, there has been a 20% increase of defilement cases(Mahtani,S.(2020)</i>
2/20	12.Incorrect Punctuation in citation Students misplace the period mark. It is used incorrectly, as it is placed at the end of the sentence and after the citation, 13.Students do not use open and close quotation correctly, see example (b), close quotation mark is missing.	b. <i>“What Must Governments Do to Reduce Gender-Based Violence during the COVID 19 pandemic?”(29 June 2020)”</i> a. <i>“... drugs and alcohol abuse refers to the use of certain chemicals for the purpose of creating pleasurable effect on the brain. (Manda,2021).</i> b. <i>“throughout much of history, we have developed technologies that make it easier for us to communicate with each other.” (Carton,2009).</i>
1/20	14.The use of an incorrect reporting verb	i.As <i>Rana and Lal (2014) said, Understanding issue.....</i> ii. <i>The use of reporting verb ‘said’ instead of ‘reports, argue, state</i>

	1/20	15.Starting a sentence with a quotation (See example a)	a. <i>“stress is direct proportional to how much stress you can gracefully endure. When you can deal with stress with joyous productivity, your blessings increase”</i> (Blackett, 2011)
3. Reference List	12/20	16.Incorrect reference layout	<p>a. <i>Aobakwe Bacos Malejane and Kobe Diraditsee,32(2):1-8,2019 BOTSWANA’S EDUCATION SYSTEM –A RELATIVE ANALYSIS WITHIN SOUTH KOREAN EDUCATION SYSTEM www.accgroup.co.za</i></p> <p>b. <i>Poupak Alipour,2020,November,22 A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ONLINE VS BLENDED LEARNING</i></p> <p>c. <i>Breslow et al, 2013, Anderson et al.,(2014)student earing and/or student engagement. https://www.researchgate.net</i></p> <p>d. <i>Charles Barch, Emerald book chapter: Chapter 5 Improving childrens attitudes and Awareness towards a healthy lifestyle in Early childhood (2019)</i></p> <p>e. <i>Sallies,2009:Stone,Mckenzi e,Welk and Booth 1998;” Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System Data Adolescent and School Health CDC” (2009)</i></p>

	13/20	17. Missing information:- occurrences of missing journal names, publication companies names, city, journal names, journal volume number and periodicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Babbie, E.R. (1990). Survey Research Methods. Second Edition</i> b. <i>Davis, D. (2003). The Aggressive Adolescent. (n.b)</i> c. <i>Alraini, Zo, & Ciganek, 2015</i> d. <i>Baker & Taylor, 2010. Students perception of online versus face to face.</i> e. <i>www.ymcan.org>2017/04/04</i> f. <i>www.healthharvard.edu>blog</i>
4. Other errors	14/20	18. Numerous sources stated in the body of the text but not reflected in the bibliography section.	
	1/20	19. Provision of a long paragraph of more than 8 sentences and citing at the end, making it difficult for the reader to differentiate between the voice of the writer (students) and the voice of authors acknowledged	<i>did not acknowledge sources when defining their key terms.</i>
	7/20	20. failure to illustrate paraphrasing and summarizing skills,	

The findings illustrated above clearly show that students do not meet Swales criterion of being the University discourse community. Students need to be given more practice before they can actually start writing essays at year one of their studies. It is the responsibility of the Communication and Study Skills unit that they are taught writing skills. Content lecturers should also emphasize the importance of academic writing conventions. There is much needed to train students in their writing skills to fit in the discourse community. The interviewees reported that students do not have enough time to learn to write academically during their first year in the university, they are struggling to fit in the Academic community discourse as it can be seen in the errors cited in Table 1.

One: *“I did not have an idea of what is expected of me I found it difficult to cite different sources.”*

One of the interviewees lamented that in text citations are taught at a late stage. They were never shown the importance of acknowledging sources, their core or content lecturers never guided them on how to write, they did not emphasize on how to write academically as they were never credited for the citations. Some lecturers guide them and they use APA 6th edition.

Setso: *“I personally look up the APA writing style on the internet but I still get some things wrong. I had the opportunity to take advanced writing skills which helped me to improve my writing skills”*

The interviews revealed that students are given assignments at first year to write essays or pieces of reflective writing, the students explained that some of their lecturers just give them the assignments without explaining to them how to write or cite sources while other lecturers take time to explain to students on how to write academically.

The students revealed that the problems they encountered are:

- i. Writing for different lecturers who have different expectations, For example; lecturers have different expertise in citing styles some use MLA while others use APA. The different writing styles confuse students.
- ii. Some lecturers explain the writing conventions while other lecturers expect students to write with skills they learn from COM classes. Some lecturers ask students to submit the sections they have written so that they assist them before proceeding to the following parts.
- iii. They had problems in citing sources, and some lecturers help them in writing the assignment. The tasks they were given explain how the essays should be written.
- iv. The feedback instructs them to resubmit; that is, they have to follow the academic writing conventions. At times students just look at their marks and ignore the comments by the markers.
- v. Some lecturers just mark content and not the writing skills.

One student also stated that, Time taken to teach referencing and citations is not enough.

What can be done to assist students?

Lesego: *Lecturers should not ask students to present on such topics because students do not listen when others are presenting. They should also encourage students to write academically.*

As it can be seen in the findings above, one of the common public goals is for students to be taught to acknowledge and respect the intellectual capabilities of different authors. If sources are not acknowledged it is a clear indication that the goals are not achieved. The findings of students failing to recognise the importance of acknowledging sources in academic writing correlates with the study of Luzon 2015, who found out that problematic citation practices were attributed to reasons such as unawareness of the function of referencing and the need to acknowledge sources. Therefore, students easily overlook the significance of citation in writing.

Students are taught different types of genres that are used in their faculty, for example reflective writing for their portfolios, research articles for their research. They are also given tasks where they have to display their competence in writing these types of genres. If students make the mistakes identified above it shows that they do not meet the

requirement of criterion 4 which states that “they utilize and hence possess one or more genre in the communicative furtherance of its aims”.

The interviewees reported that their lecturer who taught them Academic writing assigned the topic on citations to students to present and when students are presenting, other students do not listen. The interviews also revealed that students are given assignments at first year to write essays, the students explained that some of their lecturers just give them the assignment without explaining to them how to write or cite sources, whilst other lecturers do take time to explain to the students on how to write academically that is including citing sources and writing references. This is inconsistent with the lecturers’ responses who indicated that each semester they teach students referencing and citation under writing module and they make sure before the students submit essay papers/projects they have learnt Citation practices, however, students seem to have difficulties learning referencing as it needs practice and more time.

In some projects students did not punctuate the citations correctly; they were not able to differentiate between a long and a short quote. Students do not know where to place ‘period’ punctuation mark, placing it at the end of sentence and after the source. The students used numbers in square brackets and parenthesis to refer to the author in in-text citations, which is an example of non-integral citation seen in Harvard style of referencing, however, the students are not consistent throughout their work as they also mention the authors name in in-text citation which is the integral citation seen in APA Style of referencing. Example from research projects reflects APA style of referencing in-text citation while the bibliography is Harvard referencing.

This is supported by the lecturers’ interviews who reported that most of the times students mix the APA style of referencing with Harvard style. This further illustrates the fact that students do not put much effort when completing research papers, as the lecturers have indicated that they are taught APA style of referencing therefore the expectation is that they will use it consistently.

When asked about the common mistakes students make when doing citations the interviews from lecturers mentioned that; many times the students insert URL’s in the reference list and believe they have provided the sources, the students write full names of the author when doing in-text citation, they sometimes do not include the year of publication, they fail to shorten to *et al.*, when citing a paper with more than two authors, reference section is always missing information (they do not include the year of publication, omit page numbers, journal names, volume and issue numbers if it is a journal article, city of publication and publisher if it is a book), there is too much quoting, students often begin a sentence with a quotation, whilst one lecturer pointed out that the reference list of the students is hardly perfect as they do not want to insert the reference automatically using a computer but they prefer doing it manually resulting in numerous errors. Other findings from lecturers correlates with Rezeki 2018 study, who discovered that in language students often began a paragraph with a quotation or citation, which is not recommended in academic writing, and that they insert too much or little details of sources.

The other lecturer mentioned that most of the times students under reference and fail to paraphrase and summarise the information from sources.

“students seem to be unaware that any claim that is not a common knowledge should be supported by bibliographic evidence”.

“Although our students receive instruction on paraphrasing and summarising these are extremely difficult skills that only a few master, therefore they hardly paraphrase or summarise the content from different sources”.

When asked about the challenges of teaching citation, one lecturer pointed out that there is not enough time to teach citation as it is practical, so students need to do more practice on their own after they are taught in class, which they fail to do as illustrated by the errors reflected on the assignments.

When asked “how best can students be taught referencing?”, one lecturer pointed out that enough time should be given to teaching referencing as it is one of their weaknesses in writing assignments.

Conclusion

It is clearly illustrated in the texts analysed and interviews that indeed there is much to be done to help students to write academically and fit into the discourse community. The texts produced by students clearly show that students do not meet Swales (1990) outlined six characteristics of discourse communities:

- 1) Common public goals: They do not cite properly; they need to be trained before they are given assignments that have in-text citations. They have to be taught the importance and the consequences of not citing sources before they start writing.
- 2) Methods of communicating among members: The CSSU department has to conduct weekly workshops for undergraduates and have some corners at the library specifically for writing skills.
- 3) Participatory communication methods: Group discussions and presentations on writing activities are needed.
- 4) Genres that define the group: More genres from content departments to be shared with the CSSU to develop students. There is need for collaboration amongst lecturers in order to assist students to develop academically.
- 5) A lexicon: Students should use correct lexis for their individual departments. and
- 6) A standard of knowledge needed for membership: There is need for more time to be allocated for writing skills in order to develop students writing skills. (Swales, 471-473).

It is evidenced by the students’ inability to write proper genres, to cite correctly and the ability to differentiate a narrative and an essay or research project, there is no knowledge or little knowledge of what is expected in academic writing. We recommend that apart from the writing clinic which is utilised by Post graduate students, there has to be a section in the library that focusses on developing students to prepare them and to guide them. There has to be collaboration between content lecturers and the department of CSSU. There is need for an induction on writing academically. There is need to research on students’ attitude towards citations and referencing in their assignments.

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