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## Citation Analysis of the Literature Review Sections of Dissertations at M.Phil. Level

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**Abstract:** *The topic of the study conducted is Citation Analysis of Literature Review sections of dissertations at the M.Phil. level in the disciplines of literature and linguistics in English. The sample was comprised of ten theses, five each from literature and linguistics. The purpose of the study was to find out the citation pattern in the text of the LR chapter based on Swales' (1990) work on citations. A mixed method approach was adopted for this purpose, which was contained in both quantitative as well as qualitative analysis of the data. Hence, the data was analyzed, organized and tabulated, and a number of conclusions were made on the basis of the findings that were deduced. The findings suggested that the writers of the sampled theses did not follow sense as was suggested by Swales (1990) in his work. Rather, they just reproduced other people's arguments just for the sake of citations, irrespective of the logic behind various types of citations. The most preferred citation type was integral, while the most preferred reporting verbs were 'say,' 'argue,' 'discuss,' and 'explain.' It was suggested that genre genre-based or analytic-synthetic approach needs to be adopted for teaching academic writing.*

**Key Words:** Citation Analysis, Literature Review, M.Phil. Level, Dissertation, Linguistics, Literature, English

### Introduction

The dawn of discourse analysis as a separate discipline in the eighties and nineties attracted the attention of distinguished linguists, researchers, and language teachers. They focused on communicative functions along with their specificities while putting them into different groups, which are known as genres. A genre, as Swale (2012) argues, is a class of text characterized by a specific communicative function that would produce distinctive structural patterns. These discursive practices are aimed at producing well-defined models for academic texts in order to help the students produce satisfactory results and enhance the quality of their specific genres.

Literature review, as a part genre and a major focus of this study has been an integral part of research papers and academic writings like dissertations. A brief kind of introduction to the literature review (LR) is aimed here. Literature review, according to Knopf (2006), is a "systematic, explicit and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing the existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars, and practitioners." A number of researchers in the fields of natural and physical sciences as well as in social sciences and information technology have worked on this part genre of articles and dissertations having diverse objectives and hypotheses like examining the impact factor of publications, authorship pattern, the problems of citations, its uses, and misuses, through citation analysis and the study of discursive practices. Some of the researchers, like Swales (2010), Charles (2006), and Hyland (1999), focused their studies on dissertations in order to analyze the citation practices, structure of literature, and comparative position of the authors and to inform guide for collection developments. Quite recently, Khan (2013) analyzed citation patterning, which seems to be the first of its kind, particularly in the discipline of humanities and in a non-native context in Pakistan.

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The academic aspect of research dissertations, irrespective of the field, has not been considered properly in Pakistan as far as the functional significance of citations and how the citations are used by the researchers to develop their argument. It is a common observation that researchers working on different projects do not have enough understanding of how to produce a coherent or worthy presenting text with the help of appropriate citations, selecting them from different types. So, this study was aimed at tackling the same problem while making a thorough analysis of the chapter on literature review with a specific focus on citation patterns employed, as well as the use of reporting verbs and preferential behavior of the researchers and writers of the theses.

The significance of this issue under discussion is manifold. Academic discourse, firstly, tends to be an area of much interest, particularly in Pakistan, in the field of arts and humanities. Genre analysis, as part of the discursive practices, specifically in dissertations, is almost new and rare in Pakistan. So, the very focus of this study as on literature review would provide a solid base to the people intending to write their research report and would hopefully improve the quality of dissertation writing while having a pre-planned guideline, in the form of this research, before them. Specifically the study has focused on the types of citations and the choice of reporting verbs. The analysis of citation and phraseology of the arguments as one of the foci seems to be a useful addition to the area of linguistics and research in a way that it can ameliorate the textual and technical aspects of academic writings in a nonnative research environment like Pakistan.

Citation analysis as a part genre was focused on the work undertaken, following the track of the predecessors who investigated academic discourse and took an interest in producing long-lasting models (see Swales, 1990 and 2004). The study was delimited to the analysis of the literature review chapter as a part genre of dissertations. It aimed at finding the current trends of citations quantitatively as well as probing through the utilitarian aspect of citations and appropriateness of the arguments by putting different types of citations. The reporting verbs, as they are used as an essential component of integral citations, have been given special attention in this study to know the qualitative aspect of these practices along with the linguistic competence of the researchers in non-native contexts.

## Objectives

1. To have a clear understanding of the citation practices used in dissertations.
2. To help the prospective researchers in terms of providing them a guideline and a well framed model for writing their respective literature review.

## Hypothesis

1. The functional significance of citation practices is taken for granted by the researchers in a non-native context.

## Research Questions

1. What are the different ways of the use of citations in the dissertations of linguistics and literature in English?
2. How is an argument developed through different types of citations and verb phrases in the Literature Review section?

This study has employed a specific methodology, by adopting a mixed method approach in order to suit the study undertaken and answer the questions raised at the beginning. The tool selected for the study was observation while the data collected was analyzed in two parts. The first part is known as the macro analysis of the sampled texts of literature reviews, as a quantitative appraisal of the citation practices, while the second part was named the microanalysis of the said texts as a qualitative analysis of the thematic units in order to find out the thematic value of citations employed and then theorize about its further implications.

The categories of citations determined and later on analyzed in this study were *integral* and *non-integral*, *reporting* and *non-reporting*, and *in-text* and *indentation* types of citations. It was found that the first-mentioned, like *integral*, *reporting*, and *in-text* quotes of the three pairs, were in preponderance than

their respective counterparts. The majority of the writers opted for a selected number of verbs while a vast number of verbs were touched upon only once by each writer.

To sum up the discussion, a thorough analysis of the sampled theses, submitted to the degree awarding institutions, proved to be a better experience, and the results verified our hypothesized claim that at the macro level, the text of citations seems reasonable but at the micro, there is lack the logic as was supposed for the usage of different types of citations. Similarly, the theses examined have a limited choice vocabulary as far as the use of reporting verbs is concerned, which eventually depends upon the quality of our academic writing. So, the findings of this study will provide food for thought to future researchers, academicians, and linguists.

## Literature Review

The major focus of this section is to go through the related work done by eminent scholars and researchers in the fields of EAP, academic writing, genre analysis, and research-informed innovative activities in the above-mentioned fields.

It is said that approximately one in five of the world's population now speaks English with enough proficiency and competence (Crystal, 2003), and English is now rapidly growing as the world's predominant language of research and academic writing. For instance, the number of research articles, dissertations, and theses produced in various fields of sciences and humanities is manifold. More than 90% of the journal literature in scientific and non-scientific domains is printed in English, and the most prestigious and highly cited journals are in English. Scholars, students, and researchers around the world need to gain proficiency in the conventions of English-language academic discourses to have access to updated information and to grow in their careers or to successfully accomplish their learning endeavors.

Literature reviews have been a tradition in research and scholarship for a long. According to the definition by Cooper (1988), literature tends to describe, summarize, clarify, evaluate, and integrate the content of primary reports (Cooper, 1998, pp. 107). The definition of a research literature review, according to Knopf (2006), is that it is a systematic, explicit, and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing the existing body of research works and knowledge produced by researchers, scholars, and practitioners in the field of the particular discipline.

As citations are considered an integral part of literature review sections, specifically, the works done in this area need to be mentioned for further elaboration. In a study of the corpus of dissertations written in botany, Thompson (2006) categorized all instances of citation by native speakers. He investigated the ways in which the authors position themselves. In the three sections, i.e., introduction, literature review, and discussion sections, the writers tend to use non-integral citation types. In doing so, the focus was on information rather than on people (Thompson, 2006). Moreover, where the comparison of studies was made, the writers integrated the names of previous researchers into the syntax (Thompson, 2006).

For studying the citation practices in the dissertations of the masters' students by L2 English writers, Thompson's coding framework was adapted by Petrić (2007). The results show that at the master's level, citations were used for knowledge display, whereas the students of higher grades used citations for a wider range of functions.

In a study, Charles (2006) analyzed "research reports" reporting clauses used for reference to previous studies). He found a higher frequency of integral citations than were explored analysis of research articles by Hyland (2002). After the analysis of the findings, he explained, it was because the integral citation is part of a more extended discussion of a reference, which is only possible in a thesis because there is more space to give explanations as compared to a journal article.

Hyland (1999) investigated citations in 80 articles from different fields and found the variation in citation practices across disciplines. The social science and humanities used more citations than science and engineering. He suggested that this is because of the differences in epistemological as well as social conventions. However, the use of integral structures in the four Humanities and Social Science disciplines was much greater as compared to the Science and Engineering disciplines. He also mentioned that the writers in the disciplines of science and engineering favored more neutral verbs such as *report*, *use*, and



develop, and the writers in the discipline of humanities while social science favored more tentative verbs such as 'suggest,' 'claim,' and 'argue.'

The number of researchers who analyzed citations from the linguistic point of view is quite uncommon. One can call it a circle of few as only a limited number of names come to the surface when it comes to the citation analysis of the work done in the disciplines of soft sciences. They are ChandraKumar & Sritharan (2003), who examined the 'referencing pattern among the Sanskrit researchers. Vijay Kumar (2010) analyzed the citations in Ph.D theses in English literature, Swales (2010) and Kumar & Mahajan (2018) all focused on citation practices in social science dissertations and articles.

This is perhaps unfortunate since a large and increasing number of non-native students are studying social science subjects through the medium of English (Holmes, 1995). There is, therefore, a pedagogical rationale for extending the genre analysis of thesis and dissertations into the social sciences and humanities. Holmes (1995) argues that further justification for studying genre analysis is that this will enable us to determine how far the patterns observed by the above-mentioned scholars in the natural and information sciences are generalizable to all written academic discourse. Despite all these efforts, the gap that I feel and the most visible is the analysis of citations in the thesis of English literature and linguistics submitted by the students in a nonnative, Pakistani context. One may raise this question that research is not a layman's job and state-owned or Private universities provide ample opportunities for learning how to conduct research along with the services of HEC-approved professors who design and launch a number of research-oriented EAP courses. Unfortunately, as we know, EAP courses rarely provide enough time to meet all identified needs or adequate time to collect and analyze needs data, which means that the professors typically write their courses on the basis of incomplete information.

The aim of this study is to help the students identify disciplinary contexts rhetorically (Devitt, Bawarshi, & Reiff, 2003) as well as negotiate the boundaries, values and expectations of the disciplines in which they are writing. The study also aims to help students uncover the genre knowledge that is required of them to succeed in their particular academic setting. Lastly, literature review is but one of many facets of the research process that postgraduate students need to master. Applying corpus analysis to the text of the literature review, it was targeted to analyze the verb phrases frequently used by the writers.

## Methodology

This study has employed a specific methodology, containing a mixed method approach in order to suit the study undertaken and answer the questions raised at the beginning. Swales' (1990) work on Citations has been chosen as a theoretical framework for this study. The area I have selected is genre analysis of literature review sections of M.Phil. (English) theses submitted to the universities in Islamabad, particularly to Air University and NUML Islamabad. Disciplines selected for this purpose were linguistics and literature in English, which are ten in number, equally from both the disciplines (linguistics and literature in English). The procedure for taking samples was random and purposive. The tool selected for the study was observation while the data collected was analyzed in two parts. The first part, known as the macro analysis, is comprised of a quantitative analysis of the sampled texts of literature reviews as a quantitative appraisal of citations, while the second part was named the microanalysis of the said texts as a qualitative analysis of the thematic units in order to find out the functional or contextual value of citations employed and then theorized about its further implications.

## Results and Discussion

Owing to the significance of this section, it is highly imperative to organize the text and other data material into a logical sequence in order to depict a clear picture of the issue under discussion. The types of citations that were analyzed are *Integral*, *Non-Integral Reporting*, *Non-Reporting*, *In-text quotes*, and *Indentations*. Firstly, an overview of the citation types, as chosen by the writers in their theses, is going to be presented quantitatively. Secondly, the reporting verbs, as used by these writers, make the concluding part of the quantitative analysis. In the second part of this section, the functional value of the citing texts was analyzed qualitatively. The chosen types were analyzed in pairs, i.e., *Integral and Non-Integral*, *Reporting and Non-Reporting*, *In-text Quotes*, and *Indentations*.

**Table 1***Analysis of integral and non-integral citations*

Types of Citations	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	Total	%
Integral	102	105	13	51	20	63	62	48	48	23	535	59.70
Non Integral	1	96	83	4	10	90	4	11	3	59	361	40.29
Total	103	201	96	55	30	153	66	59	51	82	896	100

Table 1 is specified for the comparative analysis of Integral and Non-Integral citations. It shows that out of 896 citations belonging to these two categories only, the frequency count of Integral citations is fairly higher than its counterpart, Non-Integral citations. This indicates another fact related to the choice of the writer and, secondly, the style of the writer, whether he opts for an Integral or Non-Integral type of citation, as it is obvious in the case of T1, whose writer has made the use of Integral citations, i.e., 102 out of 103, very often and frequent. While contrary to this, some of the writers have opted for Non-Integral as T3 with 83 out of 96, T6 with 90 out of 153, and T10 with 59 out of 82 as compared to the use of Integral citation. Another important point about citations is that some writers come with a very limited number of citations, as T4 with 55, T5 with only 30, T7 with 66, T8 with 59, and T9 with 51 as compared to T1 with 103, T2 with 201, T3 with 96, T6 with 153 and T10 with 82 counts of citations in total.

**Table 2***Analysis of reporting and non-reporting citations*

Types of Citations	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	Total	%
Reporting	83	73	12	36	20	52	42	42	41	15	406	76.74
Non Reporting	15	32	Nil	13	10	16	20	7	6	4	123	23.25
Total	98	105	12	49	30	68	62	49	47	19	529	100

Table No. 2 is specified for the quantitative comparison of Reporting and Non-Reporting types of citations. To sort out the data it is worth mentioning that almost all the writers have opted for the use of Reporting citations ranging from a frequency count of 12 to 83 as compared to that of Non-Reporting, ranging from 4 to 15 only. The cumulative figure for both types of citations in all the theses is 529 wherein Reporting citations are 406 and Non-Reporting citations are 123 only, in total.

Furthermore, the use of these two types of citations differs from writer to writer as some of the writers have used these citations quite less in number as compared to others. For example, the writers of T3, T5, and T10 employed these citations, and their individual and respective frequency counts are 12, 30, and 19. While the writers of T1 with 98, T2 with 105, T4 with 49, T6 with 62, T8 with 49, and T9 with 47 counts of citations have made fairly enough use of this kind of citation.

**Table 3***Analysis of in-text quotes and indentations*

Types of Citations	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	Total	%
In text Quotes	40	48	10	30	29	49	6	34	11	21	274	79.88
Indentations	51	6	12	2	1	2	2	17	Nil	2	95	27.69
Total	91	54	22	32	30	51	8	51	11	23	343	100

Table 3 is specified for the two types of quotations, namely, In-text quotes and Indentations. As far as the frequency count is concerned, this table displays the same picture as was examined in the previous table of Reporting and Non-Reporting citations, except T1 with 51 against 40 and T3 with 12 against 10. Majority of the writers have used In-text quotes like T2 for 48 times, T4 for 30, T5 for 29, T6 for 49, T8 for 34, T9 for 11, and T10 for 21 times against 6, 2, 1, 2, 2, 17, 0, and 2 times of Indentations respectively. Similarly, the collective frequency distribution of In-text quotations is far higher, i.e., 79.88%, than 27.69% of Indentations. Further to mention, the range of quotations is from 8 to 91. So, it can be concluded here that this category of citations followed the same pattern as was observed in the above-mentioned two other



categories of citations, like integral citations against nonintegral and Reporting type of citations against Non-Reporting citations, where all the first three in the respective pairs are in preponderance against the counterparts. These findings demonstrate another fact related to the development of an argument while using different types of citations. It shows that the writers just reproduce the ideas of other researchers irrespective of the essential significance of the type of citation. The voice of the researcher is up to a minimum and lacking in the argument.

**Table 4**

*Reporting verbs with a frequency distribution of 21 and Above*

Types of Verbs	%	Types of Verbs	%
Says	29.09	Discuss	22.72
Argue	26.36	Explain	21.81

Table 4 presents the form of verbs used for reporting citations or other people's arguments in order to validate ones, own point of view. This table shows those verbs that were used very frequently by the writers of the sample theses in their part-genre of Literature Review. The table shows that the majority of the writers used the verb say or said only once in their reporting citations. Only three of them, T2, T3, and T10, did not use this verb. The total frequency count of this verb is 32, the highest, and it is 29.09% of the total types of verbs used in this category of frequency distribution from 21 and above. The second highest use of the verb is "Argue." Its use is 26.36% of the total. Then, the remaining verbs like "Discuss" and "Explain" are used with 22.72% and 21.81% frequency counts, respectively. The range of using these verbs among the writers of the sample in their LR chapters is from Zero to 39. So, the range of frequency distribution is quite wide.

**Table 5**

*Reporting verbs with a frequency distribution of 11 to 20*

Types of Verbs	%	Types of Verbs	%
Describe	18.51	Suggest	12.96
Quote	18.51	Writes	12.03
Defines	13.88	States	11.11
Observes	12.96		

The present table exhibits those verbs that were used by the writers of my sample within the range of 11 to 20, counting these individually in the LR chapters of all ten theses. The cumulative figure for all these verbs used is 108. The most frequently used among these are the terms "Describe" and "Quote," having each the highest frequency count, i.e., 20, with a frequency distribution percentage of 18.51. The term define was used 15 times with a 13.88 percent frequency distribution. In the same sequence, "observe" and "suggest" were used 14 times each, which is 12.96% each. Lastly, the verbs "write" and "state" were mentioned 13 and 12 times, respectively, which are 12.03% and 11.11%, respectively. As far as individual frequency of the use of these verbs is concerned, the writer of T1 made the highest score in using the mentioned verbs in the table, while the writer of T5 made the lowest score as he used the verb "describe" only once in the LR chapter.

**Table 6**

*Reporting verbs with a frequency distribution of 2 to 10*

Types of Verbs	%	Types of Verbs	%	Types of Verbs	%	Types of Verbs	%
Give	5.18	Records	2.07	Presents	1.03	Explore	1.03
Talks	4.66	Points to	2.07	Remark	1.03	Signify	1.03
Mention	3.62	Recommend	2.07	Speaks	1.03	Insist	1.03
Cite	3.10	Investigate	2.07	Proposed	1.03	Accepted	1.03
Show	3.10	Calls	1.55	Finds	1.03	Demonstrate	1.03
Contents	3.10	Tells	1.55	Introduce	1.03	Touched upon	1.03

Types of Verbs	%	Types of Verbs	%	Types of Verbs	%	Types of Verbs	%
Refers	3.10	Asserts	1.55	Views	1.03	Total	100
Illustrate	3.10	Consider	1.03	Opposed	1.03	Explore	1.03
Commented	2.59	Conclude	1.03	Proved	1.03	Portrays	1.03
Point out	2.59	Examined	1.03	Claim	1.03		
Highlights	2.59	Elaborate	1.03	Emphasize	1.03		

Table 6 mentions the verbs which come within the range of 2 to 10 frequency count. The verbs which were used within the range of 10 to 3 frequency count are considered fairly common in academic writings, particularly in Pakistan, a non native country. These verbs are “Give,” “talk,” “mention,” “cite,” “show,” “contends,” “illustrate,” “comment,” “point,” “highlight,” “record,” “points to,” “investigate,” “call,” and “assert.” The verbs with two frequency counts are also very common in use, like “Consider,” “Conclude,” “Examined,” “Elaborate,” “Presents,” “Remark,” “Speaks,” “Portrays,” and “Proposed” but the present study has found them with next to lowest percentage of frequency distribution in all the units of the selected sample which is further debatable a point. The rest of the verbs were used only once across the whole sample and these have the least frequency distribution percentage, i.e. 0.51%. So, these verbs are counted as the rarest out of all the reporting verbs used in the study sample. So, it is proved that the nonnative researchers circle around a limited number of reporting verbs in their works while the area is quite rich, having ample amounts as well as a variety of such verbs. It shows the stereotype trend on the part of the students and researchers in a nonnative context.

### Qualitative Analysis of Citations

Citation is the source of acknowledging not only the works done by other researchers but, at the same time, it acknowledges the work where the citation is used to augment one’s argument. The significance of citations in the thesis and other research papers tends to pay homage to pioneers, give credit for related work (homage to peers), provide background reading as well as substantiate one’s claims (Smith, 1981). She also stated that citation at this level was used basically for knowledge display but that higher-grade students used citations for a wider range of functions in order to support the researcher’s line of thought.

The mode of citations preferred by different writers of the sampled theses is the central focus of this part of the study. The categories of citations determined and later on analyzed in this study were integral and non-integral, reported and non-reported, and in-text and indentation types of citations. Some of the researchers, though they used all the categories as determined for this study, opted for one in the pairs more than the others. The same trend was observed by Charles (2006) in thesis citations and by Hyland (2002) in his analysis of research articles, and both of them found much higher levels of integral citations than non-integral citations, although this ratio was higher in these than in the articles. The reasons might be many in number, but the more obvious one could be the use of extended and continuous elaboration (Swales, 1990) of the phenomenon which asks for integral citations as against non-integral ones. However, the findings of this study demonstrate that the researchers did not understand the logic behind these types of citations. To elaborate further, integral citations need the voice of the writers to explain further their point of view. They just needed citations irrespective of the functional value of the different citations. They only reproduced and recorded others' ideas.

As far as the present study is concerned, it was observed that the frequency count of integral citations, reporting citations, and intext quotes was more in number than the counterparts. The reason behind this might be the same as mentioned earlier as the choice for extended elaboration. Hyland (1999) has shown how citation practices vary across disciplines and suggests that the social science and humanities writers used more citations than the science and engineering writers. The examples of the three types are as under:

- The link between language and race is made clear by Abbas (2013) when he said....(Thesis 2, p.13)
- There is no transparent relation of text to reality.... “relation to the significance and meaning \_manifesting their local, contextual and arbitrary nature” (Bunton, 2002)....(Thesis 4, p.21)
- Bitchener (2010a) explains that the latest technology.....(Thesis 6, p.12)
- According to Swain33, students’ use of L1 enables them to develop strategies to carry out tasks in the target language..... (Thesis 7,p.36)



- (e) Brett (1994) defines the term ‘variety’ as “register of language use such as English in banking, English in medicine, English in academic setting....” (Thesis 9, p.21)
- (f) The social and intellectual circles of England were deliberately adding gothic touches to their homes: Men like A.W. Pugin and writer John Ruskin (*The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 1849) claim that since the ages, architecture was water-shed in human achievement, and Gothic architecture represented perfect spiritual and artistic values. (Ross, 2023).

The above-mentioned points (a) and (b) are examples of integral and non-integral citations, respectively. In point (a), the author has been mentioned as part of the sentence, while in point (b), the author does not make a part of it. Points (c) and (d) are examples of reporting and non-reporting types of citations as the underlined term ‘explains’ is a reporting verb while the same is missing in point (d). Likewise, the rest two types of citations are ‘In-text quotes’ and Indentations, which have been mentioned in points (e) and (f). The categories mentioning different citations most of the time overlap as a category may bear the features of both integral and reporting or integral and non-reporting; while sometimes, integral and indentations or reporting and quoted within the text or given as indentation.

### Analysis of Reporting Verbs

Reporting verbs have been divided in to three groups according to their frequency distribution. It was noticed that some of the verbs were employed more frequently with more than 21 frequency counts each. These verbs were ‘say,’ ‘argue,’ ‘discuss,’ and ‘explain,’ which are the most commonly used verbs favored mostly by the disciplines of humanities and social sciences. These verbs, as suggested by Swales (1990), are known as tentative verbs as against neutral verbs like ‘report,’ ‘develop,’ and ‘use’ which are usually found in the disciplines of science and engineering.

Another group is comprised of those verbs that were used within the range below the above-mentioned verbs, with varying degrees from ten to twenty. The cumulative figure for all these verbs used was more than a hundred, depending on the number of verbs used. The most frequently used among these were the terms ‘Describe’ and ‘Quote’ having each the highest frequency count. The terms ‘define,’ ‘observe,’ ‘suggest,’ ‘write,’ and ‘state’ were verbs used more than a dozen times and were used 15 times with a 13.88 percent frequency distribution. As far as the individual researchers are concerned, some of the writers used these verbs more frequently with the highest score, while others used some of these verbs only once. For example, the writer of T1 made the highest score in using the mentioned verbs in the table while the writer of T5 made the lowest score as he used the verb “describe” only once in the LR chapter.

Mention further the verbs that come within the range of one to ten frequency counts were more than a hundred as far as their variety is concerned. These were the types of verbs that were used ten times, while on the other hand, there was a verb that was used once only. So, still, there were some verbs that are considered fairly common in academic writings. These verbs are “Give,” “talk,” “mention,” “cite,” “show,” “contends,” “illustrate,” “comment,” “point,” “highlight,” “record,” “points to,” “investigate,” “call,” and “asserts.” The verbs that were used only twice within the sampled text are also very common in use, like “Consider,” “Conclude,” “Examined,” “Elaborate,” “Presents,” “Remark,” “Speaks,” “Portrays,” and “Proposed” but the present study has found them with next to lowest percentage of frequency distribution in all the units of the selected sample. The rest of the verbs were used only once across the whole sample and these have the least frequency distribution percentage. So, these verbs are counted as the rarest out of all the reporting verbs used in the study sample.

### Conclusion

To develop an understanding of the genre of dissertations in the disciplines of linguistics and literature in English was the aim of this study. Citations, being a compulsory component of the thesis, were aimed to be understood, particularly at the M.Phil. level. While doing this, a number of questions came to the surface. For instance, what types of citation practices are employed in academic writing? How is argument developed through preferring different types of citations and verb phrases in the Literature Review section?

The categories of citations determined and later on analyzed in this study were *Integral and Non-Integral*, *Reporting and Non-Reporting*, and *In-text and Indentation* types of citations. Some of the



researchers, though they used all the categories as determined for this study, opted for one in the pairs more than the others. The same trend was observed by Charles (2006) in thesis citations and by Hyland (2002) in his analysis of research articles, and both of them found much higher levels of integral citations than non-integral citations, although this ratio was higher in these than in the articles. This study added another fact related to the mentioned findings by Charles (2006) and Hyland (2002) that not only Integral citations but also the other categories as Reporting citations and In-text quotes, were found within a higher frequency number than their counterparts. The logic behind this is the extended elaboration of the phenomenon (Swales,1990), which should have been done through the formerly mentioned categories. Contrary to this, the writers did not add their voice as much as to elaborate their point. They just used citations irrespective of the functional value of the different types of citations they incorporated in their arguments.

The use of Reporting verbs in presenting other people's views as citations was the last attempted category of this study, and it was observed that a variety of such verbs were employed for this purpose. Nonetheless, the majority of the writers opted for a selected number of verbs, while a vast number of verbs were touched upon only once by some writers or once or twice only in the combined text of the sampled theses. So, this very finding tells upon stereotype trend on the part of the writers and the quality of the text as far as the use of reporting verbs is concerned.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the present study, it is hereby recommended that the area of academic writing needs much attention on the part of academicians and the like people at the helm of affairs. To this end, the following mentioned points need due consideration:

- This is proposed here, for the attention of the scholars and professors who are already engaged in supervising research students, that an analytic-synthetic approach (Shehzad, 2005; Kwan, 2006; Samraj, 2008) be applied for the purpose of teaching academic genres. Swales and Feak (2004) suggest the same, as the knowledge gained from the tasks becomes a resource for the students to help them write appropriate English academic prose.
- Finally, this is recommended here that academic writing needs to be taught and practiced as a core subject, having at least six credit hours to the students at M.Phil. and PhD level.

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