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Qualitative Study on Narrative and Parenthetical Context-Based Multiple In-text References: A Systematic Review of In-text Citations

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Abstract

Clear and concise presentation of facts and findings, in well-packaged and systematic way using the approved standards, is one of the concerns of scholars; and, facts and findings packaged in this manner used in scholarly publication for researchers is called academic writing. One element which distinguishes academic writing from other forms of writing, apart from being evidenced-based, is reference and referencing which give the work genuineness. Many researchers, especially novice mistake one for the other between reference and referencing. Referencing is more technical than reference. Novice researchers often acknowledge sources imperfectly, especially when citing different ideas from different sources embedded within a sentence. This paper reviews the distinction between the two concepts, and provides illustrations of the science of acknowledging sources for embedded ideas with multiple sources, paying special attention to all technicalities. Reference is a detailed list of sources cited within that comes at the end of the work. Referencing is the science of how sources from different works are acknowledged within the work. There are two approaches of referencing: sentence-inclusion (narrative or integral) citation and sentence-exclusion (parenthetical or non-integral) in-text citation. Each of the approaches has some rules in accordance with the number of authors, and why to cite. Therefore, reference and referencing are two distinct concepts. Hence, researchers have a choice to select from the different styles and should conform to their rules in both in-text citations and end-of-list references.

Keyword: Bibliography, Citation, In-text citation, Reference, Referencing,

Introduction

Academic writing is a well-scripted work that presents research discovery (new ideas, methods, and/or principles) to contribute to the existing body of knowledge (Jayawardane, 2007). It shows the author's mastery of a particular field of research by following a formal style of expression of findings. In such writing, the author is expected to be formal, thoughtful, meticulous, objective, and above all critical. To maintain these qualities, members of the academia ought to be exposed to the nitty-gritty of writing quality academic work. One of the most important elements in academic writing is the avoidance of plagiarism (Bašić, Kružić, Jerković, Buljan, & Marušić, 2019). Plagiarism is an act of presenting a scholar's work without giving credit to the source (Bašić et al., 2019). This act is a serious crime (Agrawal, 2020) and is considered an act of thievery (Maina, Maina, & Jauro, 2014). Thus, students and novice writers should be exposed to its dangers and methods of avoiding it. A writer will be caught up with the new technologies, such as Plagiarism Checker, Turnitin, etc. One of the methods of reducing plagiarism is proper citation (acknowledgement) of sources and inclusion of all cited sources in the end-list references. Proper citation is a way of adhering to the rules of acknowledging evidences for sources of ideas and claims in line with convention of a particular style. Proper citation requires a mastery of the concept (reference and referencing) and its science (how and when to cite). Many researchers first think of an end-of-list reference as the only reference required in academic work – assignments, course projects, and final-year projects (Saeed, Aamir, & Ramzan, 2011). This perception may be due to the inability to distinguish reference and referencing in a research field (Bašić et al., 2019). Reference, on the one hand, is a detailed description (at the end of the work) of the sources of ideas that one gives credit to under a section called 'References' (Elgin, 1983). Researchers sometimes use a bibliography instead. Like reference, the bibliography list includes sources relevant to the work and important for the readers but are not necessarily cited in the work. On the other hand, referencing is the acknowledgement of others' ideas within your main work. It is the provision of a source of reference in the main body of the work, which must be captured in detail at the end-list reference at the end of the work. That is why in academic writing, writers are expected to cite (acknowledge) sources



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for any claim or authoritative ideas by way of supporting assertions and claims. And, what has been cited must be captured in the end-list reference, otherwise, it will amount to poor scholarship. Referencing is used interchangeably with citation, in-text citation, and within-text citation (Elgin, 1983). For many researchers, especially students, the concepts (reference and referencing) seem to be confusing. For this reason, this paper discusses the concepts using simple illustrations to x-ray their distinction. In addition to this, skilful citation for embedded ideas presented in a sentence as well as understanding proper citation using punctuations; when and where to provide sources, are explicitly discussed.

Reference

To Elgin (1983), a reference is a collection of a list of sources cited throughout the research that appears at the end of a research work. The reference entry incorporates details of the sources to aid in searching for further reading. The details differ according to the type of research cited (journal articles, books, conference proceedings, reports, newspapers, magazine, and other online sources such as videos) (Miller, 2016). The detailed elements contained in the reference list (depending on the style of reference) include the author's name (the author could be single or multiple); date (date of publication and sometimes retrieval date); title; and, source (database information) (White, 1991). It is important to study the proper use of punctuation marks in citation, which tells which style is employed. For more detailed description, please, study the manual of the individual style. Note that there are about 495 different styles of reference in use (Bradley, Noble, & Hendricks, 2020). Notable among these styles are: American Psychological Association (APA), Modern Language Association (MLA), Numbered System, Harvard Style, Vancouver Style, Chicago System, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE Style), British Medical Journal (BMJ), Modern Humanities Research Association (MHRA Style), and Oxford Standard for Citation of Legal Authorities (OSCOLA) for law (Pandey et al., 2020). In this review, all examples and illustrations are taken from the popular and common referencing style, The APA. This style seems common and popular among scholars. The table below provides few information about the common reference styles in use for easy recall:

Table 1: *List of Common Reference Styles with Discipline they are associated with*

Reference Style	Discipline
APA	This is used in the fields of education, psychology, and sciences.
MLA	Used in the field of Humanities.
Chicago System	This is mostly used by businesses, historians, and those in the fine arts industry.
The Numbered System	This system is commonly used in the fields of engineering and chemistry.
IEEE	This style is used in the field of electronics and other related disciplines.
BMJ	This system is used by medical trade journals.
The Harvard	This style is used in various fields such as Biochemistry, Biology, Economics, Environment, and Health Sciences, among others.
The Vancouver	This style is mostly used in the fields of medical sciences, biology, and biochemistry.
OSCOLA	This system is commonly used in the field of law.

Note: From APA Manual 2007.

Referencing

What distinguishes academic writing from most writings is the referencing (in-text citation/within-the-text citation), henceforth, citation. Citation is an act of acknowledging sources within the text. Any assertion in academic work is required to be provided with a source to support it. There are two ways to cite sources within the main body of work: narrative citation (or sentence inclusion) and parenthetical citation (sentence exclusion) (Nazir et al., 2020). These are considered the two types of in-text citations.

Sentence Inclusion In-Text Citation

Sentence inclusion citation is a citation that begins a sentence. It is when a writer provides a source to any assertion within the main body of the work starting with the source as part of the narration (Boyack, van Eck, Colavizza, & Waltman, 2018) (author's surname and only date in bracket). That is why it is called a narrative citation. For instance: "Nasiri (2012) observes that the use of hedging would be determined by the writer's background". The citation 'Nasiri (2012) ...' is typical of a sentence inclusion in-text citation. It is provided by the writer to support that the assertion is from the source cited. Often, such citation is to indicate that a new idea or explanation is presented. It opens with an indicating phrase, for example, 'According to Nasiri (2012) ...'; 'In his study, Nasiri (2012) ...'; or without any phrase such as in the example



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above, 'Nasir (2012) ...'. These phrases are followed by verbs such as define, state, say, explain, assert, etc. Note that when more than one source is provided, it should be separated by a semicolon and no use of conjunction: either 'and' or the ampersand '&'. This formality (the use of semicolons to separate more than one source) is applicable in both narrative and parenthetical citations, as illustrated below:

According to Galti (2017); Ahmed (2020); Umar (2012) who assert that ... Or, In their separate studies, Babikkoi and Galti (2016); Galti (2017); Hyland (1996) concluded that

Note: The primary conjunction 'and' can be used when acknowledging sources with more than one author as in the second example above 'Babikkoi and Galti (2016)'. The use of ampersand '&' is found in sentence exclusion citation, examples of which will be given later

Sentence Exclusion In-Text Citation

Sentence exclusion in-text citation is an acknowledgement of source that occurs end of an idea (Putnam & Phelps, 2017). The detail of the source is packaged in parenthesis marking the end of idea. This is why it is called a parenthetical citation. For example: "Hedges in research articles might create a good relationship between the writer and his target audience (Galti, 2016). Some language learners dodge speaking tasks and assessments, especially when it is face-face, except it is unavoidably necessary (Cui, 2011). Such citation is mostly to report findings or supply more information as can be seen above. This means, when the position of the scholar is the focus of the reporting, the parenthetical citation is applicable. Unlike in the end-list reference, the within-text citation entry, often, appears to be the same for article papers, textbooks, reports and so on, except for a few referencing styles. A few styles such as Vancouver (for Medicine), Numbered (for generic), and BMJ (for medicine) used numbering instead (Stevens & Duque, 2019). Importantly, writers cite not the authors of the work, but most times, the idea (Bornmann & Daniel, 2008). It is a convention to acknowledge others' ideas in a research work. Not only convention to cite but a moral obligation whenever a writer makes an authoritative statement in a research work, the writer must and ought to provide a source (cite where the idea is gotten). One can cite as many sources as possible for an idea as one can cite only one source for an idea. This phenomenon is referred in the circle of academics as Multiple In-text References (Crawley & Stevenson, 1990). Consider the two examples provided below:

- i. Music plays an important role in vocabulary retention (Chi, 2015; Galti, 2016; Hyland, 2012; Oxford and John, 2012; Priyatmojo, 2009).
- ii. Young language learners enjoy learning vocabulary without fear of evaluation (Galti, 2018).
- iii. ... is quite prevalent in the study population, diabetes (Alisjhbana, et al., 2006) alcohol consumption (Lonnroth, et al., 2008), indoor air pollution (Kolappan & Subramani, 2009; Pokhrel et al., 2010), ... which are features that is common across the study area, or a combination of a host of these factors.

In example I, there are five sources despite presenting a single idea. This indicates that all five sources have presented the same idea in their separate and independent research works. In example ii, the idea is attributed to only one source. A skilful writer can be identified by his ability to provide independent sources for different ideas embedded in a single sentence showcasing the writer's competence in academic writing. For example:

- iv. ... suggestopedia method is considered one of the effective methods for teaching language vocabulary (Priyatmojo, 2009) which could accelerate learning (Lozanov, 1988).
- v. ... what teachers present as input should allow for learners to process through negotiation for meaning (Thuraisingam, 2001) and modification as interaction (Gass & Varonis, 1994) and then the development of intake for production (Fang, 2010).

From example iii, the writer's skilful use of the two independent sources for two different ideas embedded in sentence iii seems to be superb and scholarly. Though, two different papers are conjointly used to support interrelated ideas complementarily in the writer's work. This means that Priyatmojo presented the first part of the sentence while Lozanov concluded the second part of the sentence. In example iv, the writer tactfully shows his mastery of the research topic and how vast he read about it. Here, three independent ideas are embedded in a single sentence but attributed each claim in the sentence to its original researcher. Notice that the focal idea in the sentence is the statement: 'What teacher presents as input should allow for (sic) learners to process through...', (a) negotiation for meaning, according to (Thuraisingam, 2001); (b) modification as interaction, according to (Gass & Varonis, 1994); and, (c) development of intake for production, according to (Fang, 2010). Each of the authors sees the process of learning input in different ways. But, the writer skillfully



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embedded the whole ideas after critical analysis of each and presented in a single sentence. Unfortunately, most novice writers, especially students, provide improper citations when a chunk of ideas are culled from different and independent sources. For instance, the following has different possible interpretations:

vi. ... suggestopedia method is considered one of the effective methods for teaching language vocabulary which could accelerate learning (Lozanov, 1988; Priyatmojo, 2009).

Example v. has been wrongly cited for the following reasons. The presupposition of the sentence states that both the authors agreed on the two ideas 'effectiveness of suggestopedia and accelerates learning', which is not true. By so doing, one is attributing ideas not stated by an author. This is also dishonesty in academic writing (Chanock, 2008; Hyland, 1999; Moten, 2014). Novice writers make such presentations of in-text citations on embedded ideas for lack of know-how about proper citation. There is a need for a wider study about referencing and skilful use of the citation in general. Writers should understand when and where to cite in their writing. In the traditional belief, citation is only done in the literature review section. Citations should and ought to be in every section of your work. What writers cite is claim irrespective of section where the claim occurs. This shows scholarship and mastery of research area. Most novice writers do not scale through plagiarism if sources are not acknowledged for every claim irrespective of section. Besides the literature review section, this paper provides instances where sources are required to be acknowledged in introduction, methodology, discussion, and conclusion sections. Instances where sources must be acknowledged in the introduction (background) section is when a writer wants to announcing importance of research or generalized a topic to establish a boundary, the writer may put, for example: (i) Recent researches have shown that there is spade of interest in hording beans in Northern Nigeria (Ahmed, 2022). (ii) Discovering medicine that cures malaria is of great concern in African sub-region (Musa, 2021). (iii) The concept of infixation as a recognized word formation process in English is still a debatable among linguists (Ahmed, 2020; Galti, 2021). Or, when a writer wants to establish a gap to be filled by counter claiming, indicating gap, raising question, or continuing a tradition, then source is required to be acknowledged. For example: (i) Ndimele (2003) asserted that infix is not recognised in the morphology of English; however, there are words of English that accommodate infix for plural formation, one of which is sponsful (see Ahmed & Galti, 2021). (ii) Earlier studies revealed that semantic effect for multiple negative prefixes.

In methodology section, where there the need arises for supporting a claim source must be provided. Here, the claims could be relating to use of a method of data collection, analysis, or sampling technique, design etc. such instances can be found in the following instances: (i) The instrument used for data collection is the modified inventory for language anxiety designed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). (ii) The proximate analysis was performed by Thermogravimetric analysis based on the procedure described (Donahue & Rais, (2009).

In the former example, the writer supports his use of instrument by providing source that shows its origin, probably to showcase the reliability of the instrument. In the later, a science method was adopted in the experiment where the writer supports his claim for the use of the method with a source.

In discussion section, writers acknowledge sources to support their findings and results. This is to indicate that the result and findings of the research are still valid and fertile. For example: (i) The result shows that learners of English as L2 attach *un-* as common negative prefix to adjectives whose negative prefixes are uncommon. This finding agrees with the assertion of Dzuganova (2006). (ii) It can be seen that the sample G (75%w/v) conforms to that of polyvincl acetate having standard specific gravity of 1.19 (Rodriguez et al., 2003).

In conclusion section, a writer can provide sources to indicate that he is not alone in making such deduction (logical ending). As such, sources are use in making your conclusion strong and relevant. Although, citations are not necessary in the conclusion section because they are your own findings, explanations, and interpretations. However, few examples are illustrated below: (i) The paper concludes that novice writers find it difficult to cloud their claims with hedging. This agreed with what Salager Meyer (2006) examined in her study.



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Note: in conclusion section, citation of sources seems to be rare as many writers draw their conclusion with authority. Experts recommend use of hedging for claims to avoid open criticism even when evidence is provided (Galti et al, 2016), to increase credibility of claims (Elif Tokdemir Demirel, 2019).

Conclusion

Based on the explanative discussions in this paper, academic writing is an art of presenting research ideas to particular discourse community in conformity to the science of writing academic text involving in-text citation. In-text citation is a systematic way to acknowledge sources for quotation and paraphrasing ideas of others in research work. In-text citation is used interchangeably with citation, within-the-text citation, or referencing. There are two types of citation – sentence inclusion and sentence exclusion. Sentence inclusion citation is a kind that begins an idea. Sentence exclusion is a kind that ends an idea. Referencing is different from reference which is concerned with the list of sources with details (database information) at the end of the research work. The reference entries are different from the entries of referencing. Such entries in reference is based on the individual style adopted. There are about 495 referencing styles in academic field. For appropriate citation within a text, writers can cite more than single author (one author) or single source (one article paper) within a sentence where different ideas are embedded differently – this is called Multiple In-text References (MIR). The MIR shows expertise of the writer. The paper also revealed that appropriate use punctuation in research shows mastery. Provision of sources for claims comes in all the rhetorical sections of a research, except for conclusion section which is uncommon.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, the following recommendations are forth put to better the academic writing of scholars in line with the best practices, especially writings of novice.

- i. Departments of faculties should organise seminars on reference and referencing to young scholars.
- ii. Another seamless way to master the art is to access referencing software such as Mendeley, Endnote to make our writing more current and professional.
- iii. Scholars should pay special attention to the concept of multiple in-text references to restraint from plagiarism.

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