Analysis of Citation Verbs in EFL Academic Writing: The Case Study of Dissertations and Theses at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

This study was analytical account of EFL postgraduate learners' use of verbs in citing other scholars in their own writing. Particular interest was differing extents of these verbs as categorised by Myer (1997), namely; verbs representing statement of scholarly writing, verbs communicating knowledge of scholarly writing, and verbs denoting cognition of scholarly writing, each of which has subcategories. To achieve this 40 postgraduate dissertations and theses by University of Dar es Salaam students were purposively selected. From these citation verbs from the introduction and literature review chapters were posted to the Microsoft excel sheets and frequencies of occurrences were computed for each verb before assigning them to their relevant categories. The findings indicate predominance of verbs of cognition of scholarly writing (notably perception and interpretation verbs) followed by those denoting knowledge of scholarly writing (notably procedural verbs). The least used category was verbs belonging to statement of scholarly, especially inclusive verbs with only 10 instances of occurrence.

Key words: EFL, Academic Writing, Citation Verbs

Introduction

Any piece of scholarship production, involves a fundamental and conscientious approach for "forging a commitment to become prolific" (Johnson and Mullen, 2007: 4). Academic writers tend to use the written language of syntax and grammar to convey intentionality and information (Gee, 2005). If any rejection is made of any manuscripts submitted to journals it is more likely due to poor writing.

Among aspects of academic writing that has received considerable attention is reporting verbs most probably because of their prevalence in academic writing and their prominence in conveying the attitude of the writer. For instance, Ho 2012 notes that the verb *suggest* as in *I suggest* that allows the writer to advance a proposition tentatively and thereby reduces the writer's responsibility for the proposition. Conversely, a more committed alternative *argue* as in *I argue* commits the writer to the proposition they are making. Additionally, reporting verbs also signal the type or nature of the reporting activities; for example, *believe* refers to mental activities emphasizing the writer's personal thoughts and ideas as contrasted with *argue*, which evokes an argumentative spirit to engage the reader (Ho, Ibid). According to Hunston 2000), the use of reporting verbs requires a great deal of specificity for it to establish the credibility of both the writer and their claims if there is to be a greater likelihood that the reader will accept the position the writer is taking.

Thompson and Yiyun (1991: 371-372) identified three factors of evaluation in reporting verbs, namely, "author´s stance", "writer's stance", and "writer's interpretation". There are two basic oppositions in this classification: first, it is the distinction between a writer and an author, and second, it is stance versus interpretation. The first distinction reflects the two sides involved in the process of writing, and the second one illustrates two ways of evaluation by a writer.

There have been a number of scholars who have developed typologies for the citation verbs. Meyer (1997) suggested that in the case of academic discourse, most verbs have the following commonalities: (a) the verb involves the human participant as a scholar; (b) the verb flows into a described event; (c) the object of the verb is knowledge of the object studied; and (d) the verb describes the cognitive achievement, or knowing, as the result of some intentional action. He also described an array of verbs for researchers to consider, and categorized other verbs stemming from the verb found to include some of the following: (a) mental verbs (i.e. realize, recognize); (b) speech-act verbs (i.e., argue, assumption, explain, describe, recommend); (c) given an object verbs (i.e. adjudge, consider, diagnose, identify, interpret, judge, regard as); (d) exercise of logic verbs (i.e. conclude, infer, deduce); (e) emphasis on source (i.e., learn, gather); (f) emphasis of elusiveness of object (i.e., detect, trace); (g) emphasis on novelty (i.e., discover, reveal, invent); and (h) emphasis on certainty or precision (i.e., determine, ascertain).

Another classification was by Hyland (2002a) who. modelling after Thompson and Ye (1991), developed three categories of reporting verbs: a) 'Research (real-world) Acts' which describe findings and procedures (e.g., observe, show, find, calculate); b) 'Cognition Acts' which represent mental processes (e.g., think, know, believe, speculate); and c) 'Discourse Acts' which depict communicative or 'argumentative' expressions (e.g., argue, suggest, discuss, conclude). A similar classification had been proposed by Francis et al. (1996) with 'Show' and 'Find' verbs (corresponding to 'Research' verbs), 'Think' verbs (corresponding to 'Cognitive' verbs), and 'Argue' verbs (corresponding to 'Discourse' verbs).

Onwuegbuzie and Frels (2010), on their part, developed the typology of verbs for scholarly writing for authors to consider alternate verbs to the verb found when discriminating the textual representation of acquiring knowledge.

Frels, Onwuegbuzie and Slate's (2010) study focussed on scholarly writing and the use, inaccurate use, and overuse of the verb found, expanding upon additional coming-to-know verbs and using the Typology Lists of Verbs for Scholarly Writing (Frels and Onwuegbuzie, 2010) for authors to isolate verbiage for meaning and clarity in writing. The researchers sorted out a total of 195 verbs were sorted into the following 15 categories: (a) evidence-based/data driven verbs (e.g. verbs that acquire data or evidence); (b) explicit verbs (e.g. verbs that directly state); (c) implicit verbs (e.g. verbs that imply); (d) inclusive verbs (e.g. verbs that encompass more than one element); (e) procedural verbs (e.g. verbs that specify the procedure used); (f) interpretation verbs (e.g., verbs that specify the form of inferences made); (g) proposition verbs (e.g. verbs that suggest); (g) visual verbs (e.g. verbs that display); (h) comparison verbs (e.g. verbs that link two or more elements); (i) verification verbs (e.g. verbs that verify or confirm); (j) creation verbs (e.g., verbs that originate); (k) cognitive process verbs (e.g., verbs that refer to thoughts); (l) perception verbs (e.g. verbs that refer to observation); (m) direct object verbs (e.g. verbs that refer to an object or act); and (n) reference verbs (e.g. verbs that refer to another element or act). Next, the 15 categories were grouped according to general meaning and contextual relationships of verbs: (a) pertaining to, reporting, or statement verbs (e.g. declaring, stating); (b) cognitive effort verbs (e.g., thinking, perceiving); and (c) evidencing knowledge verbs (e.g. knowing, doing) for creating the typology lists of verbs for scholarly writing.

Meyer's 1997) typology of verbs comprised three major discriminating values: (a) verbs representing statement, (b) verbs representing cognition, and (c) verbs representing knowledge or action. With this in mind, regarding the verbs representing statement, particular verbs of the 15 categories were sorted into three genres: (a) explicit (i.e., clear,

overt) verbs (e.g. affirmed, reported); (b) implicit (i.e. implied, ambiguous) verbs (e.g., speculated, associated); and (c) inclusive (i.e. descriptive) verbs (e.g. comprised, included). Explicit verbs indicate direct communication (e.g. researchers documented), whereas implicit verbs indicate subtle communication (e.g. researchers speculated). Inclusive verbs are used to describe the connections between or among elements (e.g., the survey included). Conversely, verbs representing cognition refer the act of holding a belief or thought. Thus, the typologies of such verbs are as follows: (a) cognitive process verbs (e.g., believed, scrutinized); (b) perception verbs (e.g. perceived, felt); (c) comparison verbs (e.g. distinguished, differentiated); (d) verification verbs (e.g. corroborated, reviewed); reference verbs (e.g., consulted expected); and (e) proposition verbs (e.g. reviewed, maintained).

Finally, verbs representing knowledge or action refer to the presumption of truth, or finding evidence for truth either by coming-to-know or by some type of action and include: (a) procedural verbs (e.g. conducted, analyzed); (b) visual verbs (e.g. displayed, confirmed); (c) evidence-based/data driven verbs (e.g. tested, embarked); (d) creation verbs (e.g. engendered, generated); and (e) direct object verbs (e.g., sampled, developed). These verbs are particularly useful for empirical research and, as noted by Meyer (1997) represent the most frequently used verbs in this genre. However, each verb is distinct in meaning, and cannot easily be substituted for another. This typology is the chosen one for this study for its comprehensiveness.

Empirical Studies

Hyland's (1999: 349) study of citation verbs' use in various disciplines led to his conclusion that articles from philosophy contain the highest number of reporting verbs – (57.1 per article), while physics use them the least (6. 6 per article). There was also an interesting variation among disciplines as to the use of specific reporting verbs – philosophers preferred the verb say, linguists suggest, argue, show, explain, find or point out, while physics used verbs such as develop, report or study. Comparing hard and soft sciences, Hyland found that verbs report, describe and show were predominantly used in hard sciences, such as biology or physics, and argue, suggest and study in the field of soft sciences, such as applied linguistics or philosophy.

Onwuegbuzie and Frels (2010) examined the use, overuse, and misuse of the verbs in the published literature. Similarly, in several of the studies examined by Onwuegbuzie and Frels (2010), authors used the verb found when discussing another author's concept, theory, or model, instead of using verbs such as conceptualized, theorized, or predicted, respectively.

Jogthong (2001) analysed research article introductions (RAIs) written in Thai by Thai academic writers. He sampled 40 Thai RAIs taken from Thai journals in educational and medical fields. He noted that, inter alia, while the English writers employed various types of verbs in presenting previous research, the Thai writers used only a few reporting verbs. The topic-prominent aspect of Thai language and the limited use of passive voice in Thai also marked the differences in sentence constructions between Thai and English. The differences between Thai and English RAIs are due to socio-cultural aspects, cultural linguistics and research environments.

In the comparisons of essays written by U.S. high school students and Thai high school students, Indrasuta (1987) analysed the use of cohesion, narrative structure and clause functions. The author noted that the two groups differed in all three aspects: the U.S. students expressed more use of reference for the use of cohesion and higher use of

implicit themes for the use of narrative components. The Thai students used more mental state verbs whereas Americans used more action verbs in the functions of sentences.

Taylor's (1995) examination of tense usage in academic writing in the humanities, using a corpus of 18 journal articles in English, history, and philosophy showed that the tense choices associated with the rhetorical functions unique to the journal revealed consistency in usage within each discipline but systematic variations across the disciplines. These variations were found to be largely due to differences in the specialized content area each discipline deals with.

Shaw (1992) examined reporting verbs in six introductory chapters of Ph.D. theses in agricultural biology and biochemistry and found correlations between tense, voice, and sentence types. Sentences with the names of researchers included as part of the sentence structure were usually past active; sentences without the names of researchers were usually present perfect passive.

Oster (1981) examined the reporting of past literature in two chemical engineering technical articles. She noted that the past was used to claim non-generality or to refer to non-supportive quantitative results of past literature, whereas the present perfect was used to indicate that there will be continued discussion of the same information later in the paper and to claim generality.

Similarly, Heslot (1982) examined the use of tense and voice across the four sections of 16 articles from the journal Phytopathology and found that active voice exceeded passive in all sections except methods. The introduction and discussion sections showed a slight preference for the present. The methods and results sections were mostly past; however, the former had a high frequency of passive and the latter, active.

Biber et al. (1998) used computer assisted corpus-based methods to track the use of tense and voice across the sections of 19 medical articles. They noted that the present tense occurred most frequently in discussions and introductions; the past tense and the passives predominated in methods. As for the results section, the past tense exceeded the present.

Horbačauskienė and Petronienė's (2013) analysis of the main characteristics of verb valance patterns and behaviour of verbs in syntactic structures in clauses or sentences in academic register focused on verb valence patterns in syntactic structures. The study specifically aimed at the patterns in the academic register. Five types of verb valence patterns (mono-transitive, copular, intransitive, complex transitive and di-transitive) were identified according to the number of complements that a predicative verb can take as well as to the type of the compliments.

In another study, Hanania and Akhtar (1985) compared the profile of the finite verbs across the five rhetorical sections of 20 Master's theses in biology, chemistry, and physics with respect to voice, tense, aspect, and modality. Similar to the findings of Heslot (Op.cit.), the active verbs had a higher frequency than passives in all sections except methods. However, the distributions of the tenses were somewhat different.

Bloch's 2010) study examined the use of concordancing to create materials for teaching about the role of reporting verbs in academic papers. He sampled articles from *Science*, a leading journal in the scientific community, to create two small corpora. From 27 examples of reporting verbs, 540 sentences were chosen for more careful analysis. The results were used to design a database of sentences that could be used to create teaching materials for an academic writing course.

In her study of plagiarism among NNES, Pecorari (2008) found that students did not always make conscious decisions about the use of reporting verbs. Instead, they often

randomly chose a reporting verb without consciousness of the rhetorical consequences of their choices.

Examining the content of 110 manuscripts submitted to Research in the Schools over a 6-year period, Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009) documented the prevalence of APA errors. Of the manuscripts reviewed, 56.36% of them contained errors relating to precision and clarity, with verb tense and attributions (i.e. anthropomorphism) ranking highest. Specifically, approximately one third of authors (i.e. 32.27%) misused verb tenses, committing errors such as: (a) shifting abruptly in verb tense within the same paragraph, (b) failing to use past tense verbs to describe the results of the study or to report previous findings, and (c) failing to use present tense verbs in the discussions and conclusions.

As for Thompson (2001), he employed Thompson and Ye's (1991) taxonomy of reporting verbs, in a modified form, in parallel to their citation typology, to identify variation in the choice of voice and tense in the two disciplines from which they derived their corpus. MacDonald (1992) argues that the distinctions among practices of knowledge construction in the various academic disciplines are reflected at the level of the sentence. She employed two categories of subjects: *phenomenal* ('consisting of the material that the researcher studies') and *epistemic* ('consisting of the methods, conceptual tools, and previous research that the researcher brings to bear on the material').

Hemais (2001) analysed grammatical subjects, based on a slightly modified version of MacDonald's (1992) model, and examined citation patterns which follows closely the two-level division as proposed by Swales (1990). The discussion of citations and reporting verbs accompanying them enabled the author to put forward considerations on the distinctions among the three types of marketing journals she identified; namely, practice, research and 'scholarly-applied'.

Hykes' (2000) study compared the use of modal verbs in research articles by international graduate students as contrasted with use by professional writers of scientific research articles. She created two corpora of research article texts--one by international students and one by professionals—and counted modal verbs in each of the corpora. She then compared total frequencies of modal verbs, frequencies in each research article section and frequencies of individual modals. The findings showed that students used modal verbs with twice the frequency of their professional counterparts throughout the corpora. The modal verbs 'can' and 'will' were particularly overused by students, while 'may' was the one modal consistently underused by students.

In the similar vein is Butler's (1990) study who found that modal verbs made up one percent of all words in his corpus, and Hyland (1996) noted that a limited number and variety of modal verbs functioning as hedges made up his scientific corpus. Butler (1990) found the auxiliaries 'will', 'would', 'could' and 'should' were less appropriate in scientific writing than in more general genres of writing.

Ho (2012) investigated students' usage and perceptions of reporting verbs along a continuum of authorial power at a community college in Hong Kong. Based on a revised averral framework by Charles (2006b) and the reporting verb taxonomy by Hyland (2002a), an analysis was performed on 614 academic written assignments (compared with proficient writing by native-speaking students in the UK in both frequency and textual examination), 697 questionnaires, and interviews with 13 students and three teachers. Findings reveal that the community college students were impassioned opinion holders characterized by an overuse of first person I in a cognitive, affective, and factive fashion. However, they overlooked the potential of 'mitigated' expressions of self-mention (such as it is argued that) and discourse verbs such as argue and suggest developing an argumentative ethos and dialogic interaction essential in effective reader engagement. A

misunderstanding of the purpose of academic writing, insensitivity to reporting verbs, and a categorical forbiddance of self-mention by teachers appear to be the main reasons for not further developing a writer presence by Hong Kong students.

All these studies testify to the fact that reporting verbs have been widely studied. However, this has been in exclusion of Tanzania EFL context. The current study purported to contribute towards filling that vacuum.

Materials and Methods

The study was a case study in design that made in-depth analysis of verbs as used in Tanzanian EFL context. 40 Doctoral and Maters theses and dissertations were purposively selected. This sample consisted of 10 M.Sc. theses, 10 PhD theses, 12 M.A. Dissertations and 8 MBA dissertations. To all these, irrespective of the categories of specialization, a total of 191 verbs were found, notably in the first two chapters; namely, Introduction and Literature review. Frequencies of occurrence of each verb were sought. Thereafter, the verbs were assigned into their respective categories and subcategories as established by Myer (1997). These are a) verbs representing statement, which subsumes i)explicit verbs, ii) implicit verbs, and iii) inclusive verbs; b) verbs representing cognition, within which are i) cognitive process verbs, ii) perception verbs, iii) comparison verbs, iv) verification verbs, v) reference verbs, and vi) proposition verbs; and c) verbs representing knowledge or action, which subsume i) procedural verbs, ii) visual verbs, iii) evidence-based/data-driven verbs, iv) creation verbs and v) direct object verbs.

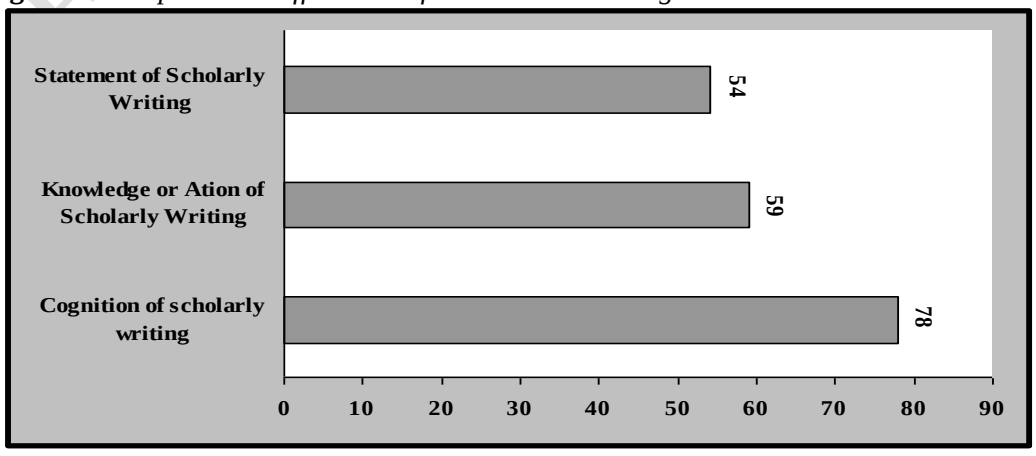
The Findings

The findings are presented in line with the verb categories as classified by Myer (1997), but first beginning with overall comparability.

Overall Comparability

The overall use of citation verbs in the three key areas of statement of scholarly writing, knowledge or action of scholarly writing and cognition of scholarly writing are presented in figure 1 below.

Figure 1. *Comparative Differences of Citation Verb Categories*



As figures 1 above shows, verbs denoting cognition of scholarly writing were the most prevalent with 78 (41%) out of 191 verbs. Verbs of cognition befitted this dominance since these kinds of verbs are the ones that communicate thinking or any aspect of cognitive mechanisms. These were followed by verbs referring to knowledge of scholarly writing, with 59 (31%) frequencies of occurrence. The least used category was that of verbs denoting statement of scholarly writing, which had 54 (28% instances of use. Generally, verbs of statement of scholarly writing had more or less equal extent of occurrence with those belonging to knowledge or action of scholarly writing, with a marginal difference of 5 (03%).

Cognition of Scholarly Writing Verbs

As defined by Matthiessen (2004: 208), these verbs represent the writer's mental processes, The EFL researchers in the current study were variously used as figure 2 below illustrates.

Figure 2. *Distribution of Verbs of Cognition of Scholarly Writing*

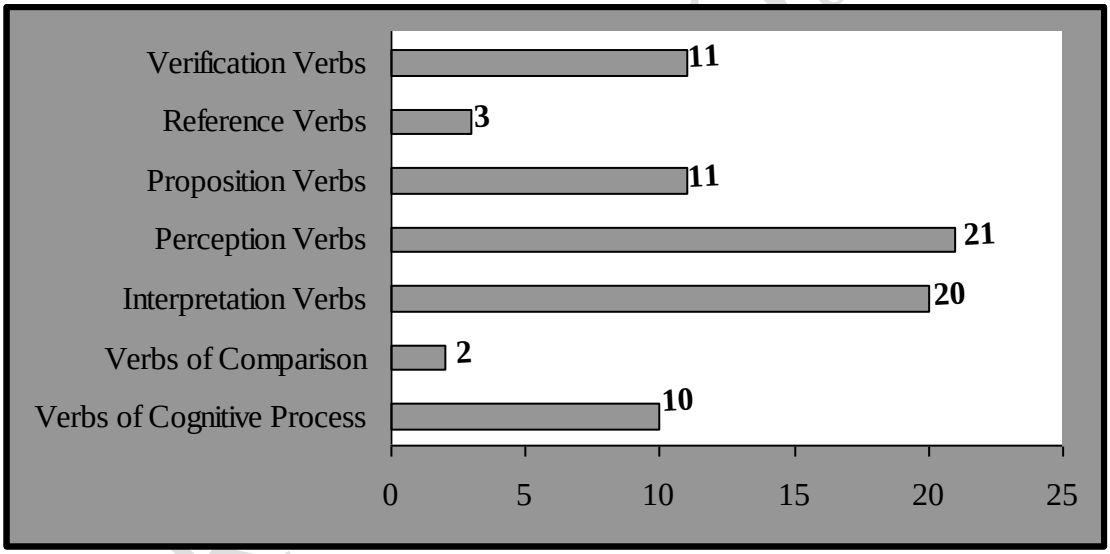


Figure 2 above shows that there were 7 subcategories of cognition of scholarly writing verbs differing magnitudes as detailed hereunder:

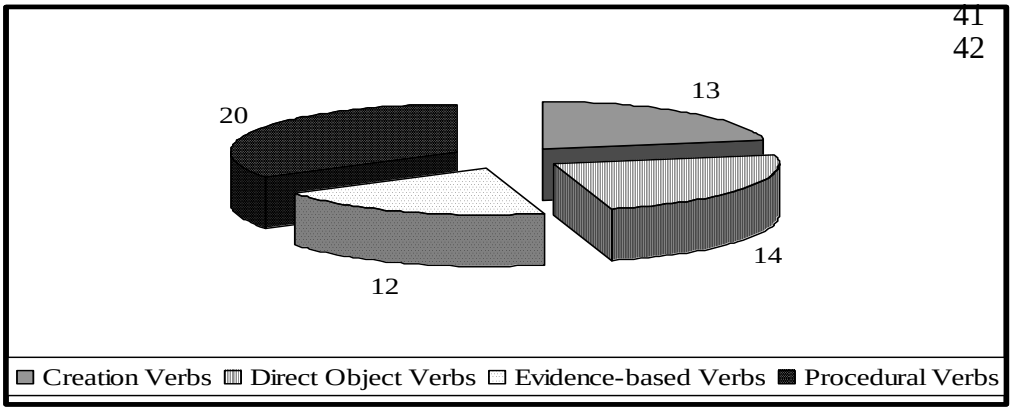
1. *Verbs of cognitive processes*: Figure 2 shows that this subcategory had 10 verbs, the most dominant of which were 'study' with 59 frequencies. These were followed by 'identify' with 18 frequencies of occurrence, then 'believe' 10 times. Others less frequently used were 'research' (4 times), 'recognise' (3 times), 'stress' (3), 'is of the view that' , 'elaborate', 'deviate' and 'make clear', each with a single instance of use.
2. *Verbs of comparison*: This category had only four verbs, the most dominant of which was 'distinguish' with 7 frequencies of occurrence, followed by 'agree with' and 'compare with' each with 5 times of frequencies. 'Differentiate' was the least used, with 3 frequencies.

3. *Interpretation verbs*: This category was the second largest after perception verbs, with a total of 20 verbs that are interpretive in nature. The most dominant was 'propose' which had 28 instances of occurrence. It was followed by 'conclude' and 'contend' with 16 and 13 frequencies of occurrence, respectively. Other verbs that were not as popular with their frequencies of occurrence in brackets are: 'determine' (7), 'attribute' (4), 'estimate' (2), 'regard' (2) and 'propound' (2). The rest occurred once. These are 'favour', 'borrow', 'mean', 'remind', 'expose', 'submit', 'question', 'influence', 'challenge', 'regard as', 'inform', 'refine' and 'put as'.
4. *Perception verbs*: Perception verbs were 21 in total, the overall frequencies of which were 56. The most popular verb was 'view' which was used 8 times (similar 14%), followed by 7 (12.5%) frequencies. 'Feel that' and 'see' ranked third with 6 (10.7%) frequencies each. The rest were not as frequently used. These are 'exemplify' and 'express' (4 times each), while the rest-'favour', 'perceive', 'conceive', 'hail', 'encapsulate', 'complain', 'echo', 'look into', 'look at', 'elucidate', 'illustrate', and 'visualize'-had a single instance of use each.
5. *Proposition verbs*: These were 11 in total, with an overall occurrences of 74 out of which almost a half-32 times (similar to 43%)-belonged to 'say'. 'Claim' and 'posit' followed 'say' with 11 (14.9%) and 10 (13.5%) frequencies, respectively. The rest were not as frequently used. These are 'recommend', 'highlight' and underscore (4 times each), postulate (3 times), 'put clear' and 'advance' (2 times each) and 'enlighten' and 'initiate' (single instance each).
6. *Reference verbs*: There were only 3 reference verbs in the current study with a total of 12 frequencies. Out of these, the most dominant was 'summarise' which was used 10 times, which is similar to 83%. The remaining two – 'notify' and 'concentrate' were used only once.
7. *Verification verbs*: This category had a total of 11 verbs, which were altogether used 29 times. The comparably more dominant verification verb was 'measure' (used 6 times), closely followed by 'support' and 'criticise', each of which was used 5 times (similar to 17% each). 'Corroborate' was used 3 (10%) times while 'acknowledge' was used twice. The rest ('verify', 'confirm', 'testify', 'take' and 'hold') were used once each.

Verbs of Knowledge or Action of Scholarly Writing

These are verbs that specifically describe what the subject of the sentence is doing. They carry a great deal of information in a sentence and can convey emotion and a sense of purpose that extends beyond the literal meanings of the words. The distribution of these verbs as used in the studied theses and dissertations are as summarized figure 3 below.

Figure 3. *Distribution of Action or Knowledge Verbs of Scholarly Writing*



As per figure 3 above, there were four categories of verbs of knowledge or action of scholarly writing. They were variously used and unevenly distributed as detailed below.

1 *Creation verbs*: These verbs, according to Pinon (2007), denote the coming into being of the referent of their direct internal argument as a result of the event by them. In the current study, creation verbs were 13 in total and their overall frequencies were 60. Out of these, 'do' and 'make' predominated with 20 frequencies each (which was 33%. In other words, the two verbs, taken together, had 66% (two thirds) of all occurrences in this sub-category. The rest were by far less frequent: 'introduce' occurred 4 times, 'came up with' and 'formulate' (3 times each), 'design' (used twice) while the rest – 'modify', 'draft', 'amend', 'work on', 'construct' and 'institute' – occurred once.

2 *Direct Object verbs:* These are verbs the transitivity scope of which takes a single object. These were 14 and their frequencies of occurrence were 87 in total. Out of these, 'focus', 'develop' and 'use' predominated by having 23 (26%), 22 (25%) and 11 (13%) frequencies, respectively. Others were 'advocate' (used 8 times), 'give' (used 6 times), 'adopt' (used 5 times), 'extend' (used 4 times), 'extend' (used 4 times), 'enlist' (used twice) and 'name', 'raise', 'pinpoint', 'amplify' and 'expand' (used once).

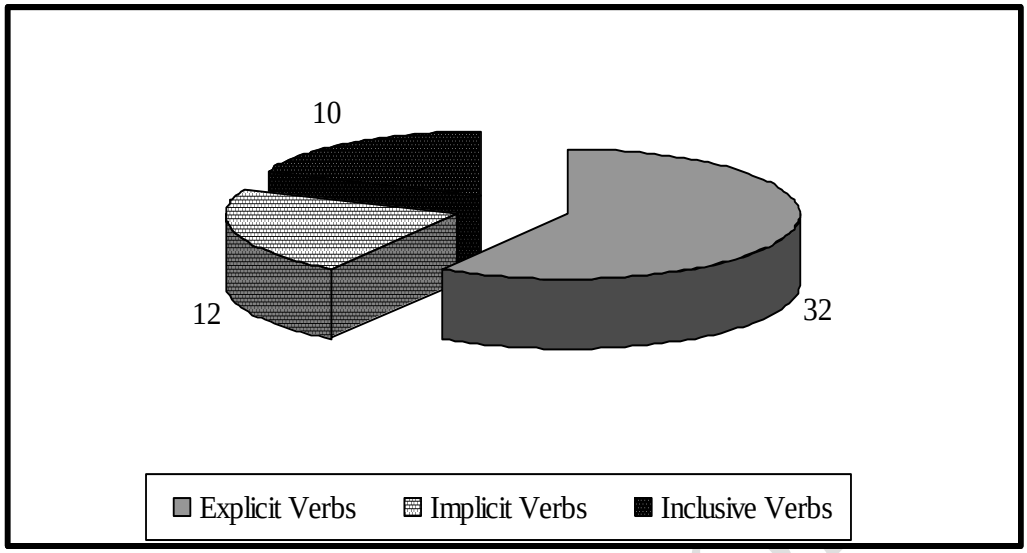
3 *Evidence-driven verbs*: These, which, according to Frels, Onwuegbuzie, and Slate (2010), are verbs that acquire data or evidence, were 12 in total. Few though they were, their total frequencies amounted to 250. Out of these, 'find', 'observe', 'reveal' and 'show' were the most predominant with frequencies amounting to 70 (28%), 58(23%), 52 (20.8%) and 48 (19%), respectively. The rest were not so popular. These are 'cite' (6 times), 'test' and 'demonstrate' (4 times each), 'discover' and 'trace' (2 times each), and 'uncover' and 'quote' (once each).

4 *Procedural verbs*: These verbs verb attest Frels, Onwuegbuzie, and Slate (2010), specify the procedure used. In the current study, procedural verbs were the most numerous in this group of action or knowledge verbs since they were 20 in total. In total, they were used 158 times, the most dominant of which was 'conduct', which was used 44 times (similar to 28%), followed by 'investigate' and 'examine' which were used 28 (18%) times and 20 (13%) times, respectively. 'Analyse' was used 14 (7%) times, carry out was used 11(7%) times, 'evaluate' (10 times, which is 6%), and 'undertake' (9 times, equal to 5%). The rest, which were not as popular, are: 'survey' (5 times), 'explore' (3 times), 'apply', 'conceptualise' and 'produce' (2 times each), and 'interview', 'attempt', 'connect', 'account for', 'administer', 'replicate', 'look to' and 'used to' each of which was used once.

Verbs of Statement of Scholarly Writing

This category of verbs is used specifically in citing scholars and presenting their viewpoints in the manner indicating the citer's attitude and stance towards such viewpoints. These were in four categories, with differing numbers of specific verbs as presented in figure 4 below.

Figure 4. *Categories of verbs of Statement of Scholarly Writing*



The three categories of verbs of statement of scholarly writing, as indicated in figure 4 above, are explicit verbs, implicit verbs and inclusive verbs. Below is detailed analysis of each one.

1. *Explicit verbs*: These verbs are those that these are verbs that leave no doubt as to what is meant. This category, as indicated in figure 4 above, has a grand majority of verbs, accounting for 61% of all verbs belonging to statement of scholarly writing. Overall, the category had 447 frequencies of occurrences of verbs. The most recurrent verbs were 'define' with 77 (17.2%) of frequencies, followed by 'report' and 'note', each with 50 (11.2%) frequencies. 'Point out' appeared 44 (9.8%) times and 'add' 26 (5.8%) times. 'State' occurred 34 (7.6%) times while 'discuss' and 'describe' had 26 (5.8%) frequencies of occurrence each. 'Indicate' and 'refer to' also had equal frequencies of 17 (3.8%). The rest, which were not so popular, are listed below: assert (11 times), 'comments' (8 times), 'assess' (7 times), 'address' (6 times), 'insist', 'write', 'call', (5 times each), 'specify' 'sum up'(4 times each), 'list', 'document' and 'outline' (3 times each), 'caution', 'remark' and 'mention' (2 times each), and 'discourage', 'put forth', and 'ascertain' (once each).
2. *Implicit verbs*: These are verbs that can act as implicit quantifiers on the subjects and objects of the sentences in which they are used (Newstead, 1994). In this subcategory, there were 12 verbs with an overall 295 frequencies of use. The most dominant here was 'according to', which was used 124 (24%) times, followed by 'argue', which was used 99 (33.6%). Ranking third was 'suggest' with 45 (15%) frequencies of use and 'explain' followed it with 11 (3.7%) frequencies. The rest were not as popular: 'consider' was used 5 (1.7%) times, 'clarify', 'cover' and 'offer' had 2 frequencies of use each. The rest – 'accentuate', 'chronicle', and 'stipulate' – were used only once.
3. *Inclusive verbs*: These are verbs whose semantic scope encompasses more than one elements. In the current study, 12 inclusive verbs were noted to be used by EFL academic writers, with an overall 36 frequencies. The most dominant was 'classify'

that was used 10 times (similar to 27.8%), closely followed by 'isolate' that was used 9 times (similar to 25%). Others not used as often are: 'divide' (4 times), 'separate' and 'include' (3 times each) and 'incorporate' and 'categorize' (2 times each). The remaining had single instance of use each. These are 'narrow', 'combine' and 'break down'.

Conclusion

The findings have shown that there is as much and rich variability is just as the EFL writers themselves whose variables include sex, differing age, level of postgraduate education as well as type of disciplinary affiliation. Nonetheless, even in such rich variability, verbs of cognition of scholarly writing (notably perception and interpretation verbs) predominated over all others, followed by those denoting knowledge of scholarly writing (notably procedural verbs). The category that was least used category was that of statement of scholarly writing, notably inclusive verbs.

However, just as in Sun's 2008) study on Chinese EFL learners, these a good number of learners tended to use one citation pattern and a reluctance to use the other patterns. In addition, some students tended to overuse citations as authoritative support for their own work, while doing little or nothing to appraise the works they cited.

This study (and other studies of this kind) gets its legitimacy within Hyland's (1999) assertion that academic knowledge is a social accomplishment, and that academic writing is a social practice of interaction between the writer and the audience and that one of the most important realizations of the research writer's concern for his or her audience is the use of citations, or references to prior research.

However, the omission of comparativeness of use of citation verbs across different disciples has ripped this study of an aspect of epistemic uniqueness in favouring or disfavouring particular verb type. A call is thus made for a study of that aspect of comparability.

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