

Research Article:

Building Audacity of Authorial Voice: A Lesson Learned From Published Writers

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ABSTRACT

This study extends knowledge of L2 writers' citation practices, especially in the development of a persuasive authorial voice, through analysis and comparison of the introduction section between 15 Indonesian Master-level students and 15 L2 published authors. The study sourced its data from a total of 30 academic paper drafts written by these two different groups. The first data set was obtained from 15 academic papers published in reputable journals ranked in the Indonesian national journal database, which discussed content related to ESL/EFL/TESOL and were written by Indonesian academics and/or collaborated with overseas academics. The second data set comprised 15 papers written by students. In the data analysis, it is found that a significant number of both master-level writers and published writers (71%) use similar patterns of stance, i.e., acknowledge, in which a writer acknowledges a proposition as belonging to another researcher/community member but passes no evaluative comment on it. In terms of textual integration, the reliance on assimilation is found in both MW and PW categories, with a striking number of 98%. This finding brings along a few implications for the teaching of academic writing at higher education levels.

Keywords: Authorial voice, stance, textual integration, distance

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INTRODUCTION

Research writing requires effective citation practices to not only attribute credit to previous works but also to justify findings and claims. For second language (L2) writers, taking an assertive stance is an especially challenging task (Chang & Schleppegrell, 2011). Yet, constructing an authorial voice is fundamental to evaluative writing (Hyland & Guinda, 2012; Peng, 2019) and difficult for L2 writers (Davis, 2013; Lee et al., 2018; Peng, 2019). As Tardy (2012) notes, a wide range of explanations has been attributed to voice (Hyland & Guinda, 2012; Xie, 2020). Consistent with Sun et al.'s (2022) case study on constructing authorial voice through citations, for this study, *voice* is defined in accordance with Hutchings (2014), where voice refers to “the student’s own views and to the ability to present other views as other voices” (p. 315).

In many tertiary educational contexts, both students and academic staff are required to produce academic writing for research publication purposes. International publication in English-language journals demands multiple skills, particularly a strong and persuasive authorial voice. However, L2 writers often struggle to develop such a voice, partly due to cultural practices that discourage overt criticism or negative evaluation of other scholars (Adnan, 2014; Arsyad & Adila, 2018; Arsyad & Arono, 2016; Jalilifar et al., 2012). This challenge becomes especially apparent in the Introduction section, which plays a pivotal role in attracting readers and “*convincingly and persuasively*” (Arsyad & Arono, 2016, p. 2) justifying the study’s significance. While this section is inherently challenging for most writers, L2 authors may face additional difficulties in balancing assertive argumentation with respectful engagement of prior scholarship (Xu & Nesi, 2019). Notably, the Introduction section, and perhaps the Literature Review section too, is frequently used to assess citation competence, as its high citation density reveals how writers position their work within existing research (Li & Zhang, 2021).

While the challenges of developing effective citation practices have been widely researched, “their association with the L2 construction of authorial voice has been largely underexplored” (Peng, 2019, p. 12). Furthermore, rather than focusing on the link between citational features to strengthen authorial voice, previous research has not closely examined the connections between citation features (Li & Zhang, 2021). In addition, despite the need to construct a persuasive voice in academic writing, with few exceptions including Hood (2004), Jalilifar et al. (2012), Kafes (2017), and Li and Zhang (2021), most studies have overlooked voice construction through comparison of writer level or expertise.

This study extends knowledge of L2 writers’ citation practices, particularly in the development of a persuasive authorial voice, through an analysis and comparison of the introduction sections between Indonesian L2 writers in graduate education and published authors. In terms of analytical approach, it has been observed that the majority of previous studies addressing L2 citation adopted a typology framework to identify citation features such as function, type, or strategy. Other studies applied the Appraisal Theory approach, which primarily focused on *Attitude* and *Graduation* with minimal attention to engagement (Lam & Crosthwaite, 2018). As a linguistic resource, citations are an engagement feature as they either expand or contract the authorial voice. Therefore, by drawing upon Coffin’s

(2009) integrative framework, our study will consider multiple aspects of citations, and their linkage, in terms of dialogic contraction and expansion in constructing an authorial voice in the citation-dense Introduction section of the research articles, especially in the development of authorial voice, by comparison of master-level writers and published authors. The analyses of the study are guided by two research questions:

1. How do master-level writers and published authors present stance, textual integration and nature of sources via citation practices to establish their authorial voices?
2. Are there differences/similarities in how authorial voice is constructed via citations within citation density, writer stance, textual integration and author integration between research articles from master-level writers and published authors?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing research on L2 citations highlights the value of analysing the Introduction section due to its high citation density, though such studies have typically examined only one or two citation features in isolation (Arsyad & Arono, 2016; Gao et al., 2021; Li & Zhang, 2021; Peng, 2019; Sun et al., 2022). Given the critical role citations play in constructing authorial voice, there is still limited evidence on how citations contribute to shaping a persuasive and convincing rhetorical stance (Li & Zhang, 2021). To address this gap, this study adopts a multidimensional perspective (Cui et al., 2023), moving beyond selective feature analysis to investigate how *citation connectivity*—the strategic interplay of citations—scaffolds the L2 authorial voice.

Citations serve as fundamental rhetorical devices in academic writing (Petrić, 2007; Swales, 2014), enabling writers to attribute ideas (Coffin, 2009), engage in scholarly dialogue (Lee et al., 2018), and negotiate alternative perspectives (Coffin, 2009; Kafes, 2017)—practices that collectively shape authorial voice. By strategically deploying citations, writers “*establish their own authority within their discourse community*” (Jalilifar et al., 2012, p. 24), crafting both credibility and persuasive stance. However, citation competence demands multifaceted skills: writers must comprehend, evaluate and synthesise prior research (Davis, 2013; Li & Zhang, 2021; Sun et al., 2022), a process that is particularly challenging for L2 scholars. As Li and Zhang’s (2021) analysis of the theses of Chinese English majors revealed, these difficulties often stem from cultural and educational disparities, compounding the complexity of mastering citation’s nuanced functions (Jalilifar et al., 2012; Zhang, 2022). This finding underscores the need to investigate how L2 writers harness citation connectivity—not merely as isolated features but as an intertextual network—to construct authoritative voices amid these challenges.

According to Lee and Casal (2014), linguistic and cultural background is a significant influence in shaping a L2 writer’s authorial voice, as writers tend to rely on their “culture-specific intellectual style” (Pérez-Llantada, 2010, p. 64) when writing in English. In her robust contrastive citation study, Dontacheva-Navratilova (2016) examined the rhetorical functionality of citations in RAs to explore how Anglophone and Czech linguists use citations as an interpersonal resource. Concentrating on the Introduction section,

Dontacheva-Navratilova found obvious differences in citation use to establish a research niche as the Anglophone writers' voice leaned towards contrasting views and negotiating meaning compared to the Czech linguists' "orientation towards respect for tradition within a single line of development in a specific field of the relatively small and traditionally mutually supportive Czech discourse community." (p. 66).

The tendency to prioritise tradition and respect for culturally significant interpersonal relationships manifests clearly in Indonesian academic writing, the focal context of this study. When composing research articles (RAs) in English, Indonesian scholars frequently employ rhetorical strategies that foreground positive justifications for their research gaps while consciously avoiding overt criticism or negative evaluations of prior work (Adnan, 2014; Arsyad & Adila, 2018). This culturally ingrained approach stems from a desire to maintain harmony within the academic community—a value deeply rooted in Indonesian discourse norms. However, such avoidance of critical engagement can inadvertently create a *disharmonised relationship* between the writer's argument and the existing literature (Arsyad & Arono, 2016, p. X). As Arsyad and Adila (2018) note, this rhetorical preference, while aligned with local academic conventions, often clashes with the expectations of international journals, where direct engagement with—and even constructive critique of—prior research is typically valorised. This disconnect may contribute to higher rejection rates for scholars unaccustomed to adopting the assertive stance demanded by Anglophone academic discourse.

This phenomenon reflects a broader pattern among L2 scholars composing research articles in English. Studies across diverse linguistic contexts (Lee et al., 2018; Coffin, 2009; Sun et al., 2022) reveal a recurring reluctance to adopt forceful positions, often attributed to cultural and educational predispositions toward deference. Many L2 writers strategically *acknowledge* or *distance* themselves from source materials rather than critique them outright, prioritising respect for established scholars over overt displays of academic rivalry (Lee et al., 2018). While this approach aligns with collectivist cultural values, it risks undermining the writer's credibility in international contexts, where rigorous critical engagement is often equated with scholarly competence (Coffin, 2009; Sun et al., 2022). The tension between these norms highlights a central challenge for L2 writers: navigating the competing demands of cultural identity and global academic expectations.

Beyond cultural differences, L2 writers in higher education—particularly ESL students learning academic writing—may struggle with constructing an authoritative authorial voice through citations due to varying educational backgrounds and prior writing experiences. Many come from academic environments where teaching practices prioritise summarising main ideas over critically evaluating and engaging with sources (Peng, 2019; Sun et al., 2022). This factor can lead to a lack of awareness about how citations contribute to voice, leaving students uncertain about how to position their own arguments alongside existing scholarship. Without a solid framework for analysing and responding to different viewpoints, students may resort to patchwriting, ineffective paraphrasing, or even unintentional plagiarism (Lee et al., 2018; Shi, 2012). Conversely, as Wette (2017) notes, some writers may demonstrate strong paraphrasing skills yet still struggle with synthesising sources to build cohesive arguments—highlighting that citation proficiency alone does not guarantee a strong academic voice. These challenges suggest that ESL writing instruction

should not only teach proper citation mechanics but also foster critical engagement with sources to help students develop their own scholarly stance.

Often, educational and cultural factors are integrated. As noted previously, for L2 writers trained in different rhetorical conventions, effective citation use may be difficult and confusing (Davis, 2013), as illustrated through integral and non-integral citations. The L2 writers' use of integral and non-integral citations as resources for dialogic engagement has often been considered in previous studies (Peng 2019). While integral citations note the author within the sentence, non-integral citations note the author in a parenthesis at the end of the sentence (Swales, 1986). Although expert writers use both citation types strategically, the non-integrated citation allows the writer's voice to dominate, creating the effect of contracting the dialogic space. In contrast, L2 writers tend to use more integral citations in their academic writing, which can block the flow (Mansourizadeh & Ahmad, 2011; Peng, 2019). Shooshtari et al. concluded in a 2017 study of Persian research writers that the predominance of integral citations, which "stress the agents of research rather than acknowledge the works" is due to cultural practices favouring people over performance (p. 71).

Researchers examining how citation competence shapes L2 authorial voice have employed varied analytical approaches to uncover patterns and challenges. For example, some studies adopt a comparative lens, contrasting citation practices between L1 and L2 writers (Arsyad & Adila, 2018; Dontcheva-Navratilova, 2016; Hu & Wang, 2014; Kafes, 2017; Lam & Crosthwaite, 2018; Li & Zhang, 2021). Others investigate disciplinary differences, revealing how citation norms vary across fields (Hu & Wang, 2014; Shooshtari et al., 2017; Sun et al., 2022; Wette, 2017; Yang & Xiaojuan, 2015; Zhang, 2022). Additional research focuses on genre-specific conventions (Li & Zhang, 2021) or examines how citations function in distinct sections of research articles, such as introductions versus discussions (Dontcheva-Navratilova, 2016; Hu & Wang, 2014; Li & Zhang, 2021; Shooshtari et al., 2017; Yang & Xiaojuan, 2015; Zhang, 2022). Finally, some scholars analyse the role of writer expertise, comparing novices and experienced academics (Kafes, 2017). Together, these approaches highlight the multifaceted nature of citation competence, demonstrating how linguistic, disciplinary, and rhetorical factors collectively influence L2 writers' ability to construct voice through sources.

As an alternative to the contrastive approach, other studies have focused on a single factor, such as writer level or academic disciplines. Regarding writer level, L2 undergraduate citation practice was the focus of three separate studies conducted by Gao et al. (2021), Mori (2017) and Wette (2017). In their longitudinal case study of master's students, Sun et al. (2022) examined the rhetorical purposes for source use. And both Coffin (2009) and Peng (2019) analysed authorial voice through evaluation and citation at the doctoral level. Several citation studies have been conducted within a single discipline, including Applied Linguistics (Dontcheva-Navratilova, 2016; Farnia et al., 2018; Kafes, 2017), Education (Chang & Schleppegrell, 2011) and Film Studies (Coffin, 2009).

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that research on L2 citation practices has moved beyond purely contrastive (L1 vs. L2) analyses to investigate how *individual variables*—such as writer expertise (e.g., undergraduate vs. doctoral) or disciplinary conventions

(e.g., Applied Linguistics vs. Film Studies)—shape citation competence. By focusing on specific academic levels or fields, scholars reveal nuanced patterns in source use, from undergraduates' foundational citation practices (Gao et al., 2021; Mori, 2017; Wette, 2017) to advanced writers' rhetorical and evaluative engagement with sources (Coffin, 2009; Peng, 2019; Sun et al., 2022). Such targeted approaches underscore the importance of context in understanding how L2 writers develop authorial voice through citations.

In their influential study, Hu and Wang (2014) chose to move beyond examining citation practices discretely or examining disciplinary and ethnolinguistic influences on citation independently. Therefore, to expand previous research, they applied Coffin's (2009) analytical framework to explore cross-linguistic and cross-disciplinary variations from a dialogic perspective between Chinese- and English-medium journals. Following Hu and Wang's (2014) approach, Shooshtari et al. (2017) conducted a corpus study of over 200 research articles from Persian- and English-medium journals from soft and hard sciences, drawing on Coffin's (2009) framework to investigate language-discipline variations. Kafes (2017) also leans heavily on Hu and Wang (2014) to frame his comparison study of novice Turkish academic writers and expert native English academic writers who employ citation practices to enhance persuasiveness. Consistent with Hu and Wang (2014) and Shooshtari et al. (2017), Kafes applied Coffin's (2009) framework to characterise citation aspects in terms of dialogic contraction or expansion. Li and Zhang (2021) used the framework of Xu and Nesi (2019) instead of Coffin as they consider the framework of Xu and Nesi to be more comprehensive.

While these studies demonstrate the value of typological and comparative approaches to citation analysis (e.g., Kafes, 2017; Li & Zhang, 2021), they predominantly treat citations as isolated features rather than dialogic tools for voice construction. This oversight becomes particularly evident when viewed through the lens of Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005), which positions citations as part of the *Engagement* system—a dimension critical to understanding how writers negotiate stance and align readers. The Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) has informed L2 studies investigating authorial voice and evaluation strategies, particularly in the Introduction section of academic texts. Focusing on the *Attitude* and *Graduation* elements of the framework, scholars like Zhang and Cheung (2018) and Jalilifar et al. (2012) have analysed how published authors employ these resources to engage with prior literature. While neither study explicitly examined citation practices, their findings reveal a tendency to prioritise emotional expression (*Affect*) over critical judgement (*Judgement*), resulting in a comparatively weaker authorial voice. This finding aligns with Hood's (2004) comparison of attitudinal resources in undergraduate dissertations and published papers, where students relied more heavily on *Affect* and *Judgement* than expert writers. Notably, rather than adopting Appraisal Theory for citation analysis, many researchers have turned to established typologies such as Swales' (1986; 1990) form-based or text-based frameworks (e.g., integral vs. non-integral citations; Peng, 2019; Sun et al., 2022) or Hyland's (1999) reporting verb classifications (Peng, 2019; Zhang, 2022). Others, like Dontcheva-Navratilova (2016), have applied Petrić's (2007) rhetorical functions to examine citation practices.

However, a subset of studies has applied the *full* Appraisal framework—*Attitude*, *Graduation*, and *Engagement*—to compare evaluative strategies between L1 and L2 writers.

For instance, Lam and Crosthwaite (2018) identified striking disparities in argumentative essays: L1 English writers used *Engagement* resources (e.g., dialogic contractions like “perhaps”) more frequently than L2 writers, who underutilised these interactive markers. The authors highlighted a critical gap in L2 writing research, noting that *Engagement* remains understudied compared to *Attitude* (Lam & Crosthwaite, 2018, p. 14). This finding suggests that L2 writers’ challenges with authorial voice may stem not only from evaluative tendencies (e.g., over-reliance on *Affect*) but also from a lack of strategic engagement with alternative viewpoints—a dimension that Appraisal Theory uniquely illuminates.

Yet, drawing on the *Engagement* element of the Appraisal Theory framework (Martin & White, 2005), Chang and Schleppegrell (2011) focused on the *Introduction* to highlight explicit linguistic resources for L2 writers to develop an effective authoritative stance. In their limited study of seven L2 postgraduate writers, the authors used published research articles to help the writers identify expanding or contracting patterns as research is presented, reviewed, and evaluated. There is a need to consider multiple aspects of citations in terms of dialogic contraction and expansion in constructing an authorial voice. To address this need, the integrative analytical framework developed by Coffin (2009) is beneficial as “it provides a dialogic perspective on the linguistic options for referencing academic sources” (Coffin, 2009, p. 163).

METHODOLOGY

Data

The study sourced its data from a total of 30 academic paper drafts written by two different groups. The first data set was obtained from 15 academic papers that meet the following criteria: they were published in reputable journals ranked in the Indonesian national journal database, discussed content related to ESL/EFL/TESOL in Indonesian contexts, and were written by Indonesians and/or collaborated with overseas academics. In the data analysis, this data set is coded as published writers (PW). Then, the second data set comprised 15 academic papers written by students. The papers were written as part of an assignment in an academic writing course at a graduate program in English Language Education in one of the public universities in Indonesia. In the data analyses, the data from this set is coded as master-level writers (MW).

Data analysis procedure

The data, i.e., clauses from the written articles in both PW and MW categories, were coded and classified based on Coffin’s (2009) framework on writers’ engagement, as shown in Figure 1. Then, they are tabulated and examined by data analysis validators. Note that the specific observation in this study is focused on the introduction sections of the academic papers. This part is selected as it has the elements of a literature review, where writers use works of previous researchers to build their arguments. Hence, the authors’ voice is supposed to stand out against the quoted work.

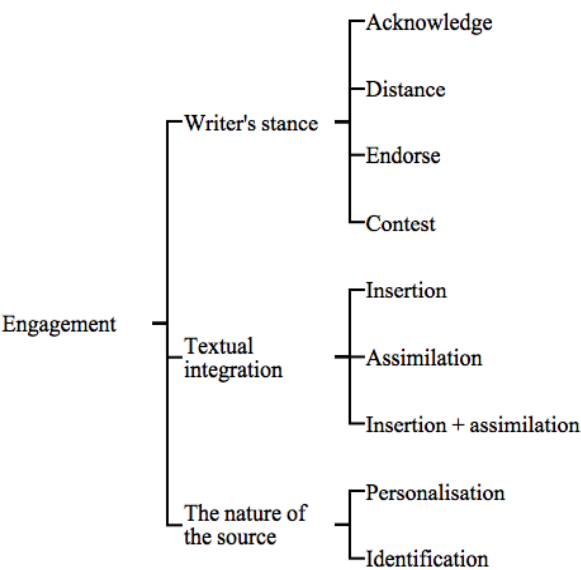


Figure 1: Coffin's (2009) framework on writers' engagement

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examines broad patterns in how Master-level Writers (MW) and published Writers (PW) employ citations to construct authorial voice, focusing on stance, textual integration and source types. The analysis reveals differences in their rhetorical strategies, highlighting how experience shapes scholarly self-presentation. The subsequent section explores whether MW and PW converge or diverge in voice construction, assessing similarities (e.g., adherence to conventions) and contrasts (e.g., critical engagement). Together, these layers shed light on how academic expertise influences discursive identity in research writing.

Writer's Stance, Textual Integration and Author Integration in MW and PW's Research Articles

Before discussing the details of the calculated categories, it is important to have a broad idea of the citation density used by MW and PW in their research articles. Our analysis reveals a notable disparity in citation usage between the two groups. Across the collected data, MWs employed a total of 278 citations, whereas PWs utilised 428 citations, indicating a substantial difference in engagement with existing scholarship. When examined on a per-paper basis, MWs cited between 9 and 33 sources per article, with an average of 18 citations per paper. In contrast, PWs demonstrated a broader range (9–59 citations per paper) and a higher average of 28 citations per article. This discrepancy suggests that PWs

engage more extensively with prior research, possibly due to their greater familiarity with academic discourse and the expectation of rigorous evidence in high-level scholarship. The wider citation range among PWs also implies greater adaptability in source usage, whether for foundational reviews or nuanced theoretical debates. These findings align with prior research (e.g., Hyland, 2016; Kwan et al., 2012), reinforcing the link between writer expertise and strategic citation practices.

Note that the writer's stance refers to the stance taken by the writer toward the words, observations, viewpoints and theories referenced (Coffin, 2009). In the data analysis, it is found that a significant number of both MW and PW (71%) use similar patterns of stance, i.e. acknowledge, in which a writer acknowledges a proposition as belonging to another researcher/community member but passes no evaluative comment on it. This stance is the most basic form of referencing in research articles. Only a small number of data show the use of distance (14%), that is, when writer distances him/herself from a source, taking no responsibility for its reliability, and endorse (15%), that is, when a writer either directly or indirectly indicates support for, or agreement with, a referenced proposition. Table 1 presents the expressions of the writer's stance in both MW and PW written work.

Table 1. Expressions of the Writer's stance in the form of acknowledgement

MW Writer's stance	PW Writer's stance
As Saribayli (2018) found, theoretically, self-assessment encourages EFL learners to be independent subjects in the learning process.	Their study exposed that technological competence and facilities become the core of online learning problems; similar problems were also found in Efriana's (2021) study.
In addition, Brown and Abeywickrama (2010) and Brown and Bailey (1984) include style and quality of expression as one thing to be assessed in different names of vocabulary, where the highest score indicates precise vocabulary usage.	For instance, a study conducted by Huang et al. (2019) depicted online learning problems in terms of teachers' roles.
They are word classes, word families, word formation, multi-word units, collocations, and homonyms (Thornbury, 2002).	The writer discusses a problem in detail based on data to provide valid information to the readers (Çandarlı et al., 2015).
Therefore, writing and speaking with the use of lexical collocations indicates natural and native-like English (Biskri, 2012).	The academic writing genre is challenging to master because the stages necessitate intellectual activities and writing competencies, such as brainstorming ideas, planning, sketching conceptual frameworks, writing drafts, correcting, and revising (Kiriakos & Tienari, 2018).

In both categories, acknowledgement is expressed in the format following the standard citation rules by putting the names of the authors followed by the year in brackets, or putting both in brackets when placed at the end of the sentence. In the sample citations in Table 1, verbs such as *found*, *include*, *conducted*, and *discuss*, in either active or passive forms, are used to further acknowledge the action taken by the cited researchers.

In terms of textual integration, a significant reliance on assimilation is found in both MW and PW categories, with a striking number of 98%. Textual integration is concerned with the degree to which the referenced proposition is assimilated or integrated into the text made by the writers. Excerpts 1 and 2, while taken from two different categories, show similarities in how textual integration creates a seamless blend between the writers' own words and the cited researchers' ideas. This finding is especially evident when the source is placed at the end of the sentence.

Excerpt 1 – MW: Furthermore, students' attitudes toward technology are seen as an important component in the success of technology implementation in L2 classrooms (Jitpaisarnwattana, 2018).

Excerpt 2 – PW: In terms of the processes, challenges are usually related to insufficient time of supervision, the poorly-managed supervision system, the supervision processes which do not match students' expectations, and the inadequate facilities of interactions between supervisors and students (Agricola et al., 2020; Almeatani et al., 2019; Ortiz-Catalan et al., 2019).

Finally, in terms of the nature of sources, both MW and PW categories used personalisation, i.e. referring to the cited references by their names. In a more detailed account, MW favours non-integral inclusion (59%) over integral inclusion (38%). This finding is almost similar to the way PW use author integration, which is nearly equal between non-integral (50%) and integral (49%) inclusion.

Authorial Voice Constructed *via* Citations: MW vs PW

This study has shown that writers in the PW category tend to incorporate more references in their academic articles compared to those in the MW category, reflecting their extensive experience in scholarly writing (Hyland, 2016). This difference stems from PWs' deeper understanding of the necessity to support their claims with credible evidence, thereby strengthening the validity of their arguments (Swales & Feak, 2012). In contrast, writers in the MW category probably struggle with source integration, either due to limited exposure to academic conventions or difficulties in locating relevant literature (Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006).

As highlighted in the previous section, this study focuses on the introductory part of the sample articles. Here, another notable distinction is observed in that while the length of introduction sections may vary, PWs tend to include denser citations, demonstrating a more comprehensive literature review and a stronger theoretical foundation (Kwan et al., 2012). This finding suggests that PWs are more adept at positioning their research within existing scholarship, a skill that MWs may still be developing. Conversely, a lower number of citations in MWs' introductions may indicate weaker argumentation or insufficient engagement with prior research (Booth et al, 2008). This disparity further highlights the importance of academic socialisation, where experienced writers learn to balance their own voice with authoritative sources (Ivanič, 1998).

To align with the selected methodological approach, we can justify that our result is consistent with Coffin's (2009), and also Li and Zhang' (2021), in that both MW and

PW's reliance on the writer's stance is equal in terms of acknowledging. This finding means that most references are used in support of the authorial voices that have been expressed in separate sentences, usually at the beginning of paragraphs. In Coffin's (2009) terms, this reliance creates a neutral stance; 'in a dialogically expansive text with attributed views being represented via an impartial reporting voice'. At some points, references are used in a way that both MW and PW in our study distance themselves from relying on the content of the references. They are simply mentioned in the research articles as statements. This finding is further reflected in the rare use of insertion. We assume that there may be several reasons. For example, it is possible that both MW and PW in our data lack certainty of how to use the quotations properly and convincingly. Or perhaps, the sources that writers use in their references may not be from experts in certain disciplines, making them hesitate to use direct quotations from the sources.

As a general rule, academic writing requires writers to establish a credible voice by balancing personal argumentation with scholarly evidence. While PWs and MWs share the goal of contributing to academic discourse, they differ quite significantly in how they express their voices. Both PWs and MWs must demonstrate authority in their writing by engaging with existing research. They follow academic conventions, such as citing sources and structuring arguments logically (Hyland, 2016). Additionally, both groups attempt to position their work within a scholarly conversation, though the depth of engagement varies (Swales & Feak, 2012). Further analysis reveals that writers in the PW and MW categories differ in a number of aspects. When using citation and evidence, PWs integrate more and higher-quality references, demonstrating their familiarity with the field and ability to synthesise complex ideas (Kwan et al., 2012). Whereas, MWs often rely on fewer citations, sometimes depending on textbook sources rather than cutting-edge research, which may weaken their argumentative weight (Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006). During the writing process, rhetorical control and argumentation expressed by PWs tend to have more nuanced arguments, using citations strategically to support claims while maintaining their own critical perspective (Ivanič, 1998). On the other hand, MWs may overly rely on sources, leading to patchwriting or weak authorial presence (Pecorari, 2003).

Overall, when we are looking at the writer's stance, and both MW and PW are using acknowledge and distance, they are using an expansive voice to allow for multiple points of view. If they used the endorse or contest type of inclusion, following Coffin's (2009) suggestion, it would be contractive, which means that it is sort of restricting or inhibiting the challenge or disagreement with the author. Therefore, we see this as a really strong voice move, and we are not seeing this with our results in the introduction section. Again, when integration is used, there is a possibility that the author's voice may not be highlighted. In this case, the inclusion of the author's argument shall be clearly stated in separate sentences prior to or following the references.

To be fair, we have to admit that the results of the analysis of the PW introduction section in terms of writer's stance, textual and authorial integration, nearly mirror the MW results. We have considered a few factors that may lead to this similarity. The style of writing in both MW and PW categories reflect their confidence and maturity. PWs confidently exhibit stronger hedging and boosting (e.g., "This study clearly demonstrates..." vs. "It might be

possible that...”), reflecting confidence in their claims (Hyland, 2005). While MWs often use excessive caution (e.g., “This could maybe suggest...”), which may undermine persuasiveness (Gilquin et al., 2007). Finally, they also express counterarguments differently. PWs more frequently acknowledge opposing views and refute them effectively, strengthening their credibility (Booth et al., 2008). But MWs sometimes ignore conflicting evidence, resulting in one-sided arguments (Jumariati & Sulistyo, 2017).

On a final note, it is useful to revisit Coffin’s (2009) concept of a dialogic perspective on the linguistic options in the use of citation for academic writing purposes. This implies the need to re-examine the syllabi for the teaching of academic writing in higher education. It means that while the broad structure of academic writing was discussed, there was not enough time allotted to get into details about the wordings or expressions used to build each of the sections in academic writing. Therefore, more explicit practices should be included to attain a dialogic perspective in academic writing.

CONCLUSION

The study has shown that two different categories of writers, i.e. master-level writers and published writers, use a similar approach in developing their audacity as writers, as reflected in their stance, textual and authorial integration. However, the study also shows that PW has more dense citations in the introduction section compared to its counterpart. While both groups adhere to academic norms, PWs demonstrate greater rhetorical sophistication, strategic citation use, and stronger authorial voice. MWs are still developing these skills; hence, they may produce writing that is less assertive, less integrated with scholarship, and less critically engaged.

This brings along a few implications for the teaching of academic writing at higher education levels. While our research analyses the major points in the engagement aspect, i.e. the writer’s stance, textual and authorial integration, it could have yielded more information if the use of lexical choices in the introduction were taken into account. More information on the quality differences between novice writers and published writers may also be seen if the analyses extend to the other sections (e.g., methodology, discussion, and conclusion) of academic writing piece for more robust results.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the analysis was restricted to the introduction section, which may not fully capture the writers’ engagement strategies across an entire paper. Second, the sample consisted of a specific group of writers; expanding the study to include a larger and more diverse range of texts could improve generalisability. Finally, the absence of lexical and syntactic analysis means that stylistic differences between MW and PW may have been overlooked. To address these gaps, future research should broaden the scope by examining other sections of academic writing, such as the methodology and discussion, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of engagement strategies. Additionally, incorporating an analysis of lexical choices, hedging, and boosting devices could reveal deeper distinctions between novice and experienced writers. From a pedagogical perspective, writing instructors should emphasise strategic citation use and engagement techniques, particularly for graduate students aiming to publish their work. By integrating these recommendations, future studies can offer more nuanced insights into the development of academic writing proficiency.

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