Citation practices of L2 university students in first-year writing: Form, function, and stance

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A B S T R A C T :

This study reports findings of an analysis of the citation practices of L2 undergraduate students in the context of first-year writing (FYW). Data consist of a corpus of 100 source-based research papers written by L2 students in a FYW course. Taking a multi-perspective analytical approach, we examine L2 undergraduate students' citation practices in terms of surface forms, rhetorical functions, and writer stance. Results indicate that L2 students use a restricted range of reporting structures, and they primarily use sources for attribution function to display their knowledge of the topics. Furthermore, as opposed to taking a strong positive or negative position, the findings show that L2 student writers mainly adopt a non-committal stance by merely acknowledging or distancing themselves from cited materials, suggesting that L2 students are inclined to show deference to the perceived authority of published sources. We conclude with pedagogical options for enhancing L2 university students' citation practices.

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1. Introduction

In recent decades, there has been increasing interest in the citation practices of academic writers, as reference to other texts is considered one of the distinguishing features of academic writing (Thompson & Tribble, 2001). Citations in academic writing are central to persuasion, as they permit writers to engage in dialogue with source texts; provide justification and evidence for arguments and claims; demonstrate familiarity with the literature; show (dis)alignment with particular scholarship; and establish credibility (Hyland, 2000).

Researchers examining citations in academic writing have focused on the practices of professional writers of research articles (RAs) (e.g., Bloch & Chi, 1995; Charles, 2006; Hu & Wang, 2014; Hyland, 1999; Swales, 1986; Thompson & Ye, 1991) and first language (L1) and second language (L2) student writers of master's theses and doctoral dissertations (e.g., Coffin, 2009; Petrić, 2007; Thompson, 2005; Thompson & Tribble, 2001), as well as have conducted comparative analyses of L1 or L2 graduate student research writing and published RAs (e.g., Mansourizadeh & Ahmad, 2011; Samraj, 2013). These studies have revealed that differences exist in writers' citation practices. For instance, in his comparative analysis of RAs across disciplines, Hyland (1999) found variation in terms of citation integration, presentation, frequency, and reporting verb usage, with the greatest division between soft and hard knowledge fields. In their examination of RAs in applied linguistics and medicine, Hu and Wang (2014) show not only cross-disciplinary variation in citation practices but also ethnolinguistic differences within

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the same disciplines. Furthermore, studies comparing RA and graduate-level writers show stark contrast in the way these two groups of writers use citations in their writing. These comparative analyses demonstrate that several factors, such as discipline, genre (and part-genre), and lingua-culture, interact in complex ways in the use of citations in student writing (Mansourizadeh & Ahmad, 2011; Samraj, 2013). While such studies have provided important insights into the citation practices of professional and student writers, researchers have pointed out that professional and student genres differ in terms of purpose, audience, scope, and evaluation (e.g., Lee & Casal, 2014; Petrić, 2007).

Specifically focusing on student writers, several researchers have explored not only how citations are constructed linguistically but also how they function within writers' texts. Thompson (2001) and Thompson and Tribble (2001), for example, studied surface forms and rhetorical functions of citations in doctoral dissertations. They found that discipline has an effect on both form and function of citations in doctoral student texts. Building on Thompson (2001), Petrić (2007) compared the rhetorical functions of citations in low- and high-rated master's theses composed by L2 graduate students across various European countries. She found that high- and low-rated theses differed contrastively in their use of citations. While the primary rhetorical function of citations in both groups was attribution (i.e., to attribute information to a source), high-rated thesis writers utilized citations for a greater variety of functions such as to evaluate sources, establish links between sources, and show connections between the work of the writer and sources. Writers of low-rated theses, in contrast, generally limited their use of citations to the attribution function, thus producing descriptive texts that overemphasize display of knowledge of the field rather than analysis of the literature. In addition to other dimensions, Coffin (2009) examined writer stance, or the affective position taken toward cited sources, in an L1 film studies doctoral dissertation. She found that this dissertation writer principally took a non-committal stance toward cited sources rather than taking a strong positive or negative position. This finding is not different from what has been discovered in RAs (Hyland, 1999), where writers of these texts also take a more neutral stance toward cited propositions. Unlike students, however, RA writers also tend to take strong evaluative positions toward cited sources. Further, dissimilar to students, when RA writers assume a strong negative stance, they are inclined to take "extreme care in making such a criticism" and the sources are generally not directly named (Bloch & Chi, 1995, p. 236).

Additionally, Ädel and Garretson (2006) and Swales (2014) examined the citation practices of university student writers in the Michigan Corpus of Upper-level Student Papers (MICUSP), an approximately 2.6 million-word corpus of A-graded student course papers across 16 disciplines, seven text types, and four student levels (senior undergraduate to first-year PhD) at the University of Michigan. Ädel and Garretson (2006) found marked disciplinary divisions in the way citations are used, similar to Hyland (1999), but also found disparities between MICUSP papers and Hyland's findings, especially in regard to citation integration. Ädel and Garretson (2006) suggest that one possible reason for these differences may be "the editing process and size restrictions of academic journals" (p. 278), which compel RA writers to use more non-integral citations (i.e., parenthetical or superscript citations). Exploring citations in the biology subcorpus of MICUSP, Swales (2014) found differences between subfields but no noteworthy disparity between undergraduate and graduate students. Both groups included the sources in the sentence grammar (i.e., integral citations) much more commonly than found in previous studies of both biology master's theses (Samraj, 2013) and RAs (Hyland, 1999). Supporting Ädel and Garretson (2006), Swales (2014) contends that learning to use non-integral citations takes not only more time and experience, but their use may also be dependent on factors such as writing experience, discipline, and genre (Ädel & Garretson, 2006; Hyland, 1999; Samraj, 2013). While these studies have revealed the surface forms and rhetorical functions of citations in high-rated disciplinary writers' texts, little is known about the stance student writers take in relation to cited sources. Yet, as Ädel and Garretson (2006) hypothesize, "stance is unusually integrated with attribution in student writing" (p. 280). Therefore, consideration of stance in the analysis of citations can contribute to a better understanding of how student writers evaluate multiple voices through citations.

Furthermore, while researchers have investigated L2 undergraduate student writers' use of sources, most of these studies have focused on the challenges that L2 students experience in integrating sources in their writing and the problems they have with source-based writing such as plagiarism and ineffective paraphrasing (e.g., Campbell, 1990; Keck, 2006; Shi, 2004, 2010). Few studies, surprisingly, have analyzed the surface forms and rhetorical functions of citations in undergraduate student writing, particularly in assessed L2 writing in the context of first-year writing (FYW), or the stance L2 FYW students take in relation to the sources they cite in their writing. Examining L2 university students' citation practices from multiple perspectives (form, function, and stance) offers a more comprehensive and representative understanding of not only the ways in which such students incorporate cited material but also the intentions realized by using citations and the affective position taken toward cited proposition. Further, gaining a deeper appreciation of these students' citation practices can provide composition teachers with valuable insight for assisting learners in developing resources and strategies to integrate sources more effectively in their writing.

Taking a multi-perspective analytical approach, this study investigates the citation practices of L2 FYW students in terms of surface forms, rhetorical functions, and writer stance.

Specifically, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the surface forms of citations in L2 FYW students' writing?
2. What are the rhetorical functions of citations in L2 FYW students' writing?
3. What writer stance do L2 FYW students take toward cited materials in their writing?

2. Corpus and methodology

2.1. Description of the corpus

The data for this study consist of a corpus of 100 high-rated research papers written by L2 students in a US-based first-year writing (FYW) course. The assessed research papers are a subset of the Corpus of Ohio Learner and Teacher English (COLTE), a large collection of English-as-a-second-language (ESL) students' writing, ranging in grades from A to F, and teachers' written feedback at Ohio University.[1] This study's corpus is comprised of papers written by ESL undergraduate students in nine different sections of the second of two courses in the FYW sequence. Designed specifically for international and multilingual writers and taught by L2 writing specialists, successful completion of this course fulfills students' institutional FYW requirement for graduation. Students are placed into the course based on the TOEFL iBT writing section score of 24 or higher, institutional intensive English program's (IEP) composition test score of 6/6, and/or completion of the first FYW course with a grade of C or higher. The standardized curriculum is designed to develop students' higher-level academic writing abilities to succeed in disciplinary courses including composing effective papers for different audiences and purposes; analyzing audience and purpose related to various academic genres; engaging in secondary research; integrating sources through quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing, following in-text and end-of-text citations in APA style; using appropriate academic style; and self-editing for grammatical accuracy.

The 100 high-rated research papers selected were the first graded draft of the source-based research paper assignment. These papers were written by 49 female and 51 male undergraduate students. The students' L1 backgrounds include Mandarin (n = 67), Arabic (n = 17), Korean (n = 3), Spanish (n = 3), Brazilian Portuguese (n = 2), and one from eight other languages (Armenian, Greek, French, Gujarati, Macedonian, Norwegian, Thai, and Twi). This distribution of language backgrounds is typical of the student population in this FYW course. Table 1 provides a description of the ESL students from whom the papers were drawn.

The source-based research paper assignment required students to select a topic relevant to general themes (e.g., cyberterrorism, ethnic conflict, media bias, refugee crisis). Students were expected to develop a research question on the selected topic, conduct in-depth library research using primary and secondary academic sources, and explore, analyze, and evaluate the sources in writing their research papers. For this assignment, students submitted an outline and two drafts. Each draft was assessed and provided written feedback based on a standardized grading rubric used by all teachers of the FYW course. The rubric included categories of content, organization, source use, and language use. Regarding source use, the rubric evaluates student papers on the effectiveness of reporting structures used and accuracy in formatting the in-text and end-of-text citations according to APA style. We specifically selected the first graded draft because it did not receive any written feedback from teachers prior to submission. The essays were each assessed by one of five different ESL writing instructors, all of whom had at least an MA in TESOL/applied linguistics. As shown in Table 1, the selected papers were highly rated by these teachers, with a mean score of 88.5%.

All of the papers were cleaned; the paper codes, titles, section headers, footers, and reference lists were removed. Upon cleaning the corpus, the total word count was 154,358 words, and the mean length of the papers was 1543.58 words (SD = 597.22).

2.2. Methods of analysis

In order to examine the surface forms and rhetorical functions of citations in student writing, and the stance students take towards cited propositions, we approached our analysis from multiple perspectives.

2.2.1. Surface forms

To analyze the surface forms of the citations, we first used Hyland's (1999) four citation categories: direct quotation, block quotation (direct quotes of 40 or more words), summary, and generalization. For the present study, we define summaries as paraphrases that refer to only one source, while generalizations are paraphrases that denote synthesis of two or more sources. This system was used to determine the ways in which the students incorporated the words, viewpoints, and ideas of cited material. The citations were subsequently categorized as either integral or non-integral. As Swales (1990) explains, integral citations include the cited author(s) within the grammar of the sentence, thus placing prominence on the messenger(s) (Example 1). In contrast, non-integral citations refer to sources in brackets (or superscript numbers), where the emphasis is placed on the reported message (Example 2).

(1) McBrien (2005) observes that education is one of the key tools that can be used to transform the lives of the refugee children. [F15B0367]

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[1] The Corpus of Ohio Learner and Teacher English (COLTE) is an ongoing 5-year corpus project of the English used by ESL learners and teachers currently being compiled by the ELIP Classroom Research Unit at Ohio University. Since September 2013, we have collected thousands of samples of assessed ESL student writing and teachers' electronic written feedback.

Table 1
Description of the ESL students (N = 100).

	Age	Years of English study in home country	Months of US residence	Terms in IEP	Grade %
Mean	21.51	8.21	25.74	3.91	88.50
SD	1.98	3.72	11.14	1.81	4.78
Min	18.00	1.00	0.50	0.00	80.00
Max	27.00	22.00	53.00	8.00	98.00

Note: SD = standard deviation; Min = minimum value; Max = maximum value.

(2) In the contemporary world, numerous people are consuming dietary supplements, and statistics showing over 50% of American adults take them often (Dickinson & MacKay, 2014) [S16B0325]

We then used Antconc 3.4.4 (Anthony, 2016), a text analysis and concordance tool, to search for potential reporting structures based on Charles (2006), Hyland (1999), Jiang and Hyland (2015), and Thompson and Ye (1991). The search included reporting verbs (e.g., *argue, assume, define*), nouns (e.g., *argument, assumption, definition*) including research nouns (e.g., *data, evidence, investigation*) and writer nouns (e.g., *author, scholar, scientist*), pronouns (e.g., *he, she, they*), and preposition phrases (e.g., *according to X, in X's article, by X*).

2.2.2. Rhetorical functions

In analyzing the rhetorical functions of citations in the corpus, we used Petrić's (2007) functional typology. Building on Thompson's (2001) classification scheme, but excluding the form-based categories from his framework, Petrić's (2007) system specifically emphasizes the "intentions writers realize by using citations" (p. 241). Her typology consists of nine functional types: *attribution, exemplification, further reference, statement of use, application, evaluation, establishing links between sources, comparison of one's own findings or interpretation with other sources,* and *other.* Table 2 presents Petrić's (2007) typology with a definition and illustration of each functional type.

2.2.3. Writer stance

Finally, complementing Petrić's (2007) functional scheme, we utilized Coffin's (2009) writer stance framework to analyze the stance the students took toward the sources cited. While Petrić's (2007) system focuses on a writer's rhetorical intention or purpose for using citations, it does not underscore the writer's dialogic engagement with sources in "managing interpersonal relationships" (Hu & Wang, 2014, p. 14). Coffin's (2009) stance framework emphasizes interpersonal engagement "in which the writer is engaging retrospectively with previous authors and communicating prospectively to an audience" (Hu & Wang, 2014, p. 17), and, thus, adding this analytical layer offers a more unifying and integrative perspective on L2 students' citation practices.

Based on appraisal theory's engagement system (Martin & White, 2005), specifically the attribute subsystem, Coffin's (2009) stance framework focuses on the linguistic choices writers make "to engage with and negotiate voices and

Table 2
Functional typology framework (adapted from Petrić, 2007, pp. 243–247).

Type	Definition	Example
Attribution	To attribute information or activity to source(s)	According to Mongelluzzo (2007), low cost labor in China productivity and growth. [F13B0032]
Exemplification	To illustrate writer's statement through source(s), usually preceded by *for example* or *e.g.*	For example, gym memberships and health clubs can cost monthly anywhere from $50 to $200 (Wells, 2014). [F15B0299]
Further reference	To refer to source(s) providing further information on issue, usually in brackets/footnotes and preceded by *see*	[a]See Trafficking in Women and Prostitution in the Baltic States: Social and Legal Aspects (IOM, Finland, 2001)
Statement of use	To state source(s) and purpose of source(s) used in the paper	[a]In further analysis I will rely on Rosemary Henessy's (1998) theorization of how queer visibility …
Application	To make connections between source(s) and writer's work for writer's own purpose	[a] … students gave me a tacit or inarticulate knowledge that helps formulate interview questions in the language of the interviewee now that I became a "retrospective research" (Reinhartz, 1992, p. 27)
Evaluation	To evaluate source(s) using evaluative language	Another problem in the author's article is that he mentions killers without mentioning their background information. [S16B0386]
Establishing links between sources	To point to links between different sources	Both articles indicate that Paris social-media have posted pictures about French eat, drink and live in the 'no-go' zones. [M16B0442]
Comparison with sources	To indicate similarities/differences between the writer's work and source(s)	[a]While she further argues that community is also threatening to one's sense of self through eradication of differences (xii), such attitude was not expressed by the respondents in my research.
Other	Instances in which the relationship between citing sentence and source is unclear	This quote from Heller raises the question: why do people believe MOOC is the future of higher education? [M14B0231]

[a] These examples are drawn from Petrić (2007), as such functions were not found in the corpus.

viewpoints" (p. 169). Underscoring the dialogic nature of language, this perspective emphasizes linguistic resources writers use to expand or contract dialogic spaces. While her framework consists of three dimensions (i.e., writer stance, textual integration, nature of source), we focused on writer stance, as consideration of stance provides a deeper understanding of students' position toward cited sources, and stance-taking is an essential part of academic writing. Writer stance, according to Coffin, is an affective position a writer takes toward "the words, observations, viewpoints, and theories that comprise the referenced source" (p. 170). Departing from previous analyses that have limited the analysis to reporting verbs (e.g., Hyland, 1999), her framework encompasses a broad range of reporting structures for establishing evaluative stance including reporting verbs, evaluative formulations (e.g., *X clearly shows*), stance nouns (e.g., *X's argument that* …) (Jiang & Hyland, 2015), and cotextual and contextual cues (e.g., *Another problem in X's article is* …).

Coffin's framework is comprised of four stance types: *acknowledge*, *distance*, *endorse*, and *contest*. *Acknowledge* denotes a neutral position a writer takes in which no evaluative comment is offered:

(3) Arnold (2011) **states** that bed occupancy was 80 percent up until the new arrivals. [F15B0422]

Distance, on the other hand, creates a certain detachment from a source, thus allowing the writer to take no responsibility for the reliability of the information presented:

(4) Garcia (2013) also **claims** that the percentage of immigrant population is 13% in 2012 … [M14B0175]

Both *acknowledge* and *distance* are dialogically expansive, as they represent the cited proposition as one among many perspectives. In contrast to these dialogically expansive types, *endorse* and *contest* are dialogically contractive, since they commit the writer to particular viewpoints. These stance types close down the dialogic space because "the writer's personal investment in a viewpoint increases the interpersonal cost of advancing an alternative" (Coffin, 2009, p. 172). *Endorse* permits writers to directly support or agree with a cited source (Example 5), while *contest* expresses a writer's direct critique or rejection of the cited proposition (Example 6).

(5) This evidence **clearly shows** that Steve Jobs has undoubtedly brought success and riches to Apple and Apple's shareholders (Finkle & Mallin, 2010). [F13B0026]
(6) As the result of **the use of inaccurate information and subjective description**, **the article goes to mislead** audiences to consider that the whole Islamic countries are irresponsible and Islam is evil. [M16B0442]

Each author worked independently to manually analyze each citation instance in terms of surface form, rhetorical function, and writer stance, upon which the items were normalized to occurrences per 1000 words (ptw). Agreement among the authors was 99.1% for citation category, 94.3% for citation integration, 89.4% for rhetorical function, and 87.6% for writer stance. The remaining discrepancies were discussed until all authors reached complete agreement.

3. Results and discussion

In this study, we identified a total of 1464 citation instances (M = 14.64, SD = 9.06) in the corpus, and the citation density is 9.48 ptw. In a study of MICUSP biology research papers, Swales (2014) found that the citation density in these papers was 13.6 ptw. Compared to these student writers, this study's L2 undergraduate writers used fewer citations in constructing their texts. However, these L2 writers integrated sources much more frequently than both high-rated (6.85 ptw) and low-rated (6.2 ptw) L2 thesis writers in Petrić's (2007) study. At least in terms of citation density, the L2 FYW writers appear to have recognized the importance (or necessity) of citing sources frequently in academic writing or, perhaps, in fulfilling the writing assignment successfully.

In what follows, we present and discuss the findings of the surface realizations of citations in L2 student writing, followed by the rhetorical functions of these citations and the stance students take toward cited propositions.

3.1. Citation forms in student writing

Table 3 shows that the vast majority of citations in the corpus are expressed as paraphrases, overwhelmingly in the form of summary. Previous studies on academic writing also have shown that citations in professional writing are expressed

Table 3
Citational presentation in L2 student writing.

Category	Frequency	Per 1000 words	%
Block quotation	23	0.15	1.57
Direct quotation	132	0.86	9.02
Summary	1295	8.39	88.46
Generalization	14	0.09	0.96

primarily as summary (Hyland, 1999). The second most common way in which citations are realized in RAs is generalization. As Hyland points out, "[s]ummary and generalization are obviously the most effective ways of achieving [a writer's argument] as they allow the writer greater flexibility to emphasize and interpret what they are citing" (p. 348). Yet generalization is extremely infrequent in our corpus, which may suggest that L2 student writers have considerable difficulty in synthesizing multiple sources in advancing their argument and supporting their claims.

In terms of quotations, Table 3 shows that the L2 students used few block quotations, but direct quotations were commonly employed, supporting previous studies on student writing (Ädel & Garretson, 2006; Campbell, 1990; Shi, 2004). Compared to the MICUSP papers in the humanities and social sciences, however, where 19% or more citations have been found to be direct quotations (Ädel & Garretson, 2006), this study's L2 students quoted directly much less frequently. In fact, the percentage of quotations is comparable to professional writing in the social sciences (Hyland, 1999). Upon closer examination of the types of direct quotations used, we found greater instances of what Borg (2000) refers to as brief quotations (i.e., whole clauses) in these L2 student texts, as shown in Example 7, than quotation fragments (i.e., shorter than a clause such as words and phrases), as illustrated in Example 8.

(7) According to Chitsike (2003, p10), "Zimbabwe's experiences with land reform are of particular significance to other countries in the region like South Africa and Namibia." [S15B0390]

(8) The population needs to be aware that the term "natural" is not a synonym to "safe" (Dickinson, 2012). [S16B0325]

In fact, approximately 77% (or 102 instances) of direct quotations consist of brief quotations and nearly 23% (or 30 instances) are comprised of quotation fragments. Petrić (2012), in her study of quotations in high- and low-rated master's theses, found that low-rated theses included far more brief quotations than high-rated theses, which contained higher frequencies of quotation fragments. As Petrić (2012) contends, unlike fragment use, which requires considerable effort in "reworking … the borrowed material to develop [students'] own discourse" (p. 114), greater inclusion of brief quotations is indicative of less proficient writers since all that is required is inserting the borrowed material into a text "without any modification" (p. 108). Our findings suggest that when it comes to directly quoting sources, the L2 student writers encountered enormous challenges in using the directly borrowed material to establish their own voice.

However, the degree to which the L2 students used direct quotations is minimal compared to the amount of paraphrasing in their texts. The distribution of citational presentation in L2 students' writing, therefore, suggests that these students may have been cognizant in refraining from excessively using source authors' words verbatim in providing context and support for their ideas. This behavior, however, is most likely due to instruction. While quoting to a certain degree is expected, paraphrasing is commonly taught in academic writing courses, including the FYW course in which this study's L2 students were enrolled, to encourage students to put source information in their own words in order to show that they understand the content (Hirvela & Du, 2013). Nevertheless, it is important to note that the students in this context did not wholly abandon the practice of quotation but rather deployed it as one of many strategies.

Previous research examining citations in RAs across disciplines (Hu & Wang, 2014; Hyland, 1999)and in university student science writing (Ädel & Garretson, 2006; Swales, 2014) has found that approximately two-thirds of all citations are presented in non-integral forms. In contrast, Ädel and Garretson (2006) discovered that approximately 80% of citations are in integral forms in texts produced by MICUSP writers in the humanities and social sciences.

Although not as abundant as the MICUSP writers, Table 4 shows a preference for integral structures in the L2 students' texts. The ways in which citations are integrated has a crucial rhetorical effect. Referenced propositions presented in non-integral forms can be perceived as established facts, while those expressed in integral forms locate the propositions as particular views of the cited authors (Coffin, 2009). Using integral citation clearly places prominence on the messenger of the proposition than on the message reported. Integral citations also convey writers' inclination to "foreground and draw attention to [their] engagement" with source material (Coffin, 2009, p. 183). By placing greater prominence on cited authors in the text, it is possible that the L2 student writers were attempting to not only demonstrating their knowledge of the actors involved in the dialogues of their chosen topics but also personalizing their writing by interacting directly with those sources. More likely, however, the students used the integral form more frequently because this is a common way in which they have been instructed in integrating sources in academic writing (Swales, 2014). Furthermore, as Ädel and Garretson (2006) suggest, there might be "a steep learning curve in the use of non-integral forms" (p. 278).

Table 5 presents the most frequent reporting structures used in the corpus. As can be seen, the most common surface structure in L2 student writing is the X + verb + *that* clause:

(9) Bigot (1992) states that more than 80 percent of malaria cases are observed in Africa. [F15B0422]

Table 4
Citational integration in L2 student writing.

Type	Frequency	Per 1000 words	%
Integral	778	5.04	53.14
Non-integral	686	4.44	46.86

Table 5
Most frequent reporting structures in L2 student writing.

Type	Frequency	Per 1000 words	%
X + verb + *that* clause	231	1.50	29.69
According to X	215	1.40	27.63
by X	40	0.26	5.14
In X('s) article	33	0.21	4.24

Being that this structure is the most frequent reporting pattern in academic writing in general (Charles, 2006; Swales, 2014), this finding is unsurprising. Among the verbs searched in the corpus, which are primarily associated with this structure, 55 verbs were used at least once, with 231 total instances overall (1.50 ptw). Only 13 verbs, however, were used by at least five different L2 student writers, with a total of 165 instances (1.07 ptw). These findings contrast sharply with Ädel and Garretson's (2006) and Swales's (2014) analyses of MICUSP writers, who were reported to use 88 and 112 different verbs, respectively.

Table 6 lists the top 10 most frequent reporting verbs in the corpus. These 10 verbs constitute nearly 63% of all reporting verbs used. As shown in the table, two frequently used verbs (*say, talk*) are considered conversational, rarely appearing in professional disciplinary writing, except philosophy (Hyland, 1999). Ädel and Garretson (2006), however, found that *say* appears frequently in MICUSP papers in the social sciences. Furthermore, these 10 verbs are some of the most frequent reporting verbs used by MICUSP writers. While it could be argued that the L2 writers in our corpus are limited in their repertoire of reporting verbs, the restricted range is comparable to findings of student writing (Ädel & Garretson, 2006; Swales, 2014) and professional writing across disciplines (Hyland, 1999).

It should be noted, however, that our corpus consists of papers written for an FYW course and not for disciplinary courses like Ädel and Garretson (2006) and Swales (2014). Without comparable research findings of L1 or L2 student writers' use of reporting verbs in FYW, it remains indeterminate whether the range of reporting verbs used in these students' writing is appropriately restricted. It is interesting to note that among these 10 verbs, two (*show, find*) are considered verbs used to indicate a writer's commitment to the "factual status of a report" (Hyland, 1999, p. 350), while the remaining eight are non-committal. This distribution of commitment and non-commitment verbs mirrors those of published RAs across disciplines, suggesting that these high-rated L2 student writers may have adopted the practices of academic writers in general, at least in this regard.

As shown in Table 5 above, the X + verb + *that* clause structure is followed by three preposition phrases (i.e., *according to X, by X, in X('s) article*). Together, these four structures comprise two-thirds of all reporting structures in the corpus. However, X + verb + *that* clause is less frequent in the L2 students' texts (approximately 30%) than found in previous studies on student writing (cf. Swales, 2014: 70%), perhaps due to the high frequency of the adjunct agent structure *according to* (nearly 28%) (cf. Swales, 2014: 6%):

(10) According to Polonsky (2013), Dadaab, which represents the biggest refugee camps in the world, has over 300,000 refugees … [F15B0422]

In fact, in some students' writing, about half are of this structural type, and in one extreme case, 72% of citations (18/25) are of this adjunct structure. Previous studies have also found that *according to* is an extraordinarily dominant structure in L2 student writing (Bychkovska & Lee, 2017; Lee & Chen, 2009; Thompson & Tribble, 2001). The high frequency of this structure in L2 student writing may be due to students' "simply trying too hard to sound more formal or professional," since "[a]ccording to is an academic phrase or formula that they are familiar with" (Lee & Chen, 2009, p. 159). Such phrases serve as *lexical teddy bears* for students (Hasselgren, 1994), as learners find comfort in using them across communicative situations (Bychkovska & Lee, 2017). Yet, as Lee and Chen (2009) report, many L2 students employ *according to* frequently without understanding its pragmatic meaning, using it sometimes mistakenly as references to "general, received knowledge of the field" because they are unaware of what constitutes a field's general and specialist knowledge (p. 158). Furthermore, they argue that this expression is highly represented in student writing because their still developing competence limits their ability to use the full range of linguistic resources in the academic stylistic toolkit for referencing cited sources.

3.2. Rhetorical functions of citations in student writing

As Table 7 shows, the dominant rhetorical function of citations in the corpus is *attribution*, supporting previous studies on student writing. This functional type is considered to be the default citation function in student writing (Petrić, 2007), as it "does not demand advanced rhetorical skills" (Mansourizadeh & Ahmad, 2011, p. 158). Even though students are frequently encouraged to establish their voice, identity, and authority in their writing with the use of citations, this study's L2 writers largely employed the *attribution* function to remain descriptive for "knowledge telling" purposes (i.e., retelling old information) rather than to be analytical with the goal of "knowledge transformation" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). In writing to transform knowledge, writers problematize existing knowledge, show relationships between various sources as well as between sources and one's own ideas, and propose novel perspectives. Instead of assuming agency to transform knowledge,

Table 6
Top 10 most frequent reporting verbs (lemma) in L2 student writing.

Verb	Frequency	Per 1000 words	%
1. say	28	0.18	12.12
2. state	27	0.18	11.69
3. report	17	0.11	7.36
4. show	15	0.10	6.49
5. find	14	0.09	6.06
6. describe	10	0.07	4.33
7. use	10	0.07	4.33
8. claim	9	0.06	3.90
9. indicate	8	0.05	3.46
10. talk	7	0.05	3.03
TOTAL	145	0.96	62.77

Table 7
Rhetorical functions of citations in L2 student writing.

Verb	Frequency	Per 1000 words	%
Attribution	1280	8.29	87.43
Exemplification	67	0.43	4.58
Further reference	–	–	–
Statement of use	–	–	–
Application	–	–	–
Evaluation	98	0.63	6.69
Establishing links between sources	18	0.12	1.23
Comparison with sources	–	–	–
Other	1	0.01	0.07

the L2 students seemed to have used this writing opportunity to permit source authors the agency to argue their own claims, similar to low-rated L2 thesis writers (Petrić, 2007). Examples 11 and 12 illustrate this function in the corpus:

(11) Alley et al. (2005) also mentioned that the collapse of Greenland ice-sheet is accelerating. [F13B0033]
(12) According to Paul Frimpong (2013), many of the youth on the continent come out of school seeking white coloured jobs … [M14B0232]

As shown in Table 7, the L2 student writers rarely relied on other more sophisticated functional types. In fact, four of the rhetorical functions analyzed were not used at all. The other types used, though infrequently, include *evaluation* (Example 13) and *exemplification* (Example 14), and a few instances of *establishing links between sources* (Example 15).

(13) Although Fletcher ends her article by saying the human mind is the most dangerous weapon … she failed to provide some of the benefits … [S16B0386]
(14) For example, according to the CDC, smoking increases the chances of having cancer. [S16B0408]
(15) However, according to Graham (2015)'s article … and Matlack (2015)'s article … there is no evidence to prove the existing of 'no-go' zones. [M16B0442]

Normalized frequencies indicate that these three other types combined were used only about once per paper since the average length of each paper in the corpus is slightly over 1540 words. Despite receiving instruction on citation use, it seems to be the case that the students were not fully aware of the various purposes and rhetorical functions that citations play in constructing an argument. Our findings, therefore, suggest that L2 FYW students' use of more rhetorically complex citations types at this developmental stage is rather limited, and helping students understand the diverse range of functional roles citations play is an area that may need considerable attention in L2 FYW courses. Related to functional roles of citation is writer stance, which we turn to next.

3.3. Writer stance in student writing

Table 8 shows that the dominant stance the L2 student writers took toward cited sources was neutral in the form of *acknowledge*, similar to L1 thesis writers (Coffin, 2009) and even professional writers (Hu & Wang, 2014; Lee, Murphy, & Baker, 2015). As Coffin (2009) explains, the effect of such a non-committal stance "is a dialogically expansive text with attributed views being represented via an impartial reporting voice" (p. 180). Supporting our findings of the primary rhetorical function of citations in the corpus (Table 7), the L2 student writers mainly cited propositions of sources to show

Table 8
Writer stance in L2 student writing.

Category	Frequency	Per 1000 words	%
Acknowledge	988	6.40	67.49
Distance	334	2.16	22.81
Endorse	64	0.41	4.37
Contest	78	0.51	5.33

their familiarity with them with few evaluative or analytical commentaries. Along with *acknowledge*, *distance* was the other main stance type in the student texts, which places the responsibility of the reliability of the proposition on the cited source. A great majority of this stance type was realized through the adjunct agent structure:

(16) Moreover, according to Raja (2013), a language is important because it can express culture. [M14B0171R2]

In this example, the writer places the responsibility of the proposition that language is important in expressing culture on Raja. While *distance* does not necessarily imply a writer's agreement or disagreement with cited proposition, it could be that the writer ultimately agrees with the cited source, as the example suggests.

This stance type, however, is highly infrequent in both professional writing (Hu & Wang, 2014; Lee et al., 2015) and L1 student writing (Coffin, 2009). Combined, over 90% of the evaluative stance in the corpus was dialogically expansive, which opens up the dialogic space for alternative perspectives. Consistent with previous studies (Coffin, 2009; Hu & Wang, 2014; Hyland, 1999; Lee et al., 2015), the L2 writers appear to assume a more non-committal position toward cited material rather than taking a strong positive or negative stance. Approaching the integration of sources from a disinterested position expresses impartiality toward cited material, "reflecting the need to build a convincing argument by simply displaying an awareness of prior or parallel research without accepting to corrupt it with personal judgment" (Hyland, 1999, p. 361). Such an approach allows writers to indirectly align themselves with cited material without appearing biased (Coffin, 2009), and thus the effect seems to be a text that is perceived as objective and balanced.

Unlike dialogically expansive stance types, dialogically contractive stance expressions were infrequently used by the L2 students. As can be seen in Table 8, less than 10% of writer stance in the corpus is comprised of *endorse* and *contest*. Similar to Coffin's (2009) findings, the L2 students used slightly more *contest* than *endorse*, perhaps indicative of these students' awareness of the value Anglophone academic culture places on taking a critical stance toward received knowledge (Hu & Wang, 2014). Their linguistic repertoire for contesting or critiquing source texts, however, was still rather unsophisticated, as the following typical examples illustrate:

(17) This article is totally biased against Chinese international students. [S16B0389]
(18) … he calls the guns supporters "gun freak", which is impoliteness, even insult. [M16B0492]
(19) Actually, author's explanation is not true. [M16B0442]

While the writers in these examples clearly attempt to take a strong negative stance toward the sources, these examples are illustrative of the limited linguistic resources L2 students possess in accomplishing such contestations and critiques of source texts. They also illustrate Bloch and Chi's (1995) point that inexperienced writers tend to name the sources directly in their critique. Unlike student writers, however, professional writers are inclined to take a more positive than a negative position toward cited material (Hu & Wang, 2014; Hyland, 1999). Taking a strong positive alignment with cited authors actually allows writers to advance their own arguments (Coffin, 2009). In the corpus, the following examples are typical ways in which students use the *endorse* stance type:

(20) Moreover, the study of Antonov, Levitus & Boyer (2005) directly prove the thermal expansion of oceans. [F13B0033]
(21) Another research provided an effective evidence to support this theory. [F13B0045]

These examples also illustrate L2 students' linguistic limitation in directly agreeing or supporting cited propositions.

Nevertheless, such strong positive or negative stance is not common in L2 students' writing. As Coffin argues, "an overuse of *endorse* or *contest* modes of attribution may weaken an argument by constructing an inappropriately critical or overly polemical writer persona" (p. 192). However, it is likely that, unlike professional writers, L2 student writers perhaps are inclined to show deference toward published sources, as authors of these texts may be viewed as more knowledgeable experts and their words, ideas, and viewpoints to be credible, reliable, and authoritative (Hirvela & Du, 2013). It is also probable that, as these students were writing for a non-disciplinary course, they lacked the breadth and depth of knowledge of their chosen topics to engage with the sources in more meaningful ways, and perceived the writing assignment as purely an exercise for the purpose of fulfilling the FYW course requirement. Being that the FYW course is one of the few opportunities L2 university students have for direct writing instruction, however, it may be crucial to instruct students more explicitly in

understanding the ways in which different citations express distinct sorts of stance and how different stance types can be used rhetorically to build a convincing argument.

4. Conclusion

This study examined the citation behaviors of high-rated L2 undergraduate students in the context of FYW. The cited sources are overwhelmingly paraphrased with minimal quotations, thus suggesting that instruction may have an effect on students' choices. However, the L2 students seemed to encounter challenges in synthesizing multiple sources, as few generalizations (i.e., multiple sources cited together) are used. Furthermore, similar to other student populations, these L2 students relied more on integral citations, which may suggest, as Ädel and Garretson (2006) point out, that the learning curve for using non-integral forms is "steep" for both L1 and L2 students. Relatedly, the L2 students' use of X + verb + that clause was minimal in comparison to high-rated L1 student writing, and they used the adjunct agent structure frequently, perhaps, to cope with their inexperienced ability to report others' words, ideas, or viewpoints in an appropriate academic style. Furthermore, the L2 students relied heavily on just a handful of reporting verbs.

In terms of rhetorical functions of citations, *attribution* is the primary type used, which indicates that the L2 students were still in the process of developing their ability to take advantage of the host of more rhetorically complex purposes for citing sources. Restricting citations exclusively to this function produces texts that are highly descriptive rather than analytical. Such writing may be perceived as simply retelling the existing knowledge rather than transforming that knowledge (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). Similar to rhetorical function, the L2 student writers primarily adopted a non-committal stance by merely acknowledging or distancing themselves from cited materials, as opposed to taking a strong positive or negative position, or directing their readers toward or away from particular propositions. While using dialogically contractive modes of stance frequently may lead to the construction of texts that is perceived as being, on the one hand, highly confrontational, or, on the other hand, excessively agreeable, using them infrequently may also lead to writing that appears overly deferential to received knowledge and lacking critical assessment of source material.

We approached our analysis from multiple analytical angles, thus permitting a more inclusive perspective on L2 FYW students' citation behaviors. Examining the linguistic realizations of citations in student texts revealed the ways in which L2 students at this level of experience incorporate source materials at the surface level. Analyzing the rhetorical functions of citations permitted us to gain a better understanding of these L2 student writers' rhetorical intentions for using sources. Yet, only analyzing these two dimensions limits insights into how L2 students engage dialogically with source material. Thus, adding the layer of writer stance into the analysis provided us with a richer understanding of not only the forms and functions of citations in these students' writing, but more importantly how they managed interpersonal relations with sources and readers. By taking a multidimensional analytical approach, our analysis offers a multi-layered and integrative perspective on students' citation practices.

We, however, admit that a few limitations exist in this study. First, we only examined the citation practices of a group of high-rated L2 undergraduate students within an FYW course at one institution. Therefore, future research could examine the citation behaviors of L2 university students in various FYW contexts to compare the citation practices of assessed student writing across a wider range of proficiency levels and institutional settings. Further, analysis could also be conducted between high-rated L1 and L2 FYW student texts, or between comparable texts in high-rated L1 and L2 student texts in disciplinary-specific courses, to determine whether it is the first language or writing experience that may affect students' citation practices. Future research could also approach citation practices from a developmental perspective by tracking L2 undergraduate students' citation behavior over time. Lastly, discourse-based interviews with L2 students could be conducted in order to gain students' perspectives on their citation choices. Such studies would not only be highly revealing of students' developmental engagement with sources but also offer important insights for L2 writing instruction.

In closing, we propose some pedagogical options for enhancing L2 university students' citation practices. Supporting other L2 writing scholars (e.g., Mansourizadeh & Ahmad, 2011; Petric, 2007; Thompson & Tribble, 2001), source and citation use—its various forms, functions, and stance—needs much more direct instructional attention in FYW courses for L2 students than it may currently receive. One of the most important activities in which teachers could engage learners is helping them notice various citation forms, functions, and stance types in models of exemplary student writing and their own writing. Teachers could involve students in tasks using the frameworks presented in this study to raise their awareness of the choices available in terms of surface forms, rhetorical functions, and evaluative positions. Writing instruction may also need to focus on expanding students' repertoire of reporting structures, including reporting verbs, to move students beyond their current lexical and rhetorical teddy bears (Hasselgren, 1994) in order to utilize a broader range of structures to more accurately communicate the intentions of cited sources. Additionally, instruction could focus on citation integration (i.e., integral vs. non-integral) to help learners understand the intended meanings such choices can suggest. Relatedly, class activities can focus on showing students how to synthesize multiple sources (i.e., generalization), as such a task has been found to be quite challenging, even for advanced L1 writers. By helping students develop a broad spectrum of formal, functional, and stance choices, learners would be able to gain better control over when and how to be deferential, critical, and agreeable.

While source integration is but one dimension of successful academic writing, using citations effectively is crucially important in the dialogic construction of one's argumentation. If we desire L2 students to more fully engage with sources in meaningful ways in early undergraduate writing courses, such as FYW, and beyond, it is not enough to address citations in the context of avoiding plagiarism or focus instruction only on the mechanics of citations, thus reducing writing with sources as

merely a technical exercise. We need to help students view academic writing as a complex socio-rhetorical activity and understand the diversity of rhetorical roles citations play and meanings they express in composing persuasively sophisticated academic texts.

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