Citation Practices and ELF Writing: A Comparison between Italian- and English-speaking Academics Publishing in English

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Abstract
Citation practices have become a popular area of research in written academic discourse. Much attention has been devoted to this issue from a cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural/cross-linguistic perspective. A related area of research that has received scholarly attention is the use of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in academic texts written by non-native English-speaking writers from different linguistic/cultural backgrounds. The present paper sets out to contribute to this research field, focusing on a small corpus of final drafts of unpublished research papers written in English as a Lingua Franca by Italian academics, taken from the SciELF corpus (created at the University of Helsinki, Finland). This corpus is contrasted with a corpus of published articles written by native English-speaking academics. The aim of this investigation is to study whether there are differences in citation practices between Italian academics' articles and their Anglophone colleagues' counterparts. The methodology adopted for this study combines a discourse and a corpus perspective. The comparison between ELF and native English citation forms points to similar tendencies rather than highly conspicuous differences.

Keywords: ELF writing, citation practices, academic English, native/non-native English-speaking writers.

1. Introduction

Over the last three decades, an increasing number of academic discourse studies have placed emphasis on citation practices and reporting in research (e.g. Swales 1986; Thompson and Ye 1991; Hunston 1993; Tadros 1993; Thomas and Hawes 1994; Thompson 1996; Hyland 1999, 2002; Thompson and Tribble 2001). It is widely recognised that many of the activities within academic communities involve scholars reporting and commenting on other scholars'

discourse. This leads to the complex interplay between 'averral' and 'attribution' (Sinclair 1988). In Sinclair's terms, a text is made up of propositions which may either be put forward by the writer (averrals) or attributed by the writer to some other person or entity (attributions).

Swales (1981, 1986, 1990) pioneered the study of citation practices from an applied linguistics perspective. He distinguished between integral and non-integral citation forms: the former are citations in which the name of the cited author appears within the sentence, while the latter are those that make reference to the author in parentheses or by superscript number. Alongside Swales' work, there has been substantial research into the functions of citations. Thompson and Tribble (2001) and Thompson (2005) classified non-integral citations into four subtypes named 'source', 'origin', 'reference' and 'identification'. 'Source' is used to attribute a research finding, information or idea to an author with the function of showing knowledge of the field. 'Origin' is used to "indicate the originator of a concept or product" (Thompson and Tribble 2001: 95). 'Reference' is used to introduce sources for further information, and 'identification' is used to identify the actor or the agent in the cited excerpt. Thompson and Tribble (2001) have also classified integral citations, mainly based on syntactic criteria, into three subtypes named 'verb-controlling', where citation includes a lexical verb that might be active or passive; 'naming', where citation is used as a noun phrase or part of a noun phrase; and 'non-citation', where the year of publication does not follow the name of the cited person.

As observed by Hyland (2002), the use of a reporting verb is one of the most explicit ways of attributing content to another source, and represents a salient rhetorical choice. According to Hyland (2002: 344), "the importance of these verbs lies in the fact that they allow the writer to clearly convey the kind of activity reported and to precisely distinguish an attitude to that information, signaling whether the claims are to be taken as accepted or not". A variety of models for classifying reporting verbs have been developed on the basis of the processes denoted by the verb (e.g. Thomas and Hawes 1994) or combining denotational issues with the evaluative potential of verb types (e.g. Thompson and Ye 1991; Hyland 2002).

Thompson and Ye (1991) provide a detailed classification of reporting verbs in academic discourse. They categorize reporting

verbs according to the process they perform: 'research' verbs, which refer to mental or physical processes that are part of research work (such as *find*, *calculate* or *isolate*); 'textual' verbs, which refer to processes in which verbal expression is an obligatory element (such as *state*, *challenge* and *report*); and 'mental' verbs, which refer primarily to mental processes (such as *believe*, *think* and *consider*). Later studies such as those by Thomas and Hawes (1994) and by Hyland (2002) also use this three-way categorization, although Hyland uses the terms 'discourse' and 'cognition' in place of Thompson and Ye's 'textual' and 'mental' verb categories.

Much attention has been devoted to citation practices across disciplines. Most of this research has examined how citations are influenced by the differences in disciplinary conventions between what Becher (1989) refers to as "hard" and "soft" disciplines, both in scholarly writing such as journal articles and in student writing such as doctoral theses and master's dissertations. For example, Hyland (1999), in a study of 80 research articles taken from eight different disciplines representing the soft/hard divide, found that writers in soft disciplines (e.g. sociology and applied linguistics) use more citations than writers in hard disciplines (e.g. mechanical engineering and physics): the former are shown to be more likely to use integral structures, employ discourse reporting verbs and represent cited authors as adopting a stance (Hyland 1999: 359-362). On the other hand, Charles (2006) studied citation use in Ph.D. theses in politics/international relations and science materials and demonstrated that both disciplines use significant numbers of reporting clauses, typically as integral citations with a human subject. Similarly, Samraj (2013), in her study of citations in discussion sections of master's theses and in corresponding sections in published research articles in biology, found similarities between master's theses and research articles in their citing practices. She showed that the student writers exhibit the same range of citation functions as published authors.

Parallel to the cross-disciplinary focus, attention to citation from a cross-cultural and cross-linguistic perspective is also growing. Research comparing citation practices has been carried out on several combinations of languages: English and Chinese (Taylor and Chen 1991; Bloch and Chi 1995; Hu and Wang 2014); English and Spanish (Mur Dueñas 2009; Soler-Monreal and Gil-Salom 2011); English, French and Norwegian (Fløttum, Dahl, and Kinn 2006);

English and Italian (Bondi 2009); English and Croatian (Varga and Gradečak-Erdeljić 2017), and English and Lithuanian (Šinkūnienė 2017). These studies show that, despite the existence of discipline-bound similarities, there are substantial differences explained in terms of the complex interplay between what Atkinson (2004: 279) refers to as "big" (i.e. national) and "small" (i.e. disciplinary) cultures.

One more area of citation research that has received scholarly attention is related to the use of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in academic texts written by non-native English-speaking academics from different linguistic/cultural backgrounds. For example, Dontcheva-Navratilova (2016), in her study of citations in a corpus of English-medium research articles in linguistics written by Czech and Anglophone scholars, shows that Czech linguists writing in English tend to use fewer citations than their Anglophone colleagues, suggesting that these divergences are related to the linguacultural background in which Anglophone and Czech linguists strive to construct their identities as members of the global and/or local academic community. The influence of the writer's native language and culture on the management of citation was also discussed by Carter-Thomas and Rowley-Jolivet's (2013) study of citation practices in pre-publication final versions of papers written by French researchers publishing in English. In contrast to Dontcheva-Navratilova's (2016) results, they find that the number of citations used by French researchers publishing in English is identical to the number used by their English colleagues. However, although they note that expert French researchers show a clear perception of the overall role of citation in research writing, they also highlight some problems, which are either culture- or language-related. For example, they find that several problems are related to inappropriate or imprecise use of referring devices in the case of inter- and intra-textual reference. These problems are suggested to be linked to an insufficient perception of the potential ambiguity of deictic determiners such as *this*+N (*this paper, this work*, *this study*) and *these*+N (*these authors*) in English. They also show that French researchers tend to underuse reporting structures and rely on a very restricted range of verbs or nouns, thus diminishing the efficacy of citation.

Other research has also focused on the influence of the sociocultural context on the way English-medium national and

international journal articles include citations from publications in languages other than English. Hewings, Lillis, Vladimirou (2010), in a study of 240 published articles written by non-Anglophone (Hungarian, Portuguese, Slovakian and Spanish) and Anglophone (UK and US) psychologists, find that non-Anglophone researchers tend to include more citations in their national language when publishing in local English medium journals than when they publish in international English-medium journals. Similarly, Breeze (2015: 54) shows that "little work not published in English is cited in indexed journals, even when the authors are not based in English-speaking countries".

As previous research has shown, the study of citation practices used by ELF academic writers vs. native English-speaking writers has involved several languages. One notable exception to date is the study of citations used by Italian-speaking academics publishing in English. The present paper attempts to help fill this gap in the research field, by focusing on a small corpus of final drafts of unpublished research papers written in English as a Lingua Franca by Italian academics, taken from the SciELF corpus (created at the University of Helsinki, Finland)[1]. The corpus will be contrasted with a corpus of published articles written by native English-speaking academics. The aim of this investigation is to study whether there are differences in citation practices between final versions of papers by Italian academics and published articles by their native English-speaking colleagues, so as to gain insights into possible differences between ELF and native writing. More specifically, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. Do Italian academics writing in English differ from English-speaking academic writers in their use of integral and non-integral citations?
2. Do Italian academics differ from English-speaking academic writers in the use of surface forms of their citations?

The next section describes the corpora used for the study as well as the methodology adopted. The results will be reported in Section 3, followed by concluding remarks in Section 4.

[1] http://www.helsinki.fi/elfa/scielf.html [visited: 15.07.2018]. For a detailed description of the ScieELF corpus, see Rowley-Jolivet (2017).

2. Materials and methods

The study is based on two corpora. The first corpus is composed of texts taken from the SciELF corpus, a collection of academic articles written by users of English as a Lingua Franca in different disciplines. These papers have not undergone any professional proofreading and most of them are final drafts of unpublished manuscripts. The SciELF corpus consists of 150 articles, for a total of 759,300 words, written during the years 2013 and 2015. The authors of these papers come from 10 different first language backgrounds (Finnish, Czech, French, Chinese, Spanish, Russian, Swedish, Italian, Brazilian Portuguese and Romanian). The present study is based on a small subcorpus of the SciELF, consisting of 10 articles written by Italian researchers in hard and soft disciplines: Chemistry, Biochemistry, Virology, Gastroenterology, Economics, Sociology, Linguistics, and Philosophy, for a total of 57,533 words. The corpus includes one article per discipline except for economics (3 articles). In the present paper, this corpus will be identified as IWE (Italians Writing in English).

The IWE corpus was contrasted with a corpus comprising 10 published journal articles written by native English academics in the same disciplines as those composing the IWE corpus, for a total of 60,162 words. This corpus will be identified as NSE (Native Speakers of English). The sample articles were selected from the following leading international journals: *Analytica Chimica Acta*, *Journal of Inorganic Biochemistry*, *Journal of Virology*, *European Journal of Gastroenterology & Hepatology*, *European Economic Review*, *European Journal of Political Economy*, *International Journal of Industrial Organization*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *World Englishes*, and *Mind*. One article was extracted from each journal. The articles were selected on the basis of their authors' 'nativeness', taking into account their names and their affiliation. The articles were published between 2013 and 2015.

The articles in both corpora use the two main referencing systems typically used in research articles: author-date and number system. The author-date is used in the soft disciplines of both corpora (linguistics, economics, sociology, philosophy), whereas the number system is used in the hard disciplines of both corpora (except for chemistry in the IWE corpus, where author-date is used instead).

Following Hyland's (2000: 23) methodology, to retrieve instances of citation a computer search for prototypical citational forms was carried out using *WordSmith 6* (Scott 2012), including all the names in the bibliographies, third person singular and plural pronouns, Latinate references to other citations like *op cit*., *ibid*, and reporting clauses introduced by a *that*-clause complement (Biber et al. 1999: 196). To identify reporting clauses, I started from a search in the corpus for the word *that*, and only instances where *that* was used to introduce a complement clause were selected, more specifically the following two patterns: V-*that*, where the subject of the projecting clause was an individual (e.g. *Hopkins and Kornienko show that*) or a research noun (e.g. *study*, *work* as in *Several studies (13, 14) have indicated that…*) and *it be* V-*ed that* (e.g. *It is believed that…*)[2]. For both verbs and nouns, I excluded cases where no specific reference was made to a published work, author, or school of thought (see example 1), as these can be considered to be statements of general knowledge rather than citations:

1) It is well known that HIV cohorts are highly enriched in risk (…) (IWE)

In order to classify the citation structures of each of the two basic citation types, integral and non-integral (Swales 1990: 148), and to compare citation patterns used by Italian- and English-speaking academics writing in English, I adapted Thompson and Tribble's (2001) classification of citations based on form (see Table 1), as discussed in section 1, to illustrate possible differences in their use between academic ELF and native English (Mauranen et al. 2010). All examples are taken from the two corpora under examination.

[2] Omission of the complementizer *that* is rare in academic prose (Biber et al. 1999; Charles 2006), as confirmed by a manual analysis of two of the most frequent reporting verbs in the corpora, *show* and *suggest*, which revealed that no instances occurred without the complementizer.

TABLE 1
Types and examples of citation structures

Non-integral citation pattern	Examples
a) No reporting verb (NRV): single author/multiple authors or subscript numbers in parentheses	(1) Several scientific efforts have been performed to propose innovative analytical tools able to characterise the geographical provenance of different commodities such as: mineral water [**Voerkelius, Gesine & Rummel et al., 2010**], olive oil [**Camin, Larcher & Nicolini et al., 2010**] (…)
	(2) Primary sclerosing cholangitis (PSC), autoimmune hepatitis (AIH) and PSC/AIH overlap syndrome are autoimmune liver diseases (AILD) of unknown origin, affecting also paediatric population (**1, 2**).
b) Research noun (RN) (e.g. paper, study, work, research) + reporting verb	(3) **A number of studies** have focused on **showing that** taxing conspicuous consumption can be welfare enhancing (…) (e.g., Frank, 1985b; Ng, 1987; Ireland, 1994).
c) References to authors (RA) (e.g. some researchers) + reporting verb	(4) **A number of scholars have analysed** the role of critics within sectors like publishing (Janssen 1997), television (Bielby et al. 2005), film (Baumann 2001, 2002) (…)
d) Reporting verb in the passive voice	(5) Furthermore, **it has also been shown that** the Sr value is not influenced by winemaking process (Almeida & Vasconcelos, 2004).
e) Directive in brackets	(6) (**see** Riley 2001)
Integral citation pattern	
a) Reported author (RA) + reporting verb	(7) **Hopkins and Kornienko (2004, 2009) show that** (…)
	(8) **As Siepmann (2005, 1) points out** (…)
b) Research noun (RN) + reporting verb (noun phrase or possessive noun phrase, e.g. genitive's or of/by phrase)	(9) **A recent study** by Hopkins and Kornienko (2010) **found that** (…)
c) Reporting verb in the passive voice	(10) **A first formal analysis is found** in Duesenberry (1949) where it is proved that (…)
d) Adjunct agent structure (*according to…*)	(11) **According to** Firth (1968: 181) (…)

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Citations across the two corpora: an overview

The analysis reveals that the frequency of citations in both corpora is almost identical, with a density of 4.44 per 1,000 words in the IWE corpus and of 4.60 in the NSE corpus (see Table 2). The results here echo those of Carter-Thomas and Rowley-Jolivet (2013: 114), who, as mentioned in section 1, found that both French writers of English and native English researchers use an identical number of citations when writing in English. My results support their view that "there is a remarkable stability in the citation ratio among experienced researchers" (Carter-Thomas and Rowley-Jolivet 2013: 114). However, these findings are unexpected in the light of the results of previous cross-cultural research, as discussed in section 1. As Dontcheva-Navratilova (2016: 61) observes, the use of English as a lingua franca is seen as a factor affecting the use of citations by scholars of small academic communities as "writing in a foreign language is likely to affect the mode of expression and the rhetorical strategies non-Anglophone scholars opt for in their academic discourse". However, as she shows, in recent years small academic discourse communities have been forced to accommodate themselves to the predominant Anglophone academic conventions in order to increase their chances of being accepted by institutional gatekeepers, such as journal editors and peer reviewers. In agreement with Dontcheva-Navratilova (2016), a possible interpretation of my results is that the institutional pressure on Italian scholars to publish in English increases their exposure to the influence of academic English, in order to make their papers acceptable according to international publication standards.

TABLE 2
Overall frequencies of citations in both corpora

IWE		NSE	
Raw freq.	Freq. per 1,000 words (ptw)	Raw freq.	Freq. per 1,000 words (ptw)
256	4.44	277	4.60

The findings also reveal similar tendencies in the use of citations across disciplines in both corpora. Soft disciplines (economics, sociology, linguistics, and philosophy) tend to employ more citations in both the IWE and the NSE corpora (2.76 ptw and 3.24 ptw respectively) compared to hard disciplines (chemistry, biochemistry, gastroenterology, virology): 1.68 ptw in the IWE corpus and 1.36 ptw in the NSE corpus. Generally, the NSE results conform to Hyland's (1999) data, pointing to a higher frequency of citations in soft disciplines than in hard disciplines.

However, the analysis points to variation. A significant difference exists in the frequency of citations between the two corpora across soft and hard disciplines. IWE has fewer citations than NSE in the soft sciences, and more in the hard sciences. A possible explanation could be the difference in length between the research articles in the soft/hard disciplinary divide in the two corpora. In the soft sciences the IWE research articles are longer than the NSE ones (6,620 avg words/article vs. 5,950), while in the hard sciences they are shorter in length (4,450 avg words/article vs. 6,042). Even though the citation frequency rates have been normalized, article length and structure may affect citation practices. I leave this suggestion, which is marginal for the present study, for future investigation.

Further similarities can be noted in the types of citations employed in each corpus: integral and non-integral (see Table 3).

TABLE 3
Integral and non-integral citations in both corpora

Types of citations	IWE		NSE	
	Raw freq.	Freq. ptw	Raw freq.	Freq. ptw
Integral citations	112	1.94	99	1.64
Non-integral citations	144	2.50	178	2.96
TOTAL	256	4.44	277	4.60

As Table 3 shows, both Italian and English academics use many more non-integral than integral citations (IWE 2.50 ptw and NSE 2.96 ptw vs IWE 1.94 ptw and NSE 1.64 ptw). This seems to show that both Italian and English scholars tend to place more emphasis on the text

reference itself rather than to its source, confirming Hyland's (2000: 23) claim that "the use of one form rather than the other appears to reflect a decision to give greater emphasis to either the reported author or the reported message". From an ELF perspective, this result may point towards the internationalization – and progressive standardization – of academic discourse (Mauranen et al. 2010). This reinforces the idea that, although their texts are final drafts of unpublished papers, Italian scholars writing in English adopt similar citation practices to those used by Anglophone academics. Although the analysis reveals similar preferences towards the use of non-integral as opposed to integral citations, a significant difference exists in the frequency distribution between the two citation types across the corpora. There is a much larger frequency gap between non-integral and integral citations in NSE than in IWE. This discrepancy may suggest that the two groups of scholars exploit the potential of both citation types in different ways.

In addition to the frequency of occurrences of citation types in each corpus, another important feature emerging from the analysis is the degree of disciplinary variation across the corpora. Table 4 shows the frequency of integral and non-integral citations used in the IWE corpus versus the NSE corpus across disciplines.

TABLE 4
Distribution of integral and non-integral citations by discipline

Discipline	IWE		NSE	
	Integral Raw freq./ ptw	Non-integral Raw freq./ ptw	Integral Raw freq./ ptw	Non-integral Raw freq./ ptw
Chemistry	1/0.02	35/0.60	0	21/0.35
Biochemistry	8/0.14	22/0.38	0	28/0.47
Virology	3/0.05	2/0.03	0	13/0.21
Gastroenterology	9/0.16	17/0.30	1/0.02	19/0.31
Economics	17/0.30	40/0.70	56/0.93	34/0.57
Sociology	14/0.24	14/0.24	8/0.13	22/0.37
Linguistics	46/0.80	8/0.14	19/0.31	38/0.63
Philosophy	14/0.24	6/0.10	15/0.25	3/0.05

Overall, the findings reveal that the incidence of non-integral citations is higher than that of integral citations in hard disciplines in both corpora. However, there is a clear difference in their distribution in the two corpora. There is a much larger frequency gap between non-integral and integral citations in the NSE corpus (1.34 occurrences ptw of non-integral citations against only 0.02 ptw of integral ones) than in the IWE corpus (1.31 occurrences ptw of non-integral and 0.37 ptw of integral ones), confirming previous studies (Hyland 2000; Mansourizadeh and Ahmad 2011) showing that non-integral citations are dominant in English papers in the hard disciplines.

With respect to the distribution of integral and non-integral citations in soft disciplines across the two corpora, the findings also show similarities, as shown in Table 4. The data show a frequency of 1.58 occurrences ptw of integral citations in the IWE corpus and 1.62 occurrences ptw in the NSE corpus against 1.18 ptw of non-integral ones in the IWE corpus and 1.62 ptw in the NSE corpus. As regards the NSE corpus, again the results confirm previous research (Hyland 2000).

The disciplines of economics and linguistics, however, diverge somewhat. Italian economics scholars display a distinct preference for non-integral citations (0.70 occurrences ptw vs 0.30 ptw occurrences of integral citations). On the other hand, English economists opt for integral citations more often (0.93 occurrences ptw vs. 0.57 occurrences ptw of non-integral citations).

As regards the discipline of linguistics, Italian authors prefer integral citations (0.80 occurrences ptw vs. 0.14 occurrences ptw of non-integral ones), while the natives opt for non-integral citations (0.63 ptw vs. 0.31 ptw of integral). Since there is only one article in linguistics in both corpora, this tendency may reflect individual writers' choices rather than disciplinary differences. The finding suggests the need to carry out further research on a larger corpus of linguistics articles written by Italian authors, in order to investigate whether the observed tendency is general or idiosyncratic.

The overall findings reveal that the citation practices used by Italian scholars in soft science domains are more homogeneous in some fields (such as sociology and philosophy) than others (such as linguistics and economics).

3.2. Surface forms of integral and non-integral citations

Table 5 shows the results emerging from the comparative analysis of the surface forms of integral and non-integral citations employed in each corpus in hard and soft disciplines.

TABLE 5
Surface forms of citations across hard and soft disciplines in IWE and NSE[3]

	Hard disciplines Raw freq. /ptw		Soft disciplines Raw freq./ptw	
Non-integral citation pattern	IWE	NSE	IWE	NSE
a) NRV	56/0.97	61/1.01	43/0.74	57/0.94
b) RN + reporting verb	16/0.27	14/0.23	11/0.19	10/0.16
c) RA + reporting verb	0	0	0	3/0.04
d) Reporting verb in the passive voice	4/0.06	6/0.09	3/0.05	2/0.03
e) Directive in brackets	0	0	11/0.19	25/0.41
Integral citation pattern	IWE	NSE	IWE	NSE
a) RA + reporting verb	10/0.17	0	51/0.88	65/1.08
b) RN + reporting verb	6/0.10	1/0.01	26/0.45	24/0.39
c) Reporting verb in the passive voice	1/0.01	0	9/0.15	7/0.11
d) Adjunct agent structure	4/0.06	0	5/0.08	2/0.03

As regards non-integral citations, the preferred citation form used by both Italian and English researchers across hard and soft disciplines (in Table 5, the sum of the NRV figures for each of IWE and NSE) is no reporting verb with single/multiple authors or subscript numbers occurring in parentheses, with 1.71 ptw and 1.95 ptw respectively. Here are some examples taken from the two corpora:

2) An explanation is that concerns for status are hardwired into human beings (**Veblen, 1899**). (IWE)

3) Another method of varying sample size (…) has used a miniature displacement diaphragm [**12**]. (NSE)

[3] For a detailed description of the patterns, see section 2.

Another similarity observed in both corpora is the frequent use of inanimate subjects referring to research nouns (e.g. paper, study, work, research), accounting for 0.46 occurrences ptw in the IWE corpus and 0.39 occurrences ptw in the NSE corpus, as examples 4 and 5 illustrate:

4) **Different studies** have provided that Sr represents an optimal geographical fingerprint for food and animals (…) [Stewart, Capo & Chadwick, 1998]. (IWE)

5) **Other findings** indicate that Ghanaian texts do not differ substantially from American texts in terms of modality (Owusu-Ansah, 1994). (NSE)

Though less frequent, another generalized tendency in both corpora is to use impersonal *it* subject/passive voice (7 instances in the IWE corpus and 8 in the NSE corpus), as shown in examples 6 and 7:

6) **It has been showed that** while contemporary criticism undermines traditional forms of cultural authority (…), it also creates new social boundaries (Lamont and Molnàr 2002). (IWE)

7) **It was demonstrated that** the pulse frequency controlled the size of response seen, but no calibration or subsequent investigations of this effect were reported [11]. (NSE)

Non-integral citations introduced by directives are particularly favoured by English economists (20 instances as opposed to 6 in the IWE corpus). Here is an example:

8) (**see**, for example, McKelvey, 1976; Cox, 1984; Le Breton, 1987; Banks, 1995). (NSE)

The same result was noted by Varga and Gradečak-Erdeljić (2017) on citation use in Croatian and English research articles in applied linguistics. As they observe (2017: 170), this citation pattern is frequently exploited by English writers as it permits them to cite multiple studies in one citation point.

Moving on to integral citations, the cited authors' names are favoured as subjects of reported statements in the soft disciplines in both corpora: 0.88 ptw as opposed to 0.17 occurrences ptw in hard disciplines in the IWE corpus, and 1.08 occurrences ptw in the soft

disciplines of the NSE corpus, corresponding to 100% of all the integral citations introduced by a cited author's name in this corpus (no instances of cited authors' names occur in the hard disciplines). Here are some examples:

9) **Clark and Oswald** (1998) have shown that (…) (IWE)

10) **Thumboo** (1992) suggests that nativized varieties come from three traditions (NSE).

The NSE results confirm previous studies: Hyland (1999: 346) pointed out that integral forms in soft disciplines tend to give greater prominence to the cited author included in the reporting sentence. Similarly, in her study of citations in business management research articles written by American scholars, Mur-Dueñas (2009: 55) observes a dominant use of the cited researchers' names as subjects of the reported clauses.

The cited authors are also found as part of a possessive noun phrase (32 instances in the IWE corpus and 25 occurrences in the NSE corpus) or a passive agent (10 occurrences in the IWE corpus and 7 in the NSE), and rarely as an adjunct like *according to* (only 2 occurrences in the NSE and 9 in the IWE corpus). In explaining the big difference in frequencies of *according to* across the two corpora, I cite evidence from a study by Bondi and Borelli (2018) on textual voices and metadiscourse in ELF writing, which shows that ELF writers privilege this particular reporting structure, as a form which represents the least interpretative choice and the most prototypical attributor. As they observe, the expression reduces the impact of the textual voice of the writer by indicating attribution without expressing the writer's position.

Finally, in the next section we move on to the reporting structures used in both corpora.

3.3. Reporting structures

Table 6 shows that the frequency of use of reporting structures is similar in the two corpora: the impersonal reporting structure *It be* V-*ed that* accounts for 12.41% in the IWE corpus and 11.36% in the NSE corpus and the reporting structure V+*that* for 87.59% of the IWE corpus and 88.64% of the NSE corpus. These findings corroborate the general

picture emerging from this study that Italian scholars tend to conform to the use commonly made of reporting structures in research papers written by their native English colleagues.

TABLE 6
Reporting structures with a *that*-clause complement in the IWE and NSE corpora

	IWE		NSE	
	Raw freq.	% of total citations	Raw freq.	% of total citations
V-*that* (individual and research nouns as subjects of the projecting clause)	120/137	87.59	117/132	88.64
It be V-*ed that*	17/137	12.41	15/132	11.36

Let us consider the choice of reporting verbs used in the two corpora. Following Hyland's (2002) threefold distinction of reporting verbs according to the process they denote – 'research', 'discourse', and 'cognition' – the reporting verbs have been classified into:

– Research verbs

11) Heid (2008, 353) **observes** that (…) (IWE)

12) Carr and Madan [4] **show** that it is possible to compute the expected value (…) (IWE)

13) Bhatia has **found** that (…) (NSE)

– Discourse verbs

14) Hanrahan (2012) has recently **argued** that social media (…) (NSE)

15) Thunboo (1992) **suggests** that nativized varieties come from three traditions (…) (NSE)

16) Some critics **state** that it is impossible to understand African literature without understanding their oral and cultural traditions (Wanjala 1988: 67; Balogun 1991). (NSE)

– Cognition verbs

17) Some philosophers **think** that (…) (IWE)

18) Riker (1982a) **believed** that political scientists had not yet discovered any other empirical regularity that was worthy of being called a law. (NSE)

Table 7 shows the types of reporting verbs according to their denotative meaning used in each of the two corpora. In the IWE corpus, discourse verbs appear to be much more frequent (1.49 ptw) than research reporting verbs (1.18 ptw), while in the NSE research verbs are much more common (1.44 ptw) than discourse reporting verbs (1.06 ptw). Tentatively, we may speculate about the high incidence of discourse verbs in the IWE corpus on the basis of intercultural differences. The degree of commitment of Italian researchers towards the cited sources may be more explicit than their English colleagues as they feel the need to be more persuasive when addressing an international community and consequently a greater need to express their position towards the cited author.

TABLE 7
Classification of reporting verbs in the corpora according to their denotative meaning

Reporting verbs	IWE		NSE	
	Raw freq.	Freq. per 1,000 words (ptw)	Raw freq.	Freq. per 1,000 words (ptw)
Research verbs	68	1.18	87	1.44
Discourse verbs	86	1.49	64	1.06
Cognition verbs	14	0.24	11	0.18

Tables 8 and 9 show the most frequent reporting verbs in terms of denotative meaning across the disciplines in both corpora. The results show variation between disciplines and suggest that researchers in different fields draw on different sets of denotative reporting verbs to refer to the cited authors.

TABLE 8A
The most frequent denotative reporting verbs across disciplines in the IWE corpus (> 5 occurrences, normalized per 1,000 words): Soft disciplines

	Soft disciplines				TOT-Freq. ptw
Denotation	Econ Freq. ptw	Ling Freq. ptw	Socio Freq. ptw	Phil Freq. ptw	
Research	0.18 *show, analyse*	0.22 *observe, find*	0.20 *show*	0	0.60
Discourse	0.25 *point out, suggest, state*	0.31 *point out, suggest, discuss*	0.21 *argue, claim, suggest*	0.23 *discuss, argue, maintain, propose*	1,00
Cognition	0	0	0	0.24 *think*	0.24

TABLE 8B
The most frequent denotative reporting verbs across disciplines in the IWE corpus (> 5 occurrences, normalized per 1,000 words): Hard disciplines

	Hard disciplines				TOT. Freq. ptw
Denotation	Chem Freq. ptw	Bioch Freq. ptw	Gastro Freq. ptw	Viro Freq. ptw	
Research	0.18 *show, demonstrate*	0.19 *show, demonstrate, suggest*	0.21 *find, analyse*	0	0,58
Discourse	0	0.16 *report, describe*	0.16 *report, claim*	0.17 *describe, suggest*	0.49
Cognition	0	0	0	0	0

TABLE 9A
The most frequent denotative reporting verbs across disciplines in the NSE corpus (> 5 occurrences, normalized per 1,000 words): Soft disciplines

	Soft disciplines				TOT. Freq. ptw
Denotation	Econ Freq. ptw	Ling Freq. ptw	Socio Freq. ptw	Phil Freq. ptw	
Research	0.26 *note, examine, find, show, observe, analyse*	0.25 *show, find, note*	0.23 *show, note, find, observe*	0.21 *show*	0.95
Discourse	0.16 *discuss, explain, conclude, report*	0.17 *suggest, argue,*	0.18 *suggest, claim*	0. 17 *point out, discuss, claim*	0.68
Cognition	0	0	0	0.18 *believe*	0.18

TABLE 9B
The most frequent denotative reporting verbs across disciplines in the NSE corpus (> 5 occurrences, normalized per 1,000 words): Hard disciplines

	Hard disciplines				TOT. Freq. ptw
Denotation	Chem Freq. ptw	Bioch Freq. ptw	Gastro Freq. ptw	Viro Freq. ptw	
Research	0.16 *demonstrate. find*	0	0.16 *show, find*	0.17 *show*	0.49
Discourse	0.18 *describe*	0.20 *suggest, propose*	0	0	0.38
Cognition	0	0	0	0	

In the IWE corpus soft disciplines favour discourse activity reporting verbs (1 occurrence ptw against 0.60 occurrences ptw of research verbs), while hard disciplines display a preference for research-type verbs (0.58 occurrences ptw against 0.49 occurrences

ptw of discourse-type verbs). This seems to suggest that Italian researchers writing in English conform to the traditional disciplinary conventions of soft and hard knowledge fields: the former are more discursive and interpretative, the latter are more empirical (Hyland 2002). In the NSE, on the contrary, soft disciplines favour research activity reporting verbs (0.95 occurrences ptw against 0.68 occurrences ptw of discourse verbs). This finding diverges from the traditional disciplinary conventions discussed above. Since there is only one article per discipline in the corpus, this frequency cannot be taken to represent the disciplines, but only the preference of individual authors.

As regards the choice of verb forms, however, the results show similarities across the corpora. Discourse-type reporting verbs such as *suggest*, *point out*, and *claim* are the most commonly used by the social sciences/humanities scholars in both corpora; on the other hand, the most frequently used reporting verbs referred to research activities occurring mainly in the hard disciplines in the two corpora are *show*, *find*, *demonstrate*.

4. Conclusion

The analysis has highlighted some similar tendencies rather than highly conspicuous differences across the corpora. The overall findings have shown that Italian scholars use citation practices in similar ways to their English colleagues. In doing so, they are applying the "cooperative imperative" often noticed in the use of English as a lingua franca, requiring language accommodation to ensure communication (Seidlhofer 2009). They seem to conform to Anglophone conventions to make their papers acceptable according to international publication standards (Mauranen 2012). In Hewings's (2001: 10) words, "becoming familiar with these modes of expression is part of becoming an established part of the academic community".

The results of this study point to a convention shared by English and Italian authors. ELF writers mainly draw on English native language norms for correctness. However, as ELF research suggests, scientific contexts have emerged as an alternative source for norm construction. For instance, according to Flowerdew (2013), the native and non-native distinction is getting blurred, and successful academic publishing is more dependent on the level of professional

expertise and academic seniority than on native-like text. As Mauranen, Hynninen and Ranta (2016: 48) argue, this points "to changing sources of norms in academic ELF contexts, and raises important questions about who gets to decide what 'good' academic language is like".

Although there are limitations to the generalizability of the results, because of the small corpora used in this study, some differing trends have been found, highlighting differences in epistemological traditions of different disciplines irrespective of culture. For example, the IWE corpus has fewer citations than NSE in the soft sciences, and more in the hard sciences. On the other hand, there is a much larger frequency gap between non-integral and integral citations in NSE than in IWE in hard disciplines. A significant difference also exists between Italian and English scholars within the disciplinary field of economics: the former display a distinct preference for non-integral citations, while the latter opt for integral citations more often.

One major concern regarding the possible interpretation of these findings is that it is difficult to know whether the differences highlighted depend on cultural factors or on brokering academic activity in the publishing process (e.g. difference between unedited and published text). The results here call for further research on the implications for reviewers or editors involved in the process of language brokering in English-medium publications. The specific textual histories of the papers in the SciELF corpus should be investigated, along the lines of Lillis and Curry (2010) or Mur-Dueñas (2012), to explore how they get published through the final stages of revision and editing. Future research on this topic should compare the present findings with the corpus of the final published versions of the papers in question, so as to identify the specific changes introduced by literacy brokers.

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