Incorporating Outside Sources in Kurdish EFL Students' Academic Writing

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Abstract
In academic writing, students need to incorporate outside sources. Incorporated sources involve summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting. Depending on why the source is being used, one method may be more appropriate than another. All three methods of incorporating sources require citations. Sources can be utilized for various purposes: presenting facts or statistics, serving as evidence to support an argument, lending authority to an argument or idea, i.e., authoritative discourse, providing examples and illustrations, stating an opposing viewpoint, and so on. For every source, students must determine the purpose of that source and how to best incorporate it into their writing. Both aspects are crucial to effectively integrating sources throughout the paper.
Effective integrating of the sources in the EFL writing is a demanding task. Therefore, the aim of the study is to find out the difficulties and challenges the students face while using outside sources in academic writing. In achieving the aim of this study, twenty five third-year students were given an assignment to write an essay in which they had to incorporate an outside source. The study was conducted in the first semester in the academic year 2016-2017. Discussion of findings, implications and recommendations were presented after analyzing the students' works.

Introduction
The most difficult skill to acquire in a foreign language is the productive skill of writing (Poel, 2006) as a basic communication skill. Like other language skills, writing goals vary with the teachers. Sometimes the focus is almost entirely on the language itself, on communication, and/or

both the form and the message (Chastain, 1988). The objective of this study, however, is to train students on productive writing to meet the demands of a growing market for writers, journalists, and translators.

Probably the first time students are exposed to the skill of writing is through the training they get in academic writing at the different levels of their education at university. Academic writing, therefore, can be defined as any writing done to fulfill a requirement of a college or university.

Success in academic writing depends upon how well students understand what they do as they write and how they approach the writing task. As they start attending college, they might have ideas about what they are doing in the course of writing an essay, or they might have no clear idea at all on the other hand (Irvin, 2010).

Teachers assign summary and paraphrase writing for a number of purposes. Perhaps the most common one is for condensing information learned through assigned readings. This type of writing has been recommended as a method for clarifying learning, as a tool for developing first and second-language skills in foreign language (Friend, 2002).

Often the most challenging aspect of writing an academic essay is determining how to integrate outside sources into the paper effectively. This research will address the issue of incorporating sources into essay writing, providing some strategies and tips for best using and integrating sources.

Literature Review
Using Sources in Academic Writing

To write successfully in EFL classes, outside sources also called stimulus materials, are employed to initiate pre-writing and postwriting reflections and tasks. The aim behind using these materials is to involve learners in thinking about and using the language by stimulating ideas, encouraging connections with particular experiences, and developing topics in ways that articulate their ideas and engage readers. Such materials provide content schemata and stimulate creativity, planning, and editing with a sense of audience, purpose, and direction. Stimulus materials include:

- Reading materials: poems, short stories, journalistic texts, autobiographies, professional texts.
- Audio materials: songs, rap lyrics, music, lectures, recorded conversations,

radio plays (Bailey, 2011).

Sources can be utilized for various purposes: presenting facts or statistics, serving as evidence to support an argument, lending authority to an argument or idea, providing examples and illustrations, and stating an opposing viewpoint. For every source, students must determine the purpose

of the source and how to best incorporate it into their works. Both aspects are crucial to effectively integrating sources throughout academic works.

Every source used must be cited in the format specified by the instructor. Failing to cite sources properly can result in plagiarism. Plagiarism is using another person's words or ideas without giving credit to the other person (Harris, 2001). Thus, it is imperative that all information obtained from sources is documented. Harris points out that most students plagiarize for the following reasons:

1. Ignorance
2. Students are natural economizers
3. Some students fear that their writing ability is inadequate
4. Tutoring out of control
5. Cheating in self-defense
6. Lack of perceived punishment
7. Many students have poor time management and planning skills
8. Some students do not believe professors actually read their works

Moreover, students are required to incorporate the sources; not copy them. They need to make sure they do not simply summarize or restate the information. Even when writing a paper that incorporates outside sources, they are expected to demonstrate an understanding of the topic by stating things in their own words.

Determining the Purpose of a Source

Students should never include sources in a paper without meeting a predetermined purpose. They should always be able to explain why each source was chosen and that it contributes to the paper. Sources can be used in different ways. Instructors may provide guidelines or indicate that students should use a source in a particular way. For example, students may be required to have one source that provides background information, one that serves as evidence, and one that gives a counterargument. Students should always read the assignment carefully before finding sources, as there are usually specifications for the number and possibly type(s) of sources.

It is often helpful to supply background information prior to presenting an argument since some readers may not be familiar with the topic being discussed. In this case, teachers are advised to use the source(s) to give enough information that the readers can get a general sense of the issue or topic and fully understand the position taken later in the paper. For instance, it might be beneficial to explain a relevant theory or provide some history for a subject before making an argument about the topic.

Sources frequently are used, in various ways, to provide evidence for an argument. For example, a source could provide relevant statistics or show research findings that back up a claim. Additionally, sources can help

develop or craft an argument by changing the author's perspective on an issue or asking a challenging question that could be explored. Using an authority or expert on a topic to support an argument can lend credibility to the position. A reader is likely going to take a claim more seriously if he /she knows that a respected, qualified figure holds the same or a similar view. If a source makes the same argument as made in the paper, students attempt to contribute to the discussion by expanding upon, adding to, or making a slight change to the argument presented by the source. Sometimes, the source is presenting a counterargument or it serves as an opposition to the thesis.

Addressing the opposition is an important part of argumentation; students need to know both sides of an issue. Using a source to help make a counterargument shows readers that the author is aware of and prepared to respond to the opposition. Failing to mention a differing viewpoint suggests that the author cannot refute the claim, which makes the argument weaker. (Harvard Guide to Using Sources: How to Avoid Plagiarism 2015)

To sum up, Quotations, Paraphrases, and Summaries are used to provide support for claims or add credibility to students' writing, to give examples of several points of view on a subject, to call attention to a position that students wish to agree or disagree with, to highlight a particularly striking phrase, sentence, or passage by quoting the original, and to expand the breadth or depth of students' writings**.**

Incorporating Sources

After the purpose of the source has been identified, the next step is to figure out how it should be incorporated into the paragraphs. The three main ways to incorporate a source are summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting. Depending on why the source is being used, one method may be more appropriate than another. All three methods of incorporating sources require citations.

Summarizing means using borrowed information from outside sources. Students' own words and own sentence structures should be used. A summary should concisely capture the key points of a text. The summary is usually shorter than the original text, since summarizing requires presenting all of the main ideas leaving out most details. For example,

Koch argues that...Research shows that... (Koch, 2016).

Paraphrasing means rewriting information from an outside source words. A paraphrase is approximately the same length as the portion of the original text being cited, since it should have the same amount of detail. It is best to paraphrase when the original wording is not essential to understanding the concept under discussion. Here are some examples of signal phrases:

- According to Koch, …

- In 2008, Koch wrote…
- A recent study by Koch shows…

Finally, quoting Quotes from reliable and knowledgeable sources are good supporting details. They are used when the original wording of the text is important to the discussion. (Oshima & Hogue, 2014; Kinssar, 2006)

Here are some examples of in-text citations for quotations:

According to Koch, "..." (42). "..." (Koch 42).

Students can use a variety of verbs to introduce quotes:

Discusses, argues, maintains, suggests, explains, implies, points out, notes, claims, proposes, believes, contends, recommends, asks, insists, asserts, comments, explores, investigates, feels, doubts, shows, admits, cautions, stresses, advises, declares, assumes, concludes, observes, questions, reveals, illustrates, examines, focuses on, and expresses.

Therefore, this gives the reader a hint of why the quote is used and a hint about the intention of the autor (Oshima & Hogue, 2014).

Integrating Seamlessly

Sources should be used to enhance and support the author's idea or argument, which means they need to be integrated into the writings. It can be difficult to integrate sources into essays smoothly. In order to succeed with this process, instructors and students should be aware of the paragraph structure and how to embed outside sources into their writing.

For a source to be used effectively, it needs to be embedded into a paragraph, allowing the material to be introduced and analyzed. It is important to ensure that the source is put into context. The following outline provides an example of how to structure a paragraph that contains source material:

1. Topic Sentence: Paragraphs should always have a topic sentence. It helps the reader understand the purpose of that paragraph. When dealing with source material, it is important to have a topic sentence that contextualizes the information being introduced. The reader needs to know how the source material fits into the topic being discussed.

2. Introducing: After writing a topic sentence, the source is briefly introduced, i.e., to give any important information about the source material, such as the author and/or pertinent background information. Signal phrases to introduce source material should be identified. Words like *states, suggests, claims, argues*, and *responds* can be used to signal to a reader that a quote or paraphrase is being introduced.

3. Using and Citing: The source material should be used actually after the information has been set up properly with a topic sentence and brief introduction. An in-text citation after using information from a source should be included. Students need to acknowledge the source with proper citation.

4. Analyzing: Merely utilizing the source material does not mean the work is finished. The most important step is analyzing. Every time source material is used, it must be analyzed. Readers need to clearly understand why the source was chosen. The answers to how the information is relevant to the topic and how the material supports the author's main idea make up the conclusion of the paragraph. The conclusion analyzes the used materials. (VanderMey, Meyer, Van Rys, & Sebranek, 2012)

Data and Methodology

Third-year students in English Department, College of Education, Salahaddin University-Erbil-Iraq were the subject of the study. The students were asked to write an essay about "The Benefits of Learning a foreign Language". They were given an outside material, i.e., an article to be inserted in their writings (See Appendix 1). The time allowed was an hour and a half. The students were allowed to use dictionaries and share their ideas with each other. Following an intensive course on essay writing, the students under research were all Kurdish native speakers who were supposed to learn the ways of inserting outside materials into their essays and paragraphs, i.e., summarization, paraphrasing, and quoting as parts of their curriculum. Later, students' papers were checked and analysed. To evaluate students' work, a rubric, which is defined as the most effective grading device, was adapted. Holistic rubric was used in this study because this type is probably more appropriate when performing tasks that require students to create some sorts of responses and where there is no definitive correct answer (Arends, 2016).

Results and Discussion

The literature review and the data analysis in the previous sections have led to the following conclusions:
1.   17 students out of 29, 58% of all, incorporated the given outside source.
2.   13 students wrote the main idea of the source in their essays.
3.   Only 10 (34%) students used their own words. Most of them copied the author's words.
4.   6 (20%) students only used transitional signals.
5.   Only 4 (20%) students wrote the intext citation.
6.   No one remembered to write the reference at the end of the work.

Apparently, third-year EFL learners' performance in incorporating outside source is generally poor. The result indicates that enough attention is not given to the teaching of the skills required to use other materials in academic writing from the early stages. Students are not given sufficient time to practice writing using outside sources.

Moreover, students faced difficulties in locational skill, i.e., they were unable to locate the main ideas and differentiate it from the minor ones. They could not recognize the important details (See Appendix 2).

Recommendations

In the light of the conclusions drawn above, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Students should be taught how to be selective. They need to be trained on how to include relevant information only. Students should be selective when deciding which information should be included and which should be left out altogether. Sometimes, only a sentence or two from the original source is relevant to the student's paper.

- Students should be trained to be concise, stay focused and on-topic, and to make sure that all information ties back to the thesis statement. Once again, the paper is the student's paper. Thus, teachers should help students to focus on their thoughts not on others'. The purpose of using outside sources is to incorporate them as supporting elements.

- Students should have and allow sufficient time to learn how to use outside sources from the early stages in their learning journey, i.e., from the secondary and high school.

Conclusion

A study was conducted on Salahddin University third-year students, English major, to investigate the difficulties and challenges students face in incorporating outside sources in their writings. To achieve the aim of the study, students were asked to write an essay about "The benefits of leaning foreign languages". An article about the same subject was given to be inserted in their essays.

The findings of the study revealed that third-year EFL learners were generally poor in incorporating outside sources. Most of them were not able to use their own words; in another words, they could not summarize, paraphrase, and/or quote properly. They copied the same words and structures from the given article. Besides, third-year students have difficulties in locating the main ideas. They could not differentiate the main from the minor ones.

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Appendix1

The Benefits of Learning a New Language

Learning a foreign language is more than just a boost to your CV or handy for travelling. It will make you smarter, more decisive and even better at English, says Anne Merritt.

Physiological studies have found that speaking two or more languages is a great asset to the cognitive process. The brains of bilingual people operate differently than single language speakers, and these differences offer several mental benefits.

Below are seven cognitive advantages to learning a foreign language. Many of these attributes are only apparent in people who speak multiple languages regularly – if you haven't spoken a foreign tongue since your A levels, your brain might not be reaping these bilingual benefits. However, people who begin language study in their adult lives can still achieve the same levels of fluency as a young learner, and still reap the same mental benefits, too.

You Become Smarter

Speaking a foreign language improves the functionality of your brain by challenging it to recognize, negotiate meaning, and communicate in different language systems. This skill boosts your ability to negotiate meaning in other problem-solving tasks as well.

Students who study foreign languages tend to score better on standardized tests than their monolingual peers, particularly in the categories of math, reading, and vocabulary.

You Build Multitasking Skills

Multilingual people, especially children, are skilled at switching between two systems of speech, writing, and structure. According to a study from the Pennsylvania State University, this "juggling" skill makes them good multitasks, because they can easily switch between different structures. In one study, participants used a driving simulator while doing separate, distracting tasks at the same time. The research found that people who spoke more than one language made fewer errors in their driving.

You Stave Off Alzheimer's and Dementia

Several studies have been conducted on this topic, and the results are consistent. For monolingual adults, the mean age for the first signs of dementia is 71.4. For adults who speak two or more languages, the mean age for those first signs is 75.5. Studies considered factors such as education level, income level, gender, and physical health, but the results were consistent.

Your Memory Improves

Educators often liken the brain to a muscle, because it functions better with exercise. Learning a language involves memorizing rules and vocabulary, which helps to strengthen that mental "muscle." This exercise improves overall memory, which means that multiple language speakers are better at remembering lists or sequences. Studies show that bilinguals are better at retaining shopping lists, names, and directions.

You Become More Perceptive

A study from Spain's University of Pompeu Fabra revealed that multilingual people are better at observing their surroundings. They are more adept at focusing on relevant information and editing out the irrelevant. They are also better at spotting misleading information. Is it any surprise that Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot are skilled polyglots?

Your Decision-making Skills is Improved

According to a study from the University of Chicago, bilinguals tend to make more rational decisions. Any language contains nuance and subtle implications in its vocabulary, and these biases can subconsciously influence your judgment. Bilinguals are more confident with their choices after thinking it over in the second language and seeing whether their initial conclusions still stand up.

You Improve your English

Learning a foreign language draws your focus to the mechanics of language: grammar, conjugations, and sentence structure. This makes you more aware of language, and the ways it can be structured and manipulated. These skills can make you a more effective communicator and a sharper editor and writer.

Language speakers also develop a better ear for listening, since they are skilled at distinguishing meaning from discreet sounds.
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Appendix 2

Table 1. Students' answers

No	Incorporate	Main ideas	Own words	Transition signals	In text citation	Reference
1	√	√	×	×	×	×
2	√	√	√	√	×	×
3	√	√	√	√	√	×
4	×	×	×	×	×	×
5	×	×	×	×	×	×
6	√	√	√	×	×	×
7	×	×	×	×	×	×
8	√	√	√	√	×	×
9	√	√	√	√	×	×
10	×	×	×	×	×	×
11	×	×	×	×	×	×
12	√	√	√	√	√	×
13	√	×	√	×	√	×
14	×	×	×	×	×	×
15	×	×	×	×	×	×
16	×	×	×	×	×	×
17	×	×	×	×	×	×
18	√	√	√	×	×	×
19	√	√	√	×	√	×
20	×	×	×	×	×	×
21	×	×	×	×	×	×
22	√	×	×	×	×	×
23	×	×	×	×	×	×
24	√	×	×	×	×	×
25	√	√	√	√	×	×
26	√	√	×	×	×	×
27	√	×	×	×	×	×
28	√	√	×	×	×	×
29	√	√	×	×	×	×