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# CITATION FROM A CROSS-LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE: THE CASE OF FRENCH RESEARCHERS PUBLISHING IN ENGLISH

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## Abstract

The problems of non-English-speaking researchers who have to publish in English have been addressed by a number of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies. However, one core feature of research articles (RA), namely citation, has rarely been examined from this perspective. The present study therefore investigates the citation practices of French researchers publishing in English, using a corpus of the uncorrected pre-publication final versions of their articles in science and linguistics, and two comparable corpora of published RAs in English and French. The analysis focuses on three of the problems encountered in the data: hybrid citing styles, referential ambiguity and the use of reporting structures. The results show that the writer's native language and culture both impact on the management of citation. In particular, ambiguous inter- and intra-textual reference and the underuse of reporting verbs and nouns can appreciably diminish the efficacy of citation in the French researchers' articles written in English.

## 1. Introduction

The rise of English as the dominant language in international research communication has led to a considerable number of studies addressing the difficulties of non-English-speaking academics who have to publish in English. These investigations highlight the differences and culture-specific features which may result in an “unintentionally inefficient rhetoric” (Mauranen 1993). Much of this work has focused on differences in styles of argumentation and rhetoric (Ventola & Mauranen 1996; Candlin & Gotti 2004; Connor *et al.* 2008), with a specific focus on the move structure of research article (RA) introductions by writers of different languages – for example, Spanish (Sheldon 2011), Portuguese (Bennett 2010), Chinese (Loi 2010) and Brazilian Portuguese (Hirano 2009), to mention just some recent studies. Other features of the RA frequently examined from this contrastive perspective are the use of metatext (Peterlin 2005; Lorés Sanz 2006), authorial presence in the text (Fløttum 2003; Molino 2010), or modality and hedging (Vold 2006; Davoodifard 2008). While some studies (e.g. Shaw 2003) have concluded that the differences are barely perceptible and unlikely to have a negative impact on the text's efficacy, and others have stressed the importance of cross-disciplinary factors (Yakhontova 2006; Harwood 2009), the general conclusion to emerge from this

research is that the writer's L1 has a non-negligible influence on a wide range of linguistic and rhetorical features in the RA.

One important aspect of research communication that has been rarely examined from a cross-linguistic perspective, perhaps because it is generally considered to be culture-free or culture-neutral, is that of citation practices (see however Mur-Dueñas 2009). Citation is one of the defining features of research articles, enabling writers to demonstrate familiarity with the literature in the field, position their findings and claims, and highlight the novelty of their research. A prominent theme in studies of citation is the use of reporting verbs (Thompson & Ye 1991; Hyland 2002; Charles 2006) and of integral vs non-integral citation (Swales 1990). Various rhetorical functions of citation, such as attribution, evaluation, and stance, have also been addressed (e.g. Chang & Schleppegrell 2011; Mansourizadeh & Ahmad 2011), as has self-mention (Hyland 2001). Several of these studies contrast the citation practices of expert and novice writers, and have shown that an ineffective use of citation by the latter significantly weakens the writer's argument and claims; Petrić (2007), for example, observed a correlation between effective citation practice and the thesis grade awarded. The strategic importance of citation therefore seems to be beyond doubt.

Among the few studies that have considered citation from a cross-linguistic perspective and investigated the specific citation problems of non-English-speaking writers, almost all focus on novice researchers such as graduate or doctoral students (see e.g. Thompson & Tribble 2001; Boch & Grossmann 2002; Charles 2006; Petrić 2007; Mansourizadeh & Ahmad 2011). This raises a methodological problem, however. The shortcomings in citation use by this population may stem from two different factors: their relative unfamiliarity with research discourse norms and/or their difficulties using the English language, making it hard to distinguish between the two. To obviate this problem, the present study focuses exclusively on the citation practices of expert non-English-speaking writers. These researchers can all be expected to be familiar with disciplinary and research publication norms; any problems encountered with citation in their articles can therefore be more reliably attributed to cross-linguistic factors.

The population studied is French researchers publishing in English. Like researchers in many other countries, they are under intense pressure to publish in English-language international journals and their academic success is largely conditioned by their ability to meet this requirement. The two authors of the present study have frequently been called upon by colleagues in other disciplines to correct their manuscripts before submission to ensure that they meet the increasingly stringent demands of journal editors and reviewers. We have therefore, over the years, amassed a corpus of pre-publication manuscripts by French researchers in various disciplines, in which we have noted a number of problems and anomalies in citation use.

These problems are detailed in the following section, in which we describe the cross-linguistic methodology adopted and provide some quantitative information concerning the overall frequency and type of citations in the corpus.

## 2. Methodology

Three subsets of articles were collected for this study. The first was drawn, as explained above, from our experience of editing research written in English by French academics and comprised the final versions of 40 research articles prior to their submission to journals and before correction of the English by the present authors (FWE). The articles covered several scientific fields (principally chemistry, physics and geology) as well as linguistics, and were written by experienced French researchers. We selected both hard and soft sciences with a view to making the results of the analysis useful for researchers from a range of disciplines. All these articles, once revised, were subsequently submitted for publication in international journals. The second subset consisted of a comparable corpus of 40 published RAs written by native English researchers<sup>1</sup> (NS) covering the same disciplines. The third subset consisted of a corpus of 40 published RAs written in French by French researchers (F), again in the same disciplines. The three subsets can therefore be considered fully comparable, following the principles laid down by Connor & Moreno (2005) for contrastive corpora, since the three main similarity factors, or *tertia comparationis*, are held constant: the genre (final versions of RAs), the writers' level of expertise (expert writers), and the subject matter (the same disciplines).

The corpus was structured in this way to enable us to adopt a cross-linguistic perspective. We first analysed all the in-text citations in the FWE corpus in detail in order to detect potential problems with citation and referencing. This analysis revealed three main categories of problems. The first concerns formal aspects related to the different citing conventions between French and English. Authors publishing in two or more different languages can on occasion confuse these details, resulting in hybrid forms of citation. The other two aspects have potentially more serious consequences on the efficacy of citation. The first is the ease with which the reader is able to identify the cited source. Citing the work of others requires a judicious use of referring devices, such as anaphora and deictics, so that the work or claim being referred to can be unambiguously identified and tracked by the reader, and distinguished from the writers' own study. A second source of ambiguity concerns the writers' stance with regard to the cited text. Both these aspects were found to cause recurrent problems in the corpus of pre-publication final versions by French researchers.

The second step was to check whether these problems also occurred in the NS corpus; if not, this was considered to indicate that it was perhaps a problem specific to French researchers writing in English. The corpus of articles in French was then used as a reference corpus to see which of the problems could be attributed to the direct interference of the French language or of French citation conventions, rather

<sup>1</sup> Three criteria were used to assign native-speaker status: i) the authors' institutional affiliations; ii) the fluency of the writing; iii) the preponderance of English publications in the references. In many cases, the authors' first and last names provided additional confirmation of their English L1 status. Although not completely watertight, these criteria were felt to be sufficiently discriminating with respect to the FWE authors, all of whom are affiliated to French institutions, live in France, and often cite publications in French. Any articles where we were unsure of the linguistic origin of the authors were discarded.

than to the idiosyncrasies of particular writers. When necessary the initial qualitative analysis was enhanced by corpus searches using the concordancer AntConc 3.2.1.<sup>2</sup>, in order to systematize the searches and gauge the regularity of the features examined.

### 2.1. Corpus breakdown and citation rates

The size of the three corpora and their respective citation rates are shown in Table 1. Although the FWE corpus is smaller than the NS corpus in terms of word count – 190,000 words against 287,000 – the number of citations per 10,000 words is practically identical: 102 and 104. The frequency of citation in the French subset is also strikingly similar: 101.5. This suggests that whatever the language used there is a remarkable stability in the citation ratio among experienced researchers. It also seems to show that, quantitatively speaking, the French writers of English in our corpus may be considered to adopt the citation practices expected of expert writers.

Authors	Category	Number	Tokens	Citations per 10,000 words	Science*	Linguistics
French writers of English (FWE)	Uncorrected final versions	40	190,393	102	30	10
Native English writers (NS)	Published RAs	40	287,519	104	30	10
Native French writers (F)	Published RAs	40	243,910	101.5	25	15
TOTAL		120	721,822		85	35

\* 'Science' is used here as an umbrella term to cover the three scientific disciplines (chemistry, physics, geology).

**Table 1.** Citation rates across the three corpora

### 2.2. Referencing systems used in the three corpora

The articles in these three subsets use the two main referencing systems prevalent in research articles today: the author-date and the number system. The vast majority (89%) of the linguistics articles but only 25% of the science articles use the author-date system, either integral as in (a) or non-integral (b):

(a) Goro (2004) provides a thorough investigation of the distribution of *to*-infinitives in child English (NS).

(b) *In situ* bubbling can be the major route of CH<sub>4</sub> flux to the atmosphere (McEnroe et al. 2009) (FWE).

The number system<sup>3</sup>, again either integral (c) or non-integral (d), slightly predominates overall (56%), and accounts for 75% in the science and engineering articles:

<sup>2</sup> AntConc is a freeware concordance programme developed by Laurence Anthony of Waseda University, Japan. Available online at <<http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp>>

<sup>3</sup> Also often referred to as the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) system.

(c) Reference [8] shows the influence of the flow regime on performances for large tilting pads bearing (FWE).

(d) Recent work indicates that a very high resolution would be required [21, 22] (NS).

The number system raises some specific problems concerning anaphor and referencing, which are discussed below. Another characteristic feature of science articles is the almost total absence of verbatim quotation, confirming Dubois (1988). In the science part of our corpus there is only one full quotation and two brief one-line quotes. The absence of quotation obviously has an impact on the reporting verbs needed: verbs describing verbal processes (*say, remark, comment, etc.*) are not used in the science articles.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Formal features of FWE citing practices

Although all the FWE authors adopted one of the two main international citing systems outlined above, there are some minor differences between the three subsets which suggest that citation knowledge is not completely culture-free. Whereas in-text references in English rarely use initials or first names except for disambiguation purposes<sup>4</sup>, this is not the case in French (Memet 2001). Conventions appear to vary from one journal to another but initials and first names are common in French, e.g. *comme le dit Pierre-Marie Fayard; comme le souligne M-F. Mortureux* (as Pierre-Marie Fayard says; as M-F. Mortureux stresses). Some French journals also distinguish between the first and second mention of an author, with full first and last name being used for the first mention in integral citations, and subsequent references using only the initial or simply the last name (see for example the Instructions to Authors in the online version of the French interdisciplinary journal *Tracés*).

Several of the FWE authors in our dataset also followed these conventions in their English articles, resulting in a rather hybrid style of referencing, such as in the following examples:

(1) In keeping with prototype theory (Rosch, 1972; Taylor, 1989), **John Lyons** (1977) thus hypothesized...(FWE)

(2) The relevant criteria used for the description mainly come from the founding model put forward by **P. Brown and S. Levinson** (1987), but several remarks are inspired by more recent researches about impoliteness (viz. Culpeper, 1996; Bousfield, 2007) (FWE).

It would thus seem that some aspects of citation knowledge are implicitly linked to a particular linguistic culture. The FWE authors presumably reproduced these features without realizing their specificity. Whilst not serious 'errors', such citation patterns would undoubtedly be considered odd by English-speaking reviewers or editors unfamiliar with the details of French citation practices<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> See Harwood (2008), however, for a discussion of some occasional exceptions.

<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to note that citations in Spanish research articles also frequently use first names and initials (Sally Burgess, personal communication).

### 3.2. Referential ambiguity

Citation involves referring and therefore anaphoric and deictic pronouns and determiners can play a crucial role, creating cohesive ties so that the reader can make connections between parts of a text (Halliday & Hasan 1976). Writers of research articles need to attribute findings and claims unambiguously so that their own work can be clearly distinguished from that of the cited authors. Anaphors can frequently fulfil both external (inter-textual) and internal (intra-textual) functions. They can refer to previously mentioned external texts or be used as an intra-textual deictic reference to refer to the present text. However, if these cohesive links are not used appropriately, instead of making the text cohere, they can have an adverse effect. There are several examples in the FWE corpus where the inappropriate or imprecise use of deictics and anaphors, and the determiner *this* in particular, leads to a blurring of these textual planes and possible ambiguity about the attribution of claims and findings. It is often the case that *this* is associated with spatial or psychological proximity and *that* with more distal reference (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 374). In both the NS and FWE subsets the expression *this paper* is systematically used to refer to the citing writer's own paper. However in other combinations, such as *this work* or *this study*, the reference can also be to other external authors' research and it is thus vitally important that the co-textual environment should enable the reader to interpret the intended referent easily.

There are several cases in the FWE corpus where the identification of the referent is not immediately clear:

(3) I take my inspiration of the semantic dimensions proposed by Mel'cuk and Wanner (1996) in the MTT framework on the one hand. However, there is a strong difference with **this kind of study** (Iordanskaia 1986, Mel'cuk and Wanner 1996, Grossmann and Tutin 2007). Firstly, the semantic dimensions in the cited studies are about the emotions. In my paper, the semantic aspects are about the BP (FWE).

It is difficult to know whether the expression *this kind of study* is being used intra-textually to refer to the writer's own study or inter-textually to the three external texts cited in brackets.

Likewise in the following example containing the similar expression *this work*, it is also difficult at first glance to see if the FWE writers are referring to their own article or to the study cited in the numbered reference:

(4) The apparatus used was an evaporator AUTO 306 Edwards to joule heating. Its description and the sublimation process were detailed in a previous paper [1]. In **this work**, the process parameters of sublimation of GABA were optimized (FWE).

After consulting the authors, it turned out that the reference is in fact an intra-textual one to their own article, but the processing of this sentence could have been facilitated for the reader by further qualifying the noun group *this work* in order to clarify the identity of the referent or by introducing a paragraph break, thus signalling a change of direction in the text.

There are also occurrences of *this work* or *this study* in the NS corpus where the

same ambiguity could arise. Interestingly, however, the NS authors frequently combine *this* with adjectives such as *previous*, *current* or *present*. In this way any ambiguity concerning the identity of the referent is dispelled:

(5) It has been shown in work with model systems that this approach can be used to examine the interactions of solutes with HSA [22], making this method attractive for measuring drug dissociation rates from this protein. This **previous** work included a validation versus reference techniques (...) [5,7,9,10,16,22]. In this **current** study, the peak profiling method will be used to examine the binding of carbamazepine and imipramine with HSA (NS).

A concordance search focusing on the temporal adjectives *current*, *present* and *previous* revealed some differences between the NS and FWE subsets (see Table 2).

			FWE	NS
this/the	current	work / study	0	34
	present		31	39
	previous		16	27
TOTAL			47	100
Frequency per 10,000 words			2.4	3.5

**Table 2.** Use of qualifying adjectives with *this work/study*

Although it would be necessary to confront these results against a larger data set, the indications are that FWE writers have less recourse to these qualifying adjectives than their NS counterparts, suggesting that NS writers are perhaps more sensitive to the potential ambiguity of *this* when the noun group is used alone.

A similar problem with identifying the reference of the anaphor occurs with the expression *these authors*. In example (6) it is not clear exactly which authors are concerned:

(6) Since the middle of the 90's, 3-D X-ray microtomography knew significant improvement. Thus, sandstones were largely characterized and the subject of many publications [6-8]. However, this technique is underused in the field of building conservation. Even so, X-ray computed tomography analysis allows to bring new information for this branch of research as shown recently [17-18]. **These authors** visualized bacterial weathering of concretes (FWE).

The number system prevalent in the majority of science papers in our corpus also appears to compound the deictics problem. As the citing writer cannot refer back by reusing the exact name of the cited author(s), it obliges him/her to use anaphoric referring devices (*these authors*, *this study*, *these works*), which in turn lead to more potential ambiguity than a named reference would.

Other examples with *these authors* in the FWE corpus that are perhaps less confusing but also infelicitous or awkward to process are illustrated in (7) and (8). In (7) the use of *the authors* would arguably have been more appropriate than the rather emphatic *these*. In (8) likewise the third person anaphoric pronoun *they* or the

repetition of the names of the authors ‘Dabros and Fyles’ would have been more appropriate choices:

- (7) Recently Rudz et al. [11] have shown that the positions obtained after applying the image processing method are as reliable and accurate as those obtained after applying the heat flux approach. **These authors** highlighted the possibility to couple both methods for designing a new metrological tool which allows to calculate average geometrical... (FWE)
- (8) Recently, based on litter bag experiments, Dabros and Fyles (2010) studied the impact of OTCs on OM decomposition followed by elemental analysis (C, N, P, Ca...). In contrast to the study of Dorrepaal et al. (2009) on C respired, **these authors** have shown that higher air temperatures reduce (i) the temperature of the peat as a result of increased evapotranspiration (the paradox of “colder soils in a warmer world”; Groffmann et al. 2001) and (ii) Sphagnum decomposition (FWE).

Whereas anaphoric pronouns are generally used as a signal to continue the existing attention focus established (or assumed to be so established), deictic pronouns and determiners serve prototypically to draw the addressee’s attention focus to a new object of discourse or to a new aspect of an existing one (Cornish 2008). However, in both examples (7) and (8) we have cases of constant theme progression. The theme/topic has already been established. In each case, the subject and theme of the sentence and the immediately preceding one have the same referent and thus sufficient textual salience; the use of the deictic determiner *these* is rather disconcerting as a result. The lexical head in this NP, *these authors*, does not add any new information to what we already know about this referent. For this reason too, the third person pronoun (*they*) or a definite NP (*the authors*), where the relation denoted by the head noun is understood as presupposed/given information, would have been more appropriate.

It is worth noting that there is only one example of the expression *These authors* in a citation context in the NS subset. The definite determiner *the* is more frequent, or, if there is a risk of ambiguity, the name of the cited author is repeated. What explanations can one give for the use of *these authors* by the FWE? There is possibly once again L1 language interference. The French determiner *ces*, in which the proximal/distal distinction is merged, has arguably less impact than the English *these*. In the citation contexts above *these authors* is perhaps to be seen as the equivalent of the much stronger *ces auteurs-ci*.

However it is also possible that this is not just a linguistic but also a cultural issue. Repetition in French is generally frowned upon (Corblin 1995). As Lundquist (2005, 2007) has shown, French writers often use a variety of lexical noun phrases to maintain co-referential chains rather than using pronominal anaphors or repeating the same formulation, which in the case at hand would have entailed repeating the names (or citation numbers) of the authors. This preference for what Lundquist terms “unfaithful anaphors” (2007: 40) can naturally lead to potential referential ambiguity. In examples (6) and (8) above, the repetition of the cited authors’ names, instead of the expression *these authors* would have successfully removed any possible misunderstanding. Although a wider corpus search would be necessary to confirm the trend, repetition of the authors’ names in our NS subset appears to be a perfectly acceptable feature, as illustrated in (9):

(9) Prominent in this area is the work of **Yalkowski [41]** who has published a series of papers describing the prediction of solubility using LogP (the logarithm of the octanol /water partition coefficient) and a term describing the energetic cost of the crystal lattice disruption. However **Yalkowski's work** is largely based on the prediction or estimation of the solubility of halogenated aromatic and polycyclic halogenated aromatic hydrocarbons [42], due to their great environmental importance (NS).

### 3.3. Reporting structures

In addition to problems of referential ambiguity, a second area where linguistic and/or cultural differences appear to impact on citation is the use of reporting structures. As well as attributing findings and claims unambiguously, writers of research articles also need to indicate their stance, or degree of commitment, to the cited sources in order to weave the cited work convincingly into their argument. Among the linguistic resources available to accomplish these functions the most common devices are reporting verbs (Thompson & Ye 1991; Hyland 2002; Charles 2006), reporting nouns (Charles 2007), and introductory adverbials such as *according to*. This section examines how these three resources are used by French researchers writing in English.

As Hyland (2002: 116) points out, "The use of a reporting verb is one of the most explicit ways of attributing content to another source, and represents a significant rhetorical choice. The wide range of verbs that can be used to introduce reports allows writers to convey both the kind of activity reported and whether the claims are to be taken as accepted or not." Two types of verb patterns are conventionally used: *V-that* (e.g. *Wexler claims that...*) and *it be V-ed that* (e.g. *It has been suggested that...*). The equivalent structures exist in French: *V-que* (e.g. *Salthouse et al. (1995) considèrent que*) and *il est V-pp que* (e.g. *il est admis que*). The occurrences of these two patterns were detected using the concordancer AntConc 3.2.1. with *that* as the search term in the NS and FWE subsets and *que* as search term in the F subset. As noted by both Biber *et al.* (1999: 680) and Charles (2006: 312), *that*-deletion is very rare in academic prose: this was confirmed by carrying out a back search on the eight reporting verbs most frequently used in the corpus (*argue, assume, conclude, demonstrate, find, note, show* and *suggest*) which revealed only six occurrences of *that*-deletion. No back-checking was necessary in the French subset, as *que*-deletion is not possible in modern written French. Reporting nouns also play an important role in indicating the writer's stance towards the cited sources (Charles 2007). The corpus was therefore searched for reporting nouns with a clausal complement (*N-that* e.g. *Bach's argument is that*; *N-que* e.g. *Ding et al. (2003) partent de l'idée que*), following the same procedure as for the reporting verbs. For both verbs and nouns, we excluded cases where no specific reference was made to a published work, author, or school of thought (see example 10) as these can be considered to be statements of general knowledge rather than citations:

(10) Indeed, **it is well known that** small modifications to the chemistry model can result in significant changes in the lift-off height of diffusion flames (NS).

The results are given in Table 3.

	Number of occurrences	As % of all citations	Number of different verbs/nouns used
<i>Reporting verbs+that</i>			
NS	393	13.2%	49
F	130	5.3%	25
FWE	112	5.7%	30
<i>Reporting nouns+that</i>			
NS	66	2.3%	12
F	11	0.4%	4
FWE	7	0.4%	4

**Table 3.** Reporting verbs and reporting nouns with clausal complements

If we compare first of all the figures for the two groups of researchers writing in their respective native languages (English: NS vs French: F), it can be clearly seen that these types of structures are not used with the same frequency in French and in English: the frequency of reporting verbs as a percentage of all citations is 13.2% in the NS subset as opposed to only 5.3% in the F subset. Mur-Dueñas (2009) likewise found a greater proportion of reporting verbs in American English business RAs than in business RAs in Spanish. Table 3 also reveals a similar strong contrast for reporting nouns in our data, with respective frequencies of 2.3% (NS) vs 0.4% (F). The same is true for the lexical variety or range of reporting verbs and nouns used in the two languages: the number of different verbs used in the French RAs is only half that of the native English RAs (25 vs 49), and a very limited range of reporting nouns (4) is used in French compared to a greater variety in English (12 different nouns). Looking now at the FWE subset, Table 3 clearly shows that their reporting behaviour is almost identical to that of the writers in French, and therefore very different from that of the NS set. In both the verb and noun frequencies (respectively 5.7% and 0.4% of all citations) and the verb and noun lexical variety (respectively 30 and 4), the French researchers writing in English follow the practice of their native language, not that of the L2. The ensuing lack of lexical variety suggests that certain nuances of stance are perhaps less explicitly communicated than in the NS articles.

The figures cannot, however, be taken to mean that French writers, whether writing in French or in English, do not attribute findings and claims to the cited sources, or that they do not indicate their own stance towards the sources, but rather that they rarely use reporting verbs and nouns to do so. We therefore investigated the use in the three subsets of another attributive structure frequently used in RAs to cite other researchers, namely introductory adverbs such as *according to /selon*, commonly referred to as evidential adverbials since they indicate the source of the information, or evidence, used for asserting a proposition (Pietrandrea 2007). The prevalence of introductory evidential adverbials such as *D'après X, Pour X et al., Selon les travaux de X* to frame propositions in French has been observed by several analysts (e.g. Charolles & Péry-Woodley 2005). A search for these terms and their English equivalents yielded the figures shown in Table 4, which confirms their frequency of occurrence in French (64 occurrences in the F subset compared to only 24 in NS).

Adverbial	NS	FWE	F
<i>According to/selon, d'après</i>	23	26	36
<i>For/ pour</i>	1	1	28
Total	24	27	64
Per 10,000 words	0.8	1.4	2.6

*Table 4.* Evidential adverbials

A typical example from our F data is (11):

(11) Plusieurs hypothèses ont été proposées afin d'expliquer l'accélération de la décomposition de l'O<sub>3</sub> en présence de CA. **Selon Valdes (2006)**, cette accélération est principalement due à l'interaction entre l'O<sub>3</sub> et les groupements oxygénés acides de surface. **Pour Faria (2006)**, ce sont principalement les fonctions basiques du CA qui sont concernées par l'interaction (F).

(Several hypotheses have been proposed to explain the faster decomposition of O<sub>3</sub> in the presence of CA. According to Valdes (2006), it is mainly due to ... For Faria (2006), it is the basic functions of CA that...).

Table 4 shows that FWE also make greater use of the structure than NS, though not markedly so (1.4 vs 0.8), and certainly not to the extent that it might compensate for the paucity of reporting verbs and nouns. A closer examination of how *according to* is used by FWE, however, revealed another problem due to cross-linguistic differences in the degree of writer commitment that can be expressed by English *according to* and French *selon*. These adverbials are often considered to be equivalent in meaning, but there are in fact certain subtle differences in their respective values. With *according to*, the enunciator attributes entire responsibility for the proposition to the source cited as evidence or authority, and does not commit herself as to the validity of the proposition; this source must be distinct from the enunciator herself. Example (12) illustrates this neutral stance:

(12) *According to Kaplan (1989)*, a semantic theory must be grounded in speakers' intuitions about what is said (see Cappelán and Lepore, 1997 for critical discussion of this claim) (NS).

*Selon* is frequently used neutrally, like *according to*, to attribute the proposition to an external source. However, unlike *according to*, it can also be used self-referentially with first person pronouns (*selon moi, selon nous*), in which case it expresses full writer commitment to the proposition<sup>6</sup>. And it can be used, as in other Romance languages, with a reportive conditional (Squartini 2008), in which case it may express a double enunciation, that of the cited source and the writer's marking of distance towards this source (Rowley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas 2014). In our FWE subset, the latter two values of *selon* appear to have been transferred into the writers' use of *according to*: self-referential use in (13) and double enunciation in (14):

(13) Given the scantiness of the documentation, the conclusions must be considered as partial and provisional. However, *according to me*, the evidence allows some hypotheses.

<sup>6</sup> Similar in this respect to the Italian *secondo me* (Pietrandrea 2007).

(14) *According to Pinker (1984)* semantic bootstrapping is the mechanism that allows children to determine which words fall into the category of noun or verb in their mother language. The discovery of noun and verb categories *would depend* on word meaning (...). Children *would thus start* by constructing semantically appropriate representations of the linguistic items they are producing (...).

Since *according to* necessarily implies single (or homogenous) enunciation – the entire responsibility for the proposition is attributed to the cited source, namely Pinker in (14) – this attempt by the French writer to also mark his distance from Pinker's theory by using a reportive conditional does not work in English. The passage is not only wrong from a linguistic viewpoint but the double (redundant) marking of writer distance also makes the writer's intended stance less clear.

This cross-linguistic analysis of reporting structures clearly shows, therefore, the influence of the French writers' native language, with a much lower use of reporting verbal and nominal structures, and a French-influenced use of evidential adverbials. The resulting effect on the reader of the English text can be that findings and claims are insufficiently attributed, or in some cases ambiguously attributed, by the FWE.

#### 4. Conclusion

Our analysis suggests that citation practices are not an entirely culture-/language-neutral aspect of academic discourse. Although expert French researchers publishing in English show a clear perception of the overall role of citation in research writing, they also have some specific problems using citation efficiently. On the basis of our data, some of these problems seem to be more culturally bound and others more language bound. We have noted, for example, several problems revolving around an infelicitous use of referring devices in the case of inter- and intra-textual reference. These problems appear to be linked to an insufficient perception of the potential ambiguity of deictic determiners such as *this+N* and *these+N* in English. If, however, the reader is unable to easily identify the cited source and track the intended referent, communication is hampered and the FWE text becomes less rhetorically effective. The number system prevalent in the majority of science articles in our corpus also possibly compounds the problem, obliging writers to further resort to anaphoric referring devices rather than named references.

The relative underuse of reporting structures and the reliance on a very restricted range of verbs or nouns can also appreciably diminish the efficacy of citation by the French researcher. The position or degree of commitment of FWE towards the cited sources is often less explicit and arguably less nuanced than in the NS subset. Reliance too on formulations that are strongly influenced by French such as the use of *according to* and the conditional can be confusing for readers.

The borderline between language and culture is notoriously difficult to draw, and some of the language issues shade off into problems of a more cultural nature. What is seen as a sign of good style in one academic culture, such as the avoidance of repetition of authors' names in French research discourse, can in fact create ambiguity or unwanted emphasis when transposed into English. For example, the meaning of a

deictic is highly co-text bound and it could be argued that a French writer, operating in a reader-responsible culture (cf. Hinds 1987), expects the reader to work harder than an English reader is generally expected to do in order to discover the intended meaning. We also encountered cases of hybrid referencing styles which can be attributed to different citation conventions in French and English academic discourse.

Whilst some of the differences we have observed, such as referential ambiguity, are subtle and can only be detected by a qualitative analysis over lengthy stretches of text, others, such as reporting structures, reveal major quantitative differences in the preferred citation practices of the language groups. Given the importance of citation in research writing, in our view the study of citation by different national groups warrants considerably more attention. We hope that the present study may generally contribute to raising the profile of these issues and in particular increase awareness amongst language professionals working as authors' editors of some of the potentially damaging pitfalls of citing for L2 writers.

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