

Composing Citations through Language Reuse: A Doctoral Student of Biomedicine Writing a Research Paper

Yongyan LI
Nanjing University

A major aspect of reading-to-write in scholarly writing is manifested through citations. While a number of recent studies have demonstrated that citations in research students' academic texts often contain reuse of language from source texts to the extent of textual plagiarism (Flowerdew & Li, forthcoming; Pecorari, 2003, 2006), there has not been focused investigation of an individual student writer's dynamic process of developing citations characterised by language reuse. This case study reports a Chinese doctoral student's strategic process of formulating her citations on the basis of source materials she cut and pasted from specialist literature. The student's citations are analysed in terms of no visible language reuse, a low level of language reuse and a high level of language reuse, with the last accounting for a large part of the student's total citations, and sometimes taking the form of secondary citations (Pecorari, 2006). The study highlights the need for EAP pedagogical actions (preferably with the participation of disciplinary supervisors) to negotiate student writers' beliefs regarding language reuse, to engage in critical examination of the expected norms with them, and to discuss their strategic process of reading-to-write. It is pointed out that with the increasing availability of specialist literature in electronic version, such pedagogical actions should be particularly worthwhile in EAP instruction that is aimed at helping research students to position themselves in "intertextual landscapes" (Bazerman, 2002).