

Writing from Sources in EAP Assessment: A Coding Scheme for References

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Language Testing Forum

My PhD Research

**The impact of imposing a time condition
in an academic reading-to-write
argumentative essay assessment**

The Coding Scheme for References (CSR)

- Background to my research
- Literature: RTW and time

Context and background to the study

- English Language Centre, City University of Hong Kong (English medium)
- Source-based argumentative essay: main writing genre and assessed task
- Combination of timed writing & process writing (at-home) assessments
- EAP Writing Rubric used to rate both

Growing popularity of RTW assessment tasks

- Authenticity (Weigle 2004; White 1995)
- (Context) Validity (Plakans 2008, 2010; Weir et al 2013)
- Fairness (Weigle 2004).

BUT is what we are doing in our EAP programmes delivering on these promises?

Authenticity

- 1980s – use of ‘genuine’ texts
- Authenticity is more than matching test tasks to TLU
- It is a quality that arises from test-takers involvement in the test tasks

Lewkovicz (2000)

Two types of authenticity:

- situational authenticity – the perceived match between the characteristics of test tasks to target language use (TLU) tasks
- interactional authenticity – the interaction between the test taker and the test task (cognitive validity?)

(Bachman 1991)

Validity

- Context validity – appropriateness of task demands in relation to a real-life task (Weir 2005)
- Cognitive validity – how closely the cognitive processing represents that of a real-life task (Shaw & Weir 2007)

However:

- Students have ‘unlimited’ time to work on genuine university assignments
- Limitations of traditional timed independent essay may still apply in RTW assessment tasks in EAP

Research Questions

Does imposing a time condition in an academic reading-into-writing argumentative essay assessment affect students':

- source text use?
- essay scores?

Previous research on RTW & time

- Majority of RTW studies (Plakans 2009; Plakans & Gebril 2012; Sawaki, Quinlan & Lee 2013; Yu 2013) focus on a one-shot task (e.g. short essay, conducted in a predetermined time)

[Exceptions: Cho 2003 - compared effects of product-oriented & process-oriented approaches to an integrated writing assessment task ; McGinley 1992- students allowed as much time as they needed in one sitting to compose a persuasive essay from multiple sources]

- Independent writing tasks (e.g. Younkin 1986; Livingstone 1987; Caudery 1990; Kroll 1990; Hale 1992; Knoch & Elder 2010)
- Extended conditions in many studies were only between 10 and 20 minutes longer in tasks of 20 or 30 minutes (e.g. Younkin 1986; Livingstone 1987; Hale 1992)
- Studies tend to judge impact of time on scores alone, often a holistic score

[Exception: Kroll 1990]

- No significant difference found between writing in two time conditions in majority of studies (Younkin 1986; Livingstone 1987; Hale 1992; Power & Fowles 1996; Polio, Fleck & Leder 1998).

The RTW construct

Complex interplay between reading & writing ≠ sum of independent skills but rather a different skill

Discourse synthesis: constructivist activity - writers organise content selected from sources & connect it to their own personal knowledge bank in order to transform the source texts into a new text (Spivey & King 1989)

Plakans (2009, 2015): students of higher overall proficiency display more discourse synthesis processes, less proficient students focus on language issues

Research design

Groups (50 students in	Topic	Time	Topic	Time
Group H – further divided into 2 groups, HA who did topic A first and HB who did the reverse				
HA	A	One week	B	1hr 45 mins
HB	B		A	
Group T				
TA	A	1 hr 45 mins	B	One week
Group T – further divided into 2 groups, TA who did topic A first and TB who did the reverse			A	

Data, Instruments & Analyses

RQ1: Students' source text use

Data	Instruments	Analyses
1. Typed & anonymized compositions (drafts, plans, notes, annotated source texts, writing logs)	- 2 genuine writing exam questions from EAP course - Coding Scheme for References (CSR) - Source Use Coding Grid (SUCG)	- Textual analysis for citation types & frequency - Statistical analysis of features (Paired sample t-test)
2. Post-writing questionnaire (PWQ) responses	- Retrospective, semi-structured questionnaire on Survey Monkey (different versions) - Classification scheme for composer's reasons for citing	- Statistical analysis of numerical questions - Qualitative analysis of short answer responses
3. Retrospective interview transcripts & video recordings	Discourse-based interviews	- Qualitative textual analysis of transcripts - Inductive approach to identify patterns, trends & idiosyncrasies

Coding Scheme for References (CSR)

Comprehensive system for classifying citations (Hyland, T. 2005)

Coding Scheme for References

Type of Citation	Definition	Identifiable Techniques	Example	Notes
Boundedness				
Bounded (B)	Any markings, words or phrases which clearly separate the citation from the writer's own words.	- Mechanical bounding e.g. quotation marks - Rhetorical bounding with reporting verbs / structures and / or phrases e.g. The author reports that... In the article ..., While I agree with this..., It is said that... (implicit attribution)	In the article it states that raising the minimum wage will increase the overheads of businesses. I agree that this is a concern. Stuburn (2012) remarks that a higher minimum wage would increase operating costs of small companies. I agree that this is a concern. "Every increase in the minimum wage raises the overall costs of small-business owners".	This refers to bounding which marks the start AND the end of the citation although in many instances bounding is not needed in both places as the information which documents the source may also mark the boundaries of the citation. Citations are often bounded by the same information that documents the source.
Unbounded (U)	There are no markings / phrases to separate the writer's ideas from those of the sources.	No mechanical or rhetorical bounding	Raising the minimum wage will increase the overheads of businesses.	
Attribution				
Documented (D)	Full information about the original source is given (this may differ depending on which citation conventions are being followed).	- Parenthetical / non-integral references - Integral references to the source e.g. author's name, credentials, institution	The article states that raising the minimum wage will increase the overheads of businesses (Stuburn, 2012). Stuburn (2012) states that, "Every increase in the minimum wage raises the overall costs of small-business owners" (p.13).	Citations may be bounded by the same information that documents the source.

Other potential schemes trialled (Shi 2004; Weigle & Parker 2012; Gebril & Plakans 2013)

Source Use Coding Grid

Student code: P01			Total no of words: 564	Score: low 4, low 4, 4, 3							Overall comments: S for S3 as only referred to one source. Main ideas seem to come from sources / with own input but then she does a good job of adding own concrete examples / specific details.	
Citation No	Location in the reading (P = paragraph, S = sentence)	Type of reference	Length (words) Not including reporting structure / linking phrase	Location in the Writing	Purpose	Reporting verb / structure (linguistic integration)	Contextual Integration	Other details	Section highlighted?	Copied 3 word chunks not referenced		
1	Stuburn, P1, S3-4	IUU	41 (whole sent)	P1, S1, (TS)	Main idea (MI)	No	No	A meshing together of ideas from Stuburn with some of writer's own input to create topic sentence. It can be hard to tell if some of IUUs are really ideas borrowed or ones which belonged to the students already as in the focus group students said this topic has been in the news and they are familiar with. However some of same vocab and one copied 3-word chunk.	No	reducing the number of		
2	Stuburn, P1, S3-4	IUUR	28 (whole sent)	P2, S2	Repetition of idea in topic sentence (supposed to be clarification / elaboration?) Doesn't really extend the argument just repeats it.	No	No		No			
3	Romer, P3, S2	DBD	19	P2, S3	Could be a concession but not clear. Could be just a supporting idea.	Romer argues that "... "	Before - none. This idea needs a linker. After - ' However, it is not supportive....' (attempt at critical evaluation?)	Seems to contradict the TS as it states employment doesn't fall much but it is used to show that regardless of this, policy does not benefit the poor. "However it is not supportive that..."- critical evaluation	Yes			
4	Romer, P4, S1	IUD	22	P3, S3	MI	Roomer (2013) supports with the evidence that	General idea (pass extra cost to consumers). Specific examples are given in TS and then this general idea comes next. Should be the TS (MI)	Full paraphrase, bounded only at start with surname and date but not at end	Yes			

Hyland's Scheme Explained

Detailed criteria to identify four specific types of borrowing (along a cline):



Same as original

Full paraphrase

Rhetorical features of citations classified according to presence of:

- ✓ documenting (attribution) – including the source information
- ✓ bounding (separation from main text at the start and end) – mechanically e.g. with quotation marks or rhetorically e.g. with a reporting structure or linking phrase

4 variations (bounded & documented; unbounded & documented; bounded & undocumented; unbounded & undocumented)

The minimum wage may “lead to price increases of day-to-day goods”. (DBU)

Hyland lists 16 different ways students can integrate source texts & gives explicit examples

Hyland's Scheme

Appendix J: Reference Type Indicators and Examples

Type of Reference	Definition	Identifiable techniques:	Example
Bounded (B)	Any markings, words or phrases in the written text that clearly separate source references taken from the reading, from the writer's own words	- Mechanical bounding such as quotation marks - Rhetorical separation with phrases like "in the article" or "the author says" or "I agree that.."	In the article, this information is usually supplied by the victim. I agree that this is a problem.
Documented (D)	Information about the source of the idea.	- Parenthetical references - In-text rhetorical references to the author's name, institution, affiliation	Brown claims that this information is usually supplied by the victim.
Bounded & Documented:	Often texts are bounded by the same information that documents a source		As Brown says in his article, much information is usually supplied by the victim (p.3).
Direct (D)	Information that is directly taken from the text. There are four possible permutations:		
1 Direct, Bounded, Documented (DBD)	Information that is separated from the writer's own ideas and identified as to its source.	- Documentation techniques - Bounding techniques	Brown tells us "Though the accused is often grilled by the investigating team, crucial details are supplied by the victim"(p.3). This is...
2 Direct, Unbounded, Documented (DUD)	Information is given about the source, but the reader is unclear where the writer's ideas end and the source ideas begin.	- Parenthetical references - In-text rhetorical references - No rhetorical or mechanical bounding techniques.	Though the accused is often grilled by the investigating team, crucial details are supplied by the victim, probably because the accused is afraid to supply them (Brown, p. 3).
3 Direct, Bounded, Undocumented (DBU)	Source information is separated from the writer's words, but there is no information about where it came from.	- Bounding techniques - No identification of the source materials.	Though the accused is often grilled by the investigating team, "crucial details are supplied by the victim."
4 Direct, Unbounded, Undocumented (DUU)	Source information is separated from the writer's words, but there is no indication of where the writer's words begin and the source words end, and no documentation of the source	- No bounding techniques - No identification of the source materials	Though the accused is often grilled by the investigating team, crucial details are supplied by the victim, probably because the accused is afraid to supply them.

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Documented
(DBD)**

**Information that
is separated
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- Documentation techniques
- Bounding techniques

**Brown tells us,
"Though the accused is
often grilled by the
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**Direct, Unbounded,
Undocumented
(DUU)**

Source information is separated from the writer's words, but there is no indication of where the writer's words begin and the source words end, and no documentation of the source

- No bounding techniques
- No identification of the source materials

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(DUD)

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- Parenthetical references
- In-text rhetorical references
- No rhetorical or mechanical bounding techniques

Though the accused is often grilled by the investigating team, crucial details are supplied by the victim (Brown, p.3).

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Bounded,
Undocumented
(DBU)**

**Source
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- Bounding techniques**
- No identification of the source materials**

"Though the accused is often grilled by the investigating team, crucial details are supplied by the victim."

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Revisions to Hyland's Classification System

Operational definitions refined / adapted:

- More clarity between quasi-direct and quasi-indirect
- Adapted definition of indirect reference: Hyland – *Ideas from the source are summarised in the writer's own words* (indirect reference ≠ summary in many instances)

Four categories have been added:

- Summary (S)
- Synthesis (Z)
- Misrepresentation (M)
- Adaptation (A)

Original expanded version - too ambitious! CSR refined to include Hyland's (2005) 16 classifications and my four new codes

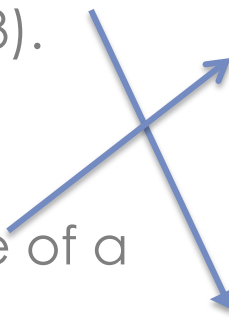
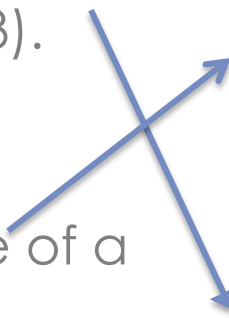
Clear rules being established as I code more scripts & other identifying features documented on on SUCG (e.g. non-integral citation; direct quote with no quotation marks)

Your turn!

Source: Stuburn, T. (2012, April 5). Should the minimum wage be raised? *Time* 133, 12-15.

A minimum wage hike may lead to price increases of everyday goods. (p.13)

Match the 3 citations to the correct code from the Coding Scheme for References:

1. According to Stuburn (2012), “a minimum wage hike may lead to price increases of everyday goods” (p.13).
2. Increased expenditure on daily necessities may be a consequence of a rise in the minimum wage (Stuburn, 2012).
3. A minimum wage hike may lead to price increases of everyday goods.

A. Indirect
Unbounded Documented
(IUD)

B. Direct Bounded
Documented (DBD)

C. Direct Unbounded
Undocumented (DUU)

- 1B, 2A, 3C

Early findings: Methodology

Coding Scheme for References proving to be a robust and valuable system BUT

Citation count alone not sufficient → Qualitative analyses needed to complement quantitative methods → HOW exactly do students use sources? (Triangulation of data collection methods and analyses)

Insider perspective: → insights from composers are invaluable (Cronin 1981; Swales, 2014, Harwood, 2008)

- i) Cross-verification with post-writing questionnaire response
- ii) Ambiguity with IUU → students highlight sources and own essay
- iii) Transcribing interviews while coding a particular script

Plakans (2015) - conflicting findings from previous research may be attributed to differing methodologies

Early findings: Citation types

Total No of instances of source text borrowing	DBD	DUD	DBU	DUU	QBD	QUD	QBU	QUU	QIBD	QIUD	QIBU	QIUU	IBD	IUD	IBU	IUU	S	Z	M	A
96	36	8	0	0	3	4	1	0	0	3	1	3	2	9	0	26	7	3	5	3
%	37.5	8.3	0	0	3.1	4.2	1	0	0	3.1	1	3.1	2	9.4	0	27.1	7.3	3.1	5.2	3.1
	Direct: 45.8%				Quasi-direct: 8.3%				Quasi-indirect: 7.3%				Indirect: 38.5%							

DBD – 37.5% of all citations

IUU – 27.1%

Attribution:

All direct quotes were documented

32.3% of all citations – undocumented (83% of these were IUU)

“Some of my ideas were the same as the ideas in the source texts but were hiding in my mind and were inspired by the sources.” (Student 37H)

Expectations

- Past studies – inconclusive (but may have been due to methodology)
- More time should equal more detailed reading of sources, less misrepresentation of original authors, more critical engagement, richer content and more indirect citations, possibly of a higher quality

HOWEVER

- Do students actually use the time to engage in more meaningful practices?
- Do they know how to operate at a higher level?
- Does spending more time reading sources / reflecting result in a better end product?
- McGinley 1992: 'synergistic' interplay between reading & writing beyond the ability of the less proficient student regardless of time
- Authenticity / validity – students lead busy lives. Is it idealistic to expect them to spend longer because we let them work at home?

Thank you for your time!
Any questions?

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