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Research Paper

From Plagiarism to Paraphrasing: Graduate Students' Approaches for Referencing Materials in Academic Writing

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Abstract

Proper citation practices have become crucial for maintaining academic integrity, yet graduate students frequently struggle with efficient paraphrasing and referencing. This paper explores the importance of paraphrasing to maintain academic integrity as well as to prevent graduate student plagiarism. A qualitative case study was conducted on 20 fourth-semester graduate students at an Indian university to obtain data collected on the same. Thematic coding was used to analyze the interviews to determine how the respondents have understood the importance of paraphrasing in the aversion of plagiarism. Findings revealed that students notice that paraphrasing is one of the strategies one should use to prevent plagiarism, yet they are not sure about their ability to use this strategy. Most of the respondents preferred specialized instruction and feedback as a means of helping them to improve their paraphrasing skills. This study establishes that teaching strategies will help students improve their skills in paraphrasing, so they can rely on fewer resources and become more independent academic writers. These findings show how crucial it is to provide educational institutions with comprehensive paraphrasing education.

Keywords: Academic integrity, paraphrasing, citation practices, plagiarism prevention, qualitative research

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1. Introduction

Referencing is an integral part of academic writing, as it's the key to establishing clarity, credibility, and integrity in writing. It serves as a bridge between the familiar knowledge to new and innovative thinking. By referencing correctly, appropriate credit is given to original scholars and thinkers, establishing where the roots of one's own ideas are. It not only strengthens the arguments but also enables the readers to understand where the information comes from so that the work becomes transparent and trustworthy. Therefore, referencing is a pillar of academic communication, supporting intellectual honesty and scholarly rigor (Kalaivani & Devaki, 2024; Panjaitan, Novelyn & Angreni, 2024).

1.1 The Importance of Referencing in Academic Writing

The scholarly and professional literature is filled with evidence of concern about inadequate writing abilities and the increasing practice of plagiarism by university students (Brown, Dickson, Humphreys, McQuillan, & Smears, 2008). The queries regarding improper references may cause numerous concerns (Sellitto, 2005). These issues might be individual, or they could affect the entire research community. These might include questions about the person's academic integrity, academic competence, or even the possibility of plagiarism. Careful citation of sources will solve all these issues (Fisher & Zingmond, 2023). A competent researcher pays meticulous attention to every minute detail throughout the whole study process (Kumar, Verma, &

Aggarwal, 2023). The information needed for referencing and creating a bibliography draws focus on the entire research process, and attention to accuracy also fosters healthy habits. It facilitates scholarly reasoning and analysis and improves the reporting of research findings (Azadeh & Vaez, 2023). Proper referencing pays close attention to specifics, such as page numbering, writer name spelling, and the authenticity of essential data that will be included in the work. Paying attention to citations improves one's reputation with editors, editorial board members, and individuals, in addition to making one a more effective researcher (dos Santos, Peroni, & Mucheroni, 2024). Inadequate reference might be seen by an editor or audience as an indication of inactive thinking, imprecise writing, and intellectual inactivity. When a writer properly credits the sources, they remove any doubt about their position from the minds of the audience. The writer may avoid using the expression "It is said" in his/her academic article by acknowledging sources clearly and properly. A well-written reference highlights the writer's scientific expertise (Silyn-Roberts, 2023). A comprehensive reference is the indication of a well-read, knowledgeable researcher or healthcare professional (Santini, 2018).

In academic writing, reference citation is crucial (Rezvani, 2024). It acknowledges sources properly, lends credibility to a claim, and demonstrates that a writer is sharing not merely his or her own opinions alongside those of other contributors. It additionally assists readers in locating the source material and making a claim or providing evidence for a point an author wishes to convey (Damarell, Badcock & Miller, 2005). When a source or piece of writing refers to any materials, the references must be cited. It is essential to enable readers to discern between and locate the things associated with trustworthy and consistent information (Damarell, Badcock & Miller, 2005).

1.2 Challenges Faced by Graduate Students in Referencing Materials

Mastery of a sophisticated set of comprehension skills is necessary for the synthesis of scholarly materials in one's own voice (Zhao, 2015). The most challenging aspect of academic writing among EFL students is citing sources (Hirvela & Du, 2013). De Voss and Rosati (2002) assert that the complexity of plagiarism concerns is exacerbated by scholars' expanding use of the internet as a research resource. They contend that the utilization of the internet's virtual realm, as well as the accessibility of downloading and copying-and-pasting tools, provides additional difficulties in relation to plagiarism concerns (De Voss & Rosati, 2002). According to Kendall (2005), a lot of students have trouble referencing and crediting reference sources. According to Newton (2001), students frequently struggle with referencing because they rely on unreliable sources for guidance on how to cite sources. Almost fifty percent of the pupils she interviewed for her study admitted that they understood they were most likely not following it correctly, but they went to inappropriate original sources for assistance—friends, parents, or outdated high school handouts—instead of asking their instructor about the instructional materials or the essential reference text. In those cases, the advice which they had received or could remember was itself often fallacious.

To fulfill their academic requirements, student authors, particularly those whose first language is not English—must write using primary materials, further increasing the analytical and linguistic demands of this complex task (Keck, 2014; Shi, 2012). The complexity of this stage is preconditioned by two aspects: first, the need to interact with them dyadically, text-responsible drafting to remain loyal to the references; second, the credibility of citation usage techniques that have to be learned and used when mirroring the referencing notions (Pecorari & Petrić, 2014; Wette, 2017). Besides, one of

the most problematic criteria and features of the research project consists of educational resources integration. Challenges include the direct results of the language of pupils' backgrounds, inadequate writing abilities, trouble in understanding articles because of technical jargon, and lengthy research papers (Naqvi, 2018).

1.3 Research Problem

It is necessary to have appropriate citation procedures for maintaining the integrity of an intellectual work in the context of academic literature, but a lot is lacking in the precise use of such citations. The technicalities of the academic referencing process are not easy to understand, and this may lead graduate students to make errors in citing references or to unintentional plagiarism. Whereas citation requirements have been made to be readily available, it is a common experience that students will often have trouble applying them in real-world usage. In their study, Flowerdew and Habibie (2021) imply that even though many learners are familiar with the significance of mentioning sources, many of them will not be able to identify the slight differences between summarizing, paraphrasing, and providing proper credit. This gap suggests that whilst a conceptual knowledge skill can be learnt by the graduate learners on referencing, many graduate learners have yet to master the practical implications of referencing. Moreover, students often turn to paraphrasing or even plagiarism because they have to complete their assignments on schedule, and are overwhelmed with a significant amount of academic information that they have to learn. According to research by Pecorari and Shaw (2019), paraphrasing is a frequent form of coping used by graduate students—especially those who are in non-native English-speaking contexts—to avoid plagiarism. However, without adequate training to use efficient paraphrasing methods, students

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often plagiarize unwillingly by either directly replicating the format or simply failing to reference it. Moreover, Bloch (2012) points out that some learners, especially those in second-language learning situations, turn to intentional plagiarism based on the belief that they cannot translate complex texts into their modified language. The inclination of students to commit plagiarism or inadequately paraphrase is exacerbated by the fact that they are ignorant of the tools and resources they have access to, i.e., educational writing programs and plagiarism detection software. To overcome these concerns, academic literacy teaching should encourage a more comprehensive view that focuses on efficient strategies to apply citation practice in graduate-level writing, aside from the importance of citation (Lee, Hitchcock, & Casal, 2018).

There is a very important study by Lee et al. (2018), as it puts its finger on what has been missing in academic literacy instruction: an overemphasis on the theoretical importance of citation without teaching students the more practical skills they need to be able to apply those citations accurately and consistently in their writing. More focus has to be placed on experiential, skill-oriented instruction since graduate students may become baffled by complex citation formats like APA, MLA, or Chicago. Once such challenges arise, discrepancies and errors may arise as well, and inadvertent plagiarism may occur, which can outcome in compromising academic work. Lee et al. (2018) have developed a thorough methodology that integrates theoretical knowledge with hands-on practices to cultivate students' ability to proficiently use the standards of citation in real scholarly writing.

Lee et al. (2018)'s findings only make the instructional methods more efficient and bring more focus to the importance of such methodologies as interactive workshops, sequential tutorials, and peer review sessions that focus on the nuances of citation practices. The previously mentioned tactics

ensure that students, besides understanding the gravity of the importance of citation, will also gain confidence in applying it accurately. Since this promotes a skill-based approach, the study by Lee et al. (2018) provides support toward moving to more learner-centered teaching of academic literacy. The advantages for students taking this approach include becoming competent in writing, reducing plagiarism tendencies, and contributing to a culture of integrity. The objectives of this research, which aim at covering the identified shortcomings in the literature, are the following.

1. To examine an understanding of graduate students as to appropriate reference styles and the trouble they can face in using proper formats in academically written materials.
2. To explore whether paraphrasing is an effective way of removing plagiarism with a retained academic integrity.
3. To identify the factors that influence student intentional and unintentional plagiarism, particularly under the specific condition of the second language.
4. To find out how education-based resources and tools, including writing workshops and plagiarism detection software, help pupils enhance their citation skills.
5. To suggest instructional approaches that can close the knowledge gap between graduate-level writing guidance and the use of reference requirements.

The following research questions are formulated to answer the identified gaps in the literature.

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1. What difficulties do graduate students face in learning to comprehend and use proper citation styles in academic work?
2. How does paraphrasing assist graduate students to avoid plagiarism, and how effective is it as a means of doing so?
3. What are the key reasons for unintentional and intentional plagiarism among graduate students, and how do these reasons differ between Indian graduate students (non-native English speakers) and graduate students from other countries (native English speakers)?
4. Do teaching writing tutorials and plagiarism checker programs have any significance on the ability of graduate students to acknowledge their sources correctly and avoid plagiarism?
5. What can be done to help graduate students better understand how to use citation styles and less overall paraphrasing?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Academic Writing and Referencing

A crucial part of academic writing is the integration of scholarly materials. This implies that pupils must find their assertions within an academic context and cite prior research conducted by other experts on the subject to strengthen their conclusions (Luzón, 2015). A reference or citation is a way of providing credit to the source's writer. It serves as a unifying factor across disciplines and serves to highlight each person's expertise in their area of study (Byrne, 2021; Nesi, 2021). According to Howard et al. (2010), writing from references is a significant part of college coursework, and students are expected to begin critically analyzing educational resources and incorporating them into their writing as early as their first year. Neville (2016) believes that citing sources is important to academic writing because it fosters the establishment of an idea. Similar to a spider weaving a web via

meticulously built links among concepts, knowledge is spread around, and correlations are made. According to Liu, Lo and Wang (2013)'s study, students may feel baffled about the different conditions of in-text citations and references, especially when they are required to switch between the styles of different citations without sufficient and predictable support. The confusion in the students' minds could be explained using Chandler and Sweller's (1991) theory of cognitive load, whereby their cognitive resources may get overwhelmed, as they need to grapple with complex rules concerning capitalization, punctuation, and italics, which are error-prone when affecting citations.

In academic writing, referencing is crucial because it enhances openness and intellectual integrity. Walker and Taylor (1998) believe that citing supports five important ideas. In the first place, it claims creativity and gives original writers recognition, which is consistent with the Western idea of ownership in an established form, like publications. Second, referencing offers users access to references so they may find and locate papers for further study. Third, it sticks to the economic side, ensuring that the references contain relevant facts that do not overwhelm the reading material and make the reading more comfortable. Fourth, standardization aids consistency in the style of citation, which makes academics understand and follow the norms in different publications. Fifth, transparency also helps to prevent muddle and equivocations since the references will be explicit and unambiguous. The significance of controlling online publications, in particular, websites, complicates the task of referencing. As Khathayut and Walker-Gleaves (2021) found, there is a lack of confidence among the learners regarding the appropriate source citation method because of the insufficient or ambiguous information that many online resources contain. Referencing can uphold academic integrity, support the dissemination of

information and enhance a well-organized discussion if it is accomplished according to the guidelines therein (Silyn-Roberts, 2023).

2.2 Citation Practices Across the Disciplines

We have found significant variations across subject areas in the citations expected when conventions are being fulfilled. These variations can be ascribed to the different knowledge-sharing routines that the fields employ. Take, for example, citation of behavioral studies, which differ in the nature and the scope of the research (Lange, 1985). On the other hand, disciplines such as environmental science exhibit a significant amount of interdisciplinarity, meaning that research results are significantly influenced by information from several domains (Steele & Stier, 2000). According to studies conducted by Radicchi, Fortunato and Castellano (2008), Sánchez-Gil, Gorraiz and Melero-Fuentes (2018) and Rinia, Van Leeuwen, Bruins, Van Vuren and Van Raan (2002), referencing distributions vary according to the discipline, with the life sciences, computer science, and mathematics exhibiting unique citation formats. Another crucial factor is where references are included within publications. The issue of reference position was considered in a study by Bertin, Atanassova, Gingras, and Lariviere (2016) and Halevi and Moed (2013), who noticed that citing positions in documents may vary depending on the structure. New methods are simplifying adherence to these citation norms to a greater extent across a wider range of areas of study, but research suggests that there are systematic domain differences in the trends (Thelwall, 2019).

2.3 Plagiarism in Academic Writing: Definition and Types

A broad comprehension of plagiarism that requires no explanation is implied by the fact that much research on the subject does not offer a practical definition. According to Power (2009), this can have an impact on study

findings as learners' reports of actual plagiarism are influenced by their personal perceptions of what constitutes plagiarism. Moreover, teachers and students frequently cannot agree on the precise definition of plagiarism. Howard's (1995) patch writing theory clarifies that students, often unknowingly, closely reproduce the original text's structure. The ability to avoid plagiarism in graduate students may be thwarted because paraphrasing to encourage original thought is extremely difficult, especially for non-native speakers. Pecorari's (2003) observations prove that linguistic barriers contribute to "patch writing," where students directly copy parts of the text due to challenges in paraphrasing. Belter and Du Pre (2009) consider plagiarism as a section or portions that are exact copies of another source, omitted from proper citation and marked with quotation marks. Colnerud and Rosander (2009) believe that plagiarism presents the same material, or portions of it, for recognition in multiple courses; using portions, or entire texts produced by another individual without acknowledgment; and fabricating facts. Hard, Conway and Moran (2006) believe plagiarism is submitting thoughts or phrases of another person or people as one's own for academic assessment without giving due credit. Plagiarism is just the practice of taking someone else's thoughts or words and using them as one's own without crediting the work to the original author (Park, 2006). Wang (2008) also views plagiarism as the act of using the ideas or words of another person without giving credit to them.

That is why intentionally using the words, ideas, or works of another person on the worldwide level without giving credit or contacting the other person can also be characterized as intentional plagiarism (Hillermann, 2023). It can be of any sort, such as copying and pasting the work done on the Internet and taking someone's ideas without the credit to the person who wrote it, translating and using the work written in another language without

referring to it. The use of pictures, video files, audio files, among other materials, without permission or citation is reckoned as intentional plagiarism. Others include stealing ideas that belong to other students, failure to use quotable statements with quotation marks, patch writing, reusing the same work without the consent of other courses, intimidating others to include their names as researchers without doing anything, and fabrication (Islam, Koka, Wahab, & Khan, 2022).

Unintentional plagiarism is the act of using the work of another without crediting or acknowledging them, generally without acknowledging their due credit. It may be conducted in a variety of ways, including copying other works without crediting them, omitting quotation marks when explicitly quoting someone, or not mentioning an appropriate reference (Islam et al., 2022). Researchers define self-plagiarism as the practice of reusing substantial, similar, or virtually identical parts of one's own work without giving credit to the original author's work or recognizing that one is doing so (Conner, Showalter, Asaolu, & Barnhart, 2024).

2.4 Factors Contributing to Plagiarism

Plagiarism is caused by a variety of circumstances, with views and opinions having an enormous impact on how people behave. Due to geographic differences in value systems and social conventions, which result from multiple interpretations and usages of plagiarism, cultural aspects are especially significant (Pennycook, 1996, 2004; Sowden, 2005). For instance, in one community, anything that is considered apparent plagiarism could be accepted as legitimate in another community. Moreover, Chien (2014, 2017) and Wheeler (2009) argue that ignorance about plagiarism is often addressed as a factor contributing to the problem of plagiarism, besides cultural norms and general beliefs. The concept of plagiarism may not be well comprehended by learners, particularly at higher learning institutions and

may lead to inadvertent academic dishonesty (Gullifer & Tyson, 2010, 2013; Shirazi, Jafarey & Moazam, 2010). The faculty members also influence plagiarism due to their attitudes toward academic integrity and their perception of it (Flint, Clegg & Macdonald, 2006). There is no unified perception of the form of scholarly misconduct by faculty and students in the case where the school lacks specific rules against plagiarism (Chen & Chou, 2016). Accordingly, to prevent plagiarism, it is quite reasonable to develop a comprehensive approach that will take into account the ideas, attitudes, and perceptions of academic integrity by professors and students (Babaii & Nejadghanbar, 2016).

2.5 Graduate Students' Academic Written Practices: Referencing and Misconduct

Graduate students usually have to perform with a high level of writing skills and academic integrity. However, it has been established that sometimes it becomes troublesome to live up to these standards. Literature study on the experience of the graduate student with referencing has shed light on various types of issues, like an inability to understand citation styles, difficulty in articulating the distinction between plagiarism and paraphrasing, and the ethical considerations of using work that is not his or her own and failing to credit the author (Smith et al., 2020). The secondary sources pose a greater challenge to scholars since it is difficult to recognize them. According to Pecorari (2006), ignorance of the tradition of academic results in the misrepresentation of secondary sources.

Uncertain criteria might also lead to students over-citing, which makes the flow of work disjointed, or under-citing, which puts them at risk for plagiarism (Bruton, 2014). Other prior studies on academic misconduct among students have also raised severe concerns. Despite the institutional

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specificity and differences in research areas, fabrication of data, exam cheating, and plagiarism tend to be the most frequently reported forms of academic cheating (Davis & Berry, 2018; Monahan & Shah, 2023). Such issues can have negative impacts on students' academic future, besides posing a threat to the reputation of the whole higher education system.

2.6 The Role of Educational Tools and Resources: Plagiarism Detection Tools and Writing Workshops and Citation Guides

A software application called Measure of Software Similarity (MOSS) compares similarities across documents to find instances of source-code copying. This tool uses text-document-based detection. iThenticate is an application that checks papers with the source material without the need for installation of any application, based on text documents (Mehsen, Kazi, & Joshi, 2024). JPlag is an online application that detects plagiarism in source code and is compatible with Java, C, and C++ (Yang, 2024). Turnitin is a popular online application that performs a fingerprint analysis of documents to detect plagiarism. A free web application called PlagChecker employs search engine resources for detecting plagiarism. PlagScan is a paid software that offers organizations, colleges, and schools several services. To track the slight fraction of concealment of stealing, there is the use of a web-based program known as Exactus. Grammarly is an ongoing document-correcting program on mobile applications as well as websites (Shrivastava & Shrivastava, 2024). DupliChecker is a free plagiarism checker, available 24/7, and with excellent efficiency, that requires a search engine and required internet connection to operate.

Academic Writing Workshops (AWWs) go a long way in reinforcing lecture-based instruction and do this through the largely intensive modes of delivery, thus contributing significantly towards enhanced academic writing

skills of the pupils. They are used in ensuring that learners get to develop their critical thinking, reasoning, and communication skills, which do improve their writing across a variety of subject disciplines (Wingate, 2007). AWWs also promote involvement and engagement with learning and training students to be able to cope with postsecondary learning settings by devising interactive learning environments that address the specific academic writing concerns (Fallon, 2009; Nzekwe-Excel, 2014).

Kolb (2014) also emphasizes that the most productive ones in skills learning methods are active learning and the chances to practice in the process and receive instantaneous feedback. On top of that, Wingate (2012) also demonstrated that tutorials give opportunities where explicit explanations and hands-on activities strongly benefit students in improving their proficiency in academic writing. Although tools such as citation management systems and automated citation generators are commonly used to ease the process of citation, Stevens (2016) warns that these tools do not always provide accurate results, which calls for manual correction of inaccuracies. Moreover, Youmans (2011) criticizes overreliance on these tools for making students complacent since they depend on software rather than an understanding of the conventions of citation.

Four aspects of citation management have been recognized by the Citation Tools Team (a dedicated team that manages the institutional resources and expertise related to organizing, formatting, and using citations in academic writing): choosing a citation manager, writing and plagiarism, citation styles and formatting, and comprehending when to suggest a reference manager (Childress, 2011). Finding the solutions to writing and plagiarism-related questions is typically not difficult (Pecorari, 2024). Students can also be referred to the writing center or published writing guides, or they can review the institution's plagiarism guide (Rustan, 2024). The referencing and

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citation style questions are diversified and range as follows: how to make a Works Cited page or reference an edited chapter using APA (Ambarwati, 2024). The responses to such questions are provided in the form of brief style guides formulated by librarians and websites like Purdue Online Writing Lab (<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/>). When readers subtly indicate that they require a citation manager, libraries can at times suggest one, such as EndNote, RefWorks, or Zotero (Childress, 2011). Citation managers can be beneficial for academics, graduate students, and researchers seeking cooperative projects (Williams & Woods, 2024). Citation generators such as KnightCite or EasyBib can be beneficial for undergraduate students. Selecting a citation manager is sometimes a question of personal preferences, but selecting the best tool for a user's needs requires a grasp of the capabilities and variations across systems. Academic librarians need to comprehend how scholars in their fields utilize citation managers and be aware of the tools that their users most frequently employ. They should also stay up to date on advancements in citation tool technology (Childress, 2011).

2.7 Previous Studies

The work by Hassanipour et al. (2024) is also applicable in the present study, which explores the paraphrasing techniques used by graduate students when writing in academia. The study brings out issues like the actualization of automated programs like ChatGPT, which could reduce but not eliminate plagiarism. It states that it is necessary to provide additional training on paraphrasing techniques and pay special attention to linguistic and psychological obstacles that need to be coped with, concerning Indian students. These limitations can be overcome in future studies. The lapses that graduate students tend to experience when learning and applying citations according to style-specific rules, like the cognitive overload attributed to the

mechanical use of language transformations, are specifically addressed by Roe et al. (2024) and by the related studies. Pecorari and Shaw (2019) emphasize the development of trust between teachers and students as a prerequisite for reducing cases of plagiarism. Trust would allow for open communication, where students could seek clarification on how to cite without fear of being judged. This favorable condition helps the students to develop their self-esteem regarding their academic integrity and reduces the dependency on dishonest practices. These works illustrate how paraphrasing can help to prevent plagiarism, yet there might be a loss of academic integrity through the use of mechanical solutions, and this point does correlate to the views of the present study.

Similar to the present research, Miranda-Rodriguez, Sanez-Nieto, and Ruiz-Rodriguez (2024) provide valuable data on the efforts of education aimed at decreasing plagiarism. The paper defines major challenges that graduate students have to face, including the necessity to master the referencing formats and learn how to paraphrase to avoid plagiarism. The results of the two questions discussed by Miranda-Rodriguez et al. (2024) can assist in determining that remedial procedures aimed at identifying plagiarism and skills in referencing can address such problems. The discussion provided in the theoretical grounds, i.e., educational interventions to maintain human integrity within educational institutions, is in line with previous studies (Pecorari, 2024) that note the significance of in-person instruction in preventing plagiarism. Like the present study, the two studies described above rest on experimental and quasi-experimental research design schemes and measure intervention effect as a quantitative outcome of independent assessment. Key findings from both studies demonstrate that students' referencing skills are significantly enhanced by writing tutorials and plagiarism detection software (question 4). Nevertheless, as it has been noted

by previous studies, the particular needs of non-native English speakers, namely Indian students, remain unmet to a certain degree. The thoroughness of Miranda-Rodriguez et al. (2024) makes their proposed research an interesting addition to the topic, which, however, prompts the necessity of a broad study that will allow filling the gap of existing knowledge about the long-term implications of a particular intervention and cross-cultural considerations.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Design

The purpose of this study is to explore in-depth the challenging context-specific experiences of graduate students about citation styles, paraphrasing and plagiarism and address the research questions. The researcher intends to use the qualitative case study research design to collect data. This approach allows examining the individual perspectives, cultural differences, and teaching effects in depth, and provides complex research information about the factors affecting academic integrity. Case studies are applied to comprehend the causes and processes of events that occur socially as well as to address the root cause of the matter at hand (Yin, 2018).

3.2 Participants

The population of the study included twenty-fourth-semester graduate students of an Indian university, of which nine participants were males and eleven participants were females. The sample size was calculated to depend on the need to use the qualitative case study methodology, which focuses on the examination of concrete problems instead of wide generalizations (Thelwall & Nevill, 2021). The respondents were identified using purposive sampling, whose validity has been assured. Research participants were

selected students of an advanced disciplinary course in academic writing that forms part of their EFL course. The assignments in this course comprised such tasks as writing essays on academic topics, doing academic homework tied to earlier acquired knowledge on academic subjects, and creating annotated reports in which they were asked to read literature on academic disciplines, based on providing adequate references. The level of English proficiency of the participants was intermediate and advanced, with the participants coming into the course based on their previous work and being qualified to attend the advanced writing course. This proficiency level is noteworthy since linguistic skill determines paraphrasing skills, a very important area of research in the study. The selected sample population is sufficient to be used within the selected research framework (Mocănașu, 2020), as it is possible to conduct a comprehensive study of the context-specific set of challenges faced by the students concerning citation formats, paraphrases, and plagiarism. The smaller sample is intended to be more in-depth, and different individual experiences, cultures, and training will be considered as well (Fielding, 2023).

Table 1: Demographics of Respondents

S.No.	Respondents	Gender	Age (Years)
1.	R1	Male	23
2.	R2	Male	24
3.	R3	Male	24
4.	R4	Male	23
5.	R5	Male	24
6.	R6	Male	23
7.	R7	Male	23
8.	R8	Male	23
9.	R9	Male	23
10.	R10	Female	23

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11.	R11	Female	23
12.	R12	Female	23
13.	R13	Female	23
14.	R14	Female	23
15.	R15	Female	23
16.	R16	Female	23
17.	R17	Female	23
18.	R18	Female	23
19.	R19	Female	23
20.	R20	Female	24

3.3 Data Collection Methods

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the study's respondents employing discourse-based techniques (Baptiste & Seig, 2007) to get their implicit opinions on writing performances (Lancaster, 2016). The researcher conducted one-on-one telephone interviews in English because it is the common language, and all of them can fully express themselves in English in August 2024 (refer to Appendix A). These semi-structured interviews generally took up to 20 to 30 minutes in duration. However, there was some difference: the shortest interview lasted 15 minutes, and the longest 35 minutes. On average, interviews lasted roughly 25 minutes. Every interview was completely transcribed and documented. Notes were gathered throughout the interviews to set the scene for the respondents' discussion of issues, solutions, and methods for citing sources in academic writing.

3.4 Data Analysis

Three fundamental processes were used to find trends and recurring topics on referencing difficulties, approaches, and perspectives about paraphrasing and plagiarism (Tustiawati & Wiguna, 2024). After carefully reviewing the transcripts, the first readings led to the creation of provisional coding groups, which were then improved upon through analysis of more interviews. The

author used multiple strategies to ensure the article matches the data with its codes and themes. Coding was a recursive operation, which continuously compared the data with the themes and the emerging codes to confirm the category from the responses of the participants (Stuckey, 2015; Wuntu, Tatipang & Ali, 2024). The author followed the recursive reading of transcripts to develop consistency in coding: the first step was the application of initial codes; this was followed by re-visiting transcripts to establish whether they were relevant to compare and integrate or to further refine themes as appropriate. The author employed contextual information provided by the use of field notes collected during data collection in the validation of the codes and themes. The researcher also used member-checking to compare the participants' views with interpretations. This enhanced the reliability and validity of the coding process. Respondents' actual remarks were employed to reinforce the juxtaposition of new groups to uncover overarching themes (Rezvani & Miri, 2023). According to De Paoli (2024a), the approach was inductive and included verifying for uniformity. Respondents were asked to reiterate their readings of the themes to change any obtained themes (Christou, 2024).

The data analysis procedure was divided into several overarching themes that capture the prevalent patterns observed within the study. The main topics identified are referencing problems that students have with the style of citing, the inconsistency of the policies and ambiguity regarding secondary sources. The next theme was paraphrasing techniques that revealed a high level of confidence in the ability to correctly paraphrase original texts, preserving participants' academic integrity. The subject of plagiarism awareness and prevention has emerged as an important focus area, underlining the different levels of understanding among students about both unintentional and

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intentional plagiarism, and the role of paraphrasing tools and plagiarism detection software.

The above themes were then iteratively refined through inductive analysis, as recommended by De Paoli (2024b), and further validated by repeated review of transcripts with member-checking among the participants. The thematic classification not only enlightens the experiences of the participants, but it also links the issue that they related to and their views to the major tendencies in academic writing. In addition, the results of the current study indicated that pragmatic advice and tailored feedback may have relevance in avoiding the issues, thereby requiring the incorporation of formal academic writing sessions and situation-specific techniques in postgraduate education. The themes that have been identified form a basis of knowledge upon which to base the improvement of the strategies employed by the students in coping with academic integrity issues.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from all the respondents of this study who confirmed that they were aware of the objectives of the study, methods and that they could withdraw their participation in the research at any time. The identities of the respondents and the details of their academic work were anonymized to provide confidentiality while keeping their personal data use during the study process. The use of plagiarism detection technologies was ethical as the tools were not applied in any way to control the people who used them. Data processing was carried out to ensure the confidentiality of respondents and intellectual property in accordance with the ethics of the institution.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Citation Problems

The responses of the twenty respondents render some general underlying problems in understanding and using acceptable referencing styles in scholarly writing. A considerable number of citation styles and the specific instructions that relate to each of them constitute a serious concern for students. Respondents expressed confusion about referencing style and in-text citation style, where one respondent reported, “It’s overwhelming with so many citation styles to remember. I often confuse APA with MLA, especially with how to format in-text citations and reference lists” (Respondent 1). A further common issue is having trouble recalling specific guidelines about capitalization, punctuation, and italics, with another respondent accepting, “There are too many small rules about commas, periods, and italics. It’s hard to be consistent, and I sometimes miss details” (Respondent 3). This might result in final writings that are inconsistent and inaccurate. Respondents often struggle with citing websites and online articles as they don’t know how to correctly organize digital sources or deal with missing information, as one participant elucidated, “Even after looking at guides, I get lost with how to cite websites and online resources. *It’s not straightforward*” (Respondent 5). The fact that a significant number of the respondents cannot understand how to properly cite the ideas obtained through borrowing makes the use of secondary sources even more complex (Participants 4, 20). Additionally, respondents report being anxious about how often they should cite a source or when they should cite and apprehensive that they may have over-cited or plagiarized unintentionally (Respondents 7, 10, 18). Although citation software is useful to some students, it can be seen that citation generators provide inaccurate citation,

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which has to be revised by a human being (Respondents 6, 13). Ultimately, the issues that students face when it comes to learning proper academic citation practices are linked to various expectations surfacing on the side of professors (Respondent 8) and a lack of instruction on citation styles.

4.1.2 Paraphrasing and Plagiarism

Based on the answers provided by the respondents to the question on paraphrasing, there was an apparent lack of trust among respondents concerning their ability to remain honest in their academic integrity without plagiarizing. Although trying to do their best in rewriting their own words, some participants express their fear of sticking too tightly to the original (Respondents 1, 5, 16). It is believed that paraphrasing could be useful when it comes to avoiding plagiarism, yet most participants find it difficult to strike a balance between their original words and the original text. One respondent remarked, "I try to rewrite everything in my own words, but I'm always worried about staying too close to the original. I'm somewhat confident but not entirely" (Respondent 1). This was echoed by another respondent, who stated, "I always paraphrase with the original text next to me, but I worry about losing the author's meaning" (Respondent 5).

Balancing the voice with the source text is also written by respondents. As one participant stated, "It's challenging to balance my voice with the original source. I'm usually confident, but sometimes I worry if I've changed enough" (Respondent 9). Not all words changed, and the main difficulty is apprehensiveness to recreate the original format or content, as one of the participants stated, "I paraphrase carefully, but I worry about unintentionally keeping the same structure as the original" (Respondent 12). In preventing plagiarism, students employ meticulous preparation practices, and often plagiarize the original source even after paraphrasing it (Respondents 8, 19).

Only a small proportion of respondents admit to using paraphrasing tools, yet there is an overall insecurity in terms of their absolute correctness, with one stating, “I use paraphrasing tools sometimes, but I don’t trust them fully. I still have to double-check the text for accuracy” (Respondent 3). Eventually, students believe that paraphrasing reduces plagiarism, yet they do not seem so confident in their ability to use it adequately even on their own (Respondents 4, 15). Such confusion points to the significance of teaching and providing feedback on the proper development of effective paraphrasing skills that would increase self-esteem and a sense of academic integrity among the students.

4.1.3 Causes of Plagiarism

Participants identified many main reasons for both unintentional and intentional plagiarism. A common issue reported was uncertainty about the requirements for citation, as expressed by this participant who said, “Accidental plagiarism happens because students think they’ve changed enough” (Respondent 4). Some respondents hinted that time pressure is one of the powerful drives to intentional plagiarism, where one respondent admitted, “Intentional plagiarism happens under pressure to perform well” (Respondent 9). It also underlined the challenges non-native speakers of the English language would face. As one student participant addressed, “Non-native speakers might have more trouble expressing ideas in their own words” (Respondent 7). Another respondent mentioned, “Lack of time or understanding causes accidental plagiarism. Non-native speakers might face extra challenges because they struggle with paraphrasing in English” (Respondent 12). However, one participant noted, “It’s mostly confusion over citation rules. Non-native speakers could face additional language

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difficulties that make paraphrasing harder, but it's not exclusive to them" (Respondent 10).

4.1.4 Writing Tutorials and Plagiarism Software

According to the respondents' answers, with more lessons being preferred, writing seminars and plagiarism detection software are equally helpful resources for assisting pupils with effective reference sources and keeping away from plagiarism. One respondent observed, "Writing tutorials have helped clarify citation rules. Plagiarism software is useful but not foolproof" (Respondent 11). Similarly, one has said, "Tutorials helped me improve a lot. Plagiarism detection software is good, but it doesn't always catch everything" (Respondent 12). Due to the comprehensive, educative information found in tutorials that provides the learners with a process of stepping through the different types of citations, tutorials are considered vital in instilling confidence and advancing their citation skills (Respondents 5, 7, 15). According to one of the respondents, exemplifying, "plagiarism detection software is great, but tutorials have been more helpful in teaching me how to properly credit references" (Respondent 16). One more pointed out, saying, "The software helps, but I still need to review my work manually" (Respondent 13). Respondents admit that there is some flaw in it, stating that it at times fails in finding mistakes or even raising incorrect outcomes (Respondents 4, 17, 20). Due to this, despite the use of the editing program, students emphasize the significance of manual review and proofreading. Thus, the results of critical studies indicate that both resources can be useful, but the tutorial one is a more in-depth coverage of introductory knowledge and skill enhancement, whereas the plagiarism detection program can be viewed as reinforcement. Although students can use both of these technologies simultaneously to avoid the risk of committing plagiarism, it is

important to resist the temptation to give up manual monitoring and active learning.

4.1.5 Learning Practices and Mastery of Citations

Participants indicated that they have a better understanding of citation due to several teaching-learning methods, including an interactive seminar, individualized feedback, and the use of online resources. One respondent added, “Hands-on workshops where we practice citing have helped. I’m less reliant on paraphrasing now” (Respondent 1). Interestingly, one of the participants mentioned, “One-on-one sessions with tutors have helped me understand citations better. I don’t need to paraphrase as much now” (Respondent 3). It was also identified that online citation tools were useful; one response was, “Interactive online tools for citations have improved my skills. I rely less on paraphrasing because I know how to cite correctly” (Respondent 5). Though not a majority of the respondents, three respondents (3,13,17) indicated that feedback (personalized) by their peers or instructors assisted them in improving their citation skills, yet other respondents (2, 5, 12) focused on the value of online citation guides and interactive tools in providing step-by-step instructions. Also, it appears that citation management systems have helped students with reference organization and the reduced need to paraphrase, as another participant expressed, “Citation management tools have improved my skills. I no longer need to paraphrase as much with a better understanding of citation styles” (Respondent 16). Thus, respondents do not depend on paraphrasing badly anymore because they are more aware of the citation guidelines. They find it much easier to cite directly to sources now (Participants 7, 14, 15), demonstrating that effective citation training not only enhances their technical proficiency but also reduces the intimidation

that they have to paraphrase extensively to avoid committing plagiarism. This is one of the moves towards more appropriate academic writing styles.

4.2 Discussion

Obstacles to Citation: What factors obstruct graduate students from accurately employing citation styles: The research results give an insight into the obstacles highlighted by the participants and demonstrate several types of issues graduate students are forced to eliminate to properly understand citation styles. The major issue is the abundance of citation styles, including APA, MLA, and Chicago, that may be confusing to students since they incorporate different methods of in-text citations and references (Respondents 1, 2, 17). There is a risk of confusion since, according to the research of Liu et al. (2013), students may be easily confused by the various requirements of in-text citations and references, especially when they are supposed to alternate among the various forms of references without being clearly advised. Hassanipour et al. (2024) also emphasize that while such automated tools as ChatGPT are useful, they cannot replace full-scale teaching of citation and paraphrasing skills, especially in consideration of the linguistic challenges faced by Indian students. Lack of frequent training in different styles aggravates this, as it brings about confusion and irregularities in academic writing (Respondent 8). This issue can be explained by the theory of cognitive load proposed by Chandler and Sweller (1991) that suggests how the working memory of pupils gets overloaded with complex capitalization, punctuation, and italics rules (Respondents 3, 14), causing citation errors.

The issues raised in the current research are also reflected in the study by Roe et al. (2024), who examine the cognitive load caused by automatic changes in language (specifically in terms of academic writing). The

inconvenience of dealing with online resources, in particular, websites where the citation process is complicated by the lack of complete data or a typical format, was also reported (Respondents 5, 16), as it has been reported previously by Khathayut and Walker-Gleaves (2021), who mentioned that students often feel lost in their ability to correctly cite sources due to the confusing nature of online resources, especially websites. Furthermore, secondary sources pose another issue because scholars take a long time trying to determine which sources are secondary and end up referring to those sources indirectly (Participants 4, 20), agreeing with a study conducted by Pecorari (2006), who noted that students who are not at par with the traditions of academic works tend to have problems with secondary citations. Additionally, ambiguity of plagiarism/over-citing (Respondents 7, 10, 18) is a hidden issue in academic unethical conduct that often occurs due to ambiguity over the amount of citations. Vague guidelines may lead to academic over-citation, which interrupts the flow of the writing due to the facts given, or under-citation that exposes the student to the risk of plagiarism (Bruton, 2014). According to Miranda-Rodriguez et al. (2024), an ambiguous guideline of referencing escalates the possibility of plagiarism acts (both deliberate and undeliberate). Some of the students attempt to alleviate those problems by the use of citation software, yet the available resources are not always reliable, and their errors have to be eliminated manually (Respondents 6, 13). Such instruments are often inaccurate, which aligns with what Stevens (2016) warns that errors produced by automatic citation generators might require additional editing. The apprehensions by Stevens are in line with the recommendation by Pecorari and Shaw (2019) that trust must be built between educators and learners to ensure that irrelevant information does not get included in the work. Effective communication between the two helps in clarifying the methods of citation, thus reducing the risks of inaccuracy and

unethical behavior. The biggest concern is that different scholarly domains have different requirements, and proper citation guidelines are not given enough consideration. Due to this, students fail to give their full understanding to effectively use citation styles in their academic papers.

Avoiding plagiarism through paraphrasing: The ambivalence of the respondents towards paraphrasing shows that there are some ambiguous challenges faced by the students in maintaining their integrity in academics, as well as keeping away from plagiarism. Even though paraphrasing is aimed at helping students rephrase ideas in their own words, some of them doubted that they could differentiate between their work and that of original sources (Respondents 1, 5, 16). This observation corresponds to patch writing theory advanced by Howard (1995), who argues that students tend to limit themselves to imitating the syntactic structure of the original text (usually inadvertently). Pecorari (2024) further states that unless strategies on how to efficiently paraphrase are implemented, there will be increasing dependence on patch writing, particularly among non-native speakers who cannot grasp the academic writing conventions. Although paraphrasing can be seen to be a form of protection in this case, it is possible that inexperienced scholars may still end up plagiarizing unknowingly, owing to a lack of confidence and ability to paraphrase. Some participants expressed that while paraphrasing might be useful in theory, it can be challenging to do in practice (Respondents 9, 10, 19). The clash is in line with the cognitive load hypothesis that proposes that students, especially in advanced learning settings, struggle to perform tasks of understanding, rewriting, and balancing originality at the same time (Sweller, 1988). Hassanipour et al. (2024) indicate the psychological and linguistic barriers to equivalence that nonnative learners have to break through and that inevitably obstruct their abilities to paraphrase and discourage them from writing in their own words.

As they know how limited they are in paraphrasing, respondents often refer to the original source after paraphrasing (Respondents 8, 19). The worry that they would forget to avoid taking the original source/content without permission stresses the significance of providing more instructions and feedback on how to paraphrase correctly (Respondents 12, 17). Previous studies suggest that offering students specific instruction on writing strategies concerning paraphrasing would enable them to become more confident and reduce their risk of unintentional plagiarism (Keck, 2014). Although beneficial, the fact that participants rely on paraphrasing tools (Respondents 3, 18) means that they cannot be used as a substitute for direct pedagogical intervention. Ultimately, paraphrasing is a technique that may be used to prevent plagiarism; however, it becomes effective only with comprehensive teaching that places its focus on citation styles and academic integrity. To circumvent plagiarism, graduate students use paraphrasing as a means to encourage new thought. Nevertheless, respondents (4, 15) raise the concern that it is doubtful how to achieve this effectively, and this aligns with the patch writing hypothesis theorized by Howard (1995). According to Keck (2014), proper feedback and training may give effective paraphrasing to maintain academic integrity and self-confidence.

Factors Contributing to Plagiarism: What are the commonest motivations—intentional and unintentional—behind plagiarism committed by non-native English speakers like Indian students: Findings show that plagiarism among graduate students—be it intentional or unintentional—is informed by a host of variables whose significance cannot be gainsaid. This study focuses on non-native English speakers (NNES), but previous studies are relevant to underscore the differences between NNES and native English speakers (NES). Respondents often cite the unintentional plagiarism that stems primarily from the incomprehension of the demands of proper citations

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and paraphrasing (Respondents 4, 5, and 16). The study also shows that academic demands, short deadlines, and incomplete citation explanations are the key factors that cause the incidences of intentional and unintentional plagiarism. Miranda-Rodriguez et al. (2024) state that this can dramatically reduce educational plagiarism and referencing problems when interventions in education are brought into operation. It is disclosed that the aspect of language issues, especially with vocabulary and rewording, is very significant in the instance of unintentional plagiarism in non-native speakers of English (Respondents 2, 12, 19). This confirms Pecorari's (2003) observations that non-native English learners often have difficulty in paraphrasing academic materials, which results in "patch writing," where students copy original text due to linguistic barriers. In its turn, a study conducted by Gullifer and Tyson (2013) shows that English-speaking students commit more plagiarism, explained by such factors as academic pressure within a short period. Similarly, the argument by Howard (1995) points out that unintentional plagiarism is due to a lack of knowledge or skill, whereas intentional plagiarism is often due to outside pressures. From these, one understands that though challenges related to the language faced the non-native English-speaking students, the inherent nature of plagiarism among NES students is mainly influenced by deadlines, along with expectations.

Tutorials and Software: How the use of tutorials on writing and plagiarism detection software impacts both citation skills and the obstruction of plagiarism: The results of this research show that graduate students can enhance their citation abilities and avoid plagiarism using both writing tutorials and plagiarism detection software, which have substantial but different functions to perform. The outcomes correspond to previous findings, which are stated in the work of Pecorari and Shaw (2019), where a supportive academic setting contributed to creating self-confidence in the

students and instilling integrity in writing. The completely in-depth information related to the complexity of the topic, like references and in-text citation, is identified by respondents as a virtue of writing workshops (Respondents 1, 2, 6, 10, 11). This is in line with the findings of Wingate (2012) that tutorials reinforce the academic writing skills of the students by bringing with them opportunities to practice and explicit verifications. Writing workshops help students to be more confident in their writing through enhancing their comprehension and engaging their minds (Respondents 5, 7, 15). This is based on learners who need active participation in the acquisition of new knowledge through learning theories known as the constructivist theories of learning (Vygotsky, 1978). However, regardless of its usefulness, plagiarism detection software is seen as an add-on. Some students use it as a safety net to ascertain that they did not plagiarize intentionally (Respondents 3, 9, 16). The Respondents 4, 17, and 20 express their concerns about the reliability of the software because it might overlook or produce inaccurate findings. This aligns with criticisms made by academics such as Youmans (2011), who argued that excessive dependence on these tools could lead students to become complacent since they may develop faith in the software more than their own knowledge of proper citation techniques. Overall, the results indicate that, though plagiarism-detecting software can serve as a supplement to the appropriate referencing, it cannot be used on an equivalent level to the profound learning and skill formation offered by writing tutorials. These two resources, as well as manual review and active learning, must be used together to help the students steer away from plagiarism in their citations.

Effective Instructional Approaches: What pedagogical methods will enhance graduate students' proficiency in the proper use of citation formats while simultaneously reduction in reliance on paraphrasing: The findings of

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the present study indicate that several instructional techniques, such as interactive workshops, personal tutoring, online citation tools, and citation management software, will enhance student knowledge related to citation formats and reduce their paraphrase dependency. Respondents (Respondent 1, 4, 10, 11, 20) concentrated on how interactive, experiential seminars have positive effects. The idea that active participation can be defined as the most efficient method of skill acquisition is also supported by these workshops, which provide much more practical application and immediate feedback (Kolb, 2014). This type of approach is the opposite of passive approaches to learning, which are often ineffective in teaching students' technical skills, such as referencing. Moreover, personal guidance and peer review also proved very useful when addressing some of the citation problems (Respondents 3, 13, 17). This corresponds with the notion of the zone of proximal development introduced by Vygotsky (1978), according to which students are capable of achieving a higher level of understanding when provided with guided help from their teachers or more knowledgeable peers. The significance of tailored feedback emphasizes the characteristics of adaptive and dynamic teaching methods more emphasized when it comes to citation training. Additionally, the reputed online citation tools and management systems simply add weight to the argument that technology can be applied to increase organizational capabilities and reduce reference errors (Respondents 9, 16, and 19). Citation management software, Hensley (2011) asserts, makes this process easier, so that students do not worry about the format and can just use their time to incorporate their sources in the right ways. The process of building the confidence of learners in reference and citation tasks is evidently going to add to the level of achieving other learning processes since technology-based training of citation practices will reduce the

level of dependence that students have to acquire in the use of paraphrasing (Respondents 7, 14, 15).

4.3 Implications

The findings of this study have some important implications for key academic stakeholders. These results underscore the importance of focused instruction to students in citation methodologies and paraphrasing strategies. This means there should be more workshops, peer review sessions, and especially one-on-one tutorials geared at building their confidence levels while reducing the current over-reliance on paraphrasing (Rossi, 2022). Furthermore, experiential learning activities in teaching citation management software will be vital in improving practical skills (Hensley, 2011). The study just goes to show the importance of a teacher giving clear and consistent instructions on the act of citation (Nesi, 2021). Furthermore, a teacher should provide specific feedback and a safe space environment where students can ask questions about citing and paraphrasing without a feeling of guilt or misunderstanding (Mbutho & Hutchings, 2021).

At the top of the list of priorities in universities should be structured courses on academic writing and citation mastery (Rossi, 2022). Institutions must engage in workshops with access to guides that make citation easy and ensure that plagiarism detection tools are not only easily accessible but also ethically used (Diki & Gibendi, 2022). Lastly, the call is to the policymakers to have frameworks on academic integrity set, that have training put in place both for the student and the faculty; incentivizing policies should enable formative assessment techniques, endorse academic honesty, and fund integration into the campus setting of plagiarism detection tools (Rasul et al., 2024). Holistic approaches by all these stakeholders are essential for the

creation of a culture of academic integrity, leading toward the enhancement of scholarly practices.

4.4 Limitations and Recommendations

The current study has limitations and should be dealt with more extensively in future research. On the one hand, the results of the study are limited in their applicability to other academic and cultural contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2016) because the number of study participants included only 20 MA students at a government-controlled college in India. Taking into account that all the participants are NNES, it can be assumed that the difficulties described above are not fully representative of the situation that learners face in various linguistic or educational environments. Moreover, the self-reporting method may be inaccurate since discourse-based interviews are involved, which, despite contributing to the presentation of covert opinions, are not entirely representative of the entire scope of citation and paraphrasing assignments of the students (Patton, 2014). Another limitation is that the interviews were conducted at a certain level of academic course, and this aspect could affect the perspectives of students regarding the topic of citation style and academic writing due to the topic's current significance (Yin, 2018). These shortcomings also impact the study because they limit the set of circumstances in which the study can be utilized due to distorting the conclusions. Hence, in an attempt to get more diversity in the opinion related to citation or paraphrasing challenges, future studies should aim at expanding the sample base in different universities and different nations. Besides, greater insight into the paraphrasing and citation abilities of students can be gained through a mixed-methods research design that includes observation and performance-based assessment, such as examining the sample writing of actual students (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Future research can also

examine the integration of digital paraphrasing tools into academic practice and how better-structured paraphrasing training sessions would help mitigate knowledge gaps which are of currently exist.

5. Conclusion

The goal of the current investigation was to determine how effective paraphrasing is in supporting graduate students to retain academic integrity and how it can help them avoid plagiarism. The position taken is that, despite the significance of paraphrasing with the aim of plagiarism prevention, the idea can only be effective with feedback and structured teaching. The improperly guided students may overdo paraphrasing and end up engaging in plagiarism without intention and with diminishing confidence in themselves as academic writers. Significant findings demonstrated that graduate students know that paraphrasing can be an alternative way to avoid plagiarism, but are unsure about their ability to do paraphrasing successfully. Other participants raised the question of sounding too close to the original wording, which reflects the key problem in determining how to balance between the initial notion and paraphrasing. Moreover, the current study revealed that although the paraphrasing tools are helpful, students do not entirely believe in paraphrasing tools when it comes to being accurate. The majority of the participants feel that paraphrasing instruction with a focus on it, as well as the feedback it will provide, would enhance their ability and certainty in not plagiarizing.

These results have significant implications in terms of academic integrity, as they highlight the importance of more comprehensive measures on the proper application of paraphrasing skills that have to be put in place, particularly for Indian non-native English learners. Institutions should offer targeted workshops and resources that provide students with both theoretical

knowledge and practical skills in paraphrasing and citation (Li, 2013; Flowerdew & Habibie, 2021). The cultural background of NNEs in just one institution and the small population of this study, however, restricts its applicability to wider educational contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2016). To gain more in-depth knowledge, it is recommended that in future research, paraphrasing task challenges in various academic settings should be examined, and a combination of research methods involving a mixed-methods approach should be used. The present study concludes that equipping students with adequate paraphrasing education is essential for enhancing their academic integrity. Therefore, there is the possibility of leveraging the current gaps in the instruction of paraphrasing to ensure that students can write more confidently and ethically.

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Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests. The research was done independently, and there are no financial or other relationships that may be used to influence the interpretation or presentation of the results.

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APPENDIX A

Respondents' Interview Questions

1. Could you describe the difficulties you've encountered while trying to understand and employ the proper citation forms in your academic writing?

2. What are the procedures involved in paraphrasing in written work? When you paraphrase, how confident are you that you're upholding academic integrity, and do you consider it helps you to prevent plagiarism?
3. What, in your opinion, leads to intentional or unintentional plagiarism in academic writing? Do you believe that Indian non-native English speakers have specific challenges than those who are native speakers?
4. What advantages do writing manuals and plagiarism checkers have in assisting you in avoiding plagiarism and correctly crediting sources?
5. What methods or resources for education have you found to be more effective in using citation styles? Do you feel that you need to paraphrase less now that you have more guidance?



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