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Citation Behaviours of Applied Linguists in Discussion Sections of Research Articles

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Abstract: It is now generally accepted that academic writing is a social activity by which the authors negotiate with their audience to gain community acceptance for their findings. One of the ways to achieve such an acceptance is by establishing intertextual links to prior research using citation. Despite a vast research on the topic and suggestion of typologies for the form and function of citation in academic writing, few studies have focused on the rhetorical functions of citations. Using Swales' (1990) and Samraj's (2013) typologies and analyzing 45 research articles from five high impact factor journals in the field of Applied Linguistics, this paper aims to identity the forms and rhetorical functions of citations in the Discussion sections of these articles. The analysis of the forms shows an overwhelming tendency towards using non-integral citations. Studying the functions of citations indicates that citations are used with various rhetorical functions: to compare the findings; support the explanations; to support the interpretations; and to support the recommendations. It is concluded that by referring to literature, applied linguists contextualize their propositions and try to use it as a support for their research claims in order to persuade their audience of their research outcomes soundness. The findings can enhance our understanding of the reasons behind choosing citations in various parts of discussion section and can be turned into pedagogical materials and raise rhetorical consciousness through teaching those choices explicitly to ESL students.

Keywords: Applied Linguistics, Citation, Discussion Section, Research Article.

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