

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**EVALUATIVE FUNCTIONS OF REPORTING VERBS IN ACADEMIC  
WRITING**



**A Dissertation in the Department Of Communication Instruction,  
School of Communication and Media Studies, Submitted to the School of  
Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment**

**of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Philosophy  
(Communication Skills)  
In the University of Education, Winneba**

**NOVEMBER, 2022**

## DECLARATION

### STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, MARK ABBEY, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

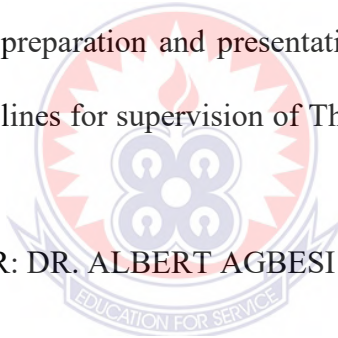
### SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. ALBERT AGBESI WORNYO

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have contributed in diverse ways to the successful outcome of this thesis. I must say I am highly indebted to my supervisor-Dr. Albert Agbesi Wornyo for his countless guidance and support. Thank you Dr. Wornyo for your patience, support, advice and expertise that helped to produce this thesis.

Also, to all lecturers in the School of Communication and Media Studies for your advice and suggestions during the weekly seminars. For my course lecturers (Prof. Andy Birikorang, Dr. Amo Mensah, Dr. Christina Hammond, Dr. Akwasi Bosompem, Dr. Henneh Kusi and Mr. Kwesi Aggrey (HOD), I appreciate your advice, support and cordial relationship. You made the Department a family!

To my mentor Dr. Ramos Asafo-Adjei (Dean of the Centre for Languages and Liberal Studies, Takoradi Technical University, Takoradi). Thanks a lot for the 'push'; it was worth it. A special appreciation also to Dr. Shirley Banini of the University of Ghana as well as Mr. Angel Tsatsu Kongo of University of Professional Studies, Accra and Mrs. Mavis Gardner of Assemblies of God Theological College. Your share of various expert ideas and knowledge on research methods and the phenomenon studied opened my eyes to the intricacies of research at this level. This thesis would not have been possible without your assistance.

Finally, my sincerest thanks also go to my family and friends. First, I appreciate the efforts of my lovely wife, Jemima Andoh for her endless prayers for me and taking care of the boys while I commuted to and from Winneba. To my mum (Juliana Abbey) and my siblings Felicia, Francis, Joyce, Doris, Grace and Esther for your prayers as well. I would also like to thank my colleagues: Francis Offen, Charles Koufie and Augustine Gyasi for your pieces of advice and check-ups and not forgetting colleagues in the Language department of St Mary's Boys SHS, Apowa.

## DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my 'boys-boys'; Emmanuel, Maximus and Alvin McAbbey.



## TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>DECLARATION</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENT</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.0. Background to the study</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1. Statement of the Problem</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.2 Objectives of the Study</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.3 Research Question</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.4 Significance of the Study</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.5 Delimitation of the Study</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.6. Organisation of the Study</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.7. Summary of Chapter</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2.0. Introduction</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2.1. Reporting and Reporting Verb in Academic Writing</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1.1. Types/Categorization of Reporting Verbs and their Functions	16
<b>2.2. Empirical Studies on the Use of Reporting Verbs and their Evaluative Functions</b>	<b>24</b>
2.2.1. Studies on the use of Reporting Verbs in LR sections of masters theses	25
2.2.2. Studies on Non-Native and Cross-cultural English Speakers use of RV	28
<b>2.3. Studies on the Tense and Voice form of the Reporting Verb</b>	<b>36</b>
2.3.1. Review on Tense usage in Academic Writing	36

2.3.2. Review on Voice usage in Academic Writing	44
<b>2.4. Theoretical Framework</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>2.5. Chapter Summary</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>3.0. Introduction</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>3.1. Research Paradigm</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>3.2. Research Approach</b>	<b>57</b>
3.2.1. Qualitative Research Approach	57
<b>3.4. Research Site</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>3.5. Sample size and Sampling method</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>3.6. Data Collection Method and Procedure</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>3.8. Data Analytical tools</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>3.9. Ethical Considerations</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>3.10. Trustworthiness of the Study</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>3.11. Summary of the Chapter</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>CHAPTER FOUR RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>4.0 Introduction</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>4.1. Research Question One (1): What are the RVs used in the literature review sections of the masters theses of students of the University of Education, Winneba?</b>	<b>77</b>
4.1.1. Occurrences of RVs in the data	78
4.1.2. The Top Ten Ranked RVs in the Study	82
<b>4.2. Research Question Two (2). What are the categories of reporting verbs frequently used in the literature review sections of the masters theses of students of the University of Education, Winneba?</b>	<b>87</b>
4.2.1. The process function category of reporting verbs used in the literature review sections of the masters thesis by University of Education, Winneba masters students	87
4.2.2. Evaluative function category of the reporting verbs used in the literature review sections of UEW masters students	90

<b>4.3. Research Question Three: How are the choices of tenses and voices form of the RV employed in the masters theses of students of the University of Education, Winneba?</b>	<b>104</b>
4.3.1. Tense Form of the RV	104
4.3.2. Voice Form of the RV	109
<b>4.4. Chapter Summary</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>5.0 Introduction</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>5.1. Summary of the Key Findings</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>5.2 Conclusions</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>5.3. Recommendations</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>5.4. Challenges of the Study</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>5.5. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>138</b>



## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
3.1: Distribution of Pages and Words across the Selected Disciplines -reading course	63
3.2; Coding for all the Discipline	65
4.1. Occurrence of Reporting Verbs cited in the LR sections of Masters Theses According to the Hyland (2002) Taxonomy of RVs	76
4.2: Rank of first ten Most occurring RVs in the study greater than 50 occurrences	80
4.3. RVs with just one occurrence and their categories/sub categories	84
4.4. Frequencies of RVs in the Process Category (Hyland, 2002)	85
4.5. Evaluative Functions of Reporting Verbs by Hyland (2002)	88
4.6. Overall percentage usage of Tenses in the study	102
4.7. Usage of Voice form of the RV in the study according to the Hyland taxonomy	110
4.8. Combination of Voice and Tense form of the RV	111





## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure</b>	<b>Page</b>
2. 1. Thompson and Ye, 1991 categorisation of Reporting Verbs	18
2.2 Thomas and Hawes' (1995) categorisation of Reporting Verbs	20
2.3. Categorisation of Reporting Verbs in terms of Denotation and Evaluation in Hyland (1999)	21
2.4. Hyland, (2002) Classification of Reporting Verbs	49
3.1. Display of Antconc of the RV 'found' from the study	70
4.1. The first most occurring RVs in each Evaluative sub-category	79
4.2. Frequencies of RVs in the Process Category	87



## ABSTRACT

Writers make use of reporting verbs in making claims when citing the works of other authors. The study explores the evaluative functions of Reporting Verbs (RVs) in the Literature Review (LR) sections of the masters theses written by students from the University of Education, Winneba. Using the Antconc concordance software and Hyland's (2002) taxonomy of RVs as the analytical framework. A corpus of 36 LR sections of master theses were purposely selected from six disciplines for the study. In all there were 2449 tokens of reporting verbs in different forms from the 102 RVs extracted. The three most common RVs that occurred in the study are: *find*, *conduct* and *state verbs*. The analysis reveals that denotatively, the Discourse Acts category of RVs were employed the most (52.8%) followed by the Research Acts (42%) and then the Cognitive Acts (5.6%). Evaluatively, the discourse act assurance factive verb was the most used as against non factive and counter/critical verbs. In terms of tense, the present simple tense(54%) was the preferred tense by the students. It was followed by the past simple(40.3%) and the present perfect tense (5.5%). The analysis reveals that the students used more of the active voices (92.7%) as against (7.3%) of the passive voice. Based on the findings, this study recommends the explicit teaching of reporting verbs and their evaluative functions in the academic writing (research methods) class to expose students to the variety of RVs and how to use them. The study further contributes to postgraduate pedagogy and citation practices and serves as a fertile resource for further research.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0. Background to the study

Writing at the higher education level is a major academic activity that is very crucial within the academic discourse community. Writing within the academic discourse community has many facets; it is a challenging and a complex task (Paltridge, 2002). At all levels of tertiary education, students write essays, reports, research papers, term papers and theses, among others (Lee *et al.*, 2018) which are means by which writers are assessed in or admitted into an academic disciplinary discourse community (Pecorari, 2006). The significance of these writings, known as academic writing, has piqued the interest of researchers all over the world in recent years (Hyland, 2000), resulting in numerous studies (Adika, 2014; Afful, 2007; Flowerdew, 2002; Koutsatoni, 2009; Swales, 2014).

Bowker (2007) notes that academic writing is a special kind of writing that has its own set of rules, conventions and practices. One such prescribed feature is the need to make reference to previous researches and cite them appropriately (Swales, 2004). It is therefore almost impossible to write an academic text without reviewing or citing other authors' works. For that matter, researchers must always refer to what others have done because it is very necessary for academics as a way of protecting other people's intellectual property and preventing themselves from being accused of plagiarism (Lamprey & Atta-Obeng, 2012). This, Adika (2014, p.75), indicates is "a fundamental and critical aspect of scholarship". Acknowledging people's work is also sometimes interchangeably called referencing, documentation or citation. Citation can be viewed as a writer attributing proportional content to another writer or source

(Hyland, 2002). “It makes the reader aware of previous works and enables the writer to refer to the large growing body of literature to give his/her work credit” (Yeganeh & Boghayeri, 2014, p.583).

Hyland (2002) adds that, citation is mainly done by reporting the work of others or referencing previous research. In this reporting or citation structure is a key rhetorical feature called reporting verb (also termed the reporting signal, citation verb or stance verb) which is one of the words used to incorporate other people’s ideas or concepts into one’s writing. Bergler (1992, p.9) defines it as “the verb used to convey the language of others”. Using reporting verbs (RVs) in academic writing is not only the most straightforward way of attributing content to another source (Hyland, 2002) but also to convey both their works or claim as well as their assessment of these claims cited (Adika, 2015). According to Woravut (2015, p.144), reporting verbs generally serve two evaluative functions. The first function is “to give credit to other researchers and to use their work in the cumulative construction of knowledge”. The second function is to, “indicate a writer’s attitude towards the work of other researchers in a community”. A writer’s attitude or evaluation toward the source of information that was referenced or cited could be ‘positive (agreement)’ ‘negative (disagreement/critique)’, or ‘neutral’ stance. This, therefore, implies that choosing a reporting verb to cite someone’s work should not be a random exercise, but one that takes into account the writer’s attitude or evaluation of the information being cited.

Several researchers have developed various taxonomies and classifications that help scholars to identify the evaluative functions of reporting verbs (Hyland, 1999, 2002; Thomas & Hawe, 1995; Thompson & Ye, 1991). Thompson and Ye (1991) are known to be the first to have classified these reporting verbs to bring out their evaluative functions. They looked at over a hundred journal introductions from various

disciplines and categorised the reporting verbs based on their semantic differences, arguing that the RVS may either fulfill denotation or evaluative roles. Denotation was put into the writer act (the one doing the citation) and the author act (the one cited). Evaluatively, Thompson and Ye (1991) introduced three distinguished evaluative sub categories of reporting verbs that are used in academic writing according to the activities that these reporting verbs perform in a sentence: *textual verbs*, *mental verbs* and *research verbs*. The *textual verbs* include the following: *state*, *indicate*, or *stance*. The *mental group* of verbs on the other hand include: *understand*, *concur*, *believe* or *think* which refer to a writer's mental processes or show a writer's thought of what is being cited. The third is the *research verb* which refers to the process of the research activity and examples are: *find*, *observe*, *experiment*, *explore*, etc.

Thompson and Ye's (1991) classification laid the foundation and paved the way for other classifications from Thomas and Hawes (1994) and Hyland (1999, 2002). Thomas and Hawes (1994) also classified reporting verbs into three categories similar to that of Thompson and Ye, (1991) and these are: *think*, *argue*, and *research verbs*. Hyland's (1999, 2002) classification, which was first done in 1999 and modified later in 2002, is a very comprehensive classification of reporting verbs that was developed from the works of Thompson and Ye (1991) and Thomas and Hawes (1994). Hyland (2002) also classified reporting verbs into three denotative functions and subdivided them into their various evaluative functions (*factive*, *non factive* and *counter factive*). These three divisions, which he called the process function of reporting verbs are the *research act*, *cognitive act*, and *discourse act*.

Aside from the aforementioned, various writers have explored reporting verbs in academic writing from various perspectives. Some have investigated the different sorts of reporting verbs and how frequently they are used in academic discourse

(Manan & Noor, 2013; Agbaglo, 2017; Zin, 2020). Others have investigated the tense and voice usage of reporting verbs (Malcolm 1987; Oster 1981; Swales 1990; Shaw 1992; Un-udom & Un-udom, 2020). There are also cross-cultural studies on reporting verbs by Jafarigohar and Mohammadkhani (2015), Yasmin *et. al.* (2020) and Yeganeh and Boghayeri (2014). Hyland (2002) and Ramoroka (2014) have also carried out a cross-disciplinary analysis of reporting verbs. Researchers have further explored the use of reporting verbs from the various parts of research work such as studies on entire research articles (Tham & Nhi, 2021), the introduction section (Thomson & Ye 1991), the discussion section (Manan & Noor, 2013) and the literature review section (Agbaglo, 2017).

Although most of these studies saw that students were unable to use the reporting verbs correctly, especially their evaluative function in citing people's work, there have been others too that have significantly contributed to exposing students to the importance of reporting verbs in their writing. Agbaglo (2017) for instance studied the use of RVs by lecturers of the University of Cape Coast in their research articles and found that the lecturers used all the categories of RVs by Hyland (2002) in their writing. The major one that was mostly used, however, was the *discourse* verb. Yeganeh and Boghayeri's (2014) comparative study between Native English Speakers (NES) and Non-Native English Speakers (NNES) also found that the Persian, NNES writers used more RVs than the NES writers in the introduction sections of their research articles. However, the NES writers used a wider variety of verbs as compared to the NNES writers.

Despite the dominance of studies on the research articles, postgraduate theses are also one genre that has attracted some studies in recent times. Reporting Verbs have been studied in the various sections of postgraduate (masters) theses as well (Loan &

Pramoolsook, 2015; Manan & Noor, 2013; Swear & Kalajahi, 2019; Zhang, 2008). For example, Zhang (2008) studied the employment of reporting verbs in the masters theses Introduction sections in a cross-cultural study using the Thompson and Ye (1991) taxonomy and found that the English writers employed *textual* and *research* verbs in their corpus than in the Chinese corpus who rather used more of the *mental* verbs. Similar studies were done with the Literature Review section by Jarkosvka and Kurcirkova (2020), the Introduction section by Yeganeh and Boghyheri (2014) and the Discussion section by Loan and Pramoolsook (2015). They all discovered that reporting verbs of various kinds are widely used in these sections. These findings also highlighted the importance of knowing how to use reporting verbs and their beneficial implications for academic writing courses. In all these works, it is the Literature Review section that has seen more research in terms of reporting verb usage than any other section because according to Monreal and Salom (2011). The Literature Review section is where most citation (reporting other people's work) is done implying that it is the section of the research work where more reporting verbs are used. Wen and Pramoolsook (2021, p.323) call this section (literature review section/chapter) the 'reporting-dense chapter'. The focus for the numerous researches (Loan & Pramoolsook, 2015; Monreal & Salom, 2011; Thompson & Ye, 1991; Wen & Pramoolsook, 2021) on RVs is often on international students, especially those in the Asian Region. Agbaglo (2017) indicates in his research that the studies on RVs in the Ghanaian context especially is very minimal (Adika, 2015; Agbaglo, 2017; Banini, 2021). In a cross-disciplinary study by Banini (2021) on the usage of RVs in writings of the Ghanaian post-graduate student, for instance, it was revealed that the Ghanaian post-graduate student has difficulty in using reporting verbs appropriately in their writing, confirming the assertion of Adika (2015) who added that when this happens the persuasive impact that the claim is expected to achieve will not be realized and

called for further training by faculty. It is on this basis that further studies need to be conducted on reporting verbs in the literature review sections, especially in the Ghanaian context using a university in Ghana to expose students to its nature, categories, usage among others. This study therefore, examines the evaluative function of Reporting Verbs in the Literature Review sections of masters theses submitted by students at the University of Education, Winneba.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

Reporting verbs are very crucial and relevant in academic writing and therefore cannot be done without, especially in the citation structure. They signal the writer's attitude towards the status of an author's ideas, theories, or research; or they as well evaluate the evidential status of the sources reviewed (Adika, 2015). It is reporting verbs that allow writers to show their responsibility towards the statement made by other writers (Charles, 2006) which could be either in agreement, disagreement, or neutral stance.

It must be indicated that there is a variety of reporting verbs used in academic writing with different functions and complexities in usage (Thompson & Ye, 1991) which often make it difficult for English as Second Language learners to use (Manan & Noor, 2013; Ramoroka, 2014). One such difficulty, according to Bloch (2010, p.221), is the inability of the student to choose the right reporting verb that can "satisfy both the syntactic requirements of their sentences and perhaps more importantly, to express their attitudes towards the claims".

In addition, ESL learners often fail to use the reporting verbs properly in the citation/reporting structure in their writing (Loan & Pramoolsook, 2015). It is either they are misusing it or overusing it or even not using it for the intended purpose (Amrullah, et al., 2017). In addition to the stated difficulties, Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) report that the ESL students used various tense forms of the reporting verb



without knowing that they have evaluative functions which impact the information cited or the claims they make. Hyland (2002) ascribes these problems to both the deficit of vocabulary as well as the ignorance of how to properly cite sources in academic writing on the part of the students.

Atta-Obeng and Lamptey (2012) indicate that the problem of the Ghanaian student starts from the misconception that the student has towards citation. What they found out in their work was that students see referencing as "... only a requirement to show the titles of sources consulted in writing their papers..." (p. 70) and not as a means of reviewing other's work to create a gap for them to situate their work in or among other uses. Also, in Adika's (2015) study, he acknowledged the difficulty that Ghanaian students have in using reporting verbs and indicated "our students need training in the use of these verbs" (p.237). This assertion was buttressed by the study of Banini (2020a) as well.

There have been several studies on RVs to expose ESL/NNES students to the subtle distinction or variations of the meaning of the RVs and the choosing of the most appropriate ones for their writing (Hyland, 2002; Loan & Pramoolsook, 2015; Uludag *et al.*, 2020). There have also been calls on instructors, lecturers and school authorities to ensure RVs are used and taught right in studies (Bloch, 2010; Gray, 2019; Loan & Pramoolsook, 2015; Manan & Noor, 2013; Ramoroka, 2014; Yasmin, *et. al.*, 2020). These studies have stemmed from different perspectives; from the type and frequency of RVs; their evaluative functions in academic work, to inter/cross-disciplinary and cultural approaches, to recent day corpus-based studies. Others have classified reporting verbs in various categories (Charles, 1996; Francis *et al.*, 1996; Hyland, 1999, 2002; Thomas & Hawes, 1995; Thompson & Ye, 1991) to be used as frameworks for other research activities, especially novice writers. Most of these

studies in the ESL setting have also revealed the deficiency in the use of reporting verbs by both novice, and expert writers (Agbaglo, 2017; Jomaa & Bidin, 2017, 2019; Loan & Pramoolsook, 2015; Samraj, 2013; Woravut, 2015).

Despite these studies, not much attention has been paid to students and writers in universities in West Africa-Ghana. In the English as a second language context, specifically, the Ghanaian context are these few writers (Adika, 2015, Agbaglo, 2017; Banini, 2021a), whose findings and recommendations further indicate the necessity to raise students' awareness of the importance of RVs in the citation structure and the need to use them appropriately to achieve their right communicative purpose. This is indicative that more research on the use of RVs in the academic writings of students needs to be conducted to expose students to the appropriate use of RVs.

Adika (2015) reviewed the most recent (2012/2013 academic year) assessors' reports for graduate theses submitted to the University of Ghana School of Graduate Studies (UGSGS). He concentrated on thirty-five reports comprising nine from the Sciences and twenty-six from the Humanities. He proposed a schema, among which is a specialised vocabulary where reporting verbs were very prominent emphasising the essence of such a rhetorical device and the need to study it. Especially so when his findings revealed that postgraduate NNES have problems using it to incorporate other people's work. His study however, did not look at the reporting structure in which the reporting verb is found.

Similarly, Agbaglo's (2017) studies using the Hyland (2002) taxonomy studied the types and frequent use of reporting verbs in ten (10) research articles written by lecturers in the Department of English of the University of Cape Coast. The findings confirmed that all the three process types of RVs identified by Hyland (2002) were

used in the research articles. This research only looked at the types and frequencies without touching on the form of the reporting verb.

Also, Banini (2021a) studied the literature review sections of thesis written by PhD students of University of Ghana using the Hyland(2002) taxonomy of reporting verbs and also found that students used variety of reporting verbs in the construction of their Literature Review sections. She however, indicated there is the need for faculty to do more in helping students use RVs appropriately. Banini (2021a) suggested further studies to be conducted on other features of the reporting verbs such as the use of tense and aspect and voice to investigate how these are applied to academic writing. This is the gap this present study intends to fill. Also works in the Ghanaian context (Adika, 2016; Agbaglo, 2017; Banini, 2021), did not consider the tense and voice associated with these reporting verbs and their evaluative functions. The current study consequently focuses on such aspects and their evaluative function using the Hyland (2002) taxonomy for RVs.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives guiding the study are to:

1. identify the reporting verbs employed in the literature review sections of the masters theses of students of the University of Education, Winneba.
2. identify the categories of reporting verbs frequently used in the literature review sections of the masters theses of students of the University of Education, Winneba.
3. examine the choice of tense and voice form of the reporting verbs used in the literature review sections of the masters theses of students of the University of Education, Winneba.

### 1.3 Research Question

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the Reporting Verbs employed in the literature review sections of the masters theses of students of the University of Education, Winneba?
2. What are the categories of reporting verbs frequently used in the literature review sections of the masters theses of students of the University of Education, Winneba?
3. How are the choices of tense and voice form of the RV used in the masters theses of students of the University of Education, Winneba?

### 1.4 Significance of the Study

The importance of this study stems from the fact that in academic writing, reporting other people's works (citation) is key. One of the main features of citation is the reporting verb which cannot be relegated to the background because it is seen as the sole way through which people can review the literature and create a niche for themselves in an academic community which will earn them admission into the academic discourse community (Pecorari, 1997) of such discipline. Academic institutions and researchers can as well not do without it. Therefore, how this is used and its function in academic writing is very important in every academic genre since citation is compulsory (Swales, 1999) and a means of communicating one's work to others. This study would contribute to the already available scholarly literature in this all-important area of academic writing on citation practices specifically and thesis writing in general.

It will provide knowledge of how masters students at the University of Education, Winneba use Reporting Verbs to review literature in their theses in the Literature Review chapters. The decision makers of the University will have to take decisions in line with these findings that will affect academic writing in the University. With such

knowledge by decision makers and the students of the University, construction of the literature review chapters of postgraduate theses will see a change.

In addition to the above, the outcome of this study will serve as a reference point to both undergraduate and post graduate students of the University. These students will learn to persuasively use the RVs to cite other people's works effortlessly and efficiently present their evaluations of the sources cited all in a bid to create a niche for themselves in the construction of their LR sections (Swales, 1990).

Supervisors, students, assessors and curriculum developers will benefit from the study because they will be aware of the types of reporting verbs and their evaluative functions those postgraduate students employ in the literature review sections of their work. This will serve as a useful guide for developing andragogical materials to enhance the teaching and writing of Literature Reviews. By extension, it will offer insights into improving academic writing courses curricula by enhancing the importance of the reporting structure which includes; the reporting verb, subject/agent, tense and voice choice in academic writing.

In addition, the findings may specifically enable lecturers to consider teaching this crucial aspect of citation-reporting verbs and their evaluative functions thoroughly. To do this very well, they will have to use some of the taxonomy and studies discussed in this work like Gray's (2019) and Zhao's (2020) corpus-driven andragogical trials. This will prevent the presenting of a tall list of verbs to students to study during research methodology or academic writing classes as normally done.

It will also enable students to do a thorough review of literature to know exactly what the authors they are citing did in their works so as to choose the appropriate RV and its tense or voice form to cite. This means that, if students do thorough review, they will for instance know that a researcher/an author might have *suggested* (discourse act

doubt tentative verb) and not *stated* (discourse act assurance non factive verb) a point that the writer wishes to make which will help in doing very intensive critical review.

### **1.5 Delimitation of the Study**

The study considered the evaluative functions of reporting verbs in the literature review sections of masters theses of students of the University of Education, Winneba. The compilation of this corpus was from 36 masters theses written by masters students from six disciplines; three from disciplines considered as ‘soft-reading disciplines’ and the other three from ‘hard-practical discipline’ according to the Becher-Biglan’s typology (Biglan, 1973; Becher, 1989). These six theses were each selected from the faculty of Education, School of Communication and Media Studies, Social Science, Creative Arts and the Sciences. The reason for these choices was to have a fair representation of the entire population of the University in the work and also for the fact that most of these disciplines have not seen much work on RVs carried out on them. The theses that were selected from these disciplines are works that have been defended and approved by the University between 2015 and 2020 and are found in the school’s institutional repository during the period.

### **1.6. Organisation of the Study**

This work is organised into five (5) chapters. Chapter One introduces the research. Chapter Two entails the review of relevant literature in connection with this study and the theoretical background that underpins the study. In Chapter Three, the research methodology is discussed. It describes and justifies the data gathering method used and also outlines how the data was gathered and analysed. Chapter Four is the presentation of results/findings and discussions and finally, Chapter Five focuses on the summary, conclusions and recommendations for future studies.

## 1.7. Summary of Chapter

This chapter has presented the background of the study, the problem statement, the study's objectives and the research questions that guided the study. In addition, the significance of the study, the delimitation and the study's overall organisation have all been indicated.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0. Introduction

This chapter is composed of a careful selection of literature that relates to the thesis. The review of this study is also a critical examination of the related relevant literature which comprises: the introduction, reporting in academic writing, reporting verbs; their types/categorization and functions, and some empirical studies on the use of RVs in academic writing and their evaluative functions as well as studies on the forms (tense and voice) of the reporting verb. The chapter also includes the theoretical framework that underpins the study which is the Hyland's taxonomy of reporting verbs.

#### 2.1. Reporting and Reporting Verb in Academic Writing

Reporting is an important aspect of academic writing and a requirement for students to successfully complete a dissertation. Though reporting and citation serve the same purpose of presenting what Hyland (2002) refers to as other people's voices in a text, they differ slightly. Zhang (2008) explains that when one attributes a piece of information or a statement to someone without the author's surname and the year of publication, it is reporting rather than citation, but when the surname and year of reporting are added to the information, as in "*Wornyo (2010) asserts...*", it is citation. That means that citation is a form of reporting, but reporting is not a form of citation (Xie, 2013). In this structure of reporting or citing is a key feature called reporting verbs. Reporting verbs are an integral part of the citation structure which are used to signal citations.

Reporting Verb (RV), as a concept, has been viewed from various perspectives by researchers; as a result, there is most often no agreement on a single universally



accepted definition for it. This section discusses a few of such perspectives to lay a good foundation that will enhance a better insightful understanding of what RVs in academic writing are about. A reporting verb in English grammar is a verb that is used to indicate discourse that is being quoted or paraphrased (Nordquist, 2019). Bergler (1992, p.9) defines it as “the verb used to convey the language of others”. Swales (1990) defines RV as “verbs used in the reporting structure to talk about other people’s text”. Explaining this further Hyland (2002) states that reporting verbs (RVs) represent one of the most straightforward ways of attributing content to another source in academic writing. Hyland (2002) adds that RV is a significant grammatical device that does not only enables the writer to attribute content to other sources but also allows the writer to convey both the kinds of activities reported and their evaluation of the reported information. Charles (2006, p.326) defined it as a tool “to give credit to other researchers to use their work in the cumulative construction of knowledge”. Bloch (2010) adds that reporting verbs can be used to both report writers’ ideas or to show the attitude writers have towards others’ claims in the course of knowledge construction. Swales and Feak (2004) reiterate this idea and state that the selection of a reporting verb shows one’s stance toward the material being sourced. Adika (2015) refers to this stance by Hyland (1998) and Swales and Feak (2004) as the attribute of a writer toward another writer’s ideas, theories, or research.

Amrullah et al. (2017) sharing the same view adds further that this stance could be positive, neutral, or negative towards the cited information or even weak or strong. This reinforces the notion that RVs are used to strengthen people’s arguments and positions, rather than simply stating a stance or providing information. Such positions could be labeled as positive (agreement/fact), weak/negative (disagreement), neutral/tentative (uncertain) (Hyland, 1999; Tham & Nhi, 2021).

Weissberg and Buker (2007) point out three things that the RV does in academic writing. The first is to present background information of a research conducted. The second is to inform readers about how much the writer is familiar with the study areas and the third is to relate the research to the literature. Thompson and Ye (1991) explain that RVs enable writers to express their evaluation of what is being reported which is all meant to position the work of the writer concerning the works of other research to qualify them (writer/work) to be part of an academic discourse community. Also, RVs are known as one of the ways by which writers establish the credibility or otherwise of the cited information (Loan & Pramoolsook, 2015).

From the preceding discussion on the meaning and importance of RVs, it is evident that RVs have meaning other than being action words/phrases. Also, it can be deduced that in using reporting verbs to cite other's work, three things come to play: the person reporting (writer), the person being reported (author) and the information (claim) being reported. This triadic nature of the RV contributes to its complexity, indicating that RVs are not just ordinary verbs, but verbs that have a polysemic nature and meaning. NNES are frequently perplexed by this and thus unable to use RVs appropriately.

However, based on the perspectives on the concept of RV presented thus far, for the context of this research, a reporting verb is defined as verbs used in academic writing to document people's writings, primarily based on the writer's attitude, the information and the purpose of citing.

### **2.1.1. Types/Categorization of Reporting Verbs and their Functions**

Writers do not only use RVs as a reference to other people's work, but they also use them to strengthen their claims and show the significance of the work reported (Petric, 2007). According to studies, RVs can indicate if this claim is either tentative, neutral,

or strong (Ibrahimova, 2016; Tham & Nhi, 2021). In Hyland's (2002) study that classified RVs into denotative and evaluative functions, it was found that RVs have different positions that show opinions about other people's works. These positions may present the information stated as true (factive) (*acknowledge, point out, establish*), false (counter-factive) (*fail, overlook, exaggerate, ignore*), or non-factual, with no clear signal. The University of Adelaide's Writing Center (2014) further classified this into three categories (tentative, strong and critical verbs) which Ibrahimova (2016) refers to as 'logical classification' of RVs.

First, verb at Tentative/weak reporting position implies that the writer is not very much assertive about the others' ideas. Writers use these verbs to show that they may believe something, but they still wish to be hesitant. Tentative verbs are sometimes seen as hedging proportional content that show weak stance. Examples are: *consider, propose, imply, affirm, recommend, restate, suggest, etc.* Also, at neutral position RVs give no clear signal about the accuracy of the previous studies (neither true nor false) where it attributes non factive position to a claim. Examples are: *assume, categorise, demonstrate, document, focus on, identify, indicate, reflect, report, study, etc.* These according to Tham and Nhi (2021) are used in narrative expressions or to cite references from another research without expressing attitude. Finally, strong reporting verbs are factive verbs that show that a writer believes strongly in what the he/she is saying or writing and make strong arguments for such stance. They are used to see whether the comments and claims of others are true or not. They therefore often involve critical/counter RVs such as: *affirm, condone, assume, determine, deny, emphasize, establish, endorse, object to, presume, recognize, substantiate etc.*

In a study by Ibrahimova (2016) on the use of reporting verbs in modern English, it was concluded that both hard and soft sciences prefer non-factive reporting verbs of neutral author evaluation than the factive or counter. Relating to this is a comparative

study by Tham and Nhi (2021) who compared the use of reporting verbs in TESOL research articles between non-native and native English writers. Tham and Nhi (2021) found that both native and Non-native writers use neutral stance in the reporting of literature and did not show any critical stance.

Another study by Banini (2021b) on the LR sections of theses written by Psychology students in a Ghanaian University, found that the students were neutral and never criticised in the review of literature but they rather used more '*finding*' reporting verbs as compared to the other sub- categories such as; *assurance, positive, doubt, procedures, tentative, neutral, counters, critical* sub - categories.

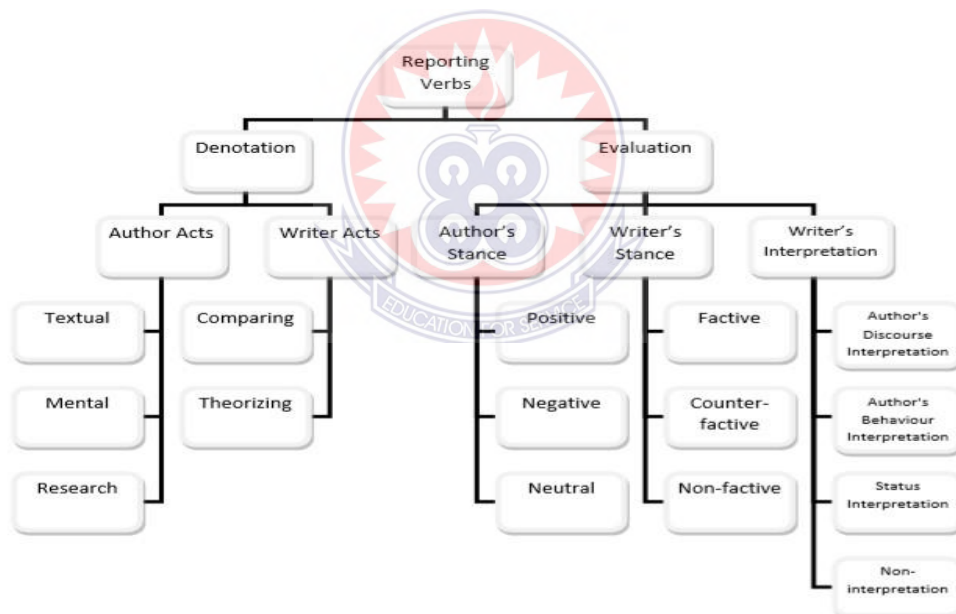
It must be added that despite these studies on the evaluative functions and types of reporting verbs discussed above, there are other researches that state different views in terms of the evaluative functions such as studies by Charles (2006), Francis *et al.* (1996), Hyland (1999, 2002), Thompson and Ye (1991), Thomas and Hawes (1995) and Swales and Feak (2004). This categorisation has been the basis of many researches works including this current study. They are used as analytical or theoretical frameworks to make the use of RVs in writing very simple for students and researchers especially NNES writers to enable easy entry into the academic discourse community. A few of these works that relate closely to this study (Hyland, 1999, 2002; Thompson & Ye, 1991; Thomas & Hawes, 1995) are considered forthwith.

#### **2.1.1.1. Thompson and Ye's (1991) Framework for RVs**

Thompson and Ye (1991) are the pioneers in the development of a framework for reporting verbs that have served as a basis for examining RVs in different types of texts. This ground breaking study was based on more than one hundred introductory chapters of articles from various disciplines in published journals. Thompson and Ye (1991) classify reporting verbs in terms of denotation and evaluation. In the analysis

of denotation, they propose three categories: *textual*, *mental* and *research* verbs which are under the heading ‘author acts’ and ‘writer act’. The author’s act is the person who is cited and the writer’s act is the person who is citing.

*Textual verbs* are those that have an obligatory component of verbal expression (*suggest, point out, term, challenge, underline, name, deny, state, write*) (the stance of the writer). The second group is categorised as mental verbs because they refer to mental processes expressed in the author’s text (*focus on, think, consider, prefer, believe, think*) (the stance of the author whose claims are being reported). The last group of RVs is named research verbs, which refer to the research activity or experimental procedures (*measure, calculate, quantify, obtain, find and demonstrate*) (the interpretation of the writer). The figure 2.1. explains this better.



**Fig.2. 1. Thompson and Ye’s (1991) categorisation of reporting verbs**

Thompson and Ye (1991) also established that writers make choices of reporting verbs to describe the positive and negative evaluations of previous studies. According to them in analysing the evaluative nature of reporting verbs, three factors are considered: the author’s stance, the writer’s stance and the writer’s interpretation. This stance can be interpreted through verbs that are known to be factive (*demonstrate,*

*points out, identify, prove, improve, notice, etc.*), counter factive (*betray, confuse, disregard, ignore, use, etc.*) and non-factive (*believe, claim, examine, propose, generalize, utilize, etc.*). Although this framework is the one that broke the ice, it seems to be a bit complex, difficult and sophisticated to use by writers in trying to specify the functions of denotation and evaluation that the RVs perform (Xie, 2013). However, some researchers (Zhang, 2008; Jafarigohaar & Mohammadkhani, 2015) have applied this framework in their works and made interesting revelations through their results and findings. Jafarigohaar and Mohammadkhani's (2015) for instance used Thompson and Ye (1991) in a comparative study to analyse 63 linguistic journal articles from the fields of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics published in three scholarly journals. Their main goal was to investigate the differences between the use of reporting verbs in quoting other authors by these native and non-native writers. The results showed the native writers make higher use of RVs slightly as against the non-native writers, thus 185 and 183 respectively. In terms of the categorisations by Thompson and Ye (1991), the number of reporting verbs used in the author's act category was far higher than the number of the ones used in the writer's act category in both corpora showing that writers tried to objectively report the author of the text being quoted. NNES used more mental verbs and the NES used research verbs more. Zhang (2008) in a similar cross-cultural study, used the Thompson and Ye (1991) categorisation and found that the Textual and research verbs are employed more frequently in the English corpus than in the Chinese corpus. The mental verbs occur in the Chinese corpus more frequently just in line with Jafarigohaar and Mohammadkhanni's (2015) study.

#### **2.1.1.2. Thomas and Hawes' (1995) Framework for RVs**

Following Thompson and Ye's (1991) study, Thomas and Hawes (1994) used this categorisation as a framework to investigate semantic categories of the corpus of

eleven (11) research articles and presented a grouping of denotations of RVs that writers of medical articles could use. This became Thomas and Hawes' (1995) taxonomy or classification. They categorised citation verbs into; *discourse* acts, *experimental* acts, and *cognitive* acts with their various sub-categories (see fig. 2.2) similar to that of Thompson and Ye (1991). Thomas and Hawes' (1994) discourse act is the same as the textual of Thompson and Ye (1991), the cognitive verb for the mental and experimental verb is for research verbs. Some researchers have used it in their analysis of RVs.

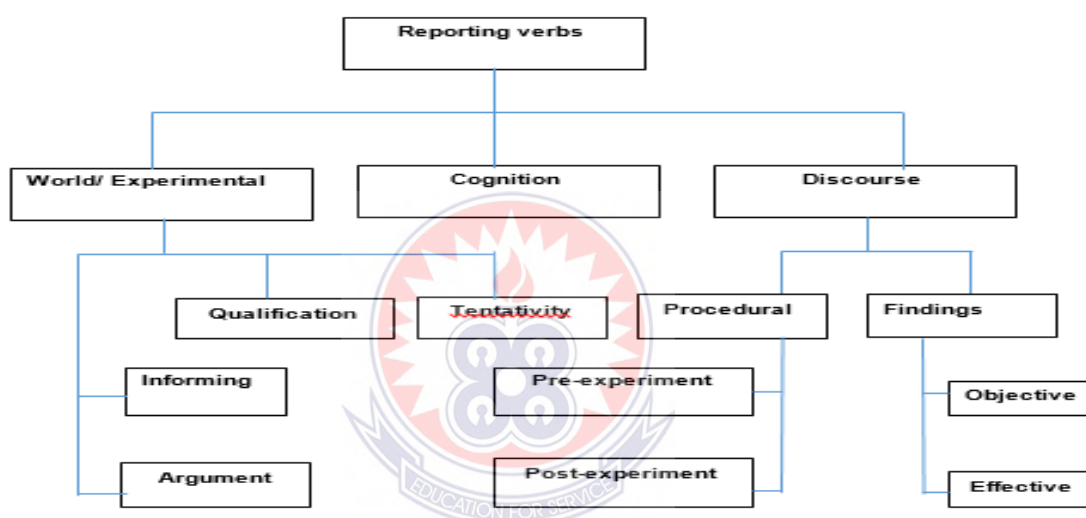


Fig. 2.2 Thomas and Hawes' (1995) categorisation of Reporting verbs

Using Thomas and Hawes' (1995) model, Ramoraka (2014) investigated the use of RVs in essays written by L2 undergraduate students with a corpus of forty (40) essays from students in the departments of Media Studies and Primary Education of the University of Botswana, and found that students used more informing verbs than argumentative verbs which are both sub-categories under textual verbs. Jirapanakorn (2012) who also used Thomas and Hawes' (1995) classification in a comparative study, had different results from Ramoraka's (2014) study. Jirapanakorn's (2012) study was based on data from 50 medical research article introductions published in

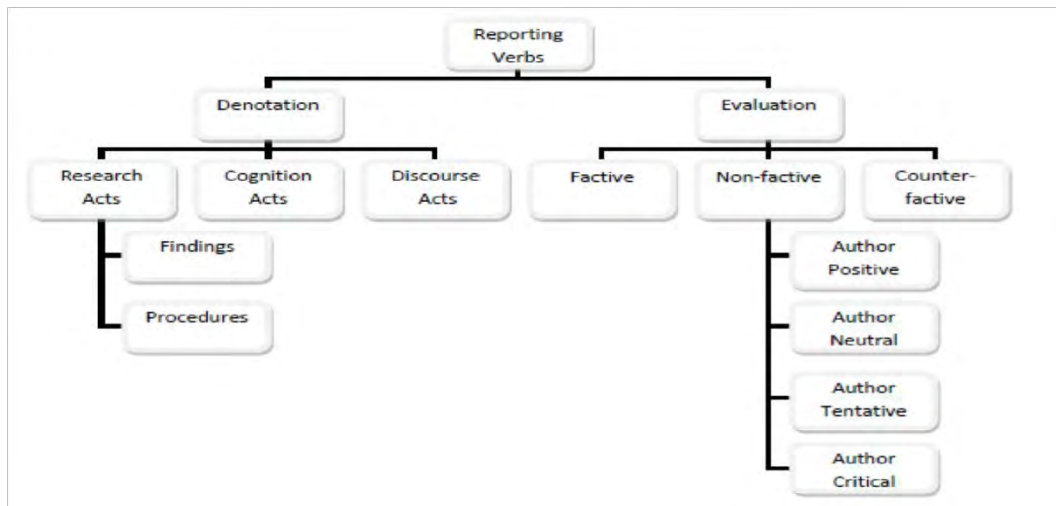
the international and Thai medical journals used a corpus-based approach and found that in terms of the categories of reporting verbs, both international and Thai medical journals used experimental verbs in the highest percentage (52.50% and 50.00% respectively), followed by discourse verbs (37.50% and 41.67% respectively) and then cognition verbs (10.00% and 8.33% respectively).

Although this classification by Thomas and Hawes (1995) seemed much easier to use in terms of choosing the different functions of the verbs, the criticism of their framework is that it does not clearly show the evaluative potential of verbs. Also, their corpus is relatively small: It was restricted to one discipline and their categories of denotation are the same as Thompson and Ye's (1991).

### **2.1.1.3. Hyland's (1999, 2002) Framework for RVs**

Hyland's (1999) work examined 80 research articles focusing on citation features and classified the Reporting verbs in terms of denotative and connotative functions.. This classification is not quite different from Thompson and Ye (1991) and Thomas and Hawes, (1995) because they were the basis of Hyland's classification. It is however, the simplified version of Thompson and Ye's (1991) categorisation. He classified RVs into *Research Acts*, *Discourse Acts*, and *Cognition Acts* similar to the research verb, textual and mental verbs of Thompson and Ye (1991). Hyland (1999) sub-categorised verbs in the Research group into two groups as Thomas and Hawes, (1995) did. The distinction between Hyland's (1999) study and the previous studies is that essentially Hyland's (1999) work sought to examine disciplinary differences in the use of RVs in different discourse communities. Hyland broadly divided Reporting verbs into two denotation and evaluation with sub categories as seen in figure 2.3.





**Figure 2.3. Categorisation of Reporting Verbs in terms of Denotation and Evaluation (Hyland, 1999)**

Hyland revised his earlier model of classifying reporting verbs in 2002. This time he based it on their denotative/ process and evaluative functions. The denotative functions include research act, cognition and discourse act. All of these have evaluative functions as either being factive, non-factive, counter factive, critical, tentative, neutral, or positive stance different from the previous one. This new categorisation of RVs which serves as the theoretical framework for this present study has been used by most writers that investigate RVs, especially the NNES writers because it is simpler and easy to understand.

Agbaglo (2017) used this framework in his research on the frequent use of reporting verbs in research articles written by lecturers in the Department of English of the University of Cape Coast. The findings confirmed that all the three process types of RVs identified by Hyland (2002) were used in the research articles examined with discourse act coming out as the most used. Banini (2021a/b) used the same taxonomy but this time on Ph.D. theses and found the same results which is also the same as the findings of Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) and Wen and Pramoolsook (2021) except for Udom-udom and Udom-udom (2020) as well as Zin (2021) who had different results with the research act being the most dominant in their studies.

The categorisations reviewed have shown a conscious effort by researchers to, over the years, develop framework for RVs that have moved from being complex and sophisticated (Thompson & Ye, 1991) to a simpler categorisation (Hyland, 1999; 2002) aimed at helping novice researchers and learners to identify the nature of RVs and their evaluative functions to use them appropriately to integrate other people's work in their theses and to make their voices heard as well. This will enable learners/writers to conform to the norms and practices accepted by the academic discourse community as far as LR writing is concerned (Charles, 1996; Hyland, 2004; Swales, 1999). Evidence from the literature review also points out the fact that categorisation of RVs has moved from mono-disciplinary study contexts (Thompson & Ye, 1991) to interdisciplinary contexts (Hyland, 1999; 2002) which is more reliable and provides a more discipline-specific conclusion for further investigations.

An interdisciplinary study, though not for comparative analysis but for a fair representation of data, as done by several researchers (Agbal & Sarwar, 2021; Zin, 2021), this study employs the Hyland (2002) taxonomy to investigate how masters students use RVs when reviewing the works of others in the LR sections of their theses at the University of Education, Winneba.

## **2.2. Empirical Studies on the Use of Reporting Verbs and their Evaluative Functions**

This section is a review of studies on the use of reporting verbs and their evaluative functions in genres such as student essays, research articles and dissertations, with particular emphasis on the masters theses, given the focus of the entire work. The review first starts with literature on the use of RV in the LR section of the masters thesis and then focuses on the point of view of Native English speaking and Non-

native English-speaking/writers. It continues with cross-culture analysis on the use of RVs as well as review on a comparative analysis of novice and expert writers.

### **2.2.1. Studies on the use of Reporting Verbs in LR sections of masters theses**

The Literature Review (LR) sections of the masters theses which is the focus of this study, have seen some studies on it (Jarkovska & Kucirkova, 2020; Loan & Pramoolsook, 2015; Swear & Kalajahi, 2019; Wen & Pramoolsook, 2021) that have yielded interesting results with much implication on academic writing especially the masters theses writing.

Manan and Noor (2013) studied the use of RVs in NNES masters theses (Malaysian students). The goal of their study was to investigate the reporting verbs that are most commonly used by masters students in their theses, as well as the RVs that are frequently employed, and the impact(s) of the reporting verbs in theses. They chose six theses at random from a pool of theses that were written and finished in 2012 by native Malaysian students pursuing a masters degree in English Language Studies (ELS) at the National University of Malaysia (UKM). They used Hyland's (2000) framework in their analysis and discovered that RVs from the Research Act verb group had the largest percentage of occurrence (44.8%), followed by cognition acts (30.2%) and discourse acts (25.0%). This suggests that the reporting verbs from the research acts category were more familiar to the masters students than the cognition and discourse acts.

The statistics also revealed that the most often used reporting verbs in the masters theses are '*states*' from the discourse acts category appearing 36 times and the RV '*discovered*' from the research acts category, appearing 34 times, with '*suggest*' being the most often used reporting verb from the cognition acts group (20 times). In their proposal, Manan and Noor (2013) suggested that their work be used by both instructors and novice as will give instructors more insight into how to use RVs

correctly so that they can teach and equip their masters students with the ability to use reporting verbs appropriately in writing up their theses before moving on to a higher level of study, such as a Ph.D. For students, the goal is to improve their understanding of the key elements of research writing, particularly on how to use reporting verbs to write thesis that are clear, argumentative and persuasive.

Also, Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) investigated the use of RVs in the Literature Review sections of theses written by non-native English students (Vietnamese students). Hyland's (2002) classification of RVs in terms of their denotative and evaluative potentials was used in analysing a corpus of 24 Literature Review sections of theses written during the 2009–2012 period. The corpus which was randomly selected for the study was from three universities in Vietnam where TESOL is carried out. Each university provided eight LR chapters resulting in a corpus of 24 LR chapters which consisted of 164,344 words (an average of 6,848 words each). The analysis revealed that Discourse acts were found to be the most used, accounting for (62.90%) of the RVs in these LR chapters. Ranked second was Research acts (28.42%), followed by Cognition acts (8.68%). In terms of the evaluative potential of RVs in the study, Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) found more non-factive RVs which meant that because of how amateurish these student writers were, they will prefer to ascribe a neutral view to the cited authors than using critical and counter verbs which is the refutation and the criticism of previous research. In terms of the most RV used the top three were the RV *state* which topped with (57 occurrences), followed by *define* (46) and then *suggest* (34). However, Loan and Pramoolsook (2015), concluded that Vietnamese students did not only use RVs randomly without knowing the evaluative or rhetorical functions of these verbs but they also did not know the evaluative potentials of the tense and voice used along the RVs. They believe the Vietnamese writers were unfamiliar with using RVs to achieve the communicative

goals of the Literature Review chapters, which is a flaw in NNES writings. According to Loan and Pramoolsook (2015), explicit structures should be offered to enable novice writers to employ RVs effectively in their masters theses.

Jarkovska and Kucirkova (2020), using a larger data set, investigated 82 LR sections of the masters theses written in English by Czech Economics and Management students. The aim was to investigate the types and functions of RVs and the choices of the verb tense, voice and the subject-agent of the RV in the reporting structures. The findings show a predominant use of RVs conveying a neutral attitude towards the reported content similar to the work of Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) and also that of Swear and Kalajahi (2019) whose study only concentrated on the evaluative function of RVs in the LR section of masters theses written by three engineering students from the University of Technology. In terms of the kind of RVs used, Jarkovska and Kucirkova (2020) found the discourse act *state* as the most occurring with 75 occurrences at 13.1% similar to Loan and Pramoolsook's (2015) findings. The other most occurring RVs that make up the first five in their study are *pointed out* 69 occurrences, *claim* had 63, *define* 57 and *describe* 54, all found in the discourse act category. They further found that the present simple active tense with the named author as the subject was the most used in the reporting structure containing the RVs.

Wen and Pramoolsook's (2021) study compared the LR section of the Bachelor's Theses (BT) and Masters Theses (MT) theses of Chinese English majors in terms of denotation and evaluation of RVs which produced interesting results. The study aimed at analysing and comparing the use of RVs between 30 BT LR chapters and 30 MT LR chapters using Hyland's (2002) classification framework. They discovered that the RVs used in the BT Literature Reviews were smaller in amount and narrower in range compared with those in the MT counterparts. In terms of the evaluative function of the

RVs, it was realised that the BT used factive RVs while MT students used non-factive RVs. The latter confirms the literature reviewed in this section that the LR section of masters theses contains more non-factive verbs than the factive RVs.

From the literature reviewed it can be observed that there are convergent and divergent views on the use of RVs in the LR section of the masters theses. The convergent view is that all researchers agree that RVs are indispensable and used in great numbers in the LR section of the masters theses. However, the divergent views were especially on the evaluative functions of the RV in the LR section of these masters theses where some studies found non-factive RVs and others found factive RVs as the most used RVs. These differences of views could be due to the various disciplines that were used in the studies, the sample size used or the taxonomy employed. Also, though a characteristic of the LR section of a thesis is that writers could challenge existing knowledge in creating a gap in their studies, students always avoided using it. Writers however, stayed neutral by using more non-factive RVs indicating the kind of genre the study is being done in; that is the masters theses. This presupposes that student as amateur as they are will not want to critique or counter any work sourced.

It is based on this divergent view on the evaluative functions of the RV in the masters theses LR sections that a study of this nature is needed to help reveal practices on RV usage among students in a Ghanaian context.

### **2.2.2. Studies on Non-Native and Cross-cultural English Speakers use of RV**

Literature suggests that RVs have received considerable attention from scholars under native, Non-native and Cross-cultural analysis. These studies have ended in some form of axiomatic conclusions due to the complex nature of the RV. This research

considered similar works that have been done on RVs from the non-native writer's point of view because this study is also on non-native writers.

Issues considered in the course of the review of these studies in this section include the objectives of the works, taxonomy/categorisation employed in carrying out the extraction and analysis of the data, and the findings, conclusions and recommendations of these works by the NNES writers. The section ends with a review of the study that compared native and non-native writers in the same style.

There are several works on the types, frequency, category and evaluative functions of RVs in non-native writers' theses or academic papers across the globe. Loan and Pramoolsook's (2015) study of NNES writers for instance found Discourse acts to be the most used RV, accounting for (62.90%) of the RVs, followed by Research acts (28.42%) and then Cognition acts (8.68%) in the LR sections of masters theses written by Vietnamese students. Similar results were found by Hyland (2002); Agbaglo (2017), Iqbal and Anwar (2021), Banini (2021a/b) and Zin (2021).

Agbaglo's (2017) study focused on the NNES expert writers from the Ghanaian context (lecturers of the University of Cape Coast) and their usage of RVs as compared to Manan and Noor (2013) and Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) who both used amateurs (masters students) theses yet yielded similar results. Agbaglo (2017) investigated the usage of reporting verbs in ten research articles produced by lecturers from the Department of English between 2008 – 2016 which were randomly collected from the internet. Using Hyland's (2002) model to analyse the data, it was discovered that the lecturers employed all three types of reporting verbs in various quantities. The Discourse Acts category had the most occurrences (108 occurrences), accounting for 51% of the total reporting verbs found in the data, followed by the Research Acts category with 84 occurrences, accounting for 42% and the Cognitive Acts verbs with 13 occurrences, accounting for only 6.7 percent of the total number of reporting verbs

found in the data. This is similar to the findings of Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) but different from the findings of Manan and Noor (2013). The study also discovered that the RV '*discuss*' was the most frequently used in the discourse acts category, while '*examine*' was the most frequently used in the research acts category of RVs and cognitive acts RVs *consider* and *believe* each had three occurrences.

Still, in the NNES context, Banini (2021a) investigated the occurrence, use and function of RVs in 50 Ph.D. theses written by NNES Ph.D. humanities students of the University of Ghana submitted between 2012 and 2018 and available on the University of Ghana's institutional repository website. Using Hyland's (2002) taxonomy of RVs Research Acts, Discourse Acts, and Cognition Acts, it was found that all these acts were used by the Ph.D. students showing an employment of all the variety of reporting verbs in their study to achieve various functions. Just like the literature already reviewed, the discourse acts category was employed more frequently (58.28%) in doctoral students' writing as compared to the research acts (28.7%) and cognitive acts (13.02%). The students do not directly refute, disagree, and criticise the views of other authors but in most cases, they remain neutral to propositions. In the recommendations of Banini (2021a), it was suggested that faculty training be expanded to better aid students in using reporting verbs effectively in thesis and academic writing. Zin (2021) in his study also used 14 RAs of NNES experts (teachers) and had similar results as Agbaglo (2017), Banini (2021), Loan and Pramoolsook (2015), where the discourse acts type occurred 83 times at (72%) out of 116 cases and the second most frequent use was research acts at 26 (22%) followed by cognition acts at 7(6%).

Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) further revealed that in terms of the evaluative potential of RVs, the non-factive RVs were the most employed. Igbal and Anwar's (2021)



study on 25 Ph.D. theses corroborates these findings when they found that, out of 24 reporting verbs that were discovered in their data, 15 were used at the neutral position. This means that evaluatively, the Ph.D. NNES students used RVs that mostly portrayed neutral positions than weaker or stronger similar to Banini (2021a/b) who also worked on Ph.D theses, and also confirming Swear and Kalajahi (2019) and Zin's (2021) studies. This may imply that the NNES authors while citing other writers, are not judgmental about other scholars' work and thus wish to remain neutral in their opinions and claims than using critical and counter verbs which are the refutation and the criticism of previous research.

Interestingly, in the recommendation of Arsyad, *et al.* (2018), they suggested that the NNES, Indonesian writers should use negative evaluation when reviewing and citing other's work in their English RA introductions more and their reason was that it will enable them to publish in international journals. These verbs they believe make arguments and claims more persuasive which is a characteristic of academic writing (Weissberg & Buker, 1990).. However, in responding to the issue of how the evaluative function of the RV has changed patterns over the years, Hyland and Jiang's (2019) revealed a shift toward the use of neutral and positive attribution verbs in their study on current trend of citation practices, confirming the fact that writers often use the neutral position of the RV in citing their works which is a current trend.

On the kind of RVs mostly used, there were differences in the results of these writers: Agbaglo (2017), Banini (2021), Igbal and Anwar (2021), Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) and Manan and Noor (2013). Manan and Noor's (2013) work for instance revealed that the RV '*discovered*' from research acts category was the most popular, appearing 34 times; '*states*' from the discourse act appeared 36 times, with '*suggest*' being the most often used reporting verb from the cognition activities group also occurred 20 times in the data. Two of these (*state* and *suggest*) were found in the first

ten most used RVs ranked by Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) except for *'discover'*. They are; *state, define, suggest, claim, find, say, conduct, argue, believe* and *describe*. Igbal and Anwar's (2021) work also discovered *argue* as the most used followed by *belief, studied, concludes* which apart from *studied* fall within the first ten of Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) RVs. Agbaglo's (2017) study however discovered entirely different RVs from the aforementioned which are; the RV *discuss* was the most frequently used in the discourse acts and *'examine'* the most frequently used in the research acts RVs and cognitive acts RVs, were *considered* and *believe* with only the latter appearing in Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) first ten RVs. Banini (2021a) also found the following verbs as the first ten most frequently used RVs by the Ghanaian postgraduate student *found, argue, note, agree, show, indicate, explain, report, suggested* and *identify*. In a later study by the same Banini (2021b) this time on Ph.D psychology students, she found almost the same RVs though not in the same order. These are: *found, affirm, show, suggest, indicate, argue, report, note, demonstrate and observe*. These RVs discovered in the data by all these NNES works reviewed similar occurrences the only difference is that they are not used as frequently or occur in the same order as others in each study.

The diachronic study of Hyland and Jiang (2019) also revealed the following RVs; *argue, propose, describe, introduce, find, show, develop, observe, discuss* and *suggest* as the first ten most used RVs as of 2015 after their 50 years investigation of the changing pattern of RVs. Most of these RVs are found in the other literature reviewed. The only problem with their work is the inability of the RV *state* to appear in any of the first ten ranked RVs in 1965, 1985 and 2015. This is strange because even in the few studies reviewed here the RV *state* seems to top all of them. Studies like Agbaglo (2017), Amrullah *et al.* (2017), Jarkovska and Kucirkova (2020), Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) and Manan and Noor (2013) either had the RV *state* as the most

used or within the first ten most used RVs. In the study of Amrullah *et al.* (2017) for instance they indicated that all the 16 theses that were investigated misused the RV *state* proving that *state* is mostly used.

Agbaglo (2017), Banini (2021a), Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) and Manan and Noor (2013) are all of the view that the NNES were unfamiliar with using RVs to achieve the communicative goals of LR chapters and therefore there is the need for clear structures and more exposure to be offered to enable these novice writers to employ RVs effectively in their masters theses. It is therefore in place as per the calls by Shin *et al.* (2018), Gray (2019) and Uludag *et al.* (2021) for a change in the teaching of RVs to an experimental and more corpus-driven method.

Aside from the research mentioned above on NNES writers, the employment of reporting verbs has also been seen in some cross-cultural investigations, involving both NES and NNES (Yeganeh & Boghayeri, 2014; Yilmaz & Erturk, 2017; Yasmin *et al.*, 2020) and experts and novice (Woravut, 2015) writers in a single study. Yeganeh and Boghayeri (2014) employed a corpus of 60 publications; thirty were from native English speakers published in international journals, and the other thirty came from Persian authors also published in national journals. Yeganeh and Boghayeri (2014) used the verb categories and explanations adopted from Francis *et al.* (1996) and found that while reporting other people's research, both corpora make extensive use of reporting clauses (that-clause compliment). Also, it was discovered that the argue verb group was slightly more frequently utilised in articles published by Native English Speakers (same as Gray, 2019 and Uludag *et al.*'s, 2021) than the Persian speakers and then the other three verb groups similar to Yasmin, Butt and Sarwar's (2020) study who also compared native and non-native Pakistanis using the Francis *et al.* (1996) taxonomy on a corpus of 152 academic papers.

Yilmaz and Erturk's (2017) Cross-Cultural Study was conducted on Turkish native and non-native English speakers. The main goal of this study was to look into the most commonly used reporting verbs in ELT research articles by native and non-native researchers. The researchers assembled and analyzed two corpora of 160 ELT research publications published in peer-reviewed international journals in the field of language education. Out of the 160 research articles, 80 were published in both corpora. The findings revealed that the most frequently used verbs by Turkish ELT researchers were similar to those used by English ELT researchers and that the frequency of those verbs indicated that non-native researchers employed more reporting verbs than native researchers similar to the work of Monreal and Salom (2011) and Yasmin et al. (2020). The study by the latter found that the Pakistani NNES writers employed more reporting verbs than native corpus. Monreal and Salom (2011) also discovered in their study of English and Spanish writers that the Spanish writers used a more limited range of RVs, while English writers use more variety in RV selection. This result is, however, in contradiction to Jafarigohar and Mohammadkhani's (2015) study which rather found that the number of reporting verbs and their frequency of occurrence were equal in native and non-native writers' corpora.

In terms of the evaluative functions, it was found that both native and non-native ELT researchers used verbs only in the neutral position. A result that collaborates with most of the studies already reviewed, especially in terms of the non-native writers. The first five most frequently used RVs in the order of preference by both native and non-natives found in the study of Yilmaz and Erturk (2017) were; *find*, *report*, *suggest*, *examine* and *show*. On the other hand, these were the most overused five RVs as well; *revealed*, *indicated*, *observed compared*, and *stated*. Finally, in conjunction with Jafarigohar and Mohammadkhani's (2015) study, Yasmin et al. (2020) proposed

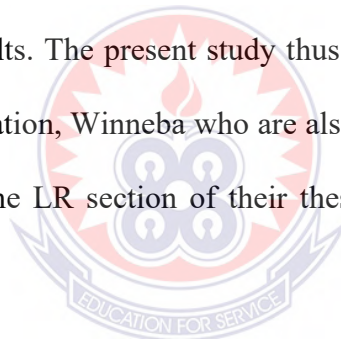
that instead of simply handing out a list of reporting verbs for students to study, teachers should take the time to educate students about the relevance of reporting verbs and the many patterns of their use.

The literature reviewed in this section indicates that there has been a shift from investigating RVs from a manual analysis (Agbaglo, 2017; Manan & Noor, 2013; Ramoroka, 2014) to a more electronic and corpus-based analytical perspective by these NNES researchers (Banini, 2021; Iqbal & Anwar, 2021; Undo-udom & Undom-udom, 2020; Yilmaz & Erturk, 2017; Zin, 2021). Also, there is a shift from investigating RVs in a mono-disciplinary context to more interdisciplinary and comparative analysis contexts. It is also observed that while the NNES writers used more RVs in their writings, the NES writers used fewer RVs but in varying forms (Yasmin *et al.*, 2020; Yilmaz & Erturk, 2017). This is consistent with the study of Martin *et al.* (2019) cited in Barghamadi (2021) that expert writers used fewer RVs than novice writers.

Also, studies on RVs have moved from just finding the frequent use of RVS (Manan & Noor, 2013; Agbaglo, 2017) to a more complex analysis as finding the evaluative functions, tense and voice of these RVs (Banini, 2021; Iqbal & Anwar, 2021; Loan & Pramoolsook, 2015; Yasmin *et al.*, 2020; Zin, 2021). Another observation is that majority of these studies used the simpler and more comprehensive categorization of RVs by Hyland (1999, 2002) which also revealed similar results with the denotative function most used being the discourse act followed by the research and cognitive act. In terms of evaluative functions, most of these NNES writers lean towards the neutral stance and like to use non-factive verbs to portray this, unlike the NES. With the kind of RV mostly used the literature reveals that they were in various kinds however a few were very dominantly used across the literature and they include; RVs from the discourse assurance non-factive category like; *state, describe, define suggest, discuss,*

*show* and from the research activities are the findings verb; *find*, *examine*, *discover* and *investigate*. The cognitive act only *belief* showed up often in the literature review. Finally, the majority of this research still indicates that the NNES students are still not always fully aware of how to use RVs appropriately, especially its evaluative functions in citing people's work hence recommend further studies and the need for curriculum designers to restructure the teaching of academic writing factoring in thorough teaching of RVs in a corpus-based way and not just a listing of them (Yilmaz & Erturk, 2017; Yasmin, Butt & Sarwar 2020 and Uludag *et al.*, 2020).

With such results and recommendations from the NNES writers across the globe, there will be the need to replicate such work in the context of the University of Education Winneba which has never had such a study to find out if there will be a difference or similar results. The present study thus investigates how master students at the University of Education, Winneba who are also NNES writers use RVs in citing other people's work in the LR section of their theses to better equip them to write well.



### **2.3. Studies on the Tense and Voice form of the Reporting Verb**

The studies on tense and voice are often done together, therefore this section reviews the literature on studies that investigated the choice of tense and voice of the RV and their outcomes. The review first starts with studies on tense and then later voice to find out how the two forms of the RV have been used in research work and the results that were derived.

#### **2.3.1. Review on Tense usage in Academic Writing**

Tense is defined by Comrie (1983, p. 9) as a “grammaticalised statement of location in time”. The relationship between the present moment (now) and another moment or period in time, which may be further or closer in time, is represented by verb tenses.

This highlights the three major tenses available: present, past and future. This is consistent with Halliday's (1994) study, which found that the primary tense or absolute tense in connection to time are; tense choice of past, present, or future. Tense cannot exist without its aspects and this is put into twelve by Caplan, (2012). Among these are the simple present, simple past and present perfect which are the three tenses most commonly employed in academic writing, according to corpus research (Biber *et al.*, 1999; Caplan, 2012; Comrie, 1985). Malcom (1987) explains that tense in a research text "has two literal time locations: the moment of reading and the moment of writing" (1987, p.40). This is the reason for which a writer must choose tense and aspect to cast an earlier author's work as something belonging to the past or to suggest that it is still valid in the present (Pecorari, 2013). Tense has received a considerable amount of attention from scholars with each scholar uniquely concluding their analysis due to its very peculiar nature. Like studies on the proposed rhetorical function of English tenses by Malcolm (1987), Oster (1981), Swales and Feak (2009) and Weisberg and Buker (1990).

In the study of Oster (1981) for instance, he proposed different rhetorical functions played by each English tense which are that: The Present perfect tense is primarily used to indicate the continued discussion of some of the information in the sentence in which the present perfect tense occurs as the main tense. Its secondary use is to claim generality about past literature. The Past tense has two primary uses; its first primary use is to claim non-generality about past literature and secondly, it refers to quantitative results of past literature that are non-supportive of some aspects of the work described in the technical article. The Present tense is primarily used to refer to quantitative results of past literature that are supportive of or non-relevant to some aspect of the work described in the technical article. The second primary use of present tense is to refer to past literature, rather than to discuss it. This has been the

basis of several research on tenses though it was done on small sample size (two articles).

Malcolm (1987) using larger data, compiled 20 scientific articles and analyzed tense choice. The results of the study revealed that when there is a general claim, present tense is used and past tense is used when there is no generality. As for the present perfect tense, it was used for generalisation about past events. Weissberg and Buker (1990) had something similar to this but they related theirs to the author. The work of Swales and Feak (2004) also found something similar to the above. They said the present tense is used for citing commonly accepted knowledge in the research field while the past tense is used when the writer wishes to refer to particular research activity and finally, the present perfect tense is used when there is a reference to nonspecific studies already conducted in the past. These various evaluative functions of tenses used in the thesis are very important in the understanding of research work.

These are, however, referred to by Thompson, (2001) as tendencies, not rules. Weissberg and Buker (1990), Chen (2009) and Swales and Feak (2004) advised against authors strictly following a convention or rule of tense usage. Pecorari (2013) buttresses this by indicating that this kind of formulae about which verb forms to use for what purpose does not offer sufficient guidance but may only be useful in raising writers' awareness of features, but should not tell the writer "...this is how you do it" (p.165). These evaluative functions of tenses have however been the basis for several studies in academic writing as frameworks to draw varying unique conclusions. Tenses have also been investigated mostly in a genre analytical study perspective to find out the rhetorical parts of research work they dominate the most. This kind of research is often in a move pattern (Abdul-Majeed; 2016; Chen, 2009; Loan & Pramoolsook, 2015; Okuyama 2020; Salager-Meyer, 1992). For instance, in a study



by Salager-Meyer (1992) on 84 RAs written by medical researchers, he explains that medical researchers used the past tense in three moves: purpose, method and results and used the present tense to introduce the conclusion move.

In a similar study, Gledhill (2009), found that the introduction and discussion sections are characterized as using present tense while the method and results sections are featured by the use of past tense. This is in line with another study by Abdul-Majeed (2016) who, in the Ghanaian context, examined how tense is used in the results and discussion sections of academic discourse of two disciplines (English and Health Science) at the University of Cape Coast. In this mixed method approach, he used a corpus of 20 M.Phil. theses that were collected through purposive and simple random sampling techniques. The results revealed that the simple present and simple past tense occurred most frequently in the results and discussion section of the M.Phil. theses in English Language and Health Sciences as a confirmation of the already reviewed works.

The literature reviewed points to the fact that the three main tenses and aspects (present simple, present perfect and past simple) are dominant tenses used in academic writing with various communicative functions. Also, the research on tenses have often been carried out on specific genres of research work with interesting results with the present simple dominating. The discussion that follows will review literature on the tense form of the reporting verb to see if it follows a similar trend.

### **2.3.1.1. Studies on the Tense Form of the Reporting Verb**

It must be noted that when it comes to the reporting verb, its tense usage form in a particular section of a thesis may not be similar to the general tense form in that same part of the thesis. In this section, studies that confirm this assertion and other related studies will be reviewed.

Maroko and Kiai (2014) state that the frequency and use of tense of the RV in the various rhetorical sections of academic discourse may vary from one discipline to another. In this cross-disciplinary study they compared six dissertations selected from six public universities in Kenya; three each from both the humanities disciplines and science disciplines in Kenya. The result of their study revealed patterns that Science dissertations have a preference for simple past tense while Humanities dissertations are inclined to use the simple present. The perfect tense, it did not feature in any of the disciplines. As part of their conclusion, Maroko and Kiai (2014) suggested that the choice of tense in research work is a function of the epistemology and ideology of the disciplines and not any other reason. They then recommended a genre-based approach to teaching citation that raises students' awareness of citation norms in the writing of academic papers.

Chen (2009) and Swales (1999) also indicated that using reporting verb in the literature review sections of research work could follow unique patterns/moves, the past tense can be used at a portion or in a move/element and the present simple will be introduced elsewhere. As in, in stating the aim of the study in the LR section, for instance, the present tense may be used (as in; *This work aims at...*). but in the same LR when citing a result of a finding, it could be in the past tense (*Agbaglo (2017) found...*). This is what Chen (2009) calls tense alternation which is a common phenomenon in research work, especially in the writing of the LRs when using the RVs to cite previous studies. Tense-alternation phenomena of reporting verbs reflect how a speaker perceives the past scenes that existed in his memory and are now being recollected (Chen, 2009).

Most research on the form of the tense of the RV used in the LR section of the research work have seen the present simple tense dominating over the past simple and the present perfect (Amrullah *et al.* 2017; Chen, 2009; Loan & Pramoolsook 2015;

Yilmaz & Ertuk, 2017). In Amrullah *et al.*'s (2017) qualitative research study on reporting verbs, for instance, they investigated the rhetorical functions of reporting verbs employed in the author prominent citations of eighteen research papers written by graduate students in linguistics. They found all the three tenses used very well in their work that is; past, present tense and perfect tense and among these, the study identified that the present simple tense outnumbered the past simple tense and present perfect in research papers written by graduate students similar to that of Arsyad *et al.* (2018) but contrary to the study of Un-udom and Un-udom (2020).

Un-udom and Un-udom (2020) conducted a corpus-based study on the use of reporting verbs in applied linguistics articles. Their research focused on the most commonly used category of reporting verbs in applied linguistic articles, as well as how the citation process uses that category. The corpora found was made up of 201,785 tokens culled from 52 publications published in three applied linguistics magazines. In terms of the tense form of the RV, Un-udom and Un-udom's study (2020) revealed that the highest form of the tense used in the literature review section in applied linguistic articles was the past form (50.21%) while the least was present participle (2.21%) same as Zin's (2020) study. In Zin's (2020) study of research articles written by teachers of the English language, the past form of RVs as well had the highest occurrence (48 occurrences) which represents 41% of the total RVs in the data followed by the third person singular (present simple) at 38 (33%), past participle at 20 (17%) and root at 10 (9%) with the present participle not occurring at all in the data.

Also, Arsyad *et al.* (2018) reviewed forty English RA introductions from two research journals in the field of medical science and analyzed the linguistic features such as tenses and citation type. In their research, it was revealed that the majority of the

clauses or sentences in the literature review sub-section of the RA introduction are in the present tense in both journals while the frequency and percentage of past tense and present perfect tense are almost similar in both journals. This finding also confirms the ones from previous studies by Gledhill (2009) but contradicts Loan and Pramoolook (2015) who rather found that the present simple and the past simple were almost equally used in the LR chapters written by Vietnamese writers (51.26% and 46.80%, respectively) reinforcing the issue on tense alternation in the LR sections (Chen, 2009).

In Chen's (2009) study on tense alternation of reporting verbs used in 100 native English speakers' dissertations taken from ProQuest Digital Dissertations (PQDD), he found that from the 100 LR sections reviewed most of the verbs about 70.6% of the total are in the simple present tense, 15.8% are in the simple past tense, 8.9% of the total are in the present perfect tense, and the rest 4.7% are in other tenses. He concluded that the present tense was the most frequently used tense in all the 100 LRs. The explanation he gave for this was that the LR genre has a unique feature which is making reference to previous studies pointing out advantages and drawbacks, then creating gaps and establishing research spaces. Chen (2009) conclusion was vehemently against the use of conventions in applying the tense when writing as some researchers suggested. Rather he advised that emphasis should be laid on "...the typical structure of a paragraph, the ways in which new topics and subtopics are indicated by choice of appropriate sentence-themes..."

Research over the years has seen varying results on the particular tense of the RV used in citing others' work, especially in the LR section. In helping to finalise these divergent views based on the fact that citation in recent research work is becoming an increasingly valued commodity in today's fiercely competitive academic world,

Hyland and Jiang (2019) undertook a diachronic study that investigated the changing patterns of academic citation practices over a 50-year period. Three corpora from the research articles from five journals in four disciplines spaced at three periods over the past 50 years: 1965, 1985 and 2015 comprising Applied linguistics, sociology, electrical engineering and biology were selected. Because they were interested in how each discipline has changed its practices over this period, they randomly selected six papers at random from each of the five longest-running journals which had achieved the highest ranking in their disciplinary category according to the 5-year impact factor in 2015 summing up to 30 articles in total from each discipline from each year. The study concluded that there is an overall decline in structures that contain reporting verbs and a shift to a preference for generalization, neutral stances, discursive representation and present tense citing. This sides with already reviewed studies in this section.

In concluding this section, three issues come to play from the works reviewed; that is, the evaluative function of the tense of the RV used in research work, the tense variation or alternation in reporting especially in the LR/Introduction section and the dominant tense of the RV used in research work. Despite the numerous research that proposed particular evaluation of the tense of the RV in writing, it can be noted from the works reviewed that the basic temporal meaning of a tense remains constant, regardless of its use in particular contexts (Comrie, 1985). That means that regardless of what the interpretations of tense may be in a specific context, it is the linguistic context that accounts for its usage and not necessarily the context (Maroko & Kiai, 2014).

Though there was tense alternation in the use of the RV depending on the author or study, as reviewed above and noted by Chen (2009) and Cheung (2017), there was a

high preference for the simple present tense over the past and the perfect tense. It is not surprising to see the present simple dominating the literature reviewed so far because such conclusions support literature. Some 30 years ago Swales (1990) revealed that the present tense carries a ‘rhetorical immediacy’ emphasising the current relevance of reported material to the writer’s viewpoint or current state of knowledge. Some years after this assertion by Swales (1990), Hyland and Jiang’s (2019) diachronic study confirmed it. As most writers in this current competitive research space have shifted to citing their works using the present simple tense, “signifying it was what an author said rather than did” (p. 22). Also, writers wish to be associated with the ‘general truth’ from the works they cite as well as make their work relevant to the current state of knowledge for promotion and other purposes.

Based on these trends, it is prudent for a study of this nature to also find out if a similar pattern occurs among the graduate students of the University of Education Winneba in terms of their usage of the tense form of the reporting verb.

### **2.3.2. Review on Voice usage in Academic Writing**

The active voice and the passive voice are very important in academic writing and specifically in the reporting structure. This section therefore discusses studies on the active and passive voice in general and then narrows it to the reporting verb.

Studies on voice usage have pointed to the active voice as the dominant one among the two in almost all research works. In an active sentence, according to Baker (1992), the subject is the agent who acts. It follows this pattern. Subject-verb-object as in “*Akoto (2022) wrote the article*”. Eckersley and Eckersley (1960, p.219-224) state, "If the person or thing denoted by the subject of a sentence is the receiver or sufferer of the action, then that form of the verb is the passive voice" as in, “...*the article was written by Akoto (2022)*... ”.

Bada and Ulum (2018) studied the use of the active and passive voice in research articles written in English and published in scientific journals covered by high-ranking field. classified as the Social Sciences, Natural and Applied Sciences and Health Sciences. The active/passive usage in these 60 articles was identified through descriptive content analysis. The results from the analysis suggest that active structure usage (61%) in the overall analysis outnumbered that of passive (39%). In the introduction/literature review section especially, which is the focus of this study, high active usage was observed to be 72%, while passive utilisation remained at 28%.

They also realized that the utilization of the voices especially the passive voice is subject/discipline specific. As the gap between active (74%) and passive (26%) usage in Social Sciences is rather wide in favor of active construction, but it was significantly narrow in the Natural and Applied Sciences (60% active, 40% passive) and Health Sciences (51% active, 49% passive). The results are similar to Yannuar *et al.* (2018) and Zahra *et al.* (2021) studies. However, in a study by Baker (1992) on passive voice usage in academic work, he notes that the passive voice is used when the agent is downplayed in most languages. According to Ahmad (2012), the passive is also used to get rid of personal whims and fancies that is if one wants to gain impersonality and universality. Notwithstanding this, Beason and Lester (2003), argue that passive voice can lead to a dull style of writing in the sense that it does not stress action and hides the agent doing an action. It is obvious from the review that the active voice is the most preferred voice used in these studies which signify the activeness of the authors cited.

Ahmad's (2012) contrastive study was to find out how scientific use of English differs from literary use of English that is to make the linguistic features of scientific texts clearer and understandable. He analysed statistically 10 scientific research articles written by native users of English and published in scientific research journals in order

to determine the frequency of occurrence of Passive voice. He found that out of 565 running words the frequency of Passive Verbs in scientific research articles went up to 70% whereas Active Voice had gone up 30% only. This was the prove that the passive voice was used more in the method Section of scientific research article more than the active voice. The reason was that the passive voice makes the research findings universally acceptable and as well gets rid of personal whims and fancies. These findings are however different from the other sections of the research article. In the study of Zahra *et al.* (2021) which was carried out on the results and discussion section the active voice occurred more than the passive voice. In the work of Yannuar *et al.* (2018) as well which was based on the literature review/ introduction section the same result was achieved (active was dominant than passive).

In the study by Zahra *et al.* (2021) which was to gain insights into the voice profile in academic discourse, found that generally in the corpus, the active voice out-numbered the passive voice. The active voice occurred 2627 (65.94%) and the passive had 1357 at (34.06%). Zahra *et al.* (2021) explained that it so as a result of the nature of the genre. They also added that to present scientific findings, the active voice is a better choice in academic writing than the passive voice. In terms of the kind of voice used Zahra *et al.* (2021) found that the data revealed verbs like *discuss*, *explain*, *give*, *divide*, *follow* and *report* were mostly found in the passive voice contrary to Yannuar *et al.*'s (2018) study whose study found *expect* and *predict* as the most used in the passive.

From the literature reviewed on voice usage in academic writing in general, it is revealed that the context of nature of the genre contributes to the choice of voice in academic writing and on my many occasion the active voice is used more than the passive vice. These results are for voice usage in general attention is now turned to studies on the voice form of the reporting verb to find out if the patterns are the same.



### 2.3.2.1. Studies on the Voice Form of the Reporting Verb

On the active and passive forms of the reporting verbs, in stating or referring to people's work, literature abounds (Banini 2021; Chen, 2009; Jarkosvka & Kurcirkova, 2020; Loan & Pramoolsook 2015; Pecorari, 2013; Shaw, 1992; Un-udom & Un-udom 2020 and Zin, 2020).

Shaw (1992) examined the introductions of doctoral theses and documented the verbs they used. This was done through analysis of the reporting verbs in terms of their tense, aspect, and voice and whether the report was integral or non-integral. It was revealed that there was a positive correlation among these features, including a tendency for integral reports to use an active verb in the past tense and non-integral citations to be passive and in the present perfect. More than twenty-years after Pecorari (2013) did the same research and found that the reporting verbs found in his study were evenly divided between the active and the passive different from Shaw's (1992) study. The only similarity with Shaw's (1992) was that the active voice was slightly ahead of the passive voice usage.

The deficiency with these two studies is the difficulty to generalize their findings and conclusions drawn to cover all RVs in the sense that; first, they used only *find* and *show* RVs which are narrow and are also only research verbs according to Thompson and Ye's (1991) typology. In addition, they were both investigated in the hard Sciences that is Biology. Maybe in other disciplines like the soft disciplines, the results would have been different. Also, Shaw (1992) used theses and Pecorari (2013) used RAs, both of whose genres have different characteristics, purposes, and states of urgency. But their findings were that the active voice was slightly used ahead of the passive voice usage similar to other findings. For instance, in the study of Undom-udom and Undom-udom (2020) it was discovered as well that the active voice

(85.16%) was found to use reporting verbs more than the passive voice (14.84%), corroborating the findings of Thomson (2001) and Loan and Pramoolsook (2015).

Yannuar *et al.* (2018) examined the quantitative data of active and passive voice construction used in the English Department of State University of Malang students' undergraduate theses written from 2011 to 2013 and as well as explored the implication arising from the issue using 124 undergraduate theses that had 1,587,059 words. The results show that the frequency of active voice construction is higher than that of the passive 64.8% and 35.2% respectively. This reinforces the findings of the previous study reviewed. The reason for this high frequency according to Yannuar *et al.* (2018) is the active voice shows determination to prove a point and also that the active voice construction generates directness impression to the reader and it helps the reader to follow the train of thought of the writer.

In terms of the most RVs/stance Verbs used in a particular voice, the study identified the following as often used in the active voice; *suggest, expect, show, predict, report, believe, hope* and *allow*. Out of this *show* was the most used while in the passive voice the most occurring was the RV *expect* and the least occurring in both voice constructions was the RV *predict*. Yannuar *et al.* (2018) explained the frequent order of these verbs in their study portrays the objectives of academic writing, especially thesis writing, which are the projection of facts, showing of authorship and projection of the attitude of the author and the others cited.

Jarkosvka and Kurcirkova (2020), in a more recent study and using larger data and the antconc software, studied 82 Masters thesis Literature Review sections written in English by Czech economics and management students to investigate the types and functions of RVs, the choices of the verb tense, voice, and the subject-agent in the reporting structures. On the choice of tense and voice of the reporting verb in the

reporting structure, the study found that in the active voice the present action was preferred to the past active and the present perfect active which contradicted Thomas and Hawes' (1995) findings that indicated that it was mainly the past tense and the present perfect tense in the activities that were preferred over the present tense in medical RAs. Jarkosvka and Kurcirkova's (2020) conclusion, however, supports Swales and Feak' (2004) study that in RA's introduction or literature review sections, it is the active voice and the present tense that is predominant. This result is also in consonance with what other current works conducted by Banini (2021) and Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) found.

According to Halliday and Hassan (1985), the expression of voice is an extension of that of tense. For that matter, a study of tense in whatever form cannot be complete without a study on voice. Jackovska and Kurcirkova (2021) therefore investigated these two together as well in their studies and found that reporting Verbs in the present active were used the more and in all the three categories of the Hyland's (2002) taxonomy. The Discourse Acts category topped with 78.5%, followed by the Research Acts verbs 70.7% and the Cognitive Acts had 16.7%. However, in the same present tense, the passive voice was used less in the three categories appearing 36 (6.3%) in discourse act but did not appear in the research and cognitive acts.

The foregoing review looked at the voice of the RV in the reporting structure from the research article. Results over the years revealed that the active voice form of the RV is most used by the NNES in their writing. It is therefore worth studying to find out the dynamics in the Ghanaian postgraduate students' masters thesis context.

#### **2.4. Theoretical Framework**

This section presents the theory that buttress concepts on which the inquiry and the core conclusions of the study were based. That is, the theory and its concepts that

helped to make judgments and predictions about the phenomenon. The theory that underpins the study is the Hyland taxonomy of Reporting Verbs.

#### **2.4.1. Hyland's (2002) Taxonomy of Reporting Verbs**

Hyland's (2002) taxonomy of reporting verbs is a build-up of that of Hyland (1999) which dwelled mostly on Thompson and Ye's (1991) and Thomas and Hawes' (1995) classification. Hyland, (2002) put reporting verbs into two broad functions. The process function and the evaluative function.

*Process functions:* Here reporting verbs are categorized based on the type of action they were referring to. Three distinct processes are involved, which are: research act, cognitive act and discourse act.

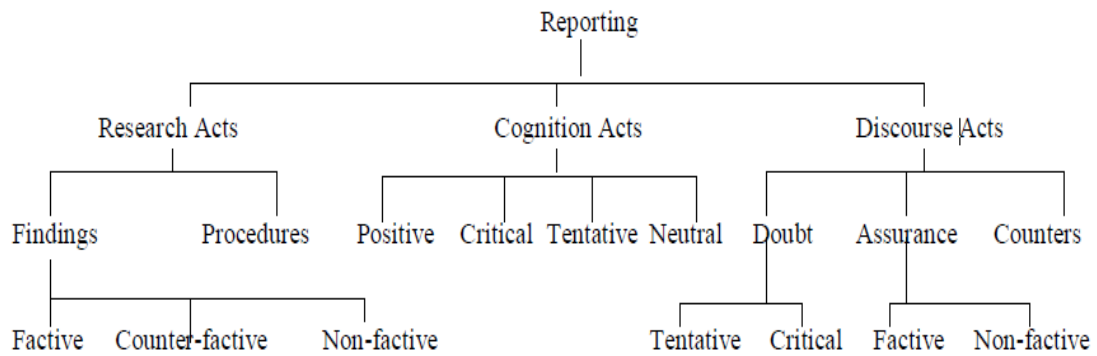
*Research (real-world) Acts;* This group of reporting verbs denotes activities or actions that are carried out in the real world. They are most commonly found in results statements or finding verbs like *observe, discover, notice, show* or they occur in verbs such as *analyze, calculate, assay, explore, plot* and *recover* that show procedure.

*Cognition Acts;* These verbs are concerned with the researcher's mental processes which according to Hyland are often based on attitudes. RVs that show these attitudes are; *believe, conceptualize, suspect, assume* and *view*.

*Discourse Acts;* These are language activities that focus on verbalizing cognitive or research tasks. such as. *ascribe, discuss, hypothesize, report, state*. It must be noted that each process verb has its evaluative function subcategories as well. The next section discusses this.

#### **ii. Evaluative functions**

Within the process categories, writers make more delicate decisions, exploiting the evaluative possibilities of reporting verbs to take either a supportive, tentative, critical, or neutral stance towards the reported claims. Fig. 2.4. shows the process and evaluative functions of the reporting verb.



**Fig. 2.4. Hyland, (2002) classification of reporting verbs**

**Research Acts:** They generally occur either in statements of Finding or Procedure.

i. *The Finding verbs;* Under this subcategory, the authors employ factive, counter factive and non-factive verbs. The factive verb is to acknowledge the acceptance of the author's results or conclusions by using verbs such as; *demonstrate, establish, show, solve, confirm, observe, discover and notice*. Counter-factive stance uses verbs such as *fail, misunderstand, ignore and overlook* to portray the author's judgments as false or incorrect. Non-factive verbs include; *find, identify, observe and obtain* are used to show neutral attitudinal signals as to the reliability of the statement made.

ii. *The Procedure verbs* are used to present methods used in the cited works such as *analyze, calculate, assay, explore, plot and recover*. These do not often carry any evaluation of the information cited.

**2. Cognition Acts;** In this act, writers might employ reporting verbs that attribute a particular attitude to the cited author. This attitude is in four sub-evaluative categories which could be; a positive attitude, tentative stance and critical or neutral stance. A positive attitude is used by a writer when the author's view is accepted as true or correct. It is shown in verbs such as *agree, concur, hold, know, think, or understand*. A tentative view of the reported matter uses verbs such as; *belief, doubt, speculate, suppose and suspect* without being certain but just saying what the writer suggests or speculates. Cognitive critical stance to the author's view employs verbs such as;

*disagree, dispute* and *not think* to assess the merits and faults of the statement the author makes. Neutral attitude is seen in verbs that include; *picture, conceive, anticipate* and *reflect*.

**3. Discourse Acts:** Discourse Acts verbs convey an evaluation of the cited material in two ways; either the writers take the responsibility for their interpretation, conveying their uncertainty or expressing assurance of the correctness of the claim, or the writer attributes a qualification to the author. Specifically, the verbs that express the author's view directly are categorized into; doubt, counter and assurance subcategories.

The *doubt category* can further be subdivided into; tentative verbs and critical verbs. Tentative verbs include; *postulate hypothesize, indicate, intimate* and *suggest* and Critical Verbs are; *evade, exaggerate, not count, not make a point*

The *assurance category* introduces cited materials in more positive and conclusive terms. They do this through factive and non-factive verbs. Non-factive verbs, support the writer's position with neutral verbs such as *state, describe, discuss, report, answer, define* and *summarise*. Factive verbs are; *argue, affirm, explain, note, point out* and *claim* used to support the writer's views. *Counter category* verbs such as; *deny, critique, challenge, attack, question, warn* and *rule out* are the cited author's reservations or objections to the correctness of the reported message.

This study is investigating the reporting verbs used in the literature review chapters of masters students of the University of Education, Winneba and so the taxonomy is the best theoretical framework.

Hyland's (2002) model demonstrates how a writer can evaluate previous studies by employing verbs to imply a stance or attribute a position to the author using language and as well as sharing his/her views with others in the construction of knowledge. Many studies have employed this framework and have yielded important results

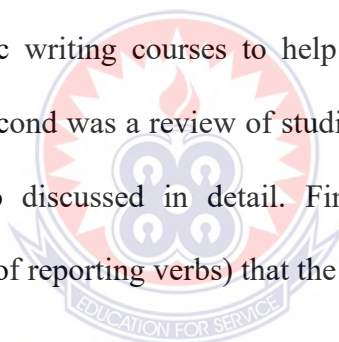
(Agbaglo, 2017; Banini, 2021a/b; Loan & Pramoolsook, (2015); Un-udom & Un-udom, 2020; Zin, 2020).

Agbaglo's (2017) studies using the Hyland (2002) taxonomy studied the types and frequent use of reporting verbs in ten (10) research articles written by lecturers in the Department of English of the University of Cape Coast. The findings confirmed that all the three process types of RVs identified by Hyland (2002) were used in the research articles with the discourse act used the most followed by research act and cognitive act. Similarly, Banini (2021a) studied the literature review sections of thesis written by PhD students of University of Ghana using the Hyland (2002) taxonomy of reporting verbs and also found that students used variety of reporting verbs in the construction of their Literature Review sections. The study also found that students used discourse act the most, followed by the research act and then the cognitive act. Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) who also used the Hyland (2002) taxonomy, found that the discourse act was the most used followed by the research act, and cognitive act similar to the studies of Agaglo (2017) and Banini (2021). However, contrary to the findings of Agaglo's (2017), Banini's (2021) and Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) studies is Berhail (2017), Un-udom and Un-udom's (2020) and Zin's (2021) findings. Un-udom and Un-udom (2020) and Zin (2021) employed the same Hyland (2002) taxonomy in their studies. Just that the former studies found the discourse act verbs as the most used whilst the latter studies found the research act verbs as the most used verbs. In terms of the evaluative functions of the reporting verbs, the findings of all the studies varied; Agaglo's (2017) and Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) found the non factive verbs as the most used while as Banini's (2021), Un-udom and Un-udom's (2020) and Zin's (2021) studies found the factive verbs as the most used RVs. Looking at these interesting and divergent results from the afore reviewed studies that

used the Hyland (2002) taxonomy, this study will apply the same theoretical framework to find out how the results will fair in a Ghanaian university.

## **2.5. Chapter Summary**

Review of related studies to this study was presented in this chapter. It started with reporting/citation to reporting verbs and their forms. This was done from a broad view (reporting) and narrowed to the specific issues at stake (reporting verbs). Then empirical studies on these specific issues were carried out. Studies were reviewed on the evaluative functions of reporting verbs by non-native writers as well as a comparative analysis of native and non-native writers as well as of novice and expert writers. This brought up some unique results and recommendations all aimed at highlighting the importance of using the reporting verbs and their beneficial implications for academic writing courses to help establish the lacuna the present study seeks to fill. The second was a review of studies on the tense and voice form of the RV which was also discussed in detail. Finally, the theoretical framework (Hyland, 2002 taxonomy of reporting verbs) that the study hinges on was reviewed.





## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0. Introduction

This chapter provides a thorough explanation and justification of the research approach, design and methods that were used to accomplish the research goals. Specifically, the area covered includes research paradigm/philosophy, research design, study area/research site, population, sampling technique, data collection processing and data analysis techniques. The chapter also looks at the ethical consideration and issues of trustworthiness and then concludes with a summary of the chapter.

#### 3.1. Research Paradigm

Every research project needs to be linked to or connected to a philosophical approach because it informs the study's direction and serves as a strategic framework (Merriam, 1998). Willis, (2007) avers that research philosophy is “a comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practice in a field” (p.8). These research philosophies are; positivism, criticalism and interpretivism. Positivism and interpretivism are the two most prevalent philosophies in social science. The positivists believe that social science disciplines should use scientific approaches and techniques as Biology and Physics do to study the social world to be able to uncover the laws that govern societies and societal behaviour (Neuman, 2007). This, the positivists say, will enable the presentation of knowledge to be seen as objective and quantifiable and so they employ quantitative methods such as questionnaires, official statistics and social surveys in data gathering and analysis. In this philosophy, the researcher is always detached from the process so that the feelings and values of the researcher would not interfere with the results of the research and knowledge to enhance objectivity (Myers, 2000).

Contrarily, the interpretivism philosophical school, which grew out of the criticism of positivism in the social sciences (Myers, (2000), shares a different view. Their focus is not on objectivity but on subjective understanding because they integrate human interest into their study. Myers (2000) posits that the premise of interpretive research is that reality is arrived at through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meanings. For that matter, Subjectivity must be considered, otherwise there will be some bias in the course of conducting research.

The interpretivism philosophy emphasises qualitative analysis over quantitative analysis and so this current study, which is based on qualitative analysis, falls within the Interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism is premised on the notion that reality is socially constructed and understanding is developed through social interactions (Pulla & Carter, 2018). Interpretivists use methods such as observation and interpretation of documents which the current study adopts too. The only disadvantage of this philosophy is its subjective nature which gives room for a little bias on the side of the researcher. Based on that, data gathered in interpretive studies are often not generalised since they reflect individual perspectives and values instead of the structure. It is for this reason that researchers who espouse this paradigm always have to prove their trustworthiness and try as much as possible to bracket their biases (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

The paradigm of criticalism, on the other hand, approaches knowledge critically and with a strong emphasis on power imbalances in society. As a result, it proposes that scientific research should be conducted with the noble goal of bringing about social change. According to them, the primary goal of research is to identify and address “gross power imbalances” in society (Taylor & Medina, 2011, p.12) because they believe power is not equally distributed. According to Taylor and Medina (2011),

“The researcher’s role is that of an advocate, a change agent who advocates for and leads the way to a more equitable, fair and sustainable society” (p.6). This paradigm differs significantly from positivism and interpretivism paradigm.

### **3.2. Research Approach**

In carrying out an investigation, a methodology must be followed to ensure that the research questions are answered. Thus, the nature of the research questions that need to be explored determine the choice of research methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Generally, three research approaches guide every research. These are the quantitative approach, qualitative approach and mixed method approach (Creswell, 2003, 2013). The present study employed a qualitative research approach to enable it answer the research questions very well.

#### **3.2.1. Qualitative Research Approach**

A qualitative research approach is the best for this study because it aligns with the philosophical paradigm (interpretivists) of this study which highlights that meaning is jointly created through social interactions (Hyland, 2008), which is exactly what this study seeks to do through reporting verbs. That is to make meaning from the texts of the participants of this study whose work is the focus of the research. It focuses on exploring meaning (linguistic choice) from the lived experiences of the participants in an academic discourse community.

According to Creswell (2007) qualitative research is an understanding inquiry process based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that investigates a social or human problem: the researcher constructs a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed informant views and conducts the study in a natural setting.

Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) note that qualitative research approach helps researchers to understand people’s beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviours and interactions towards a phenomenon. Dawson (2009) adds that, it allows the researcher to gain a

deeper understanding into issues in academic writing or world and helps to also explore the meaning and interpretation of complex social phenomenon, like the nature of people's experience, and intentions that motivate human interaction, feelings and thought which are difficult to capture with statistical methods.

The justification for choosing the qualitative research approach as the most relevant approach for this study is that; first, it aligns with the philosophical paradigm (interpretivists) of this study. Secondly, as Dawson (2009) noted, it gave the researcher the free will to explore and gain deeper insight into the phenomenon of citation practices and reporting verbs. It also helped to lay out an in-depth knowledge of how masters students use reporting verbs in citing other people's work in their literature review section and how they derive evaluative meaning and interpretation from these reporting verbs in an academic environment.

Also, the choice of this research approach helped to answer the research questions very well (Creswell, 2013). In that it helped to identify the kinds, frequency and the evaluative functions of reporting verbs that were used by masters students of UEW in the six selected disciplines under study. It also helped the researcher understand the underlying motivations that underpinned the use of reporting verbs in masters theses and the kind of interaction that occurs in the course of using the RV to confirm, oppose or critique other people's study in the review of literature.

Different designs of qualitative research abound and they include; ethnography, case study, phenomenology, biography and grounded theory (Creswell, 2007). There are also, linguistic analysis and conversational analysis among others. Some methods used in gathering data in these kinds of qualitative research design include: interviews, observations, visual materials, field studies and documents. This study, used documents which is the literature review section of the masters theses where the reporting verbs used in this LR section were selected and investigated. Based on the

fact that this study used documents, qualitative content analysis method which applies the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process was employed.

### **3.3. Research Design**

A research approach in a study, it is important for the researcher to choose a procedure of inquiry within the approach selected to serve as the framework for exploring the research findings. According to Creswell (2014), research designs are types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design. The research design employed in this study to provide this direction is the qualitative content analysis.

#### **3.3.1 Qualitative Content Analysis**

For purposes of addressing the research questions in this study, qualitative content analysis was used, for it presented the opportunity to analyse the various linguistic choices made in the texts selected systematically, to discover important categories, dimensions and interrelationships. Neuman (2007) explained that content analysis is a type of unobtrusive research that is used to determine the presence of certain words or ideas in texts. It examines written communication devoid of a researcher's influence or bias (Musa, 2014). Kumar (2011), indicates that content analysis is a research method of examining various documents or texts to determine words or themes that emerge to describe a specific phenomenon. This phenomenon is often coded and put into important groupings for analysis. In this study, because the focus is on word choice, content analysis was used to analyse the data to reveal common phenomena which were put in groups, that are classified and then generalized. Qualitative content analysis uses sections in the text as qualitative steps, working through many text passages and analysis of frequencies of categories as quantitative step (Bryman, 2008). It is important to note that, the qualitative content analysis itself is to be

understood as a data analysis technique within a rule guided research process, and this research process is bound to both qualitative and quantitative research standards (Insch *et al.*, 1997; Harris, 2001). Despite the numerous advantages of the qualitative content analysis, it is still considered to be bias which often emanates from the sampling process. For instance, in developing the coding scheme, there is the need for interpretation, which risk being tinted with biases to those faced by other measurement techniques (Insch *et al.*, 1997).

### **3.4. Research Site**

The research site for this study is the University of Education, Winneba which was established in 1992 as a University College under PNDC Law 322. On 14th May 2004, the University of Education Act, Act 672 was enacted to upgrade its status from University College of Education of Winneba to the status of a full University. The University of Education, Winneba operates from two (2) campuses: - the College of Languages Education, located at Ajumako and the Winneba Campus. The school has over 30,000 regular and distance students. The students can further be classified into two groups: students admitted directly from the senior high schools, after passing the WASCCE and “mature” students reading diploma, degree and postgraduate degrees. As a multi-campus and multi-site university, the institution is also involved in distance education all over the country including sandwich and weekend school (mostly for postgraduate) programmes. The University has forty-nine (49) academic research/departments/centres and ten (10) faculties ([www.uew.edu.gh](http://www.uew.edu.gh)). It is from the ten that five faculties were selected for this study.

First is the Faculty of Education, where Basic Education department was selected. this discipline was selected based on the fact that it is one of the earliest departments that was established to be at the fore front for the professionalization of graduates from the University of Education, Winneba. The department has therefore run the masters

programme for some time now and have sufficient theses available on its institutional repository for this study.

From the school of Communication and Media studies is Communication Skills. This was selected because it values the scientific study of language and applies language as well in general and extended writing in its pedagogy. It will be interesting to find out how Masters students use reporting verbs to dialogue in the sharing and acquisition of knowledge in the literature review section of their theses. The theses sampled for the study were studies on discourse analysis, genre analysis, rhetorical analysis, academic writing among others.

The faculty of Social Science had Social Studies which also put much premium on language use and recognizes extended writing (Casanave & Hubbard, 1992 cited in Afful, 2017). From the school of Creative Arts is Music. It is a hard-life-applied discipline according to the Biglan typology. Music has not featured much in such studies and so the need to see how interesting masters student use reporting verbs in such interaction at the literature review sections from such discipline.

Biology and Physical Education Health Recreation and Sports were selected from pure Science. These two are associated with very little writing (Myers, 1990, cited in Afful, 2017) but put much premium on practical works and so are considered as hard applied sciences according to the Biglan typology (Biglan, 1973; Becher, 1989). They were selected as representative of the sciences to bring some variations into the analysis and also because studies of this nature on these disciplines are scarce.

In summary, the choice of these six disciplines was informed by first; the scarcity of studies on citation practices-reporting verbs involving the six disciplines. Investigating these three disciplines would thus enhance our understanding of citation practices in the construction of the LR section using the RVs in student writing. Secondly, the six disciplines were also chosen because the number of theses needed

from each within the period (2015 to 2020) were available on the institutional repository sites.

The justification for the University of Education, Winneba as the research site for this study is that, as far as this study is concerned, there have not been any such studies on reporting verbs conducted in this university. It is therefore considered appropriate for such a study to be undertaken to fill this gap. Again, in a wider and national context, that is the Ghanaian context, studies on reporting verbs have been conducted in other universities such as the University of Cape Coast (Agbaglo, 2017) and the University of Ghana (Banini, 2021a/b) were only from the humanities field which is all considered softcore disciplines (Biglan, 1961). But this current study looks at the masters student's thesis which is considered an 'amateur' writing and a mixture of both soft and hard sciences (disciplines). To this end, this study attempts to fill in the gap.

### **3.5. Sample size and Sampling method**

De Vos *et al.* (2011) describe a sample as a representation of a whole that has been carefully chosen to assure its actual "representativeness". According to Arthur (2012; 111), this representativeness "should display the same distribution of traits as the population". Based on this, two major non probability sampling methods were used to select the sample size that display the same distribution of traits as the population for the study which are: purposive and convenience sampling methods. These were used to select the data on different stages.

#### **3.5.1. Purposive Sampling**

The purposive sampling was used based on Creswell's (2007) assertion that purposive sampling selects only individuals and locations that are relevant to a study. This was employed because it was this type of sampling (purposive sampling method) that helped in the accurate selection of data that provided an accurate response to the



research questions. It was used at two stages of the sampling process; the first and the third stage.

First, through a purposive sampling five faculties/schools were selected from the ten faculties from which further six departments/disciplines were picked. These faculties/schools were purposively sampled from the hard and softcore sciences to have a fair representation of the entire population and the outcome of this study as well. The faculties/schools and their corresponding departments/disciplines purposely selected are; Faculty of Educational Studies (Basic Education), School of Communication and Media Studies (Communication Skills), the School of Creative Arts (Music), Faculty of Social Science Education (Social Studies) and Faculty of Science Education where two departments were picked (Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Sports (HPERS) and Biology. At the third stage purposive sampling was used in the selection of literature review chapters that met the criteria for the study.

### **3.5.2 Convenience Sampling**

The convenience sampling technique was used at the second stage of the selection process to select the masters theses from each discipline. The convenience sampling was used on the grounds of ease and accessibility and also essentially, to ensure that the sample group represents the characteristics of the larger population chosen for the study as noted by Emerson (2015). This is often used to sample what you can get at the time of the study. The masters theses that were available and easily accessed from the university's institutional repository between 2015 and 2020 were sampled and used.

The Literature Review section was the focus and the part of the theses sampled as data for the analysis because, as Soler and Monreal (2011) noted, it is the chapter where

people's works are cited the more and therefore believed to have more RVs (Wen & Pramoolsook, 2021). Also, because it is the section of the thesis that offers an avenue for writers to report and review previous works as they negotiate their entry into the academic community. The LR sections that met the following criteria were sampled for this work: First, if the LRs are a section on their own and not embedded in other chapters like the introduction or background (Bitchener, 2010). Second, if the thesis is a master/MPhil thesis that has been completed, defended, and posted on the institutional repository site between 2015 to 2020. It is believed that theses between 2015-2020 are most current and so follow current trends of writing practices, especially in the genre (LR section) and so the results derived therein will therefore be the same (follow current trend) and very useful.

Six of these LR sections from each thesis from the six departments were selected after they met the criteria, summing up to 36 LR sections. In all 36 masters theses/LR sections totaling 358,933 words from the six disciplines made up the data. The 36-sample size was also purposely selected because it is the ideal sample size that will provide the rich description needed for this study. As noted by Biber (1993) the appropriate size of corpus should not be too big to manage or too small to be representative. The reason for this, according to Anthony (2001), is to also avoid the danger of a large corpus that leads to superficial analysis –and that of a small corpus that may also lead to less tendency of generalization. Also, the principle of data saturation sees the 36 as a representation of the “optimal number necessary to enable meaningful inferences about the population” (Marshall, 1996, p.522). Hyland's (2005) assertion that a large corpus does not necessarily reflect a study better than a small one, particularly if it is used to research high-frequency items, drove this sample size selection as well. This study investigates the frequent occurrence of RVs in 36 LR sections of masters theses.

The choice of 36 theses/LR sections is also informed by earlier studies on reporting verbs that worked on as low as three LR sections of a masters theses (Swear & Kalajahi, 2019) to as high as sixty LR sections of masters theses (Wen & Pramoolsook, 2021). This coupled with the fact that the LR sections of the masters theses tend to be bulkier and lengthy, the sample size purposively selected is, therefore, suitable for the study. On average, each LR was 65,900 words long. Table 1 presents a summary of the data and their distribution among the six disciplines calculated using Microsoft word counts.

**Table 3.1: Distribution of Pages and Words across the Selected Disciplines - reading course**

<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>No. of thesis</b>	<b>No. of words</b>
Basic education	MA/MPHIL LR	6	62724
Social studies	MA/MPHIL LR	6	76685
Communication skills	MA/MPHIL LR	6	40143
Biology	MA/MPHIL LR	6	37457
Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Sports	MA/MPHIL LR	6	73418
Music	MA/MPHIL LR	6	68506
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>358,933</b>

*Source: Field data (2022)*

Table 3.1. shows that there are few differences in the number of words in the LR sections of the theses submitted to each discipline, which may be explained by the fact that there are different theses formats, depending on the complex nature of the writer's research topics and the varied objects that have been studied.

### 3.6. Data Collection Method and Procedure

Spencer and Snape (2003) assert that qualitative data collection methods include: observations, in-depth and semi-structured interviews, group discussions, document analysis among others. As the data for this study is primarily document based, this study deploys content analysis as its data collection method instrument. The goal of

content analysis (document analytics) is undertaking a qualitative analysis of the documents that can be digital, but also physical (Bowen, 2009), and this is what this study seeks to do. Content analysis was used for purposes of addressing the research questions in the study, for it presented the opportunity to analyse the various linguistic choices made in the texts selected systematically, to discover important categories, dimensions and interrelationships. Neuman (2007) explained that content analysis is a type of unobtrusive research that is used to determine the presence of certain words or ideas in texts. It examines written communication devoid of a researcher's influence or bias (Musa, 2014). Kumar (2011), indicates that content analysis is a research method of examining various documents or texts to determine words or themes that emerge to describe a specific phenomenon. Regarding this study, the five-step content analysis of data by Luo (2021) was employed.

### **3.6.1. Five step Content Analysis of the Data**

The five steps provided by Luo (2021) for conducting content analysis were followed to address the research questions, which were primarily to determine the evaluative functions of reporting verbs used in the literature review sections of theses written by masters students of the University of Education, Winneba, as well as the choices they make in line with the tense and voice form of the RV. These steps are: one, choosing the content for analysis; two, defining the units and categories; three, generating a set of coding rules; four, coding the texts in accordance with the rules developed in steps three and four; and five, analyzing the findings; and generating conclusions.

The first step, the content of analysis is the literature review section of the theses written by the masters students of the University of Education, Winneba. Based on the three research questions of the study, 36 theses were purposely selected and downloaded from the UEW's institutional repository for the study. This is the content of this study, that is what it seeks to find.

Step two: This is the definition of units and categories which will be analysed in this study. The unit of analysis is the word level. This will be extracted from the literature review sections of the 36 theses and categorised into each discipline for easy analysis. The frequency of each word (reporting verb) will be recorded for further analysis.

Steps three and four are about the Codification of the data. The disciplines were coded as ‘*Bed, SStd, CS, Msc, Bio and Hpy*’ representing Basic Education, Social Studies, Communicative Skills, Music, Biology and Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Sports respectively. Each of the 6 theses per course was numbered 1-36 generating a code such as; *Bed 1-6, CS 7-12, Msc 13-18, SStd 19-24, Hpy 25-30* and *Bio 31-36* to denote data number one to six for Basic Education, seven to twelve for Communication Skills, thirteen to eighteen for Music, nineteen to twenty-four for Social Studies, twenty-five to thirty for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Sports (HPERS) and thirty - one to thirty-six for Biology respectively as shown in table 3.2. This coding enabled easy identification of the various types of RVs used in the data for analysis.

**Table 3.2; Coding for all the Discipline**

<b>Sn</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Code</b>
1	Basic Education	Bed 1-6
2	Communication Skills	CS 7-12
3	Music	Mus 13-18
4	Social Studies	SStd 19-24,
5	Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Sports (HPERS)	Hpy 25-30
6	Biology	Bio 31-36
	Total	36

*Source: Field data (2022)*

Final step: an analysis of data was done with the aid of AntConc (2019) software to search for and extract frequent occurrences of the reporting verbs in the texts. As part of the final step, the frequency of Word counts brought up by the antconc device was tallied, calculated and put in a table and graph forms. After which analysis was carried out and discussions of the interpretation were done before conclusions were drawn to answer the research questions.

### 3.7 Data Analysis Procedure

The full set of 36 selected LR sections, which make up the second chapters, were extracted from the pdf files into Word and cleaned up to remove extraneous elements like tables, graphs, figures and other graphics. After that, it was coded from 1 to 36 and converted to plain text forms (.txt). The reporting verbs used in the LR sections of the theses were searched for using the Antconc (2019) software. This was guided by the categories of reporting verbs from the taxonomy proposed by Hyland (2002), 138 RVs from Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) and a list of other reporting verbs compiled from the literature review of Wen and Pramoolsook (2021). Each RV was searched for in all its lemmas (*show/shows/showed/shown*) by the help of the Antconc regex.

Each Reporting Verb found was examined in its concordance line to ensure it functioned as reporting verb and eliminated from the analysis if it did not. This was done using the file view tool portion of AntConc, which enables users to explore the output of other AntConc tools in greater detail. This is the criteria employed to ensure the verb functioning as an RV in a citation structure is picked;

1. The employment of integral citations with a controlling or reporting verb (finite verb) is the focus of the examination of evidential as a reporting verb. Example: *Owu-Ewie (2013) argued that there is some in-built mechanism among the lot'.txt'.Bed3.txt* Owu-Ewie, (2013) goes with the finite verb/RV *argued* and it is an integral part of the entire sentence.

2. Clearly identified human subjects or named writers as subjects or agents with a publishing year and RV (active voice), as in:
  - a. *Owu-Ewie (2013) argued that there is some in-built mechanism among the lot'.txt'.Bed3.txt* from this above, 'Owu-Ewie (2013)' is the named subject/agent of the reporting verb 'argued'.
3. *The subject is used as a "by-adjunct"* in the sentence structure (passive voice) as in;
  - a. *As clearly stated by Owusu (2010), poor urban sanitation and waste must be treated well'.txt'.SStd13.txt*. The 'by -adjunct' 'by Owusu (2010)' is the passive subject/agent to the reporting verb 'stated'
4. Where a pronoun or a generalized or certain meta-linguistic expression was used in place of the subject/agent as in:
  - a. *Their study suggested that exergames have many parts'.txt'.Hyp9.txt*. 'Their study' is a pronominal replacing the actual subject/ agent of the reporting verb 'suggested' so this is also accepted.
  - b. (Passive voice): *As suggested by the three authors, one way of curbing bushing burning is education.'.txt'.SStd13.txt'*

From example b, 'the three authors' are introduced by the 'by-adjunct' and the RV is *suggested*. It should be noted that the search was also focused on the choice of voice (active or passive) and tense (present simple, past simple and present perfect). Additionally, each sentence was examined in this manner.

### **3.8. Data Analytical tools**

The main software used in digging deeper into the data and for presenting the results, using data visualisation tools (Creswell, 2013). The section specifically discusses the

analytical instruments used to help analyze the data which are; Antconc (2019) software and Microsoft spreadsheet 2019).

### **3.8.1 The Antconc Concordance Software**

The AntConc is a freeware, multi-platform tool for carrying out corpus linguistics research and data-driven learning. It is linguistic text analysis software that pulls out the relevant corpora from a text. It was created by Laurence Anthony and has been used in several studies. The 3.5.8, February 2019 version the one used in this study. It was easily downloaded from the website ([www.laurenceanthony.net](http://www.laurenceanthony.net)) and used to extract the reporting verbs from the text. This software was chosen for this research work because; First, it is simply accessible and user friendly, making it simple for anybody to use. If only the person is taken through the rudiments of using it. The second reason for employing this software is because many researchers have used it and through their findings and cogent conclusions, it is evident that the software is accurate and can be relied on. Studies by Banini, (2021), Loan and Pramoolsook (2015), Un-undom & Un-undom (2020; Yasmin et al. (2020), Yilmaz and Ertuk (2017) have all used the Antconc. These studies and many others are evidence of the efficacy of the Antconc software in research work and the fact that it is well established and potent.

#### ***3.7.3.1.1. Using the Antconc software in this study***

This is how the Antconc programme was used in this study. By double-clicking on the AntConc executable icon, the researcher first launches the program. An interface opens like Figure 3. 1. The text was then imported for analysis after being converted from a PDF to a text file and organized into a folder. To achieve this, the researcher first clicked on the menu file in the upper right corner of the interface. After that, he clicked on an open file, which directed him to the folder containing the plain text. This



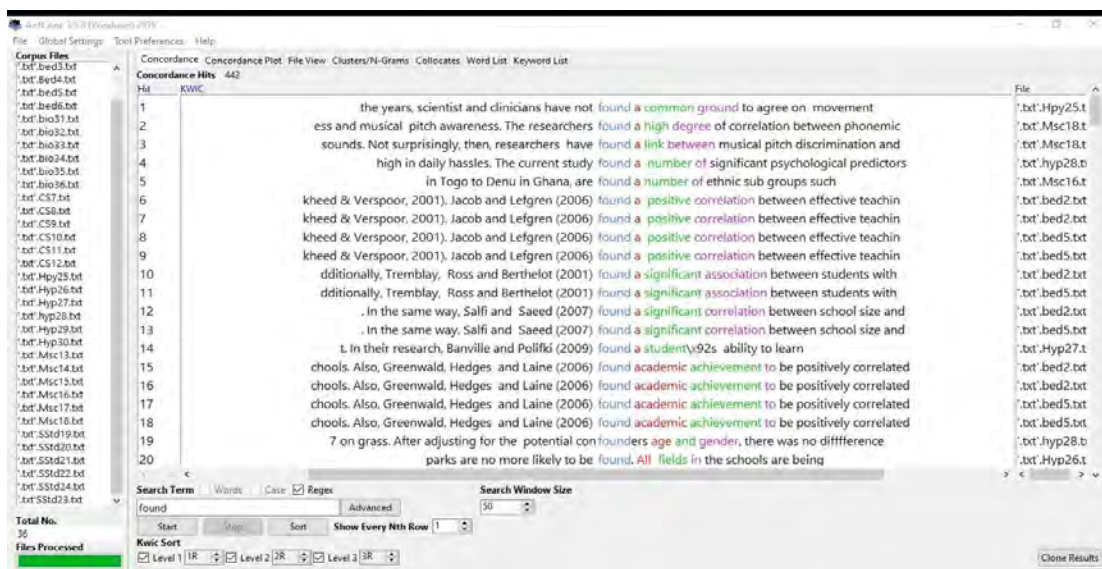
folder was also opened and each plain text containing the literature review sections of the theses to be analysed were loaded separately.

Having loaded the file(s), the researcher selected the concordance button which is found at the top of the interface. Then the researcher came down to tick regex that will help extract all word classes of each RV and then inserted each reporting verb from the Hyland (2002) taxonomy and other RVs found from the literature reviewed such as the 138 RVs by Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) and Wen and Pramoolsook (2021), one by one and category by category. These were then searched by clicking on the search button. The searched RVs that existed in the document uploaded were displayed in a different colour in the bigger space and in the sentences in which they were found with their codes (see fig. 3.1). The antconc gave the researcher feedback on the number of times the RVs occurred in the document displayed as hits (e.g., 40 HITS) and if the RV is not found, it displayed NO HIT.

The next step was that the list of statements displayed were further searched to see if the RVs found met the criteria that was set by the researcher. The researcher then clicked on the file view tool button to also manually searched through each statement one by one to see if the reporting verbs inputted and displayed were used as reporting verbs or not. Those found as reporting verbs were copied to Microsoft Excel version 2017, where the frequency was tallied and the percentages calculated for analysis. All these were done by using the Hyland (2002) taxonomy of reporting verbs and so the RVs found were all tallied under each process and evaluative function that is under the various subcategories to help answer the research questions.

In answering research question three, for instance, the reporting verb was further investigated to see the choice of tense (present simple, present perfect, or past simple tense) and voice (active or passive) the masters students of UEW opted for in their

reporting sentences. Fig. 3.1. is an example of the feedback gotten from a reporting verb 'found' that was searched in the software.



**Fig.3.1. Display of Antconc of the RV 'found' from the study**

### 3.8.2. Microsoft Excel

Excel is a part of the Microsoft Office and Office 365 suites. It is a spreadsheet used to organize numbers and data with formulas and functions. Microsoft Excel has several in-built statistical functions that enable users to format, organize and calculate data in a spreadsheet. Excel contains a large number of boxes called cells that are ordered in rows and columns where the data is entered for the processes by the software before statistical analysis. Users can arrange data in the spreadsheet using graphing tools, tables and formulas.

For this study, a built-in statistical function in Microsoft Excel (2017) was used to generate frequency tables, compute percentages and produce histograms for the data to facilitate analysis. This has been utilised for statistical computation in several research that has generated genuine statistical figures for analysis and interpretations. The works of Banini (2021) and Wen and Pramoolsook (2021) are examples of works on RVs that used the Microsoft spreadsheet to compute their figures.

### 3.9. Ethical Considerations

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that seeks to address questions of morality (the concept of good or bad / right or wrong). Academic research in various disciplines also encounters ethical issues (Halai, 2006) which must be observed to protect the respondents and the source of data. In qualitative research study for instance, it is often required that the researcher treats the ethical considerations that are necessary when conducting research with humans (Alderson & Morrow 2011) to demonstrate objectivity and sensitivity in the selection and analysis of data.

Halai (2006) identifies five principles of ethical research that appear across ethical codes of most research institutions and these five are; there should be obtaining of informed and voluntary consent, assurance of privacy and confidentiality of participants, the anonymity of the participants; it should cause no harm to the participants and there should also be reciprocity. Much consideration was given to these ethical issues and others in literature in the course of conducting this study at every stage. Even though the study did not deal directly with the participants (students), it rather used 36 LR sections of masters theses of these students. In doing this, the various LR sections picked were instead coded.

Second, Vanclay *et al.* (2013) stated that a research study must fully disclose all the methods and analytical procedures used for the study to enable replication of the research by others; to enable peer review of the adequacy and ethicality of the methodology; as well as to encourage critical self-reflection on the limitations of the methodology and any implications for the results and conclusions. As such, this study fully disclosed and explained the methodological processes that was undertaken by outlining all the various steps, ways and means through which the data collection was done and applied in order to avoid any intellectual dishonesty. Finally, the study ensured that literature used in the study was duly acknowledged as much as possible,

using the appropriate style (APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition) of referencing adopted by the University of Education, Winneba.

### **3.10. Trustworthiness of the Study**

Patton (2002) mentions that in designing a study, analyzing results and judging the quality of a study, validity and reliability are two factors qualitative researchers cannot do away with. This is particularly important as the researcher's subjectivity can be affected and can lead to biased findings. This has been the concern of the positivist who views such findings with skepticism (Brink, 1993).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) espouse some four general criteria to deal with validity and reliability issues in qualitative research. These four general criteria are; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability used to prove trustworthiness of qualitative studies. This approach has been widely accepted and further studies have been conducted on them. Shenton (2004) for instance, simplifies this approach the more with some additional criteria.

***Credibility:*** It deals with the researcher's confidence in reporting the findings of the research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. Shenton (2004) explains that credibility finds out whether the study measures or deals with what it intends to do and whether the study is congruent with reality. Among the possible construct of credibility in qualitative study identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985) are; prolonged engagement and persistent observation. Persistent observation means continuing to observe until one is sure of what was show. Prolong engagement on the other hand refers to spending enough time with the data to fully understand it, including all aspects of data collection, content analysis, discussion, and result interpretation, as well as its presentation. The two often go together to give the researcher a more

thorough familiarity with the meanings and dynamics that are relevant. Specifically, in this study from the selection of the theses from the institutional repository to its conversion from a pdf file to a word file to a text file and then feeding them into the Antconc program to extract the reporting verbs is a lot of interaction with the data. Additionally, there was also the avenue of manually determining whether or not the RVs has been used as citation verb before quantitatively computing the frequencies and percentages for analysis which are all a form of engaging with the data. The study of the RV forms in terms of voice (active or passive) and tense (present or past) up until the resolution of the research questions also demonstrates that there was persistent observation and prolong engagement with the work. This makes the data and data analysis believable and authentic.

***Transferability:*** The extent to which one's research can be applied to or replicated in other situations, populations, contexts, or phenomena is referred to as transferability. As a result, the findings must back up the theoretical underpinnings. It must also thoroughly describe the methodology, methods and analysis in order to demonstrate that the study's findings are applicable to other contexts, circumstances and situations. Based on a thorough and a step-by-step description of the procedure used in gathering data, analysis of the data and reporting of the findings/ interpretations and the drawing of conclusion was thoroughly done to make the researcher confident in the 'truth' of the findings. Also, regarding the meticulous presentation of the findings, the research quoted appropriate extracts from the data to support the findings.

***Dependability:*** A study is dependable if similar or identical results can be obtained if the same study is repeated. According to Shenton (2004, p.71), "in order to address the dependability issue more directly, the processes within the study should be reported in detail, allowing a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessarily to obtain the same results". In line with this, the methodological research design and

implementation, as well as the operational details of data collection and the presentations of findings in this study, have been thoroughly explained to ensure that it can serve as a “prototype model” (p.71) for others to arrive at the same outcome or finding under similar circumstances.

**Confirmability:** The degree to which the results can be confirmed or corroborated by others is referred to as confirmability. It also takes into account the researcher’s degree of neutrality. According to Shenton (2004, p.73), in order for the study to pass the confirmability test, “... beliefs underpinning decisions made and methods adopted should be acknowledged within the research report...”. As a result, each paradigm and methodological procedure was thoroughly described and justified. For instance, the sampling procedure was thoroughly explained and the choice of purposive and convenient sampling was justified as the sampling that helped in getting the required data to answer the research questions. Also, the results of the study have been confirmed by several studies in the field.

### **3.11. Summary of the Chapter**

The methodological orientations that underpin the investigation of the study have been discussed and justified in this chapter. The qualitative research design based on the interpretivist belief was applied, and purposive and convenience sampling procedures used to choose 36 masters theses submitted to six departments in UEW. The data were analysed using qualitative content analysis, which was backed up by descriptive statistics to bolster the qualitative analysis' claims. Finally, the chapter discussed the ethical consideration and the trustworthiness of the study based on criteria by Shenton (2004) which are: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. It ends with a summary of the chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the results of the data that were collected in order to provide answers to the three research questions posed in this thesis. The response to each research question is presented using qualitative discussion which include the use of descriptive statistics such as tables, charts and figures on reporting verbs used by the students.

First, the chapter presents and discusses the reporting verbs used in the literature review sections of theses written by the masters students of UEW, followed by the discussion on the category of the RV (according to the Hyland (2002) taxonomy) that is most frequently used by these students in the writing of their literature review sections. Finally, the choice of the tense and voice form of the RVs in the citation structure in the LR sections of these masters theses are discussed. In the discussion that follows, 'writer' is the one citing and the 'author' is the one that has been cited (Thompson & Ye, 1991).

#### **4.1. Research Question One (1): What are the RVs used in the literature review sections of the masters theses of students of the University of Education, Winneba?**

This section presents findings and discussion on the RVs used by the UEW masters students in their review of literature. This is done by first presenting and discussing the RVs and their occurrences in the various categories according to the Hyland taxonomy (2002) and then secondly, ranking them according to the first ten most occurring RVs and then the least occurring RV in the data.

#### 4.1.1. Occurrences of RVs in the data

Table 4.1 is the lists of Reporting Verbs found in each category according to Hyland (2002) taxonomy for RVs with their frequent occurrences.

**Table 4.1. Occurrence of Reporting Verbs cited in the LR sections of Masters Theses According to the Hyland (2002) Taxonomy for RVs.**

<b>Acts Category</b>	<b>Reporting Verbs</b>
<b>Research Act</b>	
Findings	
Factive	<i>show-128, reveal-89, establish-28, confirm-18, stress -15, discover-8, prove-6, demonstrate-5, emphasise-9, notice-2, display-2, justify-1, manifest-1, testify, -1</i>
Counter factive	<i>fail-4</i>
Non-factive	<i>find 223, observe -63, identify-52, provide-15, classify-7, offer-6, obtain-9, figure out-1, illustrate-1</i>
Procedure	<i>conduct-153, investigate-37, examine-45, carry out-22, study-21, compare-7, explore-7, develop-11, review-17, analyse-4, design-1</i>
<b>Cognition Act</b>	
Positive	<i>agree-19, support-30, focus-16, concur-11, hold-7, acknowledge-3, think-3, concentrate-2</i>
Critical	<i>criticise-4, dispute-2, disagree-2,</i>
Tentative	<i>believe-27, advise-3</i>
Neutral	<i>conceptualise-3, conceive-2, reflect-3</i>
<b>Discourse Act</b>	
Assurance	
Factive	<i>argue-104, explain-95, note-66, assert-55, say-41, point out-36, posit-36, opine-23, claim-14, mention-12, affirm-8, maintain-1, cited-3, highlight-7, comment-6, reiterate-3, attest-3, advocate-2, clarify-1, urge-1, state-138, define-69, report-60, conclude-51, describe-36, add-30, write-13, call-10, discuss-6, express-7, address-4, regard-4, summarise-3, refer-13, list-3, involve-4, present-3, draw-1, raise-1</i>
Non factive	
Doubt	
Tentative	<i>indicate-102, suggest-117, propose-13, see-16, view-19, contend-8, postulate-9, consider-11, intimate-14, hypothesis-5</i>
Critical	0
Counters	<i>Critique-1, oppose-1,</i>

*Source: Field data (2022)*



Table 4.1 shows the number of RVs that occurred in the data (hyphenated) in each process and evaluative function category. RVs were searched using the 66 RVs of the Hyland (2002) taxonomy, a checklist from Wen and Pramoolsook (2021) and then the 138 RVs of Loan and Pramoolsook (2015). There were (102) RVs found in the study with 2449 occurrences in different lemmas (forms and structures) as shown in table 4.1. The most often occurring RVs occurred in the category of discourse acts (51 RVs), followed by RVs in the area of research acts (35), and RVs in the category of cognitive acts (16).

The **Research act category finding factive verb** found in the study which was (14) in number had *show* (128) *reveal* (89) and *establish* (28) as the first three most frequently used RVs and *justify* (1), *manifest* (1) and *testify* (1) as the least used. The **non factive** RVs were nine (9) in number. *Find* RV had two hundred and twenty-three (223) as the most occurring, followed by *observe* -63 and *identify*-52 making up the first three. The least featured with single occurrences are; *figure out* (1) and *illustrate* (1). The **counter factive** RV had only *fail* occurring only four (4) times. **Procedure** of the research act had (11) RVs in the study; the three with the highest rates of occurrence were *conduct* (153), *examine* (45) and *investigate* (37) while *design* (1) had the lowest rate of occurrence in the subcategory.

To effect, the **research act non-factive verb find** was the most occurring RV with 233 occurrences, followed by procedure verb *conduct* with 153 occurrences, then factive verb *show*-128 as the first three most occurring RVs. Similarly, Manan and Noor (2013) also saw *found* (34 occurrences) as the most occurring in the research act category of their study. Again, Banini (2021a) also reported *Found* as the highest occurring RV with 388 occurrences. In the current study, **Research act counter factive** verb had only the RV *fail* occurring only 4 times around the same figure as Banini's (2021a), but did not occur at all in Agbaglo (2017). This confirms Hyland's (2002)

assertion that, in reporting what others have said, authors rarely use counterfactive verbs.

With the *cognitive act*, the positive sub category had greater number of RVs occurring in the study. Out of the (16) RVs in the category, it has (8) RVs. *Support* 30, *agree* 19 and *focus* 16 are the first three of the RVs and their occurrences in the positive subcategory, while *concentrate* 2 had the lowest frequency. With *cognitive act critical RV criticise* with 4 occurrences, *dispute* had 2 occurrences and *disagree* also had 2. *Tentative* sub category also had *believe* occurring 27 times and *advise* occurred 3 times. Finally, the cognitive act neutral sub category had *conceptualise* with 3 occurrences, *reflect* had 3 and *conceive* had 2 occurrences in the study. The cognitive act positive RV *support* 30 was the most employed RV in this category followed by tentative RV *believe* with 27 occurrences and then also cognitive act positive RV *agree* with 19 occurrences in the third place. In contrast, the RV *support* which was the most occurring RV in this study for this category did not show up in Banini's (2021a) study at all and only showed up in Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) with 6 occurrences which was not the most occurring but rather *believe* was with 26 occurrences. *Agree with* 252 occurrences was the most occurring for Banini (2021a) in this sub category. The least occurring RVs here are; *dispute*, *conceive*, *concentrate* and *disagree* all with 2 occurrences.

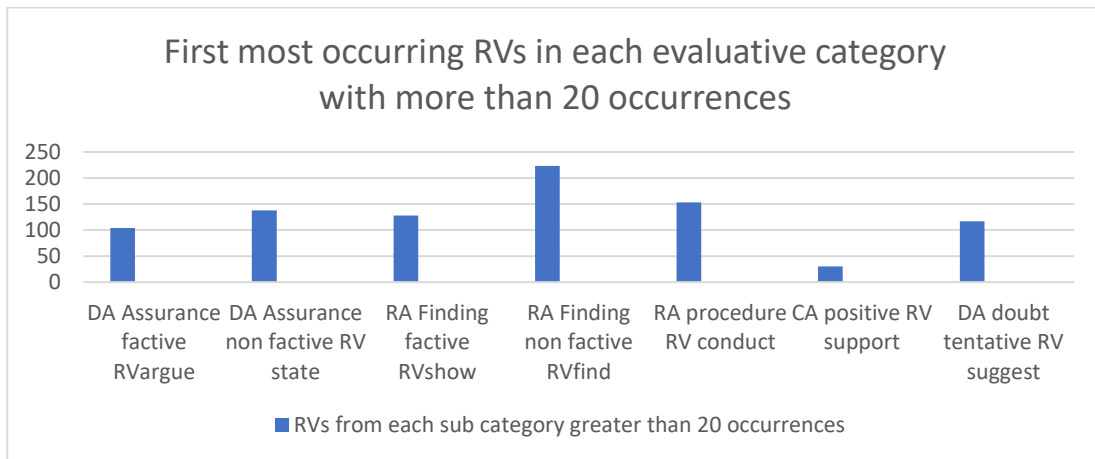
Fifty-one (51), or half, of the (102) RVs that were extracted from the data fell under the **discourse act** category. In this study, there were eleven discourse act doubt tentative verbs, but doubt critical verbs did not appear at all. The most occurring RV in the doubt tentative sub category are; *suggest* had 117 occurrences, *indicate* with 102 occurrences and *hypothesis* occurred 3 times as the least occurring in this sub category. Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) had the same RV *suggest* with 34 as the most occurring DA doubt tentative RV in their study. The RV *indicate* at 12 occurrences

was their second. Banini (2021a) recorded *indicate* at 207 occurrences as the most used doubt tentative RV in her study which was the second in this study.

With discourse act *assurance factive* verb which had (20) reporting verbs in the study, its first three most used RVs are; *argue with 104 occurrences*, *explain occurred 95 times* and *note with 66 occurrences*. The least used RVs were *clarify 1* and *urge 1*. The analysis also revealed 19 RVs for the non-factive category; the three most frequently used were ‘*state*’ which occurred 138 times, *define* with 69 and *report* had 61, while the least frequently used were *present* (1), *draw* (1) and *raise* (1). In this category, it can be realized that non factive RV *state* with 138 occurrences was the most used, followed by factive RV *argue* with 104 occurrences and from the same sub category RV *explain* with 95 occurrences at the third place.

In summary, even though discourse assurance factive evaluative sub category had more of its verbs used by the UEW masters students than any of the sub categories, research act finding non factive verb ‘*find*’ in its different forms had the highest occurrence (223). This could be due to the reason that the UEW masters students are familiar with the RV *find* or just that they lack varieties of RVs to use, hence this level of usage.

Figure 4.1. explains each sub category and the RVs that were most used to give more pictorial evidence of the kind of RVs the UEW students used in line with the Hyland (2002) taxonomy for RVs.



**Fig. 4.1. The first most occurring RVs in each evaluative sub-category**

To further paint a picture of how these RVs occurred in the study evaluatively, Figure 4.1. gives the picturesque representations of the RVs used the most, occurring more than 20 times in each sub evaluative category. The figure reports on the category of each verb, the sub category and the RV itself with its number of occurrences. It could be seen that the RA finding non factive RV *find* had the highest occurrence, followed by RA procedure verb *conduct* with 153 occurrences which is closely contended by the RV *state* from the DA assurance non factive sub category making up the first three. The RV *support* from the CA positive sub category came first similar to studies by (Barghamadi, 2021; Zin 2020) that CA RVs are the least used RVs.

#### **4.1.2. The Top Ten Ranked RVs in the Study**

The table below further reports on the top ten most used RVs that occurred more than fifty times in the study with their frequencies, category and sub category to further highlight the RVs the masters students of UEW employ in their review of literature.

**Table 4.2: Rank of first ten Most occurring RVs in the study with more than 50 occurrences**

SN	RV	Frequency	Category/sub category
1	<i>Find</i>	223	RA finding non factive
2	<i>conduct</i>	153	RA procedure
3	<i>State</i>	138,	DA assurance non factive
4	<i>show</i>	128	RA finding factive
5	<i>Suggest</i>	117	DA doubt tentative
6	<i>Argue</i>	104	DA assurance factive
7	<i>Indicate</i>	102	DA doubt tentative
8	<i>Explain</i>	95	DA assurance factive
9	<i>Reveal</i>	89	RA finding factive
10	<i>Define</i>	69	DA assurance non factive

**Source: Field data (2022)**

Table 4.2. is the first ten RVs that occurred most in the study and their sub category with more than fifty occurrences and Table 4.3 is the list of the least used RVs with only one occurrence in the study and their respective category/sub category. The RA finding factive RV *find* occurred most in the study similar to the findings of Banini (2021a), Barghamadi (2021) and Manan and Noor (2013). This defeats the assumption by Pickard (1995) that English as second language users turn to use the RV *say* in their writing the most. The *find* was used in all its forms but was most in the past simple form (*found*) similar to Banini (2021a/b), Manan and Noor (2013) and Barghamadi (2021). Manan and Noor (2013) for instance had *found* and *argue* as the most used. *Found* in Banini's (2021) study occurred 388 times followed by *argue* with 381 occurrences. Barghamadi (2021) found these three RVs *find*, *show* and *report* RVs in all the four corpora he studied with *Find* RV topping them. But contrary to this is the outcome of Swear and Kalajahi (2019) who had *argue* with 58 occurrences as the most occurring, similar to Igbal and Anwar's (2020) findings.

*Find*, grammatically, is the process of happening or discovering something by searching and so no further interpretation is added to what is found (*onlinedictionary.com*). It has the function of conclusion and it is neutral in nature as well, which does not state a fact or criticism (Yilmaz & Erturk, 2020). According to the Hyland's (2002) taxonomy, *find* is a Research Act, finding non factive verb (see table 4.1). The *find* verb occurred in various forms of the RV as in (*find/finds/found*) in the study. Below are extracts of how RV *find* occurred in the study in the various forms (present simple/past and perfect tenses)

1. They **find** out that different types of gestures have different effects on comprehension of speech by children of different age groups '.txt'. CS10.txt (*present simple*)
2. Bembenutty (2011) **finds** out that a positive relationship exists between homework activities and self-efficacy. '.txt'. bio35.txt (*present simple*)
3. Rockoff (2004), using data from New Jersey **have found** large gaps between the best and worst teachers and shown that this variation has significant consequences for student achievement. '.txt'. bio32.txt (*present perfect tense*)
4. Gavarry, Giacomoni et al. [sic], (2003), **found** an increase in physical activity levels by using heart rate monitors. '.txt'. Hyp27.txt (*past simple*)

From the examples 1-4 above, we see the RV *find* in its different forms/lemma as was extracted from the study. Extracts 1 and 2 are in its present form with different subjects. In the extract 3, it is in its present perfect form which also occurred less in the study. But in extract 4, it is in its past simple form and that occurred more (see appendix C) confirming Swales and Feak (2004) studies that the RV *find* is most often used in the past simple form as compared to other forms of the tense.

As indicated, the RV *find* is neutral and does not pass any evaluation on any claim but gives conclusions. In extract 2 for instance the writer *bio35* only states what the author

'Bembenutty (2011)' found which is "... *that a positive relationship exists between homework activities and self-efficacy...*" and that is all, it ends there. It can also be clearly seen in the extract 4 for instance that the writer Hyp27 does not pass any critique on the information given by the authors (Gavarry, Giacomoni [sic] et al., (2003) but only stated what was noticed in a neutral position that there was "...*an increase in physical activity levels by using heart rate monitors*".

For further exposure on how the RVs were used in the study, the following are excerpts from the study on the rest of the top five most frequent RVs used by the students;

5. Larson and Owusu-Acheaw (2014) **conducted** a study on reading habits among students and their effect on academic performance at Koforidua Polytechnic. '.txt'. CS8.txt.

6. Pelgrum and Law (2003) **state** that near the end of the 1980s, the term =computers 'was replaced by =IT '(information technology) signifying a shift of focus from computing technology to the capacity to store and retrieve information. '.txt'. SStd21.txt.

7. Gendron (1992) **showed** how the importance of slow-motion video to the competitors.'.txt'.Hyp27.txt

8. Laver and Hutcheson (1972) **suggest** that nonverbal behaviours and their meaning need to be taught to children'.txt'.CS10.txt

In extract 5, for example, the RV '*conduct*' is research finding procedure verb that only states the procedure or what Larson and Owusu-Acheaw (2014) did, as reported by '.txt'.CS8.txt

According to Hyland and Jiang's (2019) diachronic study on the top ten overall favoured reporting verbs by authors, the preference for reporting verbs (RV) like '*show*', '*find*', and '*discuss*', even if they were still in the top 10 in 2015, has

somewhat decreased over the previous 50 years. Two of these ‘*find*’ and ‘*show*’ examples are included in the top 10 RVs in the present analysis (see table 4.3). Their survey also revealed that ‘*argue*’, ‘*develop*’, ‘*observe*’ and ‘*suggest*’ have broken into the top 10, which is comparable to the current analysis in that ‘*argue*’ and ‘*propose*’ can also be found in the top ten RVs in this study, except, ‘*develop*’ and ‘*observe*’. This analysis demonstrates that the findings of the current study are consistent with current literature.

The table 4.3 also illustrates the least occurring RVs in the study.

**Table 4.3. RVs with just one occurrence and their categories/sub categories**

<b>RV</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>category/sub category</b>
<i>justify, manifest, testify</i>	1	RA finding factive
<i>figure out, illustrate</i>	1	RA finding non factive
<i>Design</i>	1	RA procedure
<i>Urge</i>	1	DA assurance factive
<i>draw, raise</i>	1	DA assurance non factive
<i>Critique, oppose</i>	1	DA counter

**Source: Field data (2022)**

The above table 4.3 of the least occurring reporting verbs seems to be more in the Research Act and Discourse Act category but does not show up at all in the Cognitive Act category that had less occurrences in the entire study. Most of the RVs here corresponds with that of Banini (2021a/b), Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) and Wen and Pramoolsook (2021) as the least used.

The results presented in this section and the discussion reveals that the masters students of UEW exhibit distinct preferences for different RVs due to the different contexts the RVs inhabit as well as the different evaluations the RVs convey. Despite that, they still have a number of RVs they commonly use (*find, conduct, state, show, suggest, among others*) which is similar to what literature suggest (Hyland & Jiang, 2019)



## **4.2. Research Question Two (2). What are the categories of reporting verbs frequently used in the literature review sections of the masters theses of students of the University of Education, Winneba?**

This section answers the research question two which seeks to find out the categories of reporting verbs used by the masters students of UEW according to the Hyland (2002) taxonomy for RVs. The data search revealed that generally, the masters students employed all the categories of reporting verbs found in the Hyland (2002) taxonomy in their review of existing literature in the literature review section of their theses which is in tandem with literature.

This section's presentation of the findings and discussion begins with the process function category of reporting verbs as defined by Hyland's (2002) taxonomy and then moves on to the evaluative function category.

### **4.2.1. The process function category of reporting verbs used in the literature review sections of the masters thesis by University of Education, Winneba masters students**

Table 4.4. presents results on the frequent occurrence of reporting verbs in the masters theses of UEW students in the process function category according to Hyland's (2002) taxonomy and their percentages. In the corpus, RVs occurred in all three process categories, however, rather disproportionally (Table 4.4). The process function according to Hyland's (2002) taxonomy are Research Act, Cognitive Act and Discourse Act.

**Table 4.4. Frequencies of RVs in the Process Category (Hyland, 2002)**

Category	Frequency	%
Research Act	1019	42
Cognitive Act	137	5.6
Discourse Act	1293	52.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2449</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field data (2022)*

**Research Act verbs:** The first verbs in the taxonomy are research act verbs, which refer to actual world experiments or acts. These verbs fit the description of a statement of results and method. The following reporting verbs are employed in this study: *observe, discover, notice, show; analyse, calculate, assay, explore, plot and recover* (Hyland, 2002). The table 4.4 demonstrates that the UEW masters students chose to utilise more Finding RVs 694 (28.3%) than Procedure RVs 325 (13.3%), indicating that they tended to describe the findings from earlier research rather than only the procedure employed. This finding is similar to the studies of Un-udom and Un-udom (2020) who had *Finding verb* 606 (30.02%) and *Procedure verb* 573 (28.38%), but the finding is contrary to Jakovsvka and Kucirkova (2020) who had *Findings* 66 (37.9%) and *Procedures* 108 (62.1%). This could possibly be as a result of the discipline used as data for the various research. Un-udom and Un-udom (2020) used applied linguistics and Jakovsvka and Kucirkova (2020) used economics and management studies.

The Research Act category of RVs was the second most occurring RV category in the entire study and recorded 1019 occurrences and a percentage of 42%.

Example of research act verb used in the study:

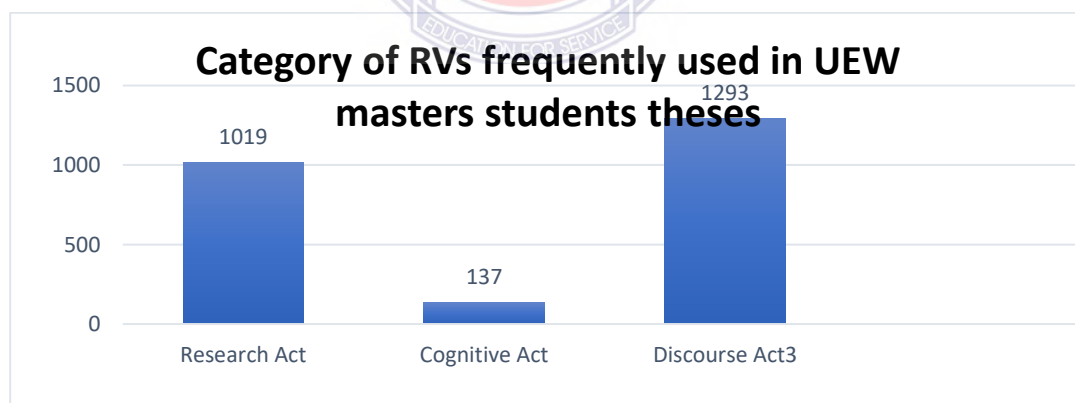
1. Swales (1981, 1990) **reveal** that a move may consist of one single sentence or more. '.txt'.CS9.txt

*Cognitive act* which concerns the researcher's mental processes has verbs such as *believe, conceptualize, suspect, assume, view* (Hyland, 2002). This consists of verbs that show positive, tentative, critical and neutral stance. It had the least occurrence of 137 and 5.6% in this work confirming the works of other scholars (Hyland, 1999, 2002; Thomas & Hawes, 1995; Un-udom & Un-udom, 2020; Yeganeh & Boghayeri, 2015) but contrary to that of Manan and Noor (2014) who rather ranked cognition acts second to research act from their study, and Berhail (2017) whose study also ranked cognitive act second to discourse act.

Example of how cognitive act was used in the study:

2. Appiah (1974) **holds** a similar view and mentions that symbolism has an eminent role in African art as well as metaphysical qualities. '.txt'.Msc16.txt

The third category according to Hyland (2002) is the *discourse act*. It occurred 1293 times which is 52.4% (shown in table 4.4) making it the most frequently used and preferred in the citation of works in the literature review sections of the masters students of UEW.



**Fig. 4.2. Frequencies of RVs in the process category**

From the figure 4.2, discourse act verb occurred most followed by research act and cognitive act. This finding is consistent with findings from Agbaglo (2017), Banini (2021a/b), Jakosvka and Kucirkova (2020), Loan and Pramoolsook (2015), but not with findings from Barghamadi (2021), Udom-udom and Udom-udom (2020), or

Zin (2020), who all identified the research act verb as the most frequently used. However, Hyland (2002) argues that the increased use of Discourse Act RVs satisfies the requirements of an argumentative writing schema, which means that masters students at UEW write more frequently in an argumentative schema style where explicit interpretation, speculation and argumentation are readily accepted. Which is an essential component of academic writing that readily merits a spot in international journals.

This is an extract of how discourse act verb was used in the study:

3. Ogunleye (2002) **reported** a significant difference in the achievement of students in urban peri-urban areas. '.txt'.bed5.txt

#### **4.2.2. Evaluative function category of the reporting verbs used in the literature review sections of UEW masters students**

Literature suggest that RVs used in their various forms carry evaluative functions that are different from the semantic meanings that the RVs carry on their own (Hyland, 1999, 2002; Loan & Pramoolsook, 2015; Thomas & Hawes, 1995; Thompson & Ye, 1991; Wen & Pramoolsook, 2021). In this regard, this section identifies some of these evaluative functions of the RVs used in the data using the Hyland (2002) taxonomy and presents the results here as well as discusses their implications to the writing of the literature review chapter of masters theses. The table 4.5 is the presentation of results on the evaluative function of the RVs in the literature review sections of UEW masters students and their percentage usage in the entire work.

**Table 4.5. Evaluative Functions of Reporting Verbs used in UEW masters theses (Hyland, 2002)**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
RA		
-Findings	694	28.3
Factive	313	12
Non factive	377	15
Counter factive	4	0.16
RA- Procedure	325	13.3
CA		
- Positive	91	3.1
-Tentative	30	1.2
-Critical	8	0.3
-Neutral	8	0.3
DA		
Assurance	974	39.8
Factive	518	21.2
Non factive	456	18.6
DA- Doubt	317	12.9
Critical	0	0
Tentative	317	12.9
DA- Counter	2	0.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>2449</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: field data (2022)*

In the **Research Acts category**, the reporting verbs could normally occur in statements of findings or procedure. The finding verbs have its sub evaluative categories as factive verbs, counter-factive stance and non-factive verbs. In this study, as revealed by Table 4.5, the research act finding verbs found are 694 (28.3%) out of the entire 2449 reporting verbs. Out of this, finding *factive verbs* used in the literature review sections by the masters students were 313 (12%) and non factive as well as counter factive were 377 (15%) and 4 (0.16%) respectively. Non factive reporting

verbs were used slightly ahead of the factive verbs confirming Hyland's (2002) work that non factive verb is the most used in the Research findings category followed by factive and then counter factive verbs.

**Research act Finding Factive verbs** show the acceptance and agreement of the writer with what is being reported. Reporting verbs such as; *confirm, discover, establish, show, observed, solve*, (Hyland, 2002) portray the source as presenting correct opinion or ideas (Swear & Kalajahi, 2019). Apart from the six RVs in this sub category suggested by Hyland (2002), the following RVs which perform the same function as the ones listed above from literature were also investigated; *reveal, proposed, notice* (Loan & Pramoolsook, 2015; Wen & Pramoolsook, 2021).

Example of how these were used in the work are below;

1. As Reimer (1970) **confirms**, music and the other arts are the most powerful tools available to man for refining and deepening his experience of feeling.''.txt'.Msc14.txt
2. 'Akiri and Ugborugbo (2009) **showed** that effective teaching produced better performing students'.'.txt'.Bed2.txt

The example 1 shows the use of the factive finding verb '*confirm*' which is stating for a fact what the author 'Reimer (1970)' is saying and reported by the writer Msc14 that

"...*music and the other arts are the most powerful tools available ...*" It is an evaluation of how the writer sees the statement and also as made by the authors. The writer repeating the statement and, in a way, agreeing to the fact that "...*music and the other arts are the most powerful tools available...*"

In the example 2, the writer Bed2 is reporting to on what is seen as a fact from the authors 'Akiri and Ugborugbo (2009) about the result of effective teaching based on their finding through the use of the verb '*showed*'. The masters students of UEW used

factive Research Acts verbs to illustrate that they share the author's view or conclusion and agrees that the propositions are valid.

**Research act Finding Non-factive** show the writer neutrality in presenting his or her report (Swear & Kalajahi, 2019). Such verbs like; *find, identify, observe, obtain*, found in Hyland's (2002) model are used by writers to express no explicit opinion about the information presented by the source (Loan & Pramoolsook, 2015). Writers here use this kind of verbs to remain neutral and not to show any commitment to the findings of the authors. This means that students comment on research findings 'with no clear attitudinal signal as to their reliability' (Hyland, 2002, p.7), as compared to factive verbs which clearly show the writer's agreement with the author's findings. This use of RVs was more prevalent in the RA Category at 377 (15%) than the factive finding verbs 313 (12%) in line with Agbaglo (2017), Banini (2021a) and Loan and Pramoolsook (2015). Loan and Pramoolsook's (2015) indicates in their study that, this is a sign of little critical engagement with earlier literature. This they continued is in consonance with the communicative functions of the LR chapters that focuses on reviewing of previous research without necessarily making the case for the need for the acceptance of their studies. It means that the UEW masters student's predominance use of the RA finding non-factive verbs is consistent with literature because the LR portions of theses are simply intended for review. Here are two excerpts from the research act that describe how non-factual RVs were utilised in the study:

3. Pelgrum (2001) **identified** material barriers as a lack of real or physical equipment and non-material barriers as somewhat intangible entities such as lack of knowledge, confidence or time '.txt'.SSStd21.txt.
4. Greenwald, Hedges and Laine (2006) **found** academic achievement to be positively correlated with teacher qualification. .txt'.Bed5.txt

The masters students at UEW use non-factive research-finding reporting verbs, as seen in example 3 above through the RV *identified*, to convey to readers just what author Pelgrum (2001) has observed. It tells that “*Material barriers as a lack of real or physical equipment and non-material barriers as somewhat intangible entities such as lack of knowledge, confidence or time*” as it stands with no further points of view.

The example 4 above also states what the authors, Greenwald, Hedges and Laine (2006), have found as reported by the writer, Bed5, who did not state any opinion on the statement that “...*academic achievement is positively correlated with teacher qualification...*” and nothing else. From the extracts 3/4, it can be seen that the masters students remain neutral and did not show any commitment to the findings of the authors that they cited. It means that the masters student of UEW will rather love to comment on research findings ‘with no clear attitudinal signal as to their reliability’ (Hyland, 2002:7) the more, as opposed to utilising factive verbs that express the writer’s agreement with the author’s findings.

In this study, **research act procedure verbs** recorded 325 (13.3%) out of the 2449 reporting verbs found in the work as against finding verb of 694 (28.3). This suggests that in the area of research acts, finding verbs were more commonly used than procedure reporting verbs similar to Un-udom and Un-udom (2020) yet in contrast to Zin’s (2020) study, who indicated that procedure verbs were more prevalent than finding verbs.

Procedure reporting verbs are verbs that pertain to process aspects of the author’s investigation and do not contain any evaluation in themselves: rather, they just and neutrally describe research tasks. Out of the ten procedure reporting verbs suggested by Hyland’s (2002) taxonomy (*study, analyse, explore, examine, compare, plot, calculate, review, investigate, recover*), seven were found in this study and



investigated except (*plot, calculate, recover*). Other RVs such as; *conduct, classify, carried out* belonging to the procedure acts subcategory from Loan and Pramoolsook's (2015) 138 RVs and Wen and Pramoolsook's (2021) were also searched and analysed.

In example 5 below for instance, the writer CS7 used the verb '*analysed*' which tells the process that was carried out by the authors in their work. The same is with the verb example 6, the RV '*review*' as used by the writer Hyp27 to show what was done by the author MacLean (1996) in his study without passing any judgement or evaluation on the statement.

Example is shown below:

5. They **analysed** a corpus of 5910 abstracts from six disciplines from which identified moves were analysed using a mixed method of both qualitative and quantitative methods. txt'.CS7.txt
6. McLean (1996) has **reviewed** a number of computer-assisted physical education instructional software and has provided the phone numbers or URLs for retrieving the programmes from the Internet and there are more than might be expected. txt'.Hyp27.txt

**Cognition Acts verbs** were also used to report the findings of other scholars in this study. It is revealed through *positive, tentative, neutral* and *critical stance*. The entire study saw only 137 occurrences of this category making it 5.6% of the 2449 reporting verbs found from the data.

The show of *positive attitudes* of the masters student towards the citation of other people's work was the most used 91 (3.7%) in this category followed by tentative 30 (1.2%), and then finally critical stance and neutral stance had the same figures 8 (0.3%) as shown in Table 4.5. The higher occurring rate of the positive subcategory is similar to the study of Banini (2021b) who also saw the positive subcategory

occurring most in the study and with 57 occurrences (9.12%) while the rest had single digits.

It means the masters students accepted as true or correct (positive attitude) information that they cite from various authors in this study more than the other attitudes. It also indicates that UEW masters students took more positive stance to the works they cite than the other sub-categories in this category similar to the work of Agbaglo (2017), Banini (2020a/b) and Zin (2020) who did not use any reporting verb that positioned the writers in a critical stance apart from positive verbs.

Examples of how the positive stance was used in the data analysed are below:

7. Bhatia (1993,1) **agrees** with Swales' (1990, 45) definition of genre as "a recognisable communicative event characterised by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs."  
'txt'.CS7.txt.
8. Ertmer (1999) **concurs** with Schoepp (2005), asserting that if teachers are aware of and understand such barriers, they can initiate strategies to overcome them.'  
'txt'.SStd21.txt

As seen in example 7 above, the RV *agree* was used to express a positive attitude by the writer CS7 in agreeing to the definition of genre by Swales (1990) being re-echoed by Bhatia (1993) the author. The example 8 similarly illustrates how the RV '*concur*' has also been used to illustrate the positive position of the author Ertmer (1999) to another author Schoepp (2005), as siding with the statement being made and reported by the writer SStd21.

**Cognitive act Tentative view** towards the reported matter could use verbs such as *believe, doubt, speculate, suppose, suspect* showing a mixture of uncertainty and in a way being careful on the side of the writer on what to say (Loan & Pramoolsook,

2015). In this study out of the five RVs suggested by the Hyland's (2002) only *believe* was found but *advise* from Wen and Pramoolsook (2021) was also found. Examples as found in the work are below;

9. Yemeh (2015) **believes** teaching learning materials are objects or activities that make teaching more effective and learning easier.' .txt'.Bed4.txt

10. Bhatia (1993) **advises** analyst to note that moves do not necessarily coincide with paragraphs as it is possible to have two or three moves in one paragraph. '.txt'.CS7.txt

The reporting verb *believe* indicates no certainty of the statement made. An author 'having a belief' or 'feeling in a certain way' about something is heavily connected with the mental attitude of the author and circumstances which is likely to change in a different circumstance. That is why the proponent of these taxonomy Hyland (2002: p. 120) indicated that cognitive verb "portray the cited work in terms of a mental process". This mental statement of belief is personal and subjective and it mostly has no clear supporting evidence as shown in the example 9 and 10 above by Bed4 and CS7 respectively. The masters students are portrayed in these excerpts as being more circumspect so they do not commit to any statements made and instead say what they feel or believe. According to example 9, the writer expresses his emotions about agreeing with the author Yemeh (2015) when she states that "*teaching-learning materials are objects or activities that make teaching more effective and learning easier.*" The same is true for case 10, where the RV *advises* is applied without taking a position against the author Bhatia's assertion (1993).

In taking **critical stance**, verbs such as follows are used; *disagree, dispute, not think*. Hyland (2002) states that it is uncommon for research to record zero for this subcategory of reporting. It might be challenging to take a critical attitude, especially for NNES/ESL and inexperienced writers like UEW masers students. It is not

surprising that it recorded as low as 0.3% in this work. However, in this study the RVs *criticise*, *disagreed* and *dispute* were used on one or two occasions. Examples of these found in the data are:

11. In a sharp contrast Omoruyi (2014) **disagree** with Johnson (2008) view by saying that this may not be completely applicable in all cases of broken homes.

'txt'.Bed2.txt

12. However, this judgment was **disputed by** many scholars (e.g., Kirk, 1988;

McNamee, 2009; Morgan, 2006). 'txt'.Hpy25.txt

There is a sought of disagreement with the proposition made by Johnson (2008) as stated by Omoruyi (2014) and reported by Bed2 using the RV *disagree* in example 11. This is a strong critical stance. Similarly, in example 12 the RV *disputed by* used by the writer Hyp25 tells how the authors (Kirk, 1988; McNamee, 2009; Morgan, 2006) do not accept the proposition made.

Finally, under the cognitive category, the writer portrays a **neutral attitude** towards the proposition with verbs such as *picture*, *conceive*, *anticipate*, *reflect* (Hyland, 2002). More of this was not found in this work from Hyalnd's (2002) except the verb *conceived* which occurred four times. The RVs *conceptualise* and *reflects* which were found from other literature reviewed featured in the study. In the example 13 below, the writer, Msc14 used the RV *conceive* to neutrally cite the claim of the author, Tyler (1949) on what curriculum is without committing themselves to agreeing with the propositions or opposing it.

In example 14 as well the writer, Bed4 cited the author Vygotsky (1978) without any personal judgmental attitude to what has been said.

13. Tyler (1949), earlier **conceived** curriculum as all that is taught to the students in the school, which is aimed at attaining their educational goals.

'txt'.Msc14.txt

14. The connection between external and internal activity is **conceptualized** by

Vygotsky (1978) as inter and intra psychological functioning. '.txt'.Bed4.txt

**Discourse act verb** conveys an evaluation of the cited material where writers have the option of either taking responsibility for their interpretation, conveying their uncertainty or assurance of the correctness of the claims reported, or attributing a qualification to the author (Hyland 2002). Denotatively, this was the most used in the study. Discourse verbs which express the writer's view directly can be separated into doubt, assurance and counter categories. Discourse act **doubt** is further categorized into tentative and critical doubt verbs. **Doubt tentative verbs** here include *postulate, hypothesize, indicate, intimate, suggest* and the **doubt critical** ones are: *evade, exaggerate, not account, not make point* (Hyland, 2002). The masters students of UEW used only the tentative verbs which occurred 317 times (12.9%) as shown in table 4.5 but did not use any of the critical verbs (0). Klimova (2014, p166) says **tentative** 'puts forth ideas as ideas...' And are often used as hedging (ibid). It is mostly based on this that masters student used more of it as found in this study and in the extracts 15 and 16.

Below are extracts from the data on how doubt tentative verbs were used:

15. Gallahue and Osmund (2006) **indicate** that the mastery of the mature throwing pattern should be visible by the ages of four to six. '.txt'.Hpy25.txt

16. Their findings **suggest** that self-concept of ability did not directly affect participant overall career goals (Parkes & Jones, 2012; Schmidt et al., 2006). 'txt'.Msc14.txt

From the above examples 15/16, it is clear that the RVs *indicate* and *suggest* have been used tentatively in stating the claims as they are without any position or stance

by the writer. The examples further show that the writer remains vague and uncertain which relates to their mental attitudes (Hyland, 2002).

The *discourse assurance* act sub category verb used recorded the most used reporting verbs in the entire work with 974 occurrences recording 52.8% of the entire RVs of 2449. Assurance verbs introduce cited material in more positive and conclusive terms. This is sub categorized into two by Hyland (2002), which are to either neutrally inform readers of the author's position (non-factive) or to use that position to support the writer's own (factive).

With *factive assurance*, writers use this kind of verbs to directly bolster their own views. These signal a supportive role for the reported information in the writer's argument, often by attributing a high degree of confidence to the proposition by the original author. They include verbs such as: *argue, affirm, explain, note, point out* and *claim* from the analytical frame work used. Others from Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) and Wen and Pramoolsook (2021) are: *claim, mentions, asserts, cite, say*, Factive verbs recorded 518 occurrences with 21.2% of the entire data gathered making it the most used reporting verb in the entire work by masters students of UEW. This is similar to the findings of Woravut, (2019); Banini (2021a) and Un-udom and Un-udom (2020). Un-udom and Un-udom's (2020) study had Factive 303 (15.01%) more than the non-factive which was at 268 (13.27%). Woravut (2015) indicated that the high usage of factive verbs in his studies could be due to the reason that the students sort of substituted the factive verb for the use of critical and counter verbs. This is to say that they used the factive verb as critical or counter verbs which made them more reserved in revealing critical aspects of their thinking towards the previous researcher/author. Contrary to this is the studies of Agbaglo (2017), Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) and Wen and Pramoolsook (2021); whose work found non

factive verbs as the preferred verb for NNES because the NNES/ESL student wish to be neutral while they contribute to others' works (Loan & Pramoolsook, 2015).

However, the finding of the current study indicates that the masters students of UEW prefer using the assurance factive reporting verbs that bolster their own view in citing information in the literature review section of their thesis as seen in these extracts from the study (example 17 & 18);

17. Cooper and Kiger (2003) **argue** that children and young adults develop literacy skills by having a variety of real literacy experiences and considerable amount of direct or explicit instruction. '.txt'.Bed4.txt

18. Stinson (1990) **explain** that, music exists in the curriculum for its own ends, to give children the opportunity to learn about its meaning and implied emotionalism and its effects and values in relation to belief about reality and growth. '.txt'.Msc18.txt

The extracts 17 and 18 are statement of facts as reported by the writers, Bed4 and Msc18 using the RVs *argue* and *explain* to state the claim as factual as they are. In the example 17 the writer Bed4 authors used a stronger verb *argue* to show their confidence in the statement made by Cooper and Kiger (2003) about how children or young adult develop literacy skills. In the same vein, the RV *explain* in the example 18, is used to state as a fact the importance of the existence of music in the curriculum to children. This in itself is a statement of fact. This lays the foundation for the writers Bed4 and Msc18 to have a say.

**Non factive Reporting verbs** are used to objectively pass information without any interpretation and they had an occurrence of 456 gaining 18.6% of the entire work. They occur in reporting verbs such as: *state, describe, discuss, report, answer, define* and *summarize*. Below are extracts of non factive assurance verbs from the data:

19. Vidyasagar (2015) **defines** meiosis as a specialized form of cell division that produces reproductive cells, such as plant and fungal spores, sperm and egg cells. '.txt'.Bio34.txt

20. 'Fan and Ho (2012) **describe** three significant academic applications of ICT. '.txt'.SStd21.txt

The use of RV *defines* by the writer Bio34 in example 19 does not commit him/her to the claim by the author Vidyasagar (2015) but only gives what 'meiosis' is. There is no commitment or stance taken by the writer in line with the statement made. This is same with the example 20 where the RV *describe* tells what Fan and Ho (2012) did that is the "three significant academic application of ICT" without adding his/her view to it or embellishing it.

The third category of reporting verbs under discourse act which is ***discourse act counter***, recorded two RVs strangely because most NNES writers hardly used such sub categories as reported by Zin (2020), Jarkosva and Kurcikova (2020), Undom-udom and Undom-udom (2020). But for Agbaglo (2017) it had 3 occurrences (0.34%) and for Wen and Pramoolsook (2021) it had 2 occurrences in the BT but 4 occurrences in the MT. This Agbaglo (2017) believed could be because of the reason that writers are not familiar with verbs found in such category or they could be as a result of culture norms as attributed by Hyland (2002), Adika (2015) and Loan and Pramoolsook (2015).

Hyland (2002) states that explicit refutation of other people's work is "a serious face-threatening act" in academic writing. Based on this novice, 'apprentices' (Akoto, 2011; Laver & Wenger, cited in Afful, 2017) may not trek such a path to cause disaffection to anyone in his/her academic community. That is why counter verbs featured less in the study.



Also, this could buttress the point of Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) that Vietnamese ESL writers base on a certain cultural practice that deter people from being confrontational which indicates disrespect for others and so will not use such verbs but will rather play it safe by using non factive verbs than the counter ones. This cultural practice is similar to that of the Ghanaian which even adds the need for one to respect the elderly or people that have taken the ‘lead’ before another and for that matter should not be criticised in the ‘open public’. For that matter criticizing such people will be a show of disrespect (Thompson, 2019). He further states that “...it is generally unacceptable to verbally confront or directly disagree with such persons...” (p.1). In this situation, we are considering people who have already undertaken research and are being cited as ‘elders’ and so they must not be disrespected in ‘public’ (theses, research articles) when citing them. It is therefore not surprising that such reporting verbs are not used at all.

Masters students’ non usage of this kind of reporting verb is supported by Hyland and Jiang’s (2019) diachronic study on citation practices that stated that the use of reporting verbs in the citation structure over the years have shifted to the fact that people now cite other people’s work as a way of supporting their own work to establish a gap rather than criticizing or countering it.

In this study based on the reason that discourse act assurance factive verbs were used most in the entire study, it can be concluded that students of the UEW in terms of denotation function prefer reporting verbs that are associated with linguistic activities and focus on the power of verbal expression (*Discourse Acts*) rather than *Research Acts* verbs (which indicate experimental activity carried out in the real world) or *Cognition Acts* verbs, which are verbs associated with a researcher’s mental processes. Also, evaluatively, UEW students will want to show a positive and a stronger position/stance in the reporting of people’s work (discourse act assurance-factive

verbs can be inferred that the UEW masters students rather wish to use RVs that strengthen their own views and create a gap for themselves in the LR section than the a neutral non factive or critical stance.

### **4.3. Research Question Three: How are the choices of tenses and voices form of the RV employed in the masters theses of students of the University of Education, Winneba?**

This section presents result on research question three on the choice of tense and voice form of the RVs used by the masters students of UEW. This was carried out through a frequency count of tenses and voices form of the RVs as they occurred in the study after the extraction by the Antconc software. The discussion first considers the tense form of the RV, then secondly, presents results and discussions on the usage of active and passive voice form of the RV, and finally, presents results and discussion on how the combination of both tense and voice form of the RV featured in the study.

#### **4.3.1. Tense Form of the RV**

According to Hyland (2000), the proper use of tense is essential to the process of citing sources in academic writing. The table 4.6 shows that the masters student made use of the three main tenses (simple present tense; the simple past tense and the present perfect tense) used in academic writing, confirming the key role of tense in academic writing. This also corroborates with Adelce (2016) and Chen (2009) who stated that the simple present tense; the simple past tense and the present perfect tense of reporting verbs are the three commonly used tenses in the LR sections of theses.

These tenses, as can be seen in table 4.6, are used fully in the study reflecting the three main communicative purpose that the LR section serves, according to Weissberg and Buker (1990) and Chen (2009) which are that; firstly, the LR section gives readers background information needed to understand a study (past simple/present simple). Secondly, it assures readers that the writer is familiar with the important research that

has been carried out in his/her area (present simple/ perfect). Then finally, the LR section establishes the writer's study as part of a larger academic community (present simple). The tense of the RV is often used to reflect this purpose of the LRs in this study bringing to the fore the tense alternation of the RV as indicated by Chen (2009).

**Table 4.6. Overall percentage usage of Tenses in the study**

<b>Tense</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Present simple tense	1323	54
Present perfect tense	135	5.5
Past simple tense	991	40.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>2449</b>	<b>100</b>

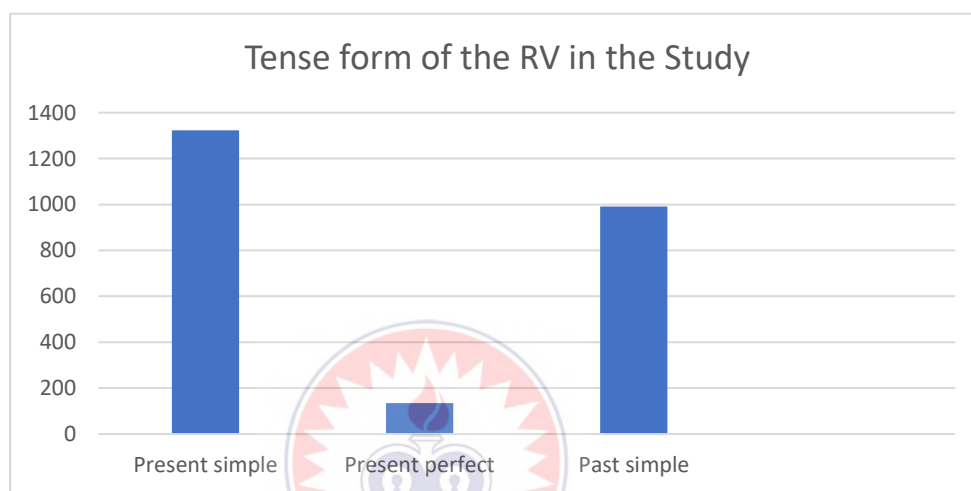
*Source: Field data (2022)*

Table 4.6 presents descriptive statistics of the distribution of the overall results of tenses used in the data obtained comprising frequency occurrences of the RVs and their corresponding percentages. From table 4.6, the present simple form of the RV occurred most with 1323 occurrences, gaining 54% of the 2449 total RVs recorded, followed by the past simple with 991 making it 40.5% of the study. Then finally the present perfect tense having 135 with 5.5% occurrences.

This result reveals that the UEW masters students use the present simple form of the RV the more in the citing of other people's work at the LR sections of their theses. This confirms the studies by Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) who had 449 (51.2%) as present simple, past simple 410 (46.80%) and the present perfect 17 (1.9%). The result is however, contrary to Zin (2020) who had the past simple as the most used recording 48 occurrences which represents 41% of the study.

The high incidence of the present simple tense therefore suggests that the work presented by these masters students of UEW, is significance to the contemporary situation. This also reveals that the time of writing the theses coincides with the time

of reading. Figure 4.3, shows a picturesque description of the most used tense in the study. The figure also indicates not so much a wide gap between the simple present and past simple which brings to the fore tense alternation in the literature review section of thesis writing as explained by Cheung (2017). This also correspond with the three communicative purposes of the LR section as indicated by Weissberg and Buker (1990) and Chen (2009). It means the tenses were used alternatively with present tense dominating.



**Figure 4.3. Overall tense usage in the study**

#### **4.3.1.1. Present Simple Tense Form of the RV**

The present simple tense is the most frequently employed in this study to explain results from the literature that are typically regarded as factual and current, just ahead of the past simple (Ibrahimova, 2016; Oster, 1981).

It is also not surprising to see masters students who are ‘burgeoning members of the academe’ (Adika, 2014) use more of these useful rhetorical strategy in this increasingly competitive academic environment, where readers/researchers frequently seek out practical applications of research to their work (Hyland & Jiang, 2019). So as long as writers continue to be rewarded based on their visibility through citation, both authors (cited sources) and masters students (in this case, writers) will want to see

their work being cited in the present simple tense. Additionally, in Hyland and Jiang's (2019) view, these works ought to be perceived as important and relevant to the state of knowledge today. Based on this, authors are delighted when the present simple tense is employed to quote earlier works, bringing them into the present and in a similar spirit, writers are also thrilled. This is supported by the data in extracts 1 and 2, where the boldened RVs in the texts imply this opinion.

1. Bazerman (2004) **identifies** six levels at which a text invokes another text or relies on another text as a resource. '.txt'.CS11.txt
2. Ruiz-Primo, Schultz, Li, and Shavelson (2001a), **describe** methods to compare a student's map to that of an expert. '.txt'.bio31.txt

The extracts give how the RVs *identifies* and *describe* were used in the present simple tense in the data to discuss findings from the literature that are generally considered factual and current. The RV *identifies* as used in example 1 is used with the third person singular subject that reflects the unrestrictive present and the second example is a plural subject which both agree very well with the two RVs in terms of concord. These are very unique ways of bringing the past to the present. This supports the assertion made by Weissberg and Buker (1990) that the literature review section of a thesis is designed to analyse the key components of present knowledge. Where in the first extract for instance the writer CS11 cites a general statement made by Bazerman (2004) that has been made factual and relevant to aspects of current knowledge because of the use of the present simple form of the RV, *identifies*. The use of the present simple form of the RV *describe* as shown in example two also indicates that the writer bio31 perceive the description of 'methods' by the authors Ruiz-Primo, Schultz, Li and Shavelson (2001a), as a generally accepted scientific fact.

The aforementioned instances support Hyland and Jiang's (2019) assertions that the present simple options allow the writer to imply a general truth and a larger relevance of others' work to their own.

#### 4.3.1.2. Past Simple Tense form of the RV

Essentially, the simple past tense refers to an event that happened before an utterance (Comrie, 1985). This was the study's second-most-common verb tense form of the RV used and as noted by Weissberg and Buker (1990), it was used extensively to report or refer to previous research that is completed as part of the study. Zin's (2020) and Nguyen and Pramoolsook's (2015) studies saw this as the most frequently used tense against the present and the present perfect tense in their study. In Nguyen and Pramoolsook's (2015) study for instance, accounted for almost two thirds of the reporting verbs used in these introductions (61.3%) followed by the present simple (35.1%) and present perfect (3.6%) indicating that what the Vietnamese students cited is simply reports on past studies. The extracts from the study that reveals this is found in example 3 and 4.

3. Kraft and Singhapakdi (1991) **confirmed** that students with strong work ethics are strongly committed to their work, more dedicated, focused and tend to perform better than their peers. '.txt'.Bed5.txt
4. Darling-Hammond (2000) **found** that teacher quality characteristics such as certification status and degrees in subject to be taught are very significant and positively correlated with subject outcomes in science and mathematics. '.txt'.Bed2.txt

In extract 3 above, the reporting verb *confirmed* indicates that the situation (*'that students with strong work ethics are strongly committed to their work, more dedicated, focused and tend to perform better than their peers'*) being described by Kraft and Singhapakdi (1991) and cited by Bed5 took place at an earlier time in

relation to the present. Example 4 also tells what the authors did in their study that is reported by the writer Bed2 as part of the study using the RV *found*.

#### 4.3.1.3. Present Perfect Tense Form of the RV

The perfect tense which gives the general background of past research and show their relevance in current study according to Oster (1981) was also used in the study (see table 4.6) but it happens to be the least used. This supports findings from Jarkosvka and Kurcirkova (2020) and Loan and Pramoolsook (2015), who found from their study that the present perfect is consistently the least form of the RV used, particularly in the LR section. Below are few extracts of this from the data gathered:

5. Kahn et al (1964) **have defined** role conflict as the simultaneous occurrence of two or more sets of pressures, such that compliance with one would make compliance with the other more difficult. '.txt'.CS12.txt
6. Several studies **have discussed** the types of festivals as distinguished on the basis of their themes (Atkinson, 2012; Cudny, 2014; Rouba, 2012)'.txt'.Msc15.txt

The extracts 5 and 6 confirms what Woravut (2015) and Oster (1981) revealed about the use of the present perfect tense as stating the current state of affairs when in example 5 for instance, it stated that “*role conflict as the simultaneous occurrence of two or more sets of pressures, such that compliance with one would make compliance with the other more difficult.*” as the current state of things using the RV *have defined*.

#### 4.3.2. Voice Form of the RV

According to Halliday (1985), the expression of voice is an extension of that of tense. For that matter a study of tense in whatever form cannot be complete without a study on voice. The study was therefore also interested in finding out the kind of voice

(active or passive voice) form of the RV the masters students used most in the reporting structure when constructing the LR sections of their theses.

The counting of the data gathered of the RVs in LR section yielded 2269 (92.7%) use of active voice and 180 (7.3%) usage of the passive voice. The detail results are presented in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7. Usage of Voice form of the RV in the study according to the Hyland taxonomy**

<b>Voice</b>			
<b>Active</b>		<b>Passive</b>	
<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
2269	92.7	180	7.3

*Source: field data (2022)*

Table 4.7 shows the frequent occurrences of the active and passive voice form of the RVs and their percentages. It is evident that the UEW masters students used the active voice form of the RV more than the passive voice form of the RV in the reporting structure when citing other sources in the literature review chapter of their theses.

The phenomenon realized in this study where the active voice took 92.7% of the entire work with the passive having only 7.3% is similar to the studies of Jakosvka and Kucirkova (2020), Loan and Pramoolsook (2015), Nguyen and Pramoolsook (2015), Un-udom and Un-udom (2020) and Zin (2020). Nguyen and Pramoolsook (2015) indicates that the active preference of reporting by the non-native writers in Vietnam is to emphasise the researchers/authors by placing them in the theme position of the sentence which is just what this study found.

Ahmadi (2012) cites the citation sentence's construction as one important factor for the dominance of the active voice in these studies. For instance, there are several tenses in which active sentences can be produced as opposed to the passive voice, this



enables the active voice to be used in sentences in a variety of ways. Therefore, it is more probable that the active voice will develop or be employed more than the passive. (Examples of these are seen in excerpts 7 and 8).

The second reason for the dominance of the active voice as seen in the results in this study which confirms literature is, Ahmadi (2012) once again indicate that the method section is where passive voice construction is typically employed to eliminate the effect of personal whims and preferences and achieve impersonality and universality in the research. However, the focus of the present study is on the literature review portion, whose traits differ somewhat from those of the method and other sections and where discussion is less focused on personal reporting. A view shared by Zahra, Tan and Ebrahimi (2021). who explained further that providing an argument, such as describing results, making generalisations and demonstrating the validity of the results, calls for a strong writer's voice; employing the active voice is therefore the most acceptable. However, to avoid any blame that may result from the study's limitations, writers often employed passive language when criticising, disputing, or even pointing out the limits of others.

According to the results from this study as indicated in table 4.7, students in this study used fewer passive voices indicating that they offered less critique or counter argument in their review of the literature. Consequently, less passive voice and more active voice usage in this study by the UEW master students who in constructing their LR section would want to be seen as laying more emphasis on the agent (active voice) in a strong voice than on the information.

All these imply that the NNES style of writing, to some extent is the preference for the active voice (Ahmadi, 2012; Loan & Pramoolsook, 2015; Undom & Undom, 2020; Yannuar *et. al.* 2014; Zin, 2020) and not the passive voice.

#### 4.3.2.1. Active Voice form of the RV

With active voice generally the emphasizes is on who acts, rather than on who receives or experiences the action. As a way of structuring sentences, the active voice places the “actor” (in this case cited authors) of a sentence at the beginning and the “receiver” (statement/proposition/claim) of the action at the end, with the ‘action’ (reporting verb) between them.

The active voice alone had 2269 out of the entire reporting verbs 2449 occurrences of RVs which is 92.7% with the passive recording only 180 occurrences at 7.3% of the study. This confirms the study of Loan and Pramoolsook (2015), Un-undom and Un-undom (2020) and Zin (2020). In the study of Un-undom and Un-undom (2020) for instance, it was revealed that the active voice had 1,004(85.16%) and the passive voice 175(14.84%). Similar, in Zin’s (2020) study as well, the active RVs recorded was 97 occurrences (84%) and the passive RVs also occurred 19 times in the data, representing 16% of the total number of RVs in the data analysed.

As seen in examples 7 and 8; Adofo (2013) and Land and Vaughan (1978) are all active ‘doers’ of the action of their various RVs and so are directly responsible for the statements made. This is strategically aimed at projecting the author to engage with the readers more actively (Ahmad, 2012; Hyland, 2005). In example 7 for instance, the statement that “*nursing mothers had emotional and physical support from their husbands and peers*” is purely attributed to Adofo (2013) and no one else. This makes the statement clearer and not too complicated or wordy (Hinkel, 2004).

Below are these examples of the active voice extracted from the data:

7. **Adofo (2013)** stated in her findings that nursing mothers had emotional and physical support from their husbands and peers. '.txt'.CS12.txt
8. **Land and Vaughan (1978)** note that movement gives children the opportunity to be aware of rhythm, form, and mood in music. '.txt'.Msc14.txt

From the extracts 7 and 9 above, the boldened and underlined words are the agents (*Adofo (2013)* and *Land and Vaughan (1978)*) that the attention and emphasis is on and not the other way round that is the statement. They are the ‘doers’ of the action and the focus of the citation.

#### 4.3.2.2. Passive voice form of the RV

From table 4.7 above, the passive form of the RV featured only 7.3% of the entire study occurring 180 times. Similar to the findings of Banini (2021), Loan and Prammolsook (2015), Udom-udom and Udom-udom (2020), Jakosvka and Kurcirkova (2020). Banda and Ulum (2018) states that passive voice gives writers the opportunity to stress the most important participants in sentences by putting them at the beginning of a sentence (Hyland, 2002) and this important participant is the statement and not the one (actor) making the statement. Banda and Ulum (2018) continues that, it is the kind of writing that shields personal feelings, but highlights objects, evidence and notion which is very academic. Yet this is not used the most now because the APA (6th edition), for instance discourages its use and rather approves the use of the active voice. Hinkel (2004) critiques that the **passive voice** form makes reading dull.

In the study the RV *conduct* was used the most in the passive voice (see appendix) contrary to Jakosvka and Kurcirkova’s (2020) whose study rather found *expect* as the most used. The extract below (9 and 10) are examples of the reporting structure with an RV *conduct* and *defined* in the **passive voice** with the ‘by-agent’ that were found in the study. The boldened words are the verb with the by adjunct and the underlined is the agent used passively.

9. In Mekong Delta, Vietnam a study was **conducted by** Mai and Hong (2014) on factors affecting secondary school English teachers ‘adoption of technologies in Southwest Vietnam. '.txt'.SStd210.txt

10. Physical exercise as **defined by (Siddiqui, Nessa, & Hossain, 2010)** is any bodily activity that promoted wellness, overall health and physical fitness.'.txt'.Hyp30.txt

In example 9 for instance, **Mai and Hong (2014)** is the ‘doer’ of the action (RV) *conducted* but they have been relegated to the background giving way to the emphasis to be placed on the information it carries which is the study they did ‘*on factors affecting secondary school English teachers ‘adoption of technologies in Southwest Vietnam*’. Same with example 10, the emphasis is on the various statements and not **Siddiqui, Nessa and Hossain (2010)**. The masters students are trying to give prominence to the statements being made than to the authors.

#### 4.3.2.3. Combination of Tense and Voice usage in the Reporting structure

The study investigated how tense and voice were used together in the study. It specifically looked at how the tense in a particular voice is most used that is its frequency by the help of the Antconc software search and manual count. Table 4.8 presents data results on how the two (active and passive voices) were used in a particular tense in the study through the frequencies and percentages portrayed.

**Table 4.8. Combination of Voice and Tense form of the RV**

Tense/voice	Active		Passive		Total of tense	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Total	%
Present simple	1219	49.8	104	4.2	1323	54
Present perfect	125	5.1	10	0.40	135	5.5
Past simple	925	37.8	66	2.7	991	40.5
<b>Total of voice</b>	<b>2269</b>	<b>92.6</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>2449</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: field data (2022)*

Table 4.8 presents figures on a combination of both tense and voice form of the RV used in the reporting structure. This gives information on which tense (present simple,

present perfect and past simple tense) was used the most and in which voice (active and passive voice) form of the RV in the reporting structure. Generally, from table 4.8, the present simple active voice is the most used in the study recording 1219 (49.8%) of the entire study, corroborating the findings of Jakosvka and Kurcirkova (2020) and Swales and Feak (2004) that the active voice and present tense predominate in the introduction and literature review parts of RAs. This was followed by the past simple active voice which also recorded 925 (37.7%) and then the present perfect active voice recording 125 (5.1%). The study of Nguyen and Pramoolsook (2015) contradicts this they rather found the active voice combination with the past simple as the most used with 63 occurrences followed by its combination with the present simple with 32 occurrences and the perfect with 4 occurrences. A lot of extracts and examples on active voice and tenses have already been stated.

In the passive voice this is how the data is represented the passive present simple had 104 with 4.5% of the entire study followed by the passive past simple with 66 occurrences at 2.5% and then the passive perfect tense form of the RV had 10 occurrences at 0.40% in the study. This is however similar to the study of Nguyen and Pramoolsook (2015) who also found the present passive as the most used with 7 occurrences followed by the past passive but the passive perfect did not occur at all. The underlined group of words in the extracts 11, 12 and 13 represents passive present simple, passive present perfect and passive past simple respectively. Below are examples of how these combinations occurred in the study:

11. This *is* **supported by Banks and Banks (2010)** in their five dimensions of multicultural education. '.txt'.Msc13.txt (*passive present simple*)

12. It *has been* **established by Morris (1966)** in Reid and Donaldson (1977) that reading achievement is related to the skill of the teacher... txt'. CS8.txt (*passive present perfect*)

13. As it *was* observed by Bannister and Wilden (2013) that, when the pupils are engaged in project and collaborative learning on media, the teacher may need to take a less active role txt'.CS7.txt (*passive past simple*)

The underlined are the RV, 'by adjunct' and the author and the italicised are the auxiliary verbs that makes them present (*is* as in example 11), perfect (*has been* as in example 12) and past (*was* as in example 13).

The findings thus suggest that the masters students used more of the present simple tense in the active voice as compared to the past simple tense contrary to the studies by Nguyen & Pramoolsook (2016) whose work realised that the preferred voice combined with the tense used by Vietnamese masters students was the past simple active voice. In the passive, the study result which saw the present passive dominating is consistent with Jarkovska and Kucirkova's (2021) study that also had the present passive dominating with 36 occurrences at (6.3%). The passive perfect did not feature in their study.

#### 4.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings, analysis and discussions of data to help answer the three research questions. Though some reporting verbs were used more than the others, the study found that masters students of UEW used the research act non factive finding *find* RV more than any other RV. Denotatively, the Discourse Act verbs were the most used followed by the Research Act and then the Cognitive Act Verbs. Evaluatively, the masters students used more of factive verbs to show a strong positive position to demonstrate the students' strength and confident in their argument. The students constructed sentences using the present simple tense, simple past tense and then the present perfect tense in the order of preference. They chose the present simple to cite their sources in the literature review section of their masters

theses as compared to the past and present perfect to make their work relevant to current knowledge. The active voice was also dominantly used over the passive voice aimed at projecting the author to engage with the readers more actively than the information. The active present tense was also used the more in this study.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the key findings of the study and the conclusions drawn from the main findings. It also makes recommendations from these conclusions, discusses the study's challenges and then ends with limitations and suggestions for future study.

#### 5.1. Summary of the Key Findings

This section recounts a summary of the major findings of the study based on the three research questions that guided the study.

The first objective of the study was to identify the reporting verbs employed in the literature review sections of the masters theses of students of the University of Education, Winneba. In responding to this question, the frequency of occurrence of each reporting verb in the data was analyzed using Hyland's (2002) taxonomy and percentages of occurrence obtained after the Antconc (2019) have helped extract the RVs from the 36 LR sections of the theses.

The key finding here is that the study saw 2449 occurrences of reporting verbs from 102 RVs extracted. Out of these, the ten most frequently occurring RVs that occurred more than fifty times are: *find* 233, *conduct* 156, *state* 140, *show* 128, *suggest* 123, *argue* 104, *indicate* 102, *explain* 95, *reveal* 89 and *define* 69. The RA finding non-factive RV *find* is the most RV used, similar to Banini (2021a/b) and Manan and Noor (2013), yet contrary to Loan and Pramoolsook (2015), Swear and Kalajahi (2019) and Zin (2020). Aside from these RVs, there is a wide range of others available that were not explored or were less explored. These are the least common RVs in the study that



occurred only once: *justify, manifest, testify, figure out, illustrate, design, clarify, urge, draw and raise.*

The second research question that guided this study was aimed at investigating the categories of reporting verbs frequently used in the literature review sections of the masters theses of students of the University of Education, Winneba. Using Hyland's (2002) categorisation of reporting verbs, the occurrence of each reporting verb was investigated and realised. This was done with the help of the Antconc concordance software Anthony (2019), a Microsoft spreadsheet and the Hyland (2002) taxonomy of reporting verbs as well as other reporting verbs found in the literature such as Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) and Wen and Pramoolsook (2021). Two key findings were revealed under this research question: first is the most occurring category of the RV used denotatively and the second is the evaluative subcategory most used.

The various reporting verbs belonging to the three categories of process function verbs according to Hyland (2002) were extensively used in the study. These three are the Research Acts, Cognition Acts and Discourse Acts. The Discourse Acts verbs, concerned with linguistic activities and focusing on the verbal expression of cognitive or research activities, were the most employed by the UEW masters students with 1293 (52.8%), followed by the research acts verbs, which indicate experimental activity carried out in the real world, with 1019 (42%) and then the Cognition Acts verbs, which are also associated with the researcher's mental processes which were not much employed with 137 (5.6%). This result agrees with Agbaglo's (2017), Banini's (2021), Jakovsvka and Kucirkova's (2020), Loan and Pramoolsook's (2015) findings and yet is contrary to Manan and Noor's (2014), Udom-udom and Udom-udom's (2020) and Wen and Pramoolsook's (2021) whose findings saw the research act verbs as the most occurring verbs in their various studies.

The evaluative functions as identified by Hyland (2002) as subcategories under each act, the main focus of this study, were identified in this study as well. The findings suggest that the discourse act assurance category of RVs was the most used where its evaluative sub-category factive with 518 occurrences came top among all other sub-evaluative categories (confirming studies by Loan & Pramoolsook, 2015; Un-udom & Un-udom, 2020; Woravut, 2015), followed by its non-factive counterpart with 456 occurrences, then research act finding non factive verb with 377 occurrences and doubt tentative 317 in that order, then the positive, neutral and negative RVs were also used moderately but counter and critical RVs were the least used in the study (see table 4.5). This shows that the students also indicate greater awareness and a higher ability to use different RVs to integrate other people's views into their works, as they create space for themselves and try to occupy it. However, there is a need for them to be exposed to a greater variety of RVs to give them a wide range of RVs to choose from to enrich their writing.

The final research question was to find out the choices of tense and voice form of the RV used in the literature review sections of masters theses written by the students of the University of Education, Winneba. It can be deduced from the analysis that the masters students used appropriately the three major aspects of tense form of the RV in integrating people's work into their work in the literature review sections of their masters theses. These three major aspects of tenses mostly used in academic writing are; the present simple tense, present perfect tense and the past simple tense. Of these three aspects of tenses, the masters students at UEW prefer to use, on average, the simple present tense, which occurred 1323 times at (54%) followed by the past simple tense with 991 occurrences at (40.5%) and then the present perfect tense at 135 times with (5.5%) confirming the studies of Banini (2021), Loan and Pramoolsook (2015) yet contrary to Undom-udom (2020) and Zin (2020). In effect, this reveals that the

present simple tense form of the RV was used more than both the past simple and the present perfect tense forms of the RV in the literature review sections of the masters theses of UEW masters students. In other words, the masters students at UEW used all the three tenses alternatively in the LR sections as literature suggests (Cheung, 2017; Chen, 2009) but prefer to use the present simple tense form of the RV the more to indicate that the information being cited is a fact that is generally accepted and also that it has some significance to the contemporary situation, making such work relevant in the current moment, confirming the current trend of the usage of the RV (Hyland & Jiang, 2019) in the literature review chapters.

In terms of the choice of active and passive voice, the analysis reveals that the active voice was used far more than the passive voice. The active voice alone had 2269 occurrences out of the entire 2449 occurrences of reporting verbs, which is 92.7%, with the passive recording only 180 (7.3%), confirming studies by Loan and Pramoolsook (2015), Un-undom and Un-undom (2020) and Zin (2020). This also leans toward what the APA 6th edition requires for scholars. The UEW masters students, in writing the LR sections of their theses, use the active voice of the RV to ensure the information they integrate into the work is accurate and brief and there is also a show of responsibility, unlike the passive voice that rather suggests avoidance of responsibility.

To make the analysis complete, the study also investigated the tense and voice form of the RV together. In such analysis it was found that active present simple tense was used the more with 1219 occurrences at (49.8%) corroborating the findings of Jakosvka and Kurcirkova (2020) and Swales and Feak (2004) that the active voice and present tense predominate in the introduction and literature review parts of RAs contrary to Nguyen & Pramoolsook (2015) who reported from their study that the

active voice most commonly is combined with the past aspect. This is followed by the active past simple tense 925 (37.7%) and then the active present perfect tense 125 (5.1%) indicating that the masters students of UEW show clearly who is making a claim and the relevancy of the claim to current situations. In other words, the masters students use reporting verb with a known subject in a situation that makes the statement or claim being cited factual and relevant to current literature. (Refer to table 4.7).

In summary, three key issues were found here: the most used tense form of the RV, which is the present simple tense; the most used voice, which is the active voice; and the most tenses and voice combination used, which the study found to be the active present simple tense.

## 5.2 Conclusions

The study was purposed on finding out the evaluative functions of RVs used in the LR sections of the masters theses of students of the University of Education, Winneba. After collection of data and using the Hyland (2002) categorisation of RVs along with the Antconc software for extraction of the RVs, 102 RVs were found in the study that occurred 2449 times in their various forms. The research act finding non-factive verb *find* in all its lemmas was found to be the most frequently used RV in the study, followed by *conduct*, *state*, *show* and *suggest* to make up the first five RVs. This shows that, the masters students used a greater variety of reporting verbs to demonstrate the veracity of their claims.

The study is also set to investigate the categories of the RVs used by the UEW masters students in the LR sections of their theses. The research study revealed that the master students used all three different categories of reporting verbs according to the Hyland (2002) taxonomy in citing previous authors in the writing of their literature review

chapters. These three called the process function are; discourse act, cognitive act and research acts. The discourse acts verbs category, which involves communicating an evaluation of the cited material with the option of either accepting responsibility for an interpretation, communicating uncertainty or assurance of the accuracy of the claims reported, or attributing a qualification to the author, had the highest frequency of occurrence of reporting verbs used by the UEW masters students, preceded by research acts and then followed by cognitive acts.

Additionally, it emerged that the study included a fair amount of usage and occurrences of the evaluative functions of these reporting verbs, which, in Hyland's (2002) taxonomy, are the subcategories of these process functions. These subcategories in summary could either be *finding/assurance factive*, *finding/assurance non-factive*, *procedure*, *positive*, *tentative*, *neutral* or *critical/counter* (Banini, 2021b). The UEW masters students used assurance factive RVs more frequently than the others in this study when reviewing the literature demonstrating the UEW masters student's preference for using RVs that support their own opinions and create a space for themselves in the LR section over adopting a critical or objective stance. They hardly used the evaluative function that demanded them to be critical or counter or refute the information being reported by the authors. In most cases, they remain neutral to propositions and in a precautionous manner used factive RVs to make their stance.

In the end, the study discovered that UEW masters students used all the three academic tenses alternatively in the review of literature but prefer to use the more RVs in the present simple tense form to those with the past tense and present perfect tense. This is done to make sure that the cited works are current and relevant to the readers and recent knowledge. In terms of the voice used, 92 per cent of all RVs were in the active voice, ensuring that the authors cited were the ones who carried out the action

to demonstrate responsibility for their assertion and not to make them appear to be the recipients of the action who wants to avoid responsibility as the passive voice would imply. It was discovered that when the voice and tense are used together, students use the active voice and the present simple tense combination the most than any other combination to drive home the point that a 'known author' is making a claim that is current and pertinent to current knowledge.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

The following recommendations are necessary, especially for teachers/lecturers, students, curriculum developers, examiners and all who engage in postgraduate writing, teaching and supervision. They are based on the main findings drawn from the present study and a thorough examination of emerging results from the investigative methodology adopted during the course of the present study.

First, it is recommended to curriculum developers to use the study as a basis for developing andragogical materials to enhance the teaching and learning of effective construction of the LR sections in their theses using the appropriate RVs. Such material can address the significance of reporting verbs as not only as a lexical choice but as an evaluative choice as well and at the very beginning of the academic work (first year). This can be done by emphasising the functions of RVs and directing students' attention to their different aspects, in terms of, classification, evaluative potential, tense and voice choice and how they are integrated into texts. Also, as examiners and supervisors guide learners to improve the quality of their work, they may be guided to be particular about the use of RVs by students as they cite others in their work especially at the LR sections because on many occasions supervisors overlook this crucial rhetorical feature in students writing.

Secondly, the findings of the most frequently occurring reporting verbs and the most occurring category of such verbs in this study could be useful to the students and

instructors for the teaching and learning of academic writing. The list of reporting verbs found and their categories have been stated in detail in the study. It is therefore recommended that this should be referred to in class for the benefit of the UEW students both at the first degree and masters degree levels during research methods or academic writing lessons. In such classes, students should be made aware of these RVs found in the study to serve as examples to create students' awareness of using appropriate and effective RVs to clearly report other sources precisely.

Finally, for instructors, the focus on reporting verbs with their respective evaluative functions should be included in writing instruction and explicitly taught because ESL students primarily use a small variety of reporting verbs to source information in their texts. A corpus-based resource that has been demonstrated to assist students in using a wider variety of reporting verbs could be used by instructors in these lessons (Friginal, 2013; Gray, 2019; Zhao, 2020). The "concordancing technology" proposed by Bloch (2009) could also be applied in this context. Students will be better able to choose appropriate verbs when writing academically as a result of their ongoing exposure to the language used in this setting. As a result, it is appropriate to suggest that lecturers in academic writing or research methodology be encouraged to use corpus-based data when teaching reporting verbs rather than just a list of them so that students have a more practical understanding. In light of this, the study therefore, concurs with Kwon *et al.* (2018) and Shin *et al.* (2018) in calling for corpus-based instructional attention to reporting verb instruction for student writers.

#### **5.4. Challenges of the Study**

The study encountered some challenges in getting the necessary information or data required for the study and through the analysis to completion. A few of these obstacles that the study had to overcome to reach the desired conclusion are as follows:

First, is the challenge of obtaining the data or information needed for the study. Obtaining recent theses from the institutional repository for some courses was challenging. While some departments, including social studies, communication, and media studies, uploaded their most recent theses as of 2021, others, including Music and Health Education, Sports and Recreation, struggled between 2019 and 2017. To solve this challenge, the researcher had to purposively collect data from thesis from the years that were available on the institutional repository for all departments. That was why the theses written from 2015 to 2020 were considered for this research.

Additionally, from the start of the project, using the Antconc Concordance Device and the Microsoft Excel sheet presented some difficulties. It was a little difficult to figure out how to use Antconc, especially with Regex, which requires formulaic code to produce the precise results from the text that are desired. The same was with the Excel sheet. It took experts in Information Technology-IT to help. The researcher had to undergo some tutorials from Youtube website. Moreso, the researcher also sort aid from some IT experts and senior colleagues who had applied these softwares in their research to assist and help with the analysis.

In addition, it was also tedious to find the evaluative function of each verb especially for verbs that were not already classified, because the determination of the evaluative meanings of these non-classified verbs depend heavily on the discourse function of such words (Whu, 2019). The factive, neutral, or critical meaning of the RV is also heavily genre- and domain-dependent. The context within which the reporting verbs occurred, relevant research reviewed and the theoretical framework helped to resolve this limitation.



### **5.5. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

The study offers some insightful recommendations for additional research based on its limitations. First and foremost, even though the study used data from various disciplines, it limited itself to only using them to represent the entire population and not for comparative analysis. As a result, another comparative study focusing on soft and hard sciences as well as undergraduate and postgraduate written genres could also be done. This study was only on post graduate students (amateur writers). There could therefore be another possibility of comparing the writing styles of amateur and professional authors in Ghana. To determine how reporting verbs are used between these two groups, senior lecturers' works, for instance, may be chosen and contrasted with those of undergraduate or graduate students.

In light of this and to enlarge the scope of the scholarship on reporting verbs, a contrastive appraisal study on the use of reporting verbs by native and non-native writers across a range of disciplines could also be carried out. It may be the subject of an investigation to determine whether certain reporting verbs are used differently by Ghanaian writers than they are by other L1 speakers, for example. Also, in subsequent studies, writers and students from various disciplines could be interviewed to gain first-hand knowledge of any differences in students' awareness of the use of reporting verbs in academic writing. This further step of interviewing correspondents/participants could explore more socio-cultural factors.

Additionally, future researches could concentrate on the rhetorical roles that reporting structures play in various genres, including spoken and written genres. This study only considered theses but other educational genres, as: reports, minutes and essays, are not covered. The use of reporting verbs in oral communication, including speeches, news broadcasts, news reports and viva voce, among other situations, can be investigated.

Finally, in the reporting structure are the subject/agent, the reporting verb and its form (tense/voice). This study looked at the tense and voice of the reporting verb. A study can also be conducted to look at the subject or agent of the reporting verb. Through a correlative study, the relationship between the subjects used alongside the reporting verb could be revealed.



## REFERENCES

- Abdul- Majeed, S. A. (2016). *Tense in Academic Discourse: A Study of two Disciplines*. [Unpublished Masters Theses]. Department of English, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast.
- Adelce, S. F. (2016). English Tense Use in Indonesian Journal Articles. *KnE Social Sciences*, 78–87. Doi 10.18502/kss.v1i1.438.
- Adika, G. S. K. (2014). Ghanaian Graduate Students' Knowledge of Referencing in Academic Writing and Implications for Plagiarism. *Frontiers of Language and Teaching*, 5(1), 75-80
- Adika, G. S. K. (2015). Credibility and Accountability in Academic Discourse: Increasing the Awareness of Ghanaian Graduate Students. *Practice and Theory in Systems of Education*, 10(3), 227-234. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ptse-20150021>.
- Afful, J. B. A. (2008). Engaging with the Writing of a Thesis: A Narrative of recently Graduated Doctoral Researcher. *Drumspeak*, 1(1), 1-21.
- Afful, I. (2016). *Dialogic Positioning in Literature Reviews of Masters Theses in a Ghanaian University*, [Unpublished Masters Thesis]. Department of English, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast.
- Agbaglo, E. (2017). The Types of and the Frequencies of Reporting Verbs in Research Articles by Lecturers in a Ghanaian University. *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics*, 34, 51-57.
- Ahmad, J. (2012). Stylistic Features of Scientific English: A Study of Scientific Research Articles. *English Language and Literature Studies*, 2(1), 47-55.
- Anthony, L. (2019). Antconc (Version 3.5.8) [Computer Software]. Tokyo, Japan: Waseda University <http://www.laurenceanthony.net>
- Arsyad, S, Zaim, M., & Susyla, D. (2018). Review and Citation Style in Research Article Introductions: A Comparative Study between National and International English-Medium Journals n Medical Sciences. *Discourse and Interaction*, 28-51. <https://doi.org/10.5817/DI2018-1-28>
- Bada, E., & Ulum, O. G. (2018). Utilisation of Active and Passive Constructions in English Academic Writing. *Journal of Human Sciences*, 15(1), 413-421. doi:10.14687/jhs.v15i1.5256
- Baker, P. (1992). Using Corpora in Discourse Analysis. In K. Hyland (Ed.), *Discourse Series*, 12-26. Continuum.
- Banini, S. (2021a). *Range and Variability of Reporting Verbs in Doctoral Theses of Humanities Students*. [Unpublished Doctor of Philosophy Thesis]. University of Venda, South Africa.

- Banini, S. (2021b). Reporting Verbs Used in The Literature Review Chapters of Doctoral Theses by Psychology Students in A Ghanaian University. *Takoradi Technical University Journal of Technology*, 7(1), 85-101.
- Barghamadi, M. (2021). Reporting Verbs in the Humanities and Medical Sciences Research Articles. *Language Teaching Research Quarterly*, 22, 17-32. doi:10.32038/ltrq.2021.22.02
- Beason L. & Lester M. (2003). *A Common Sense Guide to Grammar and Usage*.
- Becher, T. (1989). *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Cultures of Disciplines*.
- Bergler, S. (1992). *Evidential Analysis of Reported Speech*. [Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation], Brandeis University. Semantic Scholar.
- Berhail, S. (2017). *A Corpus Based Analysis of the Use of Reporting Verbs in Master Dissertations*. [Unpublished Masters Thesis] Larbi Ben M'hidi University.
- Bhardwaj, R. K. (2014). Institutional Repository Literature: A Bibliometric Analysis. *Science and Technology Libraries*, 1(3), 1-18.
- Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S., & Finegan, E. (1999). *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. White Plains, Longman. <https://doi.org/10.1162/08912010130034683>
- Biglan, A. (1973). The Characteristics of Subject Matter in Different Academic Areas. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 57(3), 204-213.
- Bitchener, J. (2010). *Writing an-Applied Linguistics Thesis or Dissertation*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bloch, J. (2010). A Concordance-Based Study of the Use of Reporting Verbs as Rhetorical Devices in Academic Papers. *Journal of Writing Research*, 2(2), 219-244.
- Bowker, N. (2007). Academic Writing: A Guide to Tertiary Level Writing. *Educational Researcher*, 34(6), 3-15.
- Brink, M., (2011). The Future of Survey Sampling, *Public Opinion Quarterly* (special future issue), 75(5), 872-888.
- Caplan, N. A. (2012). *Grammar Choices for Graduate and Professional Writers*. University of Michigan Press.
- Charles, M. (2006). Phraseological Patterns in Reporting Clauses used in Citation: A Corpus Based Study of Thesis in Two Disciplines. *English for Specific Purposes*, 25, 310-331.
- Chen, M. (2009). Tense of Reporting in Dissertation Literature Reviews. *Journal of Cambridge Studies*, 4(2), 139-150.
- Cheung, L. M. E. (2017). *Development of Evaluative Stance and Voice in Postgraduate Academic Writing*, [Unpublished Doctor of Philosophy Thesis]. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong.

- Comrie, B. (1985). *Tense*. Cambridge University Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Approaches* (2nd Ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions* (2nd Ed). SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- Dawson, J. W. (2007). The Empirical Institutions-Growth Literature: Is Something Amiss at The Top? *Econ Journal Watch*, 4(2), 184-196.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2003). *The Landscape of Qualitative Research Theories and Issues*. SAGE Publications.
- De Vos A.S., Strydom H., Schulze S. & Patel, L. (2011). The Sciences and the Profession. In De Vos A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché C. B. & Delpont C. S. L. *Research at the Grass Roots for the Social Sciences and Human Service Professions*. (4th Ed). Pretoria: J. L. Van Schaik Publishers.
- Eckersley, C. E., & Eckersley J. M. (1960). *A Comprehensive English Grammar*. London: Longman Ltd.
- Emerson, R. W. (2015). Convenience Sampling, Random Sampling, and Snowball Sampling: How Does Sampling Affect the Validity of Research? *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 109(2), 164-168. [doi.org/10.1177/0145482X1510900215](https://doi.org/10.1177/0145482X1510900215)
- Flowerdew, J. (1999). Problems in Writing for Scholarly Publication in English: The Case of Hong Kong. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8, 243-64.
- Fraenkel, J. R., & Wallen, N.E. (2000). *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education*. Mc Grawhill Companies Inc.
- Francis, G., Hunston, S. & Manning, E. (1996). *Collins COBUILD Grammar Patterns 1: Verbs*. Harper Collins.
- Friginal, E. (2013). Developing Research Report Writing Skills Using Corpora. *English for Specific Purposes*, 32(4), 208-220. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2013.06.001>.
- Gale, N. K., Heath, G., Cameron, E. (2013). Using the Framework Method for the Analysis of Qualitative Data in Multi-Disciplinary Health Research. *BMC Med Res Methodology* 13, 117 <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-13-117>
- Gil-Salom, L., & Soler-Monreal, C. (2014). Writers' Positioning in Literature Reviews in English and Spanish Computing Doctoral Theses. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 16, 23-39. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2014.08.002>.

- Gledhill, C. (2009). *Colligation and the Cohesive Function of Present and Past Tense in the Scientific Research Article*. In David Banks (éd.), *Les Temps et les Textes de spécialité*, 65-84. Paris: l'Harmattan.
- Gray, L. (2019). College Students' Use of Reporting Verbs and Verb Complements in Academic Papers. *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics*, 55, DOI: 10.7176/JLLL
- Halai, A. (2006). Ethics in Qualitative Research: Issues and Challenge, *EdQual Conference Working paper*, 4.
- Hinkel, E. (2004). Tense, Aspect and the Passive Voice in L1 and L2 Academic Texts, *Language Teaching Research*, 8, 5-29.
- Hyland, K. (1999). Academic Attribution: Citation and the Construction of Disciplinary Knowledge. *Applied Linguistics*, 20, 341-367.
- Hyland, K. (2002). Activity and Evaluation: Reporting Practices in Academic Writing. In J. Flowerdew (Ed.). *Academic Discourse*, 115-130. London: Longman.
- Hyland, K. (2004). Engagement and Disciplinarity: the other side of evaluation. In D. Lungo, G. Camiciotti, and E.T. Bonelli (Eds.), *Academic Discourse-New Insights into Evaluation*, 13-30. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Hyland, K. (2008). Make your academic writing assertive and certain. In J. Reid (Ed.), *Writing Myths: Applying Second Language Research to Classroom Writing*, 70-89. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Hyland, K., & Jiang, F. (2019). Points of Reference: Changing Patterns of Academic Citation. *Applied Linguistics*, 40(1), 64-85.
- Ibrahimova, S. I. (2016). Features of Reporting Verbs in Modern English. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 6(2), 80-83. DOI:10.5539/ijel.v6n2p79.
- Igbal, T. & Anwar, B. (2021). Analysis of Reporting Verbs in Non-Native English Academic Discourse. *Orient Research Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(1), 141-150
- Jafarigohar, M. & Mohammadkhani, A. (2015). Reporting Verbs in Applied Linguistics Research Articles by Native and Non-Native Writers. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 5(12), 2490-2496.
- Jarkovska, M. & Kucírkova, L. (2020). Citation Practices in EFL Academic Writing: The Use of Reporting Verbs in Masters Thesis Literature Reviews. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 10(2), 571-579. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v10i2.29033>.
- Jirapanakorn, N. (2012). How Doctors Report: A Corpus-Based Contrastive Analysis Of Reporting Verbs in Research Article Introductions Published in International and Thai Medical Journals. *The Bangkok Medical Journal*, 4, 39-46.

- Jomaa, N. J. & Bidin, S. J. (2017). Perspective of EFL Doctoral Students on Challenges of Citations in Academic Writing. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, 14(2), 177-209. <https://doi.org/10.32890/mjli2017.14.2.7763>.
- Klimova, B. (2014). Approaches to the teaching of writing skills. *Procedia-Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 112, 147-151. doi:10.1016/J.SBSPRO.2014.11.1149
- Koutsantoni, D. (2007). *Developing Academic Literacies. Understanding Disciplinary Communities, Culture and Rhetoric*. Oxford: Peter Lang.
- Kumar, R. (2011). *Research Methodology: A Step - by - Step Guide for Beginners (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)*. SAGE Publications.
- Kusi, H. (2012). *Doing Qualitative Research: A Guide Researchers*. Accra-new Town: Emmpong Press.
- Kwon, M. H. Staples, S. & Partridge, R. S. (2018). Source Work in the First-Year L2 Writing Classroom: Undergraduate L2 Writers' Use of Reporting Verbs. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 34, 86-96. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2018.04.001>.
- Lamprey, R. B. & Atta-Obeng, H. (2012). Challenges with Reference Citations among Postgraduate Students at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana. *Journal of Science and Technology*, 32(3), 69-80 <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jst.v32i3.8>.
- Lee, J. L. Hitchcock, C. & Elliot C. J. (2018). Citation Practices of L2 University Students in First-Year Writing: Form, Function, and Stance. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 33, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2018.01.001>
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G., (1985). *Naturalist Inquiry*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Loan, N. T. L. & Pramoolsook, I. (2015). Reporting Verbs in Literature Review Chapters of TESOL Master's Theses Written by Vietnamese Postgraduates. *ESP Today*, 3(2), 196-215.
- Luo, A. (2021). *Content Analysis, A Step-by-Step Guide with Examples*, retrieved June 10, 2021, from [www.scribbr.com](http://www.scribbr.com)
- Maroko, G. M., & Kiai, A. (2014). Tense Usage in Selected Humanities and Science Dissertations. *Beyond Words*, 2(2), 54-85.
- Malcolm, L. (1987). What Rules Govern Tense Usage in Scientific Articles? *English for Specific Purposes*, 6, 31-44.
- Manan, N. A. & Noor, N. M. (2014). Analysis of Reporting Verbs in Masters theses. *Procedia- Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 134, 140-145.
- Maxwell, J.A. (2008). Designing a Qualitative Study. *Applied Research Designs*, 214-253. doi:10.1111/1467-9299.00177.

- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Application in Education*. Jossey- Bass.
- Musa, A. (2014). Hedging Strategies in English and Chemistry Masters Theses in the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. *Journal of ELT and Applied Linguistics (JELTAL)*, 2(3), 1-19.
- Myers, M. (2000). Qualitative Research and Generalization Question: Standing firm with Proteus. *The Quality Report*, 4(3/4). Available at: <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR4-1/myers.html> retrieved on 7/09/ 2019.
- Neuman, W. L. (2007). *Basics of Social Research Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Allyn and Bacon.
- Nguyen, L. T. T. & Pramoolsook, I. (2015). Citation Practice in the Whole TESOL Master's Theses by Vietnamese Postgraduates. *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 22(3), 79-92.
- Oster, S. (1981). The Use of Tenses in "Reporting Past Literature" in EST. *English for Academic and Technical Purposes; Studies in Honor of Louis Trimble*, 76-90.
- Okuyama, Y. (2020). Use of Tense and Aspect in Academic Writing in Engineering: Simple Past and Present Perfect. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 24(1), 1-15.
- Paltridge, B. (2002). Thesis and Dissertation Writing: An Examination of Published Advice and Actual Practice. *English for Specific Purposes*, 21(2), 125-143. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0889-4906\(00\)00025-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0889-4906(00)00025-9)
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, SAGE Publications.
- Pecorari, D. (2008). *Academic Writing and Plagiarism: A Linguistic Analysis*. Continuum.
- Petric, B. & Harwood, N. (2013). Task Requirements, Task Representation, and Self-Reported Citation Functions: An Exploratory Study of a Successful L2 Student's Writing. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 12(2), 110–124. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2013.01.002>.
- Pulla, V. & Carter, E. (2018). Employing Interpretivism in Social Work Research. *International Journal of Social Work and Human Services*, Practice Horizon Research Publishing, 6(1), 9-14.
- Ramoroka, B. T. (2014). Integration of Sources in Academic Writing: A Corpus-Based Study Citation Practices in Essay Writing in two Departments at the University of Botswana: original Research. *Reading and Writing- Journal of the Reading Association of South Africa*, 5(1), 1-7.
- Salvager-Mayer, F. (1994). Hedges and Textual Communicative Function in Medical English Written Discourse. *English for Specific Purposes*, 13(2), 149-171.



- Samraj, B. (2013). Form and Function of Citations in Discussion Sections of Master's Theses and Research Articles. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 12(4), 299-310. doi:08.2018/j.jeap.2013.09.001
- Shaw, P. (1992). Reasons for the Correlation of Voice, Tense and Sentence Function in Reporting verbs. *Applied Linguistics*, 13, 302-19.
- Shenton, A. K., (2004). Strategies of Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Design Projects, *Education for Information IOS Press*, 22(2),63-75.
- Soler-Monreal, C. & Gill-Salom, L. (2011). A Cross-Disciplinary Study on Citation Practices in PhD. Theses, *International Journal of English Studies*, 11(2), 53-75.
- Swales, J. M. (2014). Variation in Citational Practice in a Corpus of Student Biology Papers: From Parenthetical Plonking to Intertextual Storytelling. *Written Communication*, 31, 118-141.
- Swales, J. M. (1990). *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press. .
- Swales, J. M. & Feak, C. (2004). *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Swales, J. M. & Feak, C. (2008). *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Swear, M. A. & Kalajahi, S. A. R. (2019). Evaluative Functions of Reporting Verbs in the Introductions of Master Theses. *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews*, 7(6), 139-142 <https://doi.org/10.18510/hssr.2019.7628>.
- Taylor, P. C., & Medina, M. (2011). Educational Research Paradigms: from Positivism to Pluralism. *College Research Journal*, 1(1), 1-16.
- Tham, D. M. & Nhi, T. P. (2021). A Corpus-Based Study on Reporting Verbs used in TESOL Research Articles by Native and Non-Native Writers. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, 37(3), 135-147
- Trinh, T. T. T., (2021). Analysis of Interpersonal Metafunction in Text Messages: A Case Study of Group Text Messages among Teachers of English at Viet Anh School. *Thu Dau Mot University Journal of Science*, 3(3), 365-385. <https://doi.org/10.37550/tdmu.EJS/2021.03.215>
- Thomson, S. B. (2011). Sample Size and Grounded Theory. *Journal of Administration and Governance*, 5(1), 45-51.
- Thomas, S. & Hawes, T. P. (1995). Reporting Verbs in Medical Journal Articles. *English For Specific Purposes*, 13(2).
- Thompson, G. & Ye, Y. (1991). Evaluation in the Reporting Verbs used in Academic Papers. *Applied Linguistics*, 12(4), 365-382.
- Uludag, P. Crawford, W. J. & McDonough, K. (2021). English for Academic Purposes Writers' Use of Reporting Verbs in Argumentative and Cause-

and-Effect Essay Exams, *BC TEAL Journal* 6(1), 42-58, <https://doi.org/10.14288/bctj.v6i1.388>

- Un-udom, S. & Un-udom, N. (2020). A Corpus-Based Study on the Use of Reporting Verbs in Applied Linguistics Articles. *English Language Teaching*, 13(4), 162. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v13n4p162>.
- Weissberg, R. & Buker, S. (1990). *Writing up Research: Experimental Research Report Writing for Students of English*. New York: Prentice Hall Regents.
- Wen, S. & Pramoolsook, I. (2021). A Comparative Analysis of Reporting Verbs Used in Literature Review Chapters of Bachelor's and Masters Theses of Chinese English Majors. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 10 (4), 320-332. DOI: 10.18488/journal.23.2021.104.320.332
- Woravut, J. (2015). Reporting Verbs in Research Writing: Lessons from Experts. *Journal of Language Teaching and Learning in Thailand*, 50, 143-154.
- Willis, J. (2007). *Foundations of Qualitative Research: Interpretive and Critical Approaches*. SAGE Publication, [doi:https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452230108](https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452230108)
- Writing Centre, (2014). *Verbs for Reporting*. The University of Adelaide. Retrieved November 20, 2021, from <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/writingcentre/sites/default/files/docs/learningguideverbsforreporting.pdf>
- Wu, J. (2017). The Use of Reporting Verbs as Rhetoric in Academic Writing Across Disciplines.: A Research Proposal. doi:0.13140/RG.2.2.23720.83209.
- Xie, N. (2013). *Genre Analysis of Research Article Introductions of TESOL*. [Unpublished MEd Assignment], University of Exeter, UK.
- Yannuar, N., I., Shitadev, Y. B. & Utami, W. (2014). Active and Passive Voice Constructions by Indonesian Student Writers. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 4(7), 1400-1408.
- Yeganeh, M.T. & Boghayeri, M. (2015). The Frequency and Function of Reporting Verbs in Research Articles Written by Native Persian and English Speakers. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 192, 582-586.
- Yilmaz, M. & Ertuk, Z. (2017). A Contrastive Corpus-Based Analysis of the Use of Reporting verbs by Native and Non-native ELT Researchers. *Novitas-Royal Research on Youth and Language*, 11(2), 112-127.
- Zahra, Tan & Ebrahimi (2021). Voice in Rhetorical Units of Results and Discussion Chapter of Masters Theses: Across Science Study. *Brno Studies in English*, 47(1). <https://doi.org/10.5817/BSE2021-1-5>.
- Zhang, X. (2008). A Contrastive Study of Reporting in Master's Theses in Native Chinese and in Native English. Unpublished MSc dissertation, University of Edinburgh.

Zhao, J. (2020). Teaching Reporting Verbs to English as a Second Language Undergraduate Writers in the Academic Context. *TESOL International Journal*. 15(2), 28-45.

Zin, W, M, (2020). The Use of Reporting Verbs Found in Research Articles. *Banmaw University Research Journal*, 11(1), 29-42.



## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

## RVs found in the Hyland's (2002) taxonomy

SN	Category/sub category	Reporting verbs
<b>1. Research Act</b>		
Finding		
	<i>Factive</i>	<i>confirm, solve, show, establish, demonstrate</i>
	<i>counter factive</i>	<i>overlook, ignore, fall, misunderstand</i>
	<i>non factive</i>	<i>obtain, find, observe, identify</i>
Procedure		
<i>Analyze, calculate, essay, explore, plot, recover</i>		
<b>2. Cognition Acts</b>		
	<i>Positive</i>	<i>think, understand agree, concur, hold, know,</i>
	<i>Critical</i>	<i>not think, disagree, dispute</i>
	<i>Tentative</i>	<i>suppose, suspect, believe, doubt, speculate,</i>
	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>anticipate, reflect, picture, conceive</i>
<b>3. Discourse act</b>		
Doubt		
	<i>Tentative</i>	<i>suggest, intimate, postulate, hypothesize, indicate</i>
	<i>Critical</i>	<i>not account, not make a point, evade, exaggerate</i>
Assurance		
	<i>Factive</i>	<i>argue, affirm, explain, note, point out, claim</i>
	<i>non factive</i>	<i>state, describe, discuss, report, answer, define, summarize</i>
Counter		
<i>attack, question, warn, rule out, deny, critique, challenge</i>		



**APPENDIX B**  
**Masters Theses used in the study**

SN	Name Of Author	Title	Year	Department
1	Benedicta Obeng	A Comparative Analysis of the Rhetorical Moves and Metadiscourse Elements in Abstracts of Science Conferences	2019	Communication and Media Studies
2	Nyarko Ansa	The Impact of CS and Academic Writing as Required Course in undergraduate Writing	2019	√
3	Iddrisu Ibrahim Pati	The Role of Teachers in Handling the Reading Difficulties of Students at Savelugu Senior High School	2020	√
4	Susanna Mamle Hervie	A Study of Non Verbal Communication Cues and their Uses In Pre-School Classroom Interaction: A Case Study of Nsakina Kindergarten	2019	√
5	Hudu Abukari	Investigating Spelling Challenges Among Junior High School Students: A Case of Some Selected Schools in the Yendi Municipality	2020	√
6	Khadijatu Iddrisu	Investigating the Communication Relationships between Lactating Mothers in Graduate School, Their Cohorts and Their Lecturers: the Case of University Of Education, Winneba	2018	√
7	Moro Mohammed Amin	Causes of Poor Performance of Students in the Basic Education Certificate Examination in Selected Public Junior High Schools in Mampong Municipality	2019	Social Studies
8	Eric Mensah	ICT Integration in to the Teaching and Learning of Social Studies in SHS	2020	√
9	Bismark Boateng	Perception of the People on ‘Operation Vanguard’ in the Upper Denkyira District	2020	√
10	Ebenezer Spio Anim	Students’ Perception of Peace Education in Senior High Schools In the Ekumfi District Of Central Region, Ghana	2020	√
11	Eric Koomson	Teaching and Learning for Nation Building: Knowledge and Practices of Senior High School Social Studies Teachers in the Eastern Region of Ghana	2020	√
12	Augusta Kyerewaah Asante	Women’s Participation in Local Level Governance In Selected Districts in the Central Region of Ghana	2020	√
13	Celestine Timbila	History of Kumasi Public Sculptural Art	2017	Music
14	Francis Dzakey	Challenges of Music and Dance Studies in Francis College of Education, Hohoe	2016	√
15	Isaac Yakubu	Impact of Chalewotey Street Art Festival	2020	√
16	Ernest Ametefe Doh	Indigenous Ewe Kete Designs in Contemporary Ghanaian Fashion	2019	√
17	Mayona Sophia	The Use of Music in Enhancing Teaching and Learning in Preschools: Case Study of Selected Preschools in Winneba	2016	√
18	Mawuse Adiakpor	Folk Songs in Early Childhood Music Education: A Study in Some Selected Schools in Afadjato-South District	2015	√
19	Lydia Abbey	An Investigation into Health and safety Management Procedure	2015	Health Physical Education Recreation and Sports
20	Ernest Tsikata	Assessing Psycho-Motor Skills Development Level of 6 To 8 Years Children	2019	√

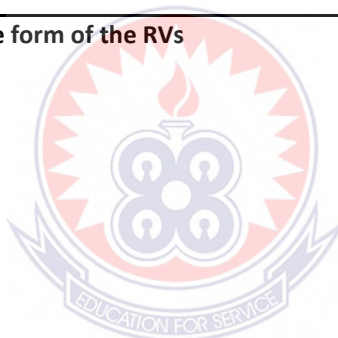
21	Lawson Gordon Nyavor	Assessing the Influence of Planning on Selected Instructional Behaviours of Physical Education Student Interns From University Of Education, Winneba, Ghana.	2015	√
22	Mawauli Sedegah	Factors Contributing to Sports Injuries Among Senior High Athletes in Competition in Akuapem Municipality	2020	√
23	Ebenezer Kofi Ofosu	Effect of Eight-Week Physical Activity Programme on Weight Loss In Akwamuman Senior High School Students	2020	√
24	Magnus Der	An Investigation into the Challenges Facing the Implementation Of The Senior High School Physical Education Programme in Nandom District Of Ghana	2015	√
25	Irene Sarpah	Improving the Conceptual Understanding of the Process of Photosynthesis to Second Year Science Students of Abetifi Presbyterian Senior High School: The Use of the Model of the Leaf and Animations Videos	2020	Biology
26	Issah Ibrahim	Differential Views of SHS Teacher Factors that Affect Students' Performance in Biology	2016	√
27	Peter Kwasi Krah	Guided Discovery and Self Learning Strategies: Biology Intervention Lessons in a Ghanaian Senior High School	2015	√
28	Nartey Esther Dorcas	Comparative Analysis of Concept Mapping and Traditional Methods in Teaching Selected Topics in Biology	2016	√
29	Bernice Boateng Acheampong	Enhancing Students' Retention of Cell Division through Computer simulations in Adanwomase Senior High School	2016	√
30	Anastasia Abena Afrah	Effects Of Realistic And Non -Realist Simulations on Students Achievement on the Topic Cell Division	2015	√
31	Gifty Koomson	Determinants of Academic Achievement of Students in Public Junior High Schools in the Effutu Municipality	2019	Basic Education
32	Matilda Osei-Asibey	Assessment of Media Literacy in the Teaching and Learning Of English Language in Basic Schools in the Nsawam-Adoagyiri Municipality	2019	√
33	Samuel Adombire Azuure	Public Junior High School Mathematics Teachers' Conceptions of the Purpose and Practice of Assessment in Bongo District of Ghana	2019	√
34	Joseph Bentil	Study Habits and Academic Performance among Public Junior High School Pupils in the Ekumfi District: Investigating the Controlling Effect of Learning Styles	2016	√
35	Patrick Kyeremeh	Junior High School Mathematics Teachers' Knowledge and Practice Of Differentiated Instruction in Tano South District	2018	√
36	Man Blaise Dery	Evaluating the National Literacy Acceleration Programme on Lower Primary in the Upper West Region	2017	√

**Appendix C**  
**Combination of Tense and voice forms of the RV categorized according to the Hyland (2002) taxonomy**

Category	Past simple Tense	Present Perfect Tense	Present simple Tense
Research Act			
Findings			
<i>Factive</i>	Confirmed 6, Established 2, noticed 1, revealed 9, emphasized 3, showed 29, stressed 3, displayed 2, proved 4 (59) REVEALED-2, JUSTIFIED-1, EMPHASISED-1, STRESS-1 (5)	demonstrated 2, confirmed 1, noticed 1, established 6, revealed 8, emphasised 1, shown 36, proved 2 (57) ESTABLISH-1	Discover(s) 8, emphasise(s) 4, demonstrate 3, confirm(s) 7, reveal(s) 70, stress(s) 12, show(s) 62, establish(s) 18, testify 1, manifest 1 (186) SHOW -1, CONFIRM-4 (5)
<i>Non factive</i>	Found 120, identified 6, observed 7, discovered 6, classified 2, offered 3, provided 10 (154) OBSERVED-2, PROVIDED-1, IDENTIFIED-1, (4)	found 7, observed 2, identified 2, classified 2 (13)	Find(s) 96, identify(s) 41, observe(s) 52, obtain(s) 2, classify(s) 3, figure(s) out 1, offer(s) 3, illustrate(s) 1, provide(s) 4,(203) IDENTIFIED-2, OBTAINED-1
<i>Counter factive</i>	Failed 3	Failed 1	0
Procedure	explored 2, compared 1, examined 3, reviewed 9, investigated 7, studied 9, conducted 88 (119) CONDUCT-30, REVIEW-4, EXAMINED-10, DEVELOPED-2 (46)	analysed 1, carried out 5, compared 2, conducted 6, developed 1, explored 1, investigated 4, examined 3, reviewed 1, (24) EXAMINED-2, INVESTIGATED-1, CONDUCTED-1 (4)	Analyse 3, carry(s) out 14, compare(s) 4, conduct(s) 8, explore(s) 4, investigate(s) 25, examine(s) 27, review(s) 3, Study(s) 8 (96) CONDUCT-20, DEVELOP-8, STUDIED-4, CARRIED OUT-4 (36)
Cognitive Act			
Positive	Agreed 11, concurred 11, acknowledged 3, held 4, supported 19, thought 2, concentrated 1, focuses 2 (53) SUPPORT-2	Focused 1,	Agree(s) 8, hold(s) 1, Support(s) 3, think 1, concentrate(s) 1, focus(s) 13 (27) HELD-2, SUPPORT-6 (8)
Critical	Disagreed 1, disputed 1 CRITISED-2, DESPUTED-1	0 CRITICISED-2	Disagree(s) 1,
Tentative	believed 24, advised 2 (26)	0	Believe(s) 3, advise(s) 1
Neutral	Reflected 2, Conceived 2, conceptualized 1	0	reflect(s) 1 CONCEPTUALISED-2
<b>Discourse Act</b>			
Assurance			
<i>Factive</i>	Affirmed 6, Argued 65, asserted 34, claimed 13, commented 1, explained 53, mentioned 3, noted 19, opine 7, pointed out 12, posited 17, said 16, urged 1, reiterated 2, advocated 1, attested 2, highlighted 3, clarified 1 (256) ARGUED-1, NOTED-1	argued 4, explained 1, noted 1, pointed out 3, said 3 (12) EXPLAINED-1	Affirm(s) 1, Argued(s) 34, assert(s) 21, claim(s) 1, comment(s) 5, explain(s) 36, mention(s) 9, note(s) 45, opine(s) 15, point(s) out 20, posited 16, say 20, maintain 1, reiterate(s) 1, advocate(s) 2, attest(s) 1, highlight(s) 3, (231) CITED-3, NOTED-1, AFFIRM-1, EXPLAINED-4, POINT OUT-1, SAY-2,

<i>Non factive</i>	Stated 64, described 12, discussed 4, listed 3, reported 12, added 8, defined 40, referred 10, addressed 3, called 3, concluded 7, presented 1, expressed 4, involved 4, regarded 4, wrote 10, draw 1 (190) EXPRESSED-1, STATE-1	stated 1, discussed 1, defined 4 (6)	HIGHLIGHT-1, POSIT-3 (16) State(s) 72, describe(s) 19, define(s) 23, add(s) 21, discuss(s) 1, refer(s) 3, report(s) 45, summarise(s) 3, call(s) 5, address(s) 1, raise 1, conclude(s) 44, express(s) 2, write 1 (241) REPORTED 3, WRITE-2, DESCRIBE-5, DEFINED-2, PRESENTED-3, CALL-2 (17)
Doubt			
Critical	0	0	0
Tentative	Hypothesised 1, Indicated 14, intimated 3, proposed 3, postulated 5, saw 6, suggested 15, viewed 9 (56) INDICATED-2	indicated 5, proposed 2, viewed 4 (11) PROPOSED-2	Indicate(s) 77, intimate(s) 11, propose(s) 3, suggest(s) 99, view(s) 6, postulate(s) 2, see(s) 10, considered 11, contend(s) 8, hypothesis 2, (229) SUGGEST-3, INDICATE-4, PROPOSED-3, POSTULATED-2, HYPOTHESISED-2 (14)
Counter	Critique 1, opposes 1	0	0

**NB: RVs in caps are the passive form of the RVs**





**Appendix D****Tense and voice form of the RV according to the Hyland (2002) taxonomy**

Category	Past		Perfect		Present		Total
	Active	Passive	Active	Passive	Active	Passive	
Research act							
Finding							
Factive	54	5	57	1	186	5	313
Non factive	154	4	13	0	203	3	377
Counter factive	3	0	1	0	0	0	4
Procedure	119	46	24	4	96	36	325
Cognitive act							
Positive	53	2	1	0	27	8	91
Critical	2	0	0	2	1	3	8
Tentative	26	0	0	0	4	0	30
Neutral	5	0	0	0	1	2	8
Discourse act							
Assurance							
Factive	256	2	12	1	231	16	518
Non factive	190	2	6	0	240	17	456
Doubt							
Tentative	56	5	11	2	229	14	317
Critical	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Counter	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
	925	66	125	10	1219	104	2449

**Appendix E****Active and passive voice form of the RV in the Hyland (2002) taxonomy**

Category/sub category	Active voice		Passive voice	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
<b>Research act</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>37.4</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>4.25</b>
Finding	676	27.7	18	0.8
Factive	302	12.7	11	0.4
Non factive	370	15.8	7	0.29
Counter factive	4	0.16	0	0
Procedure	239	9.8	86	3.5
<b>Cognitive act</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0.7</b>
Positive	81	3.3	10	0.4
Critical	3	0.1	5	0.2
Neutral	6	0.2	2	0.08
Tentative	30	1.2	0	0
<b>Discourse act</b>	<b>1234</b>	<b>62.56</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>2.41</b>
Assurance	936	38	38	1.6
Factive	499	20	19	0.8
Non factive	437	17.8	19	0.8
Doubt	296	12.2	21	0.8
Tentative	296	12.9	21	0.9
Critical	0	0	0	0
Counter	2	0.08	0	0
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>2269</b>	<b>92.7</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>7.3</b>